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41st Annual Southwest Farm & Home Expo Kicks Off April 12



APRIL 12
8:30am - 6:00pm

APRIL 13
Noon - 5:00pm

The 41st Annual Southwest Farm & Home Expo will be April 12-13, 2025 at the Elk City Convention Center. Whether it's the farm, home, lawn or garden, this Farm & Home Expo will give you the opportunity to see the newest and best products and services in these areas.

Over 100 displays will showcase the latest in farm and livestock equipment and lawn, home and garden supplies. Several special events are scheduled for this year's show including the FFA Ag Mechanics Show & Silent Auction, Antique Tractor Display, the Children's Pedal Tractor Pull, BBQ Cook-Off. Along with the All-Breed Bull Sale will be Saturday, April 12 at 2:00 pm.

Various Food Trucks will be in the North Parking lot on Saturday and Sunday and the Elk City FFA will be doing the concessions in the South Exhibit Hall on Saturday, 10am to 4pm and on Sunday, 12-5pm in the North Exhibit Hall East Room.

Farmers and Ranchers get your CEU credits on Saturday, April 12 starting at 8:30 am with coffee

and donuts in the East Room of the Convention Center. At 9 am, listen to Josh Bushong, area Agronomy Specialist, and Dr. Liberty Galvan. Lunch will be provided by Fowler Crop Insurance Agency.

The All-Breed Bull Sale, which draws people from all over Oklahoma, Texas and Kansas will feature some of the top breeders in Oklahoma and Texas. Bulls will range from yearlings to two year olds. There will be an excellent selection of big stout bulls ready for your farm and the ranch needs at 2:00 pm on Saturday, April 12 in the South Exhibit Hall. Sponsoring the All-Breed Bull Sale is the First National Bank & Trust of Elk City.

The BBQ Cook-Off kicks off on Friday, April 11 at 6:00 pm with the Cook's meeting and meat inspection, a \$25 entry fee for each category will be due at this time.

The check-in/set up will be Saturday, April 12 at 7:30 am through Sunday, April 13 at 8:00 am. The judging will begin at 1:00 pm on Sunday, April 13. Categories are Chicken, Pork Ribs, Beef Brisket and Jalapeno Appetizers.

There will be cash prizes for first place in each category and plaques for 1st, 2nd, & 3rd places. Prizes will be awarded on Sunday at 4:30 pm in the North Exhibit Hall.

The Children's Pedal Tractor Pull, for ages 4-12, will begin on Sunday, April 13 at 1:30 pm with registration at 1:00 pm in the South Exhibit Hall. Each participant will receive a t-shirt and the top two winners in each age division will also receive a plaque all donated by Great Plains Bank of Elk City. The pedal tractors are furnished so the committee invites all the children to come out and have lots of fun. There will be a drawing for two Pedal Tractors and a Bicycle...John Deere Pedal Tractor donated by Western Equipment and a Bicycle donated by Rother Brothers also a pedal tractor donated by Great Plains Kubota. Wall Equipment will also be giving items away. The drawing will be at the end of the Children's Pedal Tractor Pull. Only the participating riders are eligible for the drawing.

(See FARM & HOME EXPO, Page 3)

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Jerry Spangler

Gerald Archie Spangler was born November 13, 1946, to Archie and Malease (Stinson) Spangler in Fay, Oklahoma, and passed away March 31, 2025.



Jerry attended 12 years of schooling at the Fay School and graduated in 1965. Jerry attended two years of college at SWOSU and fathered three daughters, Debbie, Beckie and Missie, while married to Linda Roberts Spangler.

Jerry worked at the Oakwood gas station while attending college, then went to work for the railroad building bridges. He enjoyed custom harvesting for some years and working on the farm growing wheat. He would later build his own business of Oilfield Production, Spangler Contract Pumping, which is still a productive business.

Jerry would later go on to marry Linda Kay (Doughty) Abel in 1981, in Canadian Texas. They would combine their families and later welcome two more children, Gerald and Nathan, to their blended family, while living on their farm in Fay.

Jerry enjoyed many outdoor activities such as bowling, fishing, and hunting: specifically, quail hunting. He especially enjoyed going to the casino. If he won \$3 or \$3000 you couldn't tell because he celebrated loud and proud either way. He will be remembered for his work on the farm and by the many, many people that he encountered in the oilfield. Jerry loved seeing his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. He also delighted in taking his sisters and nephews on in a game or four of pinochle.

