



OUR OWN MISS AMERICA—Jennifer Berry, a 22-year-old senior education major and student in the OU School of Dance, wowed judges and audience alike with a ballet en pointe performance that propelled her to the 2006 Miss America crown. Berry, an articulate Tulsa native who won the Miss Oklahoma title in June 2005, is the fifth state representative to become Miss America. The pageant, held January 21 for the first time in Las Vegas, earned Berry \$30,000 in scholarships. She still plans to become an elementary schoolteacher when her year's reign ends after traveling 20,000 miles a month promoting the Miss America program and her own platform, the prevention of drunken driving and underage drinking.

SOONER MAGAZINE

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ON THE COVER • Canadian writer Brian Doyle came to OU to collect the second NSK Prize in Children's Literature, charming his way into the hearts of young, old and in between.

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LETTERS

A Case of Misdirection

I really enjoy *Sooner Magazine*, especially Summer 2005.

My initial journey to Norman in 1955 was much like that of Fredrik Holmberg in 1903. I was there for an intramural volleyball tournament on North Campus and to meet with the Chemistry Department about attending graduate school. I asked an OU student how to get to the campus and his directions sent me to the mental hospital. I looked for that guy for two years but never saw him again. My interview with Dr. J. C. Colbert of chemistry paid off with an MS in chemistry.

I also read of the possible demise of Parkview Apartments. After six weeks in the old plywood housing (called the breeding pens by students), we lived in Parkview on the railroad tracks.

Thanks again for a wonderful publication.

*Walter Bishop Jr., '59 ms chem
Claremore, Oklahoma*

Editor's Note: While less colorful than the students' appellation, the University's name for the prefabs was Sooner City.

Let's Hear It for the Original

Broadway abounds in revivals, so why not revive a winning poster such as the now-vintage image of the OU football player lifting the diminutive ballerina in a "new, improved" version? [Summer 2005] Well, good try, but as it often happens, the original remains the gold standard for the art form.

Proper attribution for the photography was given to longtime University photographer Gil Jain. But you neglected to credit the major creative force behind the tough athlete/dainty dancer concept: Bill Williams, OU director of publications. And one other tiny quibble in favor of the oldie: its punch line. "We've Got It All" just packs a bigger wallop than the more grammatically correct but mundane "We Have It All."

I suppose in another 20 years (2025!!) we can look for this year's classic to be updated again. Hmm, how about a women's basketball player lifting a male

flautist for a change? Or maybe—more radical yet—someone should come up with a brand *new* poster idea.

*Betty B. Brown, '76 mls
Norman, Oklahoma*

Editor's Note: Reader Brown was in a position to know as an OU Publications editor from 1975 to 1979. Also involved in the creation of the original poster were Sooner Magazine's own art director George Dotson and his now-wife, Teresa Rankin.

Riding with the Blue Moth

Your readers may recall from "Bill Hancock's Road to the Final Four" [*Sooner Magazine*, Winter 1998] that OU graduate Hancock was an accomplished bicyclist. At the time of the article, he had already ridden in an event called "Bike Across Kansas" and had negotiated the 500 miles between Kansas City and his hometown of Hobart—without SAG (support and guidance). A self-described "geek" in high school, Hancock had made himself into an athlete by running marathons (including Boston and New York) and biking long distances.

The training hardened him for his toughest task: dealing with the death of son Will in the Oklahoma State University [basketball program] plane crash in 2001. Devastated, Hancock put aside the cross-country bike ride he had been planning and, with wife Nicki, tried to get through one day at a time. Nicki taught school, and Bill worked for the NCAA. Eventually, Hancock decided to bike from the Pacific to the Atlantic as he had earlier planned. Nicki agreed, and the pair set out from Huntington Beach, California, with Nicki towing their camper and serving as Bill's faithful SAG. It would be an epic journey of 2,746 miles to Tybee Island, Georgia.

After the journey's completion, Hancock wrote a book called *Riding with the Blue Moth*. The "Blue Moth" of despair visited the author frequently along the way, but the two kept going and saw the world anew. As one personally acquainted with Hancock and having received almost daily e-mails

from him during his trip, I thought the book might be anticlimactic for me, but it wasn't. The work is a beautiful love song to Will and a legacy to Karen and Andie, Will's widow and daughter. I recommend it to anyone.

*Edgar L. Frost
'61 ba journ, '67 ma russian
Norman, Oklahoma*

Editor's Note: The former longtime administrative director of the NCAA's Final Four basketball tournament, Bill Hancock, '72 journ, became the first full-time administrator of college football's BCS in December 2005. He and Nicki live in Kansas City.

A Little Bit of Cross History

The Fall 2005 issue of *Sooner Magazine* arrived here today. This reminded me that another anniversary of the passing of President [George L.] Cross is upon us. I am sure that many others who very much admired the man have already, or will be writing to remember Dr. Cross as a man, or in some official capacity as he served the state of Oklahoma and the University of Oklahoma.

When the first stories began to be printed to describe the humanity and wit of the man, I started watching for someone to describe an event which I witnessed in the spring of 1965, but the person never came forward. This incident so vividly illustrates the way that Dr. Cross approached a fellow man who was in pain that the person to whom it happened must retain the memory of someone showing kindness as he suffered great agony.

I came down the steps from my office in the Carnegie Building as Dr. Cross came out of Evans Hall on his way to lunch. We walked north on the North Oval and struck up a conversation... We arrived at Boyd Street with a group waiting for the signal to change. When the walk light turned green, the group surged forward, except for one man who stepped off the curb and started west—directly into the path of an automobile. An arrow-shaped strip along the front fender

caught the man's right trouser leg and twisted him just enough for the piece of chrome to go through both of his legs about mid-thigh. The strip broke loose and left the young man impaled. Dr. Cross turned to me and said, "Call an ambulance!" then sat down and took the man's head in his lap and began trying to soothe him.

The ambulance arrived and took the man away without my getting to see the end of the incident, so I don't know if the man knew who had come to his assistance—perhaps not. I wonder if you can find some way to encourage someone—the victim, the driver, or one of the students who witnessed the event—to come forward to settle this for me. Why has there been no mention of it, as those who witnessed it were surely impressed by the President of the University sitting in the street holding the head of a wounded and bleeding man. I don't even remember seeing a mention of the incident in *The Norman Transcript*.

*Charles R. Galbraith, '68 ed.d
Huntsville, Texas*

Jeanne and David

I received my *Sooner Magazine* today and, as usual, set it aside to enjoy later. Finally, I opened it up. I was delighted to see the article on Jeanne Hoffman Smith. I have known Jeanne for more than 40 years. She is someone I admire, list as a mentor and enjoy as a friend. She is one of the more remarkable women whom I have ever met. I am in awe of all that she has given to OU and Oklahoma.

As I kept reading I came across the article on David Levy and his book on OU's history. In the mid-'60s I was a student of his. I certainly was not one of his outstanding students, but he inspired in me the desire to look beyond the small world and myself to see what was going on around me. He was an outstanding teