

WEST OK WEEKLY



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Golf Tournament, Hall of Fame Induction, and Athletic Auction Set to Raise Funds for WPS



The Weatherford Athletic Department is gearing up for a special day of celebration, competition, and community support on Friday, May 23, 2025. The district will host its 18th Annual All-Sports Golf Classic, the 16th Annual Hall of Fame Induction, and—for the first time ever—an Athletic Auction to benefit student-athletes across all programs in Weatherford Public Schools.

The action begins bright and early with the All-Sports Golf Classic. Teams of four can sign up to participate in the popular 4-man scramble format, with check-in opening at 7:30 a.m. and closing at 8:15 a.m.

A shotgun start will follow at 8:30 a.m., with Nickels Point providing breakfast and Magill Insurance Agency sponsoring lunch for the players. The tournament field is limited to 40 teams, so early registration is encouraged.

Later in the day, attention turns to honoring the legacy of Weatherford athletics during the Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony.

The evening begins with a social hour at 4:00 p.m., followed by the induction program at 5:00 p.m. This year's class includes Eddie Berrong, Ruth Maynard Boyd, Justin Conkling, Quade Cummins, Charlie Lopez, Preston Roof, Nick Pugh, and the 2003 State Champion Baseball Team.

New to this year's schedule is the Athletic Auction, which kicks off with dinner at 7:00 p.m. and the auction event itself beginning at 8:00 p.m. Proceeds from the auction will directly support Weatherford athletic programs.

Athletic Director Kyle Null and Assistant Athletic Director Cody Cantrell extended their thanks to the community for its continued support and encouraged everyone to participate in this day of giving back and celebrating excellence. "We sincerely hope that you will make a special effort to help us raise money for all of our athletic programs here at Weatherford Public Schools," they jointly expressed in an event flier.

For more information or to register a golf team, contact the Weatherford Athletic Department.



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Mandy Hoock

Mandy Friesen Hoock was born on July 18th, 1923 to John and Agnes (Ediger) Friesen. She passed away April 18th, 2025, in Corn, Oklahoma, at the age of 101 years and 9 months. Mandy was the tenth child of 11 siblings.



She attended Corn Valley school. The family then moved to Corn, and she attended Corn Public Schools through the 8th grade.

As a teenager, she accepted the Lord as her personal savior. In later years she was baptized and joined the Calvary Baptist Church which she was a Charter member. Mandy was a faithful member serving in the nursery, Wednesday night Bible classes, and chairman of the kitchen and White Cross committee. She was also a member of the Ladies Legion Axillary.

Mandy met and started dating her future husband, Albert Hoock, in 1940. Ab joined the Navy in 1943, moving to California and Mandy followed him.

She lived with her sister Bertha and husband Ted Schmidt. She worked for a packing plant during this time.

Ab was given 30 days leave and headed home from Guadalcanal in 1944. Mandy followed him home. It was then that they were married on December 12th, 1944, in the Corn Mennonite Church.

Ab was then given orders to return to New York from the Navy and again Mandy followed him. After two weeks he was shipped out of Boston for deployment to Guadalcanal. Before reaching his destination, peace was declared. Ab was discharged from the Navy in 1945 and the couple moved to Corn, Oklahoma.

When moving to Corn they soon moved to a home southeast of Corn. It was then that their union was blessed with two children, Sally Ann and Tommy Ray.

In 1973, they built a new home in Corn. Mandy was a homemaker until 1960. She then earned her beautician license and opened Mandy's Beauty Shop in Corn. Mandy retired in 1983.

Retirement for the couple included golfing and vacations with her sister Mart and husband Wes Kroker. Mandy and friend Sadie Kroeker were tournament queens for several years.

In May of 2015 Mandy moved to the Assistant Living apartment in the Corn Heritage Village. Mandy was blessed with good health until 2024 and at that time moved into the Corn Heritage Nursing Home.

Mandy was preceded in death by her husband Albert Hook, her son-in-law Michael Knisley, her parents John and Agnes (Ediger) Friesen, and beloved granddaughter, Tracie McGuire. She also survived her eight sisters Zelma, Freida, Elizabeth, Emma, Bertha, Ruby, Helen, Martha, and her two brothers Dan and Herman.

Mandy is survived by one daughter, Sally Knisley of Douglas, WY; one son, Tommy Hoock and his wife Marsha of Woodward, OK; and one sister-in-law, Bert Dalke.

Mandy's memories will also be cherished by her three grandchildren: Valerie Morris and her husband Ware of Douglas, WY; Heath Hoock and his wife Amanda of Woodward, OK; and Morgan Newby and her husband Gerald of Woodward, OK; 10 great-grandchildren: Wes Morris, Melinda Caballero and her husband Eleazar, Joshua McGuire and his wife Kristin, Jake McGuire, Hayden Hoock, Peyton Newby, Emma, Paul, Luke, and John Miller; five great-great grandchildren, Raylie, Mylah, and Jax McGuire; and Luzy and Logan Caballero;

She is also survived by a host of friends and relatives, along with her good friend, Norma Jean Vogt, and faithful visitors Phyllis Fadenrecht and Gracie Sawatzky.

Brandon Shatswell

Brandon Joe Jerome Shatswell 35, of Burns Flat, OK was born on May 31st, 1989 in Lawton, OK. He is the son of Becky Shatswell and was raised by Clifford (Bud) and Diane Rogers. He went to walk the heavenly streets of gold with his Lord and Savior on Monday, April 7th, 2025, at his residence in Foss, OK.



Brandon had a heart of gold and would do anything for anybody. He loved tinkering with old cars and taking care of his dogs.

You would usually see him eating sweets of any kind but his favorites were Swiss rolls, honeybuns and fudgesicles.

He is now reunited with his dad, Bud in Heaven. Brandon will be missed and greatly remembered by all who knew and loved him.

Cherishing his memory is his wife, Terri Shatswell of Foss, OK; one son, Robert Shatswell; one daughter, Bailey Davis; his mother, Diane Rogers of Elk City, OK; his birth mother, Becky Shatswell; two brothers, Jason Rogers and wife, Stephanie of Elk City, OK, Jeremy Rogers and wife, Lisa of Canute, OK;

Brandon is also survived by five nieces and nephews: Kylie Rogers, Ryah Rogers, Cason Rogers, Madison Rogers, Macie Rogers; one great nephew, Maverick Musick; and one brother-in-law, Cody Shoptaw, as well as numerous other relatives and friends.

Brandon is preceded in death by his father, Clifford (Bud) Rogers; two brothers, Billy Shatswell, Cody Shatswell; mother-in-law, Marcie Shoptaw; grandparents, Donna Kay and Buddy Wayne Shatswell.

Jimmy Hawkins

James Ray "Jimmy" Hawkins Jr., 83, of Burns Flat, OK was born on September 21st, 1941 in Wichita Falls, Texas. He is the son of James Ray and Camilla Estelle (Wood) Hawkins. He went to walk the heavenly streets of gold with his Lord and Savior on Saturday, April 12th, 2025, at his residence in Burns Flat, OK.



Jimmy proudly served his country in the United States Army from March 6, 1959 to April 5th, 1962, and was honorably discharged, receiving a Good Conduct Medal.

Jimmy married his sweetheart and best friend, Cheree Cox on July 14th, 1960 in Corpus Christi, Texas. Together they raised their family and spent 64 wonderful years of marriage together.

Jimmy enjoyed pier fishing in the gulf, playing golf, and welding. He was a member of the Northside Baptist Church, Victoria, Texas, and had a deep personal relationship with Christ.

He loved his grandchildren and great grandchildren and enjoyed teaching them about his career and religion. He treasured spending time with his family and friends and had many great adventures to say the least.

Jimmy built an Off Shore Platform. A Pipeline (Hawkins Lateral) was named in his honor. He retired from the oilfield three times because he truly loved his job. Jimmy will be missed and greatly remembered by all who knew and loved him.

Jimmy was preceded in death by his parents, James Ray and Camilla Estelle Hawkins; and two brothers, Davis Lee Hawkins, Don Phillip Hawkins.

Jimmy is survived by his wife of Burns Flat, OK; one daughter, Shanna Ray Dorman and husband, Tony, of Burns Flat, OK; two sons, Timothy Ray Hawkins and wife, Amanda of Victoria, Texas, Ty Ray Hawkins, Sr. and wife, Tracy of Burns Flat, OK; and one sister, Angel Blackley and husband, Bill of Bastrop, Texas; eight grandchildren: Ty Ray Hawkins Jr. and wife, Jessica of Burns Flat, OK; Mike Weir and wife, Chloe of Sacramento, CA; Tom Weir and wife, Haley of Burns Flat, OK, Samantha Huereca and husband, Beau of Elk City, OK, Ashley Reeves and husband, John of Dill City, OK, Tonia Knight and husband, Trenton of Slaughterville, OK, Tiffani Burns and husband, Hunter of Purcell, OK, and Tony Dorman Jr. and wife, Victoria of Yukon, OK.

Justin Lesley

Justin Lynn Lesley, 47, of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma was born on July 18th, 1977, in Shamrock, TX. He is the son of Janice (LeGrand) Lesley. His father was Vestal Howard Lesley.



Justin went to be with his Lord and Savior on April 11th, 2025, at OU Medical Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, surrounded by his loving family.

He enjoyed wood carving, performing as a comedian, and watching movies. He was a good friend, always listening when you needed an ear and showing kindness to all.

Cherishing his memory is his daughter, Abby Colleen Johnson of Weatherford, Oklahoma; one sister, Elizabeth Renee Sumpter, Sweetwater, Oklahoma.

Justin is preceded in death by his mother, Janice Lesley; aunt and uncle, Virginia Ann and Tommy George LeGrand; grandparents, Juanita and TG LeGrand.

Adam Ferguson

Adam Joe Ferguson 26, of Canute, OK, was born on September 9, 1998 in Moore, OK. He is the son of Victor Don and Dianna Lynn (Kennan) Ferguson. Adam went to be with his Lord and Savior on Sunday, April 20th, 2025, in Pecos, TX.



Adam attended and graduated from Moore High School with the class of 2017. He married his best friend and sweetheart, Harmonie De'nee Sullivan on March 23rd, 2023, in Blanchard, OK.

Adam had a heart of gold and would do anything for anybody. He enjoyed gaming, fishing, buying and collecting guns.

Adam gave the best hugs and loved spending time going on vacations with his wife, family and friends, he will be missed and greatly remembered by all who knew and loved him.

Cherishing his memory is his loving wife, Harmonie De'nee Ferguson of Canute, OK; father, Victor Don Ferguson of Shawnee, OK; mother, Dianna Lynn Kennan of Moore, OK; one brother K.C. Condit and his wife, Yolita of Carrollton, Texas; one sister, Tannay Condit of Moore, OK; maternal grandparents, Randy David Silger of Valley Brook, Oklahoma and Vicky Lynn Riddle of Valley Brook, Oklahoma; three nieces; and numerous other relatives and friends.

Adam is preceded in death by his paternal grandparents, Joe Max and Neva June Ferguson.

Deborah Ankney

Deborah Gail Ankney, 74 years and 10 months of Elk City, was born on June 11, 1950, in Hobart, OK, to Edgar Lee and Mary Gayle (Shockley) Ankney.



She passed away on Tuesday, April 22nd, 2025, at Great Plains Regional Medical Center in Elk City, surrounded by her loving family.

Deborah graduated from Elk City High School with the class of 1968. She attended OU for nursing school where she received her master's degree in critical care. Deborah worked for UT Southwestern in Texas before moving to Hawaii with her roommate, Patsy. She was employed at Queen Hospital in Hawaii for approximately thirty years in the Intensive Care Unit.

Deborah enjoyed the company of Patsy's niece, Jenni Rasco, who lived with them for a year in Hawaii. Deborah loved traveling to the other islands and enjoyed snorkeling; Kailua Beach was one of her favorite places to visit. She will be remembered by her peers for her strong clinical knowledge and mentorship of all fellow nurses.

Deborah loved spending time with her family and friends and her beloved corgies. She will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved her.

Cherishing her memory is one sister, Cathy Schneberger and husband, Martin of Elk City, OK; one brother, Jon Ankney and wife Terry of Burns Flat, OK; one aunt, Janny Simpson of Sand Springs, OK; six nephews and nieces; twelve great nephews and nieces; numerous cousins; and many other family members and friends.

Deborah is preceded in death by her parents, Edgar Lee and Mary Gayle Ankney; her grandparents; one niece, Jessica Ankney; and her dear friend, Patsy.



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Fariss Named 2025 Cecil Perkins Recipient



VALERIE FARISS
2025 CECIL PERKINS SERVICE AWARD WINNER

Valerie Fariss (Cordell, OK) was recently awarded the Cecil Perkins Service Award for 2025 by the SWOSU athletic department's annual All-Sports Awards Ceremony at the Pioneer Event Center.

"Cecil was too good to me as a player at Southwestern and was also so kind to my family throughout the years," said Fariss. "But it wasn't just me, he was good to everyone he came in contact with. He was the epitome of service, always going above and beyond to make sure people were cared for. I am honored and appreciative to be selected as a recipient of the service award named after him."

Fariss, a former national champion for the Lady Bulldog basketball team, is also a SWOSU Athletic Hall of Fame member, inducted in the Class of 2008, as well as a longtime member of the SWOSU Athletic Association.

Fariss served as President of the SWOSU Athletic Association from 2013-18. She has also spent well over a decade on the association's Board of Directors and is currently serving her second term as Secretary.

Aside from formal duties and titles linked to the athletic department, Fariss is also widely known to this day for sponsoring meals for SWOSU athletic teams, her help with SWOSU Rodeo, and the creation of a youth golf camp in Cordell that has many ties to the SWOSU golf program.

After Fariss' Hall of Fame playing career ended at Southwestern in 1994, she became a teacher and coach in Carnegie, Oklahoma for a year before moving to Clinton in '95 for similar opportunities. Fariss spent nine years in Clinton and says her former players she coached who went on to play at SWOSU were a large reason why she remained so plugged into the SWOSU athletic scene.

Opportunities to support SWOSU athletes then began presenting themselves. Fariss first helped feed the football team hot dogs when they didn't have cafeteria access over the summer, which snowballed into basketball teams needing meals over Christmas Break, then postseason meals for qualifying teams, and so on. She did the same for the SWOSU rodeo team, always finding a way to cook and supply food for the team.

Fariss might be most known for her chicken spaghetti, a meal she's commonly supplied through the years to a very welcoming SWOSU women's basketball team.

"Being from a small town, I grew up where everybody supported each other and that's just how it was. The businesses supported the school and vice versa. We always chipped in and helped no matter if it was athletics or something else. If you wanted to get something done, everybody just had to jump in and make it happen as a group and community."

In 2015, now living in Cordell, Fariss became involved with helping start up the sport of golf at the school. She eventually created a summer youth golf clinic at Cordell and reached out to SWOSU Golf Head Coach Brad Fleetwood to pair up with the college teams for help. Through the years, Fariss has had numerous SWOSU golfers provide instruction and presence at the camp and has even had two former Cordell natives go on to play golf under Fleetwood on scholarship. Fariss continues to serve on the SWOSU Athletic Board and help where she can. She can still be caught serving, sponsoring, or helping organize a meal that will feed SWOSU athletes. Cordell's summer youth golf camp also continues to be held each summer.