Jerry is preceded in death by his parents, Archie and Malease.

He is survived by his wife, Linda of the home; four daughters: Debbie Perzanowski, Joy Abel Abbey and partner, Rod Copley, Beckie Galer and husband, Luke and Missie Worden and husband, Kevin; four sons C.B. Abel and wife, Heather, Luke Abel and wife, Amanda, Gerald Archie Spangler II, and Nathan Leon Spangler; five sisters: Christina Greening, Theresa Barnes, Arthena Shifflett and husband, Jack, Sue Edgeworth, and Carrie Phillips and husband, Billy along with 24 grandchildren and numerous great grandchildren.

June Wright

June Wright, 83, of Elk City, Oklahoma, was born on June 28, 1941 in Mangum, Oklahoma. She is the daughter of Silas Glynn Reeves and Alta Preston (Stanley) Reeves. She went to hold the hands of her Lord and Savior on April 1, 2025 at her home, in Elk City, Oklahoma surrounded by her family.



She married the love of her life, Harvey Wright on September 18, 1971 in Clinton, Oklahoma. He preceded her in death on November 14, 2021.

June enjoyed going golfing, doing yard work in her garden where she loved to spend time next to her Bradford Pear tree. She also enjoyed cooking, knitting, crocheting and other various crafts, but most all she loved spending time with her family. She was a member of the United Methodist Church and Elk City Golf and Country Club.

Cherishing her memory is her children, Doug Freeman and his wife, Debra Ramirez, of Elk City, Oklahoma, Angie Sneed and her husband, Harry III of Stillwater, Oklahoma; Sy Freeman and his wife, Amie of Elk City, Oklahoma; one granddaughter, Kristen Freeman, of Elk City, Oklahoma; one great-grandson, Rigby Chancey of Elk City, Oklahoma and one step-daughter, Marcie Kendrick of Vernon, Texas.

June is preceded in death by her husband, Harvey Wright; her parents, Silas and Alta Reeves; one brother, Glynn Reeves and one sister, Shirley Holden.

Memorials can be made to the Dementia-OMRF in care of Martin-Dugger Funeral Home and Cremation Services, P.O. Box 707, Elk City, Oklahoma 73648.

Darren Ford

Willie "Darren" Lee Ford Sr. was born to Peggy (Morris) Ford on December 5, 1965, in Clinton, Oklahoma. At the age of 59, Willie was called home on March 22, 2025. Willie, also known as Darren, was raised in Clinton, where he attended public schools. In his younger years, he was an astonishing athlete. From track and field to football and basketball, he could slam dunk a basketball in the seventh grade. Willie could do it all. He was a true leader among his peers. However, his true love and passion was art.



Darren was an unbelievably gifted visual artist, with a keen eye for creating magnificent portraits. His talent was a great inspiration to others. As a child, Willie would paint and color anything he could get his hands on. You could say he was a bit of a mama's boy, as he hardly ever got into trouble because of it. Willie loved his mother dearly. He was a quiet, introverted person but enjoyed being around his siblings and family, most importantly his children and grandchildren.

Willie is preceded in death by his mother, Peggy Ford; first wife, Barbara Ford; brother, Tommy Ford; sister, Earline Ford; grandparents, Mollie and Alfred Washington; and grandchild, Zavier.

Willie leaves to cherish his memory, four adoring children: Son, Willie Lee Ford Jr.; daughters Chasity Ann Thompson, Gracie LeeAnn Ford, Faith Nevaeh Ford, along with three stepchildren- Jesty, Gabriella, and Ayden. He is also survived by his 11 beautiful grandchildren, Willie Lee III, Adrianna, Payton, Ryder, Trace, Araceli, Tavi, Rose, Zaire, Kingston, and Zaylon. His brothers, Frank Ford and wife Valetta of OKC, and Dewayne "Papa" Ford and wife Pamela of Clinton, OK.; Sisters, Donnie Ethel Ford-Williams and husband James of Antioch, CA, and Brenda Delarose and husband Donnie of Stockton, CA. In addition, he leaves behind aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and a host of family and friends. Willie will be missed dearly.

Louise Jones

Minnie Louise Jones, 83, of Elk City, Oklahoma, was born on December 15, 1941 in Sayre, Oklahoma, to Henry Willie and Jewell Leona (Brown) Tyarks. She transitioned to her heavenly home on Sunday, March 30, 2025 at Great Plains Regional Medical Center surrounded by her loving family.



