



postscript.

From Ballerinas to Football Players

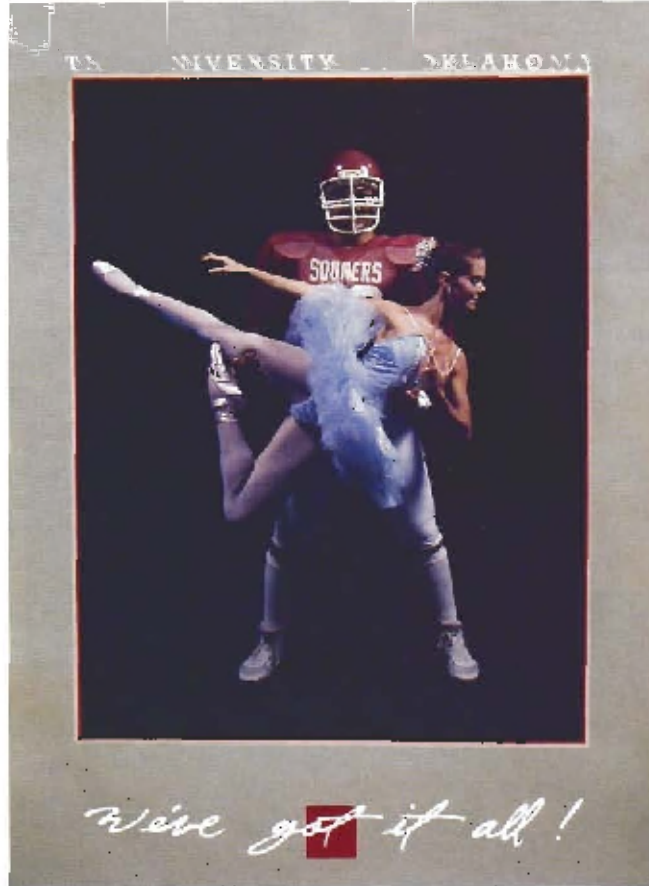
The ballerina seems so diminutive and elegant, so deceptively fragile being lifted by her powerfully built, athletic partner. In his Sooner football uniform, he is a solid, commanding, even forbidding presence. An odd couple indeed—but gazing out from the colorful student recruiting poster, they make their point: the University of Oklahoma has it all.

The original version of this classic poster was issued in 1985, a national championship year. The football player was two-time consensus All-American Tony Casillas, winner of the Lombardi Trophy, UPI national lineman-of-the-year, Big Eight defensive player of the year, who added two Super Bowl rings to his jewelry collection as a member of the Dallas Cowboys. The second overall draft choice in 1986, he played 13 seasons in the NFL. He is now president of T.C. Oil and Gas Company and lives in Flower Mound, Texas. In August 2005, he was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame.

The ballerina, Debra Dermeyer, though less well-known, had a compelling story of her own, coming to Norman from a staunch Cornhusker family because only at OU could she study both ballet and chemical engineering. She eventually switched to accounting, worked for Amoco in Tulsa, then earned a civil engineering degree from the University of Nebraska. After several years with Black & Veatch engineering, she is now Debra Dermeyer-Lamb, mother of two daughters, living in Lees Summit, Missouri.

Very few of those 1985 posters survive, framed in campus offices, jealously guarded by their owners. OU First Lady Molly Shi Boren spotted one and spearheaded an effort to create a new version. The 2005 edition has new models and a new background but with the same message, albeit with a syntax upgrade: “We’ve Got It All!” in 1985, but “We Have It All!” today.

Recruited for the poster remake were Melissa Gammell, a



All-American Tony Casillas lifts ballerina Debra Dermeyer in this classic OU student recruitment poster from 1985.

junior ballet performance major from Tulsa, and Davin Joseph, a Hallandale, Florida, senior majoring in sociology and opposing-team annihilation. At 6-foot-3, 306 pounds, Joseph was more accustomed to manhandling would-be tacklers than supporting a petite, 5-foot-2 ballerina, who might weigh 115 pounds soaking wet—but he was definitely the man for the job.

A leading candidate for post-season honors and a solid student on schedule to graduate, Joseph was a two-year starter at right guard, before switching to left tackle during spring 2005. Last season, while lining up beside current NFL linemen Jammal Brown and Vince Carter, who garnered the media attention, Joseph was acknowledged by coaches and teammates as the leader of the offensive line and its best player.

Gammell is held in similar esteem within the School of Dance, where director Mary Margaret Holt cannot say

enough about her talent, motivation and academic achievements. Gammell has had principal roles in many of the OU’s ballet productions, including the pas de deux in last fall’s *Don Quixote* and three of the ballets in the 2005 summer season. She was part of the Oklahoma Festival Ballet tour to Claremont-Ferrand, France, in June 2004.

The intention was to duplicate exactly the style chosen by 1985 photographer Gil Jain—the two figures against a black backdrop—but Joseph’s big, toothy smile and the pair’s instant rapport changed the focus. Off came the football helmet that earlier had masked Casillas’ expression, and instead of Rupel Jones Theatre’s darkened stage, photographer Shevaun Williams set up shop in the dazzling new Reynolds Center performance hall (see story on Page 4). After all, a bold claim like “We Have It All!” really should be made in the classiest setting available, one that combines the glories of the past with the promise of the future.

—CJB