"I had such a great experience at Southwestern as a student-athlete. The wonderful people that were there, and the little things they did to support us, made it special. I always felt like I needed to make sure I did those same little things once I was able to so that the kids after me felt the same level of support that I did."

This is the 13th year that the Cecil Perkins Service Award has been presented. The award is named for Perkins, the former SWOSU Athletic Director who passed away in September 2013. Perkins helped pioneer the direction of the Bulldogs' athletic programs for more than a quarter century, elevating the SWOSU Athletic Department to the NCAA Division II level. His philosophy of putting the student-athlete first in any decision has led to hundreds of individual success stories that continue to positively impact the new generation of students, coaches, and teams at SWOSU and beyond.



The Dairyland Donkey Ball team (pictured with Weatherford Mayor Mike Smith) recently traveled from Chippewa, WI, to help fundraise for Weatherford's Chamber of Commerce.

HIGHER GROUND

The Goodness of God in Man



Jim Morrison

We live in a day when men call evil good and good evil. Often it is difficult to determine what is really good. Sometimes false motives corrupt our good deeds. But this does not take away from the reality of real goodness that stems from God's goodness to us as evidenced by the Cross. Jesus went about doing good. The Apostle Paul speaks of God's desire for us in Ephesians 2:10. "For we are God's workmanship (his masterpiece), created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

In his letter to Titus, he reveals God's purpose for us. "...who (Christ) gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good."

Later, in that same letter he says, "Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives." (Titus 3:14) That verse implies some intentionality. There is a learning process involved.

Man is inherently selfish. It is the goodness of God imputed to us by His Spirit that allows us to see and act. Goodness is an act of love. Romans 5:5 says that "...God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."

At the risk of seemingly parading my goodness before man, let me share an illustration of the joy and satisfaction that can come from simply denying self and doing that which is good. Several years ago, I was visiting in a low-income area, seeking children to invite to Vacation Bible School. I found an apartment of five children; two boys and three girls. They all seemed interested in attending VBS.

However, the youngest one was only 5 and had not completed Kindergarten, which was one of the requirements to be eligible to attend. She looked up to me with big brown eyes and said, "Can I go?" I broke the rules. I couldn't say no. A small later reprimand was worth it.

As time went on, all of them started attending Sunday School. Their apartment opened to a patch of high weeds. Paper and trash had blown into the area making it an ugly mess. I thought this is a chance to spend some time with the two older boys. I thought, "I'll get a sack and ask them to help me clean up the area." I knocked on the door only to find that the boys were not home. But, the two smallest girls, including the 5-year-old offered to help. So out we go! In a few minutes I looked down to find a twenty-dollar bill nestled among the leaves. I picked it up and asked one of the girls to take it to her mom. Then mom comes out to help!

We finished the job in a few minutes and I headed back to dump the trash and get on my way home. But I heard the patter of running feet behind me.

I stopped and looking back I saw the two little girls running toward me. I stopped, waiting for them. Then my reward came. The smallest one wrapped her arms around my knees and the older one hugged my waist.

That picture is etched in my memory though it happened almost 20 years ago. Just seeing people as God sees them and being open and available is to demonstrate the love of the Father and reflects his love. Look for an opportunity to do good this week.

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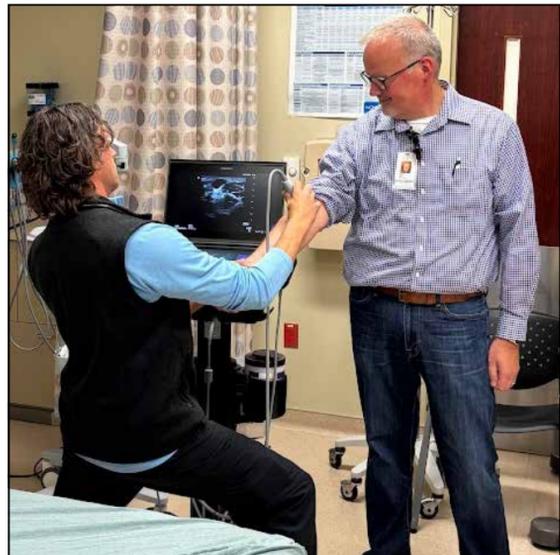
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LOCAL AND AREA NEWS



Mike Smith
News Director

Weatherford Regional Hospital Invests in New Ultrasound Machine



Molly Carson / WW

The Weatherford Regional Hospital (WRH) recently purchased a Sonosite PX Portable Ultrasound machine. This MRI was the result of last October's Stellar Arts Festival. Physician Assistant Cam Hogan (pictured, right, demonstrating the machine on WRH CEO Darin Farrell's arm) outlined how the equipment is utilized in the emergency room. While its most well-known usage is for inspecting the wombs of expecting mothers, an MRI also helps in assessing trauma patients, abdominal aneurysms, hypertension, and much more. WRH CEO Darin Farrell says the equipment improves quality of care and allows for quick diagnoses.