Louise married the love of her life Travis Wayne Jones on August 28, 1959, he preceded her in death on Thursday, December 6, 2018. She was a member of the Main Street Baptist Church where she taught Sunday School.

She enjoyed spending her time in the garden growing plants, being a part of sewing club, talking with her friends and neighbors, but most of all spending time with her family.

Louise is survived by her son, David Jones of Elk City, Oklahoma; Daughter, Brenda Jones of Elk City, Oklahoma.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Henry and Jewell; her husband Travis Wayne Jones; 6 brothers and 3 sisters.

Memorials can be made to the Charity of the Donors Choice Expense Fund in care of Martin-Dugger Funeral Home and Cremation Services, P.O. Box 707, Elk City, Oklahoma 73648.

Debbie Tripp

Deborah Ann Tripp, 75, of Elk City, OK was born on June 23, 1949, to Melrose Quincy and Mary Beth (Vaughn) Brinkley. She gained her wings on Saturday, March 29, 2025, surrounded by her loving family and under the loving care of St. Anthony's Hospital.



She graduated from Elk City High School with the class of 1967. Debbie married David Wayne Tripp on October 29, 1975, at Wheeler Texas County Courthouse. She was a proud member of the Church of God, Elk City, OK, where she was devoted in many committees and women's group. She enjoyed careers at the Pants Factory, Oleta's Drapery, and many secretarial jobs, but her proudest endeavor was managing Tripp Concrete Construction alongside her hardworking husband.

Debbie was the pinnacle of her family and had a gift of bringing everyone together, extending her love beyond family. She will always be "Mom and Nana" to all who knew her. Debbie's love is a constant. Her care and compassion unlimited. Her love unconditional. Her guidance always unwavering.

Her final moments were surrounded by family as they sang to her, prayed over her, shared stories, and assured her those left behind will be okay. Though unable to speak, her sharp mind found ways to communicate, and she sent a final "I love you" to give the same peace to her family. Her loving husband's final words of love and assurance are what guided her home. He always told her, "You know why you're my favorite girl? Because you're my only girl". The empire they built together will live on through him and the ones who grieve the void she left behind, but rest assured, you can find her in the hummingbirds buzzing by.

Cherishing her memory is her husband, David Tripp of Elk City, OK; two daughters, Tonja Thompson and husband, Jamie of Hot Springs Village, Arkansas, Taira Tripp and life partner, Martin Cerda of Elk City, OK; five grandchildren, Micaelah Thompson and fiance', William Appel of Hot Springs, Arkansas, Schylar Cupp and husband, Brennon of Fargo, OK, Madison Turner and husband, Stephen of Hot Springs Village, Arkansas, Trak Thompson of Hot Springs Village, Arkansas, Kyra Hensen and husband, Bryce of Abilene, Texas; three great grandchildren, Everett Cupp, Amelia Hensen, and, arriving in June, Carson Cupp; one brother, Mel Brinkley of Elk City, OK; two sisters, Sheryl Doshier and husband, Larry of Newalla, OK, Trena Brinkley of Canute, OK; one brother-in-law, Thurlow Tripp and wife, Joan of Norman, OK; five sisters-in-law, Susan Brinkley of Elk City, OK, Rita Brinkley of Canute, OK, Thelma Vaughn of Elk City, OK, Alene Sexton of Piedmont, OK, Darlene Kupka of Park Hill, OK; bonus daughter, Chasity Ritter of Elk City, OK; special friends, Bill and Kathy Evans of Elk City, OK, David and Pam Osterloh of Elk City, OK; and numerous other loving family members and bonus grandchildren.

Debbie is preceded in death by her parents, Melrose Brinkley and Mary Beth Brinkley-Luster; and two brothers, Ranny Brinkley and Monty Brinkley.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Elk City Church of God, in care of Martin-Dugger Funeral Home, P.O. Box 707, Elk City, OK 73648.

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FARM & HOME EXPO

Continued from Page 1

“This year’s show is going to be the best yet,” said Spencer Smith, Expo Chairman. “We have exhibitors that really take pride in their products and services and that helps put our show above the rest.”

The Elk City Chamber of Commerce, which sponsors the Southwest Farm and Home Expo, prides itself on promoting education in agriculture. Every year they award several scholarships to help further high school seniors with their education in the field of agriculture.

The Southwest Farm & Home Expo Committee would like to thank the City of Elk City for their help with the facility, barrels, cones and some of our advertising. Also, thank you to all our volunteers, exhibitors, Bull Sale Ad Sponsors, Bull Sale Sponsor, Consignors, the Children’s Pedal Tractor Pull Sponsor, CEU Speakers and lunch sponsor and everyone that visits the Expo.

The Elk City Chamber of Commerce Southwest Farm & Home Expo Committee suffered a great loss in 2024, in the passing of Kenneth Hart. Kenneth has been involved for over 20 years, first as an exhibitor for the First National Bank & Trust of Elk City and then joining the committee to help with the planning. Kenneth was a generous man who volunteered his time in many clubs and organizations and he will be sorely missed by all. He continually showed his dedication to his family, the Chamber of Commerce and Elk City. We would like to dedicate this year’s Bull Sale and Kid’s Tractor Pull to Kenneth for giving so much of his time, love and joyful spirit to everything he did.

Members of the 2025 Southwest Farm & Home Expo committee include Chairman, Spencer Smith, Melody Cummings, Dusty Davis, Darren Dupree, Randy Dupree, Cody Gible, Kathy Gible, Larry Long, Ridge Lowrance Brent Meador, David Misener, Nate Perry, Jason Redd, Jason Simon, Cathy Smith, Jimmy Smith, Randy Smith, Teresa Smith, Susie Cupp and Karen Touchstone.

Hours for the Southwest Farm and Home Expo are Saturday, April 12 from 9:00-6:00 and Sunday, April 13 from 12:00-5:00. Admission is free. For a complete schedule of events or more information, call the Elk City Chamber of Commerce at (580)-225-0207, email elkcitychamber@itlnet.net, or find the Elk City Chamber of Commerce on Facebook.

Southwest Farm & Home EXPO

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Elk City
Chamber of Commerce and Convention & Visitors Bureau

FOR MORE INFORMATION
800-280-0207
elkcitychamber@itlnet.net

SATURDAY, APRIL 12

8:30 a.m. Farmers & Ranchers Get Your CEU Credits
Josh Bushong, Area Agronomy Specialist and Dr. Liberty Galvan, Coffee & Donuts 8:30am, Meeting 9:00am-Noon Lunch Provided by Fowler Agency...Convention Center East Room

9:00 a.m. 41st Annual Southwest Farm & Home Expo Opens to Public

All Day FFA Ag Mechanics Show & Silent Auction South Exhibit Hall

All Day Antique Tractor Display...South Exhibit Grounds

2:00 p.m. All Breed Bull Sale – Sponsored by First National Bank & Trust...South Exhibit Hall

6:00 p.m. Expo Closes...On Site Security Provided

SUNDAY, APRIL 13

Noon Expo Opens to Public

1:00 p.m. Children's Pedal Tractor Pull Ages 4-12; Registration at 1:00pm Begins at 1:30pm Sponsored by Great Plains Bank...South Exhibit Hall

1:00 p.m. BBQ Cook-Off Judging Begins North Exhibit Hall, East Room

All Day Antique Tractor Display...South Exhibit Grounds

4:30 p.m. FFA Ag Mechanics and BBQ Cook-Off Awards and Scholarship Presentations...North Exhibit Hall Stage

5:00 p.m. Expo Closes



Krystal Hammon / Connections Food & Resource Center

Kim Cook was named Connection Food & Resource Center’s Volunteer of the month for March 2025. Kim is a hard worker, kind, and is always ready to help and step in when needed. This award is sponsored by Laura Sweeney Eagle Realty and The Morley Group.

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Youth Leadership OK Reveals “Class 25”



from Leadership Oklahoma
 This year's YLOK class features Ruby Wright (pictured), the first recipient for WestOK Weekly readers since Class 23's Jack Morgan, Elk City.

After a highly competitive selection process, we are thrilled to introduce the 52 outstanding students who make up Youth Leadership Oklahoma (YLOK) Class 25.

This year's class represents 26 counties and 47 different high schools across Oklahoma. From June 1-6, these future leaders will embark on a transformational journey across the state, traveling to Edmond, OKC, Tecumseh, Lawton, Sulphur, Tulsa, Stillwater, Enid, and OKC again.

Along the way, they will explore Oklahoma's challenges, successes, and hidden treasures—all with the goal of inspiring them to return after college to build their careers, raise their families, and create positive change in our state.

Since its launch in 2001, YLOK has proudly represented 288 high schools across Oklahoma, shaping young leaders and fostering a love for our great state. Please join us in congratulating the YLOK Class 25!