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JECH / TERM LIMITS - With term limits shaping the future of Oklahoma's legislature, Senator Darcy Jech weighed in on the topic during an interview with Wright Wradio. "I could argue [about] term limits both ways," Jech expressed. "I've been up here for 11 years now, so obviously I know a lot more about the process now than I did then. But I learn things every day when those people do turn limit and walk away, there's a lot of ideas that they either carried or heard or passed, or maybe worked through and debated." Jech noted that the 12-year cap, whether in the house, senate, or both, brings both benefits and challenges to the capitol.

CLINTON / OBN ARRESTS - The Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics recently teamed up with Clinton Police, the Custer County Sheriff's Department, and Oklahoma Highway Patrol to seize drugs and a stolen firearm. Mark Woodward, the spokesperson for the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics, stated the investigation began following "a concerning number of recent overdoses to try to identify who the people are bringing drugs [specifically fentanyl] into Clinton." Woodward says authorities made about eight arrests over the two-day operation. He says citizens can anonymously report criminal drug activity by sending OBN a direct message on Facebook.



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SWOSU / NEW PROGRAMS - Beginning this Fall, Southwestern Oklahoma State University will be offering two new programs, says President Dr. Diana Lovell. These include degrees for "Surgical Tech" and "Long-Term Healthcare Administration." Additionally, construction will soon begin on the third floor of Parker Hall. Dr. Lovell says it is being converted to allow for additional room for the nursing program.

BECKHAM CO / POINTER - District Attorney Angela Marsee has filed a motion in Beckham County District Court to revoke the suspended portion of a prison term for a convicted murderer. Court records show 25-year-old Jarred Pointer is serving 35 years of a 45-year sentence for first degree murder. Pointer, who is being held at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in McAlester, is charged in Pittsburg County District Court with possession of a weapon by an inmate.



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WASHITA CO / FENTANYL TOXICITY - Two people charged in Washita County District Court with second degree murder have both pleaded not guilty to the charge. 64-year-old Mary Kathleen Green of Clinton and 37 year old Jerrid Page Johnson of Cordell allegedly failed to protect a 2 year old child who died as the result of acute fentanyl toxicity after ingesting fentanyl in December of 2023. The judge informed attorneys to have any motions in the case filed by June 5th, and those motions will be heard by the court on July 24th. A pretrial date for both Green and Johnson is set for August 7th.

WEATHERFORD / RT. 66 B-DAY BASH - The Weatherford Chamber of Commerce is gearing up for a few Route 66 events coming up later this year. Executive Director Kim Silman says up first is the "Route 66 Birthday Bash," which has been moved back to August 22nd to coincide with the downtown ribbon cutting ceremony. Silman says state officials are showing their excitement surrounding the spaceman display in downtown Weatherford.

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Alfa, 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 23 - Marilyn Baldwin, Shelby Blagg, Lena Cardenas, Tyler Ellis, Andrew Fraser, Adam Fraser, Devon Jordan, Daryl Mosburg, Tom Willis; **April 24** - Sandy Duncan, Nikki Frye, Ron Goodman, Mary Harris, Jason Kemper, Shelby Martinez, Greg Mouse, Carol Wahnee, Jill Ward; **April 25** - Casey Elston, Gary Eytcheson, Regena Gardner, Mercedes Hampton, Edward Lopez, Bailee Pond, Kacie Roof, Brooke Schneberger, Shaun Skinner, Baylor Watkins, Lonnie Whitson; **April 26** - Megan Britton, Peyton Carmin, Micah Dobrinski, Dennis Green, Alex Hicks, Matt Lamm, Denise Lay, Kenneth Maddox, Dakota Meinhardt, Benton Toczeko; **April 27** - Richard Ballew, Kaden Buckner, Arthula Carmen, Songhawk Fields-Toahty, Melissa Martin, Liz McBrayer, Avry Nailon, Hermon Small; **April 28** - Janice Ball, Jacob Bass, Alison Mainers, Jay Martin, Alvin McNeal, Gentry Ortiz, Matthew Sumner; **April 29** - Mack Barnes, Ben Brown, Derek Carroll, Mary Frye, Dana Janning, Trent Koch, Summer Lettkeman, Logan Little, Bailey Mae Matthews, Bruce McLemore, Michelle Nance, Suzzi Rossiter, Vernon Slagle, Cheryl Thomason, J.R. Ussery; **April 30** - Tanner Holt, Kenny Lehman, Ryan Lehman, Thomas Martin, Kassie Miller, Steve Owens, Mark Ray, Austin Richardson, Lauren Roles, Jack Schwartz.

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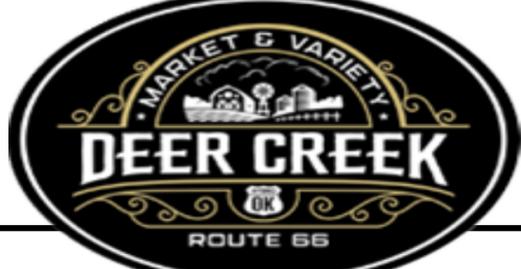
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Freya Sala & Katie Boline Secure Final Bulldogs of the Week of '24-25

BULLDOGS OF THE WEEK



Women's Golf
Freya Sala



Softball
Katie Boline

Jon Chidester
SWOSU Media Relations

Freya Sala and Katie Boline have been named the final Bulldogs of the Week of the 2024-25 school year. The recognition is brought to you by Wright Media – the home for SWOSU athletic livestream events and radio broadcasts.