CUSTER CO / FATALITY - A two-vehicle accident in Custer County claimed the lives of two people. The Oklahoma Highway Patrol says 42-year-old Monica Martinez of Clinton and 51-year-old Jeffery Terrell of Custer City died at the scene of the crash at U.S. 183 and County Road E 920, 4 miles west of Custer City. Troopers say Martinez drove left-of-center and struck Terrell's vehicle head-on.

SWOSU / HODGE CENTER UPDATE - SWOSU President Dr. Diana Lovell says progress continues constructing the Hodge Center for Pharmacy and Rural Health. "Every room is shaped but not completed; we don't have doors on rooms, we don't have the laboratory equipment...but it is fabulous," explained Lovell. "I took a potential donor there. We had a wonderful, wonderful showing of the Hodge center." One of the benefits of the new building is that it will allow for expanded community health services of the SWOSU Center for Rural Health.

CLINTON / OHP HEADQUARTERS - A new Oklahoma Highway Patrol headquarters is still planned to locate at the former Glancey Motel property in Clinton. According to Mayor David Berrong, prior to bidding opening, anxiety around this project is at an all-time high. "It's been delayed, as government projects tend to be. We just wanted to put a sign out there, say, coming law enforcement center," said Berrong. The current HQ remains fully operational and will not be torn down until the new site is built.

WEST OK / ELECTION RESULTS - Several races and propositions were decided at the ballot box in western Oklahoma. In Thomas, Ronald Dean Smith won the Ward 2 seat for City Council. In Hydro, Eric Entin and Kenneth Nunn won seats in a three-way race. In Merritt, Marte Mullens won the office number 5 seat for the city's School Board of Education.

ELK CITY / ELECTION RESULTS - Elk City has a new mayor, with Micah Kilhoffer claiming 53% of the vote over Shannon McAbee. Additionally, Rod Carver claimed the City Commission Ward 2 seat and Rocky Andresen was victorious in Ward 3.

WATONGA / ELECTION RESULTS - Several seats were up for grabs in the city of Watonga. By three votes, Roy Hampton claimed the Ward 1 City Council Seat. Deborah McGee claimed the Ward 2 city council seat. Howard Hursh Sr. Wins the Ward 4 council seat. Neal Riley was elected to the council's member-at-large position.

CORDELL / ELECTION RESULTS - In Cordell, James Newman Jr. won the Ward 3 council seat. Additionally, Dale Selman defeated Randi Hunter for the office number 5 seat for Cordell's School Board of Education.

HINTON / ELECTION RESULTS - In Hinton, voters chose two candidates in each of the Board of Trustee races. In one race, Brian Sweany and Casey O'Neal McLoud were chosen by voters. In the other race for unexpired term, Joshua Cain Toho and Charles Basse were elected to trustee seats.

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Alcohol causing problems? Alcoholics Anonymous meets daily at 928 W. Main, Weatherford. Call (580) 819-0727 for more information.
Christian Free Store - Donations of school supplies, clothes, shoes, etc. are needed or if you are in need. Please call (580) 637-2345 or (580) 291-3875.
Alfalfa, OK, Community Center "Bible Study," Every Monday Night from 7:00 to 8:00 Hwy 58. Five miles South of Hwy 152. For more information contact (405) 643-9211. Free and Open to the Public.
OK Parkinson's Alliance, monthly support group meeting the second Thursday of each month, excluding December, at 5:30 p.m. at Weatherford's Pioneer Center, 1000 Gartrell Place. Patients, caregivers, family or friends are welcome. Questions? Contact OK Parkinson's Alliance (405) 810-0695 or info@OKpa.org.
Iron Sharpens Iron is a Christ-centered adult support group every Tuesday night at 7pm. 233 E Main in Hydro, First Christian Church.

Happy Birthday Wishes for April 10 - Jessica Allisen, Mike Brown, Lacey Burdick, Chad Chaplin, Patsy Chisum, Elmer Croaker, Shannon Duncan, Beau Ferrell, Jeffrey Maynard, Scott Moore, Brant Purdum, Sam Smith, Mark Stapleton; **April 11** - Chuck Ackley, Ari Albrightson, Ian Brennoerder, Charlene Cantrell, Darla Davenport, Patty Doran, Bill Mucker, Shelby Nance; **April 12** - Billy Birkenfeld, Teri Boyd, Cindi Bruce, Rhownw Grossman, Rob Grogan, Leslie Harrison, Kelis Hart, Amy Hoffman, Sonny Makesry, Bobby Richardson, Lisa Stephens, Julie Weichel; **April 13** - Emily Garrison, Donis Hardaway, Kim Heger, Mollie Reeves, Troy Shirey, Tristan Shirey; **April 14** - Tisha Campbell, Bobbie Edwards, Harold Goldmann, Clayton Johnson, Rickey Mackin, Pam Martin, Kim Pickett, Debra Purdum, Alfredo Reyes, Michella Sims, Tinaya Sisler, Allan Weil; **April 15** - Amy Albert, Courtney Albrightson, David Henderson, Doris Johnson, Bud Lamke, Terry Lofland, Kathryn Lowry, Tabor Moss, Lonnie Penner, Kim Potter, Jerry Ritchison, Lexy Roys, Wessyn James Short, Joyce Stewart, Brady Taff.

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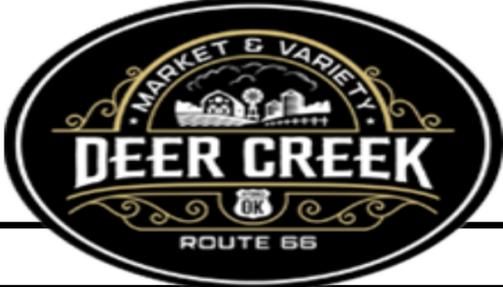
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Oklahoma History: How the Eastern Redbud Became Our State Tree



Maimee Lee Browne
OKC Civic Leader (1881-1963)



From the Arbor Day Foundation

Browne's campaign promoting the Eastern Redbud as the state tree earned her the nickname "Friend of the Redbud" and landed her in the OK Hall of Fame in 1939.

The Eastern Redbud tree, which has been Oklahoma's State Tree since 1937.

Chase Wright
Staff Writer

Every spring, as Oklahoma shakes off the last chill of winter, the landscape erupts in a brilliant wash of pink. Along country roads and in city parks alike, Eastern redbud trees burst into bloom. Their dark limbs suddenly become draped with thousands of tiny magenta blossoms. It's a spectacle that generations of Oklahomans have cherished as the first sign of spring's arrival. But the redbud is more than just a pretty harbinger of warmer days – it also holds a proud place as Oklahoma's official state tree, a title it has borne for nearly nine decades.

The redbud's journey to official status began with one woman's vision in the 1930s. Maimee Lee Browne, an Oklahoma City civic leader, fell in love with this tree's beauty and spearheaded a campaign to see it formally recognized.

Browne initially aimed to crown the redbud as Oklahoma's state flower – until discovering that honor already belonged to mistletoe, a territorial-era emblem adopted in 1893. Undeterred, Browne shifted gears and focused on making it the state tree instead. She organized tree-planting drives and extolled the redbud's virtues to garden clubs and schools. Her grassroots efforts gradually won over public and political support.

By March 1937, after years of advocacy, a resolution to name the Eastern redbud as Oklahoma's state tree had passed the legislature and arrived on Governor E.W. Marland's desk for signing. Then, just as victory was at hand, an unexpected controversy nearly derailed Browne's plan.

As Governor Marland prepared to sign the redbud bill, a telegram from Mrs. Roberta Campbell Lawson of Tulsa arrived and threw the outcome into doubt. Lawson, a prominent clubwoman, warned that the redbud was actually the infamous "Judas tree" on which Judas Iscariot had hanged himself, and she argued that such a tree was too cursed to represent Oklahoma.

Fortunately, her sensational objection was swiftly debunked. John Y. Iskian, a resident of Oklahoma City who hailed from Jerusalem, stepped forward to explain that Oklahoma's Eastern redbud was an entirely different species from the Old World Judas tree. With that clarification, the scare died down, and Governor Marland signed the resolution on March 30, 1937, officially crowning the redbud as the state tree.

The legislature's proclamation even noted how the redbud's bright blossoms had welcomed "sturdy and hardy pioneers" settling the territory. That 1937 resolution gave Oklahoma its state tree, a status later cemented in 1971 when Governor David Hall signed it into law as a permanent statute.

In the decades since, the Eastern Redbud has only entrenched itself further in the landscape and culture of Oklahoma. Its natural range spreads across the state's eastern half, where redbuds often flourish in the understory of woodlands and along creek banks. Gardeners across Oklahoma prize the redbud as an ornamental, planting it in yards and parks for its vibrant spring display and the dappled summer shade of its heart-shaped leaves.