Freya Sala (Mexico City, Mexico) became the second golfer in SWOSU women's golf history to win medalist honors at the GAC Championships after she took home the individual title last week at Hardscrabble Country Club in Fort Smith, Arkansas. She did so in dramatic fashion, edging a Henderson State competitor in a second playoff hole. She shot 71-73-73 in her three rounds to finish at seven-over par for the tournament.

Katie Boline (Wichita, Kan.) was a run producer last week for SWOSU softball, driving in a team high six runs for the Bulldogs in their final push to qualify for the postseason.

Boline finished the week 7-for-16 (.438) with a double, triple, and home run and had an .813 slugging percentage.

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Oklahoma History: Saurophaganax Maximus, the State's Official Fossil



Courtesy of the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History

Photos of Oklahoma's state fossil, *Allosaurus anax* (known as "Saurophaganax maximus" until early 2025).

Jon Chidester
SWOSU Media Relations

Saurophaganax maximus has long been known as an enormous Jurassic predator – so famous that it was named Oklahoma's official state fossil in 2000. Discovered in the early 1930s at a quarry in Cimarron County, Oklahoma, the dinosaur's bones were first informally dubbed "Saurophagus maximus" (meaning "greatest lizard eater") by paleontologist J. Willis Stovall. However, that name was later found to be preoccupied by a bird, so in 1995 the creature was formally renamed *Saurophaganax*, meaning "lord of lizard-eaters." For decades, *Saurophaganax* was depicted as a colossal relative of *Allosaurus* – roughly 12–14 meters (40–46 ft) in length – and it captured the public's imagination as a unique apex predator of the Late Jurassic.

Despite its renown, scientists have debated *Saurophaganax*'s true identity for years. Was it really a distinct genus, or simply a giant species of *Allosaurus*? The overall anatomy of the known *Saurophaganax* bones closely resembles *Allosaurus*, with only a few subtle differences reported (for example, variations in certain skull bones and unusual features in the vertebrae). These differences led some researchers to treat *Saurophaganax* as a separate genus, while others suspected it might just be *Allosaurus maximus* – essentially an especially large *Allosaurus*. Over time, most large-scale analyses included *Saurophaganax* as its own genus, but its classification remained controversial and uncertain. The fossil material was limited and fragmentary, and crucially, it all came from an old excavation that may not have kept the bones properly sorted by individual.

By the 2020s, *Saurophaganax*'s status was still unresolved – a "dubious" giant meat-eater lurking in the fossil record. This set the stage for a fresh investigation. Paleontologists decided to re-examine the original bones with modern techniques and a skeptical eye. The goal: determine once and for all whether *Saurophaganax* truly deserved its title, or whether it had been a case of mistaken identity.

In late 2024, a comprehensive re-analysis of the *Saurophaganax* fossils was published by Andy Danison (a PhD student at Oklahoma State University Center for Health Sciences) and colleagues. This study, appearing in the journal *Vertebrate Anatomy Morphology and Palaeontology*, turned the *Saurophaganax* story on its head.

After nearly two years of meticulous research, Danison's team concluded that the bones attributed to *Saurophaganax maximus* did not all belong to one animal at all – instead, they came from at least three different dinosaurs. To reach this conclusion, the researchers used a combination of traditional anatomical comparison and modern paleohistology (the study of fossil bone microstructure). They pored over each bone that had been assigned to *Saurophaganax* back in the 1930s and 1940s, comparing them to known fossils of other dinosaurs from the same quarry and the broader Morrison Formation. What they found was startling:

- **Sauropod Imposters:** Several bones – especially vertebrae – turned out not to be theropod (meat-eating dinosaur) bones at all. The most important example was that the very bone defining "*Saurophaganax*" wasn't from a carnivore! Other vertebrae from the collection also seemed to belong to sauropods – the anatomy of these backbones was much more consistent with large herbivores like *Apatosaurus* or *Camarasaurus*.

- **Allosaur Bones in the Mix:** Not all the material was herbivorous, however. A number of the skull and limb bones from the quarry clearly belonged to an allosaurid theropod. These included parts of the skull such as a postorbital bone (from behind the eye) that lacked the prominent horn or brow-ridge seen in the common species *Allosaurus fragilis*. There were also limb elements like a massive metatarsal (foot bone) and portions of the hindlimb.

The presence of these carnivore bones confirmed that a large predator was indeed found at the site – but the question became what to call it.

- **A Case of Chimeric Fossils:** The study ultimately showed that the original excavation had combined fossils from multiple species – a classic "chimera" in paleontology. Back in the 1930s, the workers at Stovall's quarry may have unknowingly collected bones from different dinosaurs that were jumbled together in the deposit. Danison's research confirms that at least two large sauropods (long-necked plant-eaters) and one giant allosaurid theropod were all present at the site, their remains intermingled. The "tortured history" of these bones, as Danison put it, led earlier scientists astray.