Wildlife benefits from it as well. Honeybees flock to the redbud's nectar-rich blooms, and birds such as bobwhite quail feast on its seed pods.

People have long found practical uses for the redbud beyond its beauty. Native American tribes and early settlers brewed the redbud's bark into teas to treat coughs and fevers, and even burned its wood for warmth in winter. Because the redbud is one of the first trees to bloom each year, families often brought its flowering branches indoors to "drive winter out," and children were fond of eating the blossoms as a sweet springtime snack. These humble traditions underscore how deeply the redbud was woven into everyday life on the frontier.

Today, the redbud continues to hold a special place in Oklahoma. Each spring, communities like Shawnee host Redbud Festivals where neighbors gather under the pink canopy of blossoms to celebrate the season. Nature lovers can also witness spectacular displays of wild redbuds. For example, the hillsides of the Chickasaw National Recreation Area in Sulphur turn vibrant fuchsia with redbud blooms each April.

In the end, the Eastern redbud stands as more than just a tree. It is a living emblem of Oklahoma's history and natural spirit. Each spring's explosion of pink blossoms is a reminder of pioneer days and of visionaries like Maimee Browne who helped make this tree a lasting symbol of the Sooner State.

As long as redbuds continue to bloom across Oklahoma, the state's story will keep blooming alongside them.

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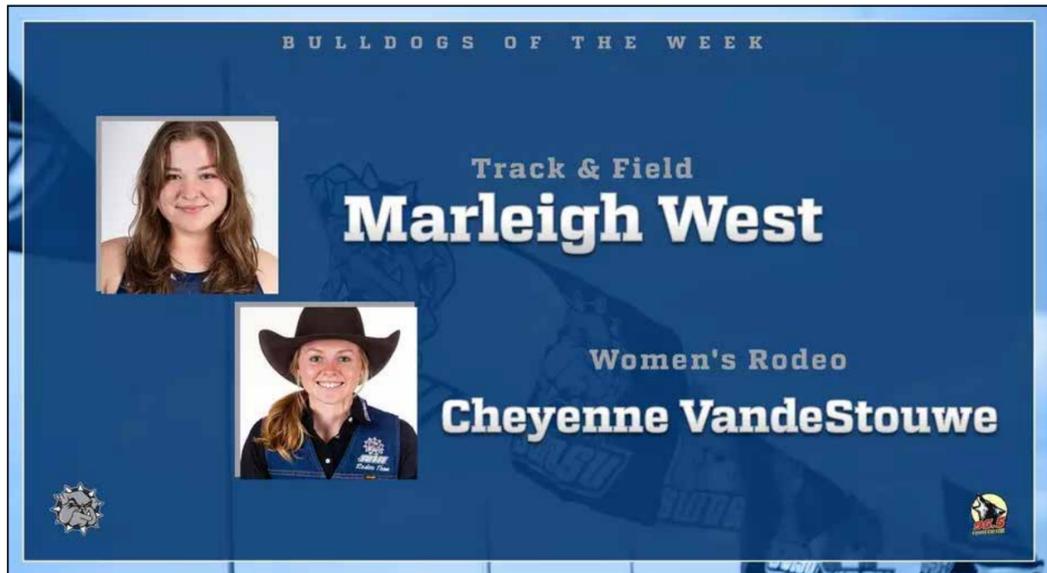
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SWOSU Athletes West & VandeStouwe Tabled Bulldogs of the Week



Jon Chidester
SWOSU Media Relations

Marleigh West and Cheyenne VandeStouwe have been named the latest Bulldogs of the Week. The recognition is brought to you by Wright Media – the home for SWOSU athletic livestream events and radio broadcasts.

West (Edmond, Okla.) tied for SWOSU's best individual finish at the Friends University Spring Invitational last week when she finished third in shot put. The senior heaved a personal best 12.86m throw, beating her old 12.6 mark from the 2024 season.

VandeStouwe (Inwood, Iowa) had a clean sweep at the Garden City rodeo over the weekend after winning Goat Tying, Breakaway Roping, and the Women's All-Around. Her 1.9 second run in the short round of the breakaway also let her claim the round win. It's VandeStouwe's third all-around title of the 2024-25 college circuit. The SWOSU women's team has now had five all-around winners in eight rodeos this season.

Weatherford High School's 2025 Promenade is fast approaching. Below is some handy information for both students and spectators who wish to attend in-person, complete with a marked map. Student introduction will also be available via livestream on Weatherford Eagles TV at wright.media/one.

STUDENT ENTRANCE ROUTE

Travel on Davis Ave. until you reach the Pioneer Event Center, then turn south onto 7th Street. Keep your eyes peeled for Huber Ave., about two blocks past the First United Methodist Church. When you see Huber Ave., turn right (west). After passing Thacker Park, you'll need to turn right (north) down an alley road entrance. Someone will be ready to guide you from there.

PROMENADE LINE INSTRUCTIONS

Students may begin lining up after 7:00 p.m., but no earlier. Students will begin exiting their cars to be introduced starting at 7:45 p.m.

SPECTATOR PARKING

Do not park in the CrossPointe Church parking lot, which will be reserved for student valet parking. Please park in the field west of the church by entering from East Bergen Dr. off of Highway 54.

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SWOSU Football Announces Pair of Staffing Changes for 2025 Season



Jon Chidester
SWOSU Media Relations

SWOSU Football head coach Andrew Rice has announced two changes to his full-time staff for the 2025 season. Staffing changes include the addition of Adam Carr, and the elevation of Marquise Cunningham from graduate assistant to full-time. Carr will coach quarterbacks, while Cunningham will be over the defensive line.

"Both of these coaches make this program better and will represent Bulldog Nation well," said Rice.

"We were fired up to get Coach Carr onboard and to be able to retain Coach Cunningham."

Carr and Cunningham have been serving in their new roles since the start of the spring semester.

Aside from Carr and Cunningham, former defensive lineman Johnny Scales will remain a Bulldog as a graduate assistant. Scales played 30 games at SWOSU over his three-year career and accumulated nearly 70 tackles with five tackles for loss, 2.5 sacks, and two fumble recoveries.

Adam Carr – Quarterbacks Coach

Carr comes to Weatherford from Division I Marshall University where he spent a season as the Assistant Quarterbacks Coach. Prior to that, Carr made Division I collegiate stops at Northwestern State (2023) and Texas State (2022) where he helped coach tight ends.

He began his coaching career in 2021 at Austin High School, working with quarterbacks.

Originally from St. Louis, Missouri, Carr graduated with a bachelor's degree in finance from Texas State back in 2022 during his time as a student assistant.

Marquise Cunningham – Defensive Line Coach

Cunningham has now spent more than five years in total at SWOSU, first as a player from 2020-22 before he transitioned to a coach after his playing career ended. He came to Weatherford from Los Medanos Junior College where he was a First Team All-Conference selection on defense.

Originally from Tracy, California, Cunningham holds two degrees from SWOSU -- a bachelor's in exercise science and a master's in sports management.

The Annual SWOSU Rodeo Returns Thursday, April 10th

Break out the boots and dust off your best belt buckle because the 52nd annual SWOSU Rodeo is coming to town. This Thursday, Friday & Saturday, beginning nightly at 7pm, the best collegiate rodeo athletes in the Central Plains Region will be putting on a show in the Don Mitchel Arena at the B.O.P. Ram Rodeo Grounds.

The 52nd annual SWOSU Rodeo will feature 9 events; Team Roping, Saddle Bronc Riding, Steer Wrestling, Breakaway Roping, Goat Tying, Barrel Racing, Bareback Riding and Bull Riding. And with nearly 500 athletes vying for a ticket to the biggest Collegiate Rodeo event of the year, the College Finals Rodeo in Casper, Wyoming, the SWOSU Rodeo is guaranteed to be the hottest ticket in Western Oklahoma this weekend.

With the SWOSU men sitting at 5th and the SWOSU women sitting atop the Central Plains Region of the National Intercollegiate Rodeo

Association, at the time of writing this article, the SWOSU Rodeo team is poised to send several athletes to the CFR later this summer.

Among the SWOSU athletes who are ranked in the Central Plains Region and looking to shine at this weekend's rodeo are; Cheyenne Summer Vande Stouwe, who is currently ranked 1st in the Women's All-around, Breakaway Roping and Goat Tying, Heston Luke Harrison, who is currently ranked 3rd in the Men's All-around and Saddle Bronc Riding, and Dustin Clay Sanchez who is currently ranked 1st in Bull Riding.

You can purchase tickets in advance for every performance of the SWOSU by visting <https://swosu.hometownticketing.com/embed/all>, but if you can't make it in person Wright Media will be broadcasting every nightly performance on Bulldog TV. You can watch the 52nd Annual SWOSU rodeo by visting Wright.Media/six/

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