Once the team determined that the genuine carnivorous bones from the quarry did not belong to *Allosaurus fragilis* or any other described species, they concluded a new species name was needed. Rather than keep using "*Saurophaganax*" (which was now tainted by the chimera problem), they decided to officially sink *Saurophaganax* as a unique genus. In the 2024 paper, they propose that the predator bones be assigned to *Allosaurus anax*, a newly named species of *Allosaurus*. The name *Allosaurus anax* roughly translates to "different lizard lord" – combining *Allosaurus* ("different lizard") with *anax* ("ruler" or "lord"), in a nod to the original "lizard-eater lord" meaning of *Saurophaganax*.

Allosaurus anax is described as the largest *Allosaurus* species known. From the bones available, Danison and colleagues estimate this dinosaur reached about 12 meters (40 feet in length) and weighed on the order of 4–5 tons (around the mass of an African elephant). That would make it comparable in length to a *T. rex* (though not as heavy as the biggest *T. rex* specimens, which exceed 7 tons). Crucially, the microstructure of its bones shows it was fully grown at that gigantic size, confirming that it wasn't just an unusually young and large *Allosaurus fragilis*.

This giant had unique skeletal traits as well: for example, the lack of a horn or raised boss on the postorbital bone (above and behind the eye) is a distinguishing feature, since other *Allosaurus* species do have a noticeable protrusion there. Essentially, *A. anax* seems to be a robust, long-skulled *Allosaurus* that evolved to a larger body size late in the Jurassic.

With this reclassification, *Allosaurus anax* joins the ranks of known *Allosaurus* species (which include *A. fragilis* from North America and *A. jimmadseni* from Utah/Wyoming, among others). It effectively replaces "*Saurophaganax maximus*" in the scientific record. The name

Saurophaganax, under this new view, is considered a nomen dubium – a "dubious name" – because its type specimen (the misidentified vertebra) can't reliably be linked to any single species of dinosaur. In other words, since the type fossil is actually from a sauropod and not diagnostic of a unique predator, the genus *Saurophaganax* has no leg to stand on. The true predator once called *Saurophaganax* is now *Allosaurus anax*, and the extra sauropod bones await further study to see if they might even represent a new herbivore species of their own.

The revelation that *Saurophaganax* was a chimera and not a real single species has major implications in paleontology. For one, it corrects the scientific record: a famous dinosaur has essentially been demoted from the status of distinct genus. This kind of reclassification is not unheard of – there have been other cases of misidentified or composite fossils in the past – but it's quite significant given *Saurophaganax*'s prominence. Co-author Dr. Daniel Barta noted, fossils discovered decades ago can still reveal new secrets with fresh analysis. "I hope this finding brings further attention to museums and their collections as powerful engines of scientific discovery," Barta said.

Even many years after excavation, new technology and perspectives can overturn long-held assumptions.

For the community of dinosaur enthusiasts and researchers, the response has been mixed. On one hand, many were excited that a new giant *Allosaurus* species (*A. anax*) has been described – it adds to our understanding of Jurassic predators and suggests *Allosaurus* was even more diverse than previously known. On the other hand, there's a touch of sadness or nostalgia in seeing the name "*Saurophaganax*" fade into obscurity.

Saurophaganax had a bit of a cult following as the "big allosaur" and was even featured in museums, merchandise, and media. Some paleontology fans were disappointed to learn that their beloved "lord of the lizard-eaters" was essentially being absorbed into *Allosaurus*.

The consensus emerging in 2025 is that *Saurophaganax* as a standalone genus is no longer valid. The community is adapting to the change: already some museum displays and educational materials are being updated to reflect *Allosaurus anax* instead of *Saurophaganax*.

The skull of a mounted *Saurophaganax* (now reclassified) is on display at the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History. This specimen showcases the allosaurid features of the animal's skull – large jaws with serrated teeth and openings (fenestrae) in the bones – which always indicated its close relation to *Allosaurus*. With the new research, museums may relabel such displays to *Allosaurus anax*, though the imposing presence of the fossil mount remains unchanged. *Saurophaganax* or not, this Jurassic predator was an impressive creature.

A very public aspect of this reclassification is its impact on Oklahoma's state fossil. *Saurophaganax* has been the official state fossil for a quarter of a century, used as a point of state pride in education and tourism. Understandably, news that "the state fossil never actually existed as we thought" has caused a stir. Oklahoma's legislation named *Saurophaganax maximus* in 2000 based on the belief it was a one-of-a-kind super-predator from the state's soil. Now that scientists argue *Saurophaganax* is not a valid genus, what does that mean for the title of state fossil?

At the moment, there haven't been any formal moves by the state government to change the designation. Andy Danison himself has said he's unlikely to petition for a new state fossil, since the name *Saurophaganax* still refers to the same collection of bones even if the classification changes. It's a tricky situation: the bones are real and they were found in Oklahoma, but calling them "*Saurophaganax*" is scientifically outdated.

For now, Oklahoma's state fossil remains "*Saurophaganax maximus*" on the books. It's possible that, in time, the legislature might amend the listing to *Allosaurus anax* or choose to keep the *Saurophaganax* name for tradition's sake. Similar situations have occurred in other states when scientific names changed (for example, Colorado's state fossil name was changed when *Brontosaurus* was considered invalid, then that genus was later resurrected – a rollercoaster for lawmakers!). For *Saurophaganax* fans, the giant predator is still there in the record.

In the end, while the name *Saurophaganax* may be retired in scientific circles, its legacy lives on. The towering skeletal mounts and artistic depictions originally meant for "*Saurophaganax*" will now be celebrated under a new name. The creature itself – a giant, elephant-weight carnivore with slicing teeth and a powerful build – remains every bit as fascinating. Only now, we have a clearer picture of what it was, and what it wasn't. In a sense, *Saurophaganax* isn't gone; it has been rediscovered. Science has pulled back the curtain to reveal the truth behind the legend: a case of mistaken identity resolved, a new dinosaur added to the books, and a deeper appreciation gained for the prehistoric world that once was.

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Lady Bulldog Softball Clinch Tournament Spot



Jon Chidester
SWOSU Media Relations

SWOSU Softball won Saturday's rubber match against Arkansas Tech 4-2 and in doing so, clinched a spot in the upcoming 2025 GAC Softball Championship for the first time since 2019.

The Bulldogs finish the regular season 22-24 overall, representing the most wins since 2012 when the team posted a 32-20 mark. They were 10-4 in the month of April. SWOSU ended 14-19 in conference play dating back to February.

The Bulldogs will await their final seeding verdict, depending on the results of Arkansas-Monticello's series against Southern Nazarene. SWOSU will either be the No. 7 or 8 seed. If UAM loses any of their three games against SNU, the Bulldogs will finish as the seven seed. If UAM sweeps, the Dawgs will be the eight seed.

On Saturday, SWOSU jumped out to a 1-0 lead in their first at-bat, led 3-1 after scoring two more in the fourth, and finished off the day's scoring in the sixth with another solo run. Leading 4-2 in the seventh, the Bulldogs hung on to win it as Alexis Taylor stranded the bases loaded to end the game. Taylor pitched 3.2 innings in relief of Jaycee McKee who threw into the fourth inning before making her exit.

Chesnie Hewitt set the tone early with a lead off double to start the game.

Hewitt was small balled over to third before Jady Hook did what was needed for a sacrifice fly to plate the run. Tech answered in the bottom half.

A two-out double tied the game at 1-1 before the runner was thrown out trying to extend the extra-base hit even further to third.

SWOSU loaded the bases in the fourth and got two runs courtesy of an RBI single from Kaylee Barkley and another RBI from Emily Wedel.

The Golden Suns answered right back again in their half of the fourth with one more run. Three straight ATU singles loaded the bases and chased McKee from the game. Taylor entered and limited Tech's damage by allowing just one of those runs to cross.

Katie Boline doubled in a run in the sixth to push the lead out to 4-2. It allowed additional breathing room for when things eventually got dicey in the bottom of the seventh.

The SWOSU lineup finished with seven hits, compared to Tech's five. Those seven hits came from four players, three of who had two apiece. Hewitt (2-4), Hook (2-2), and Boline led the Dawgs on the day.

With SWOSU's season extended, more information regarding the postseason tournament including dates, times, and opponent will be forthcoming. Be sure to follow SWOSU Athletic social media pages and check www.swosuathletics.com for additional information.

SWOSU Baseball Season Ends to Northwestern



Jon Chidester
SWOSU Media Relations

SWOSU Baseball saw its 2025 season end with the conclusion of the final conference series against Northwestern Oklahoma State. The Dawgs fell by scores of 4-2, 7-3, and 8-4 to the Rangers.

SWOSU ends the 2025 campaign with a 24-23 overall record and 11-21 in conference play. The All-Conference awards will be announced next week, prior to play at the GAC Tournament.

Game One - NWOSU 7, SWOSU 3

A six-run seventh inning by Northwestern spoiled things in the first game of Saturday's action. SWOSU got a strong start on the mound from Ayden Page, who threw 5.1 innings of scoreless baseball. He exited in the sixth inning, getting help from Jackson Blue who kept the Rangers scoreless.

In the seventh inning, Northwestern racked up six hits and scored six runs to jump ahead 6-2. Both teams scored another run prior to the game ending. SWOSU's runs came from Eric Foufoulas, Campbell Sullivan, and Connor Jeffers.

Foufoulas singled to start the game's scoring in the third. Sullivan doubled in the final run in the ninth to finish 3-for-5 in the game. Jeffers helped score a run in the fourth inning.

Five of SWOSU's 11 hits in the game went for extra bases. The Rangers matched SWOSU with 11 hits, though only two went for extra bases.

Game Two - NWOSU 8, SWOSU 4

The Rangers jumped out to a 4-0 lead after the first inning and added single runs from the second through the fifth for their eight runs. SWOSU couldn't produce a crooked scoring number until the seventh, when it was too late.

Drew Fifer suffered the loss in 3.0 innings of work. Tyler Leachner, Greg Ross, and Tyler Fortin threw productive innings of relief to close the game out. Ross and Fortin did not allow a run.

Campbell Sullivan and Connor Jeffers both had two hits apiece. Northwestern got the edge in hits, 10-9, including a two-run home run in the first inning.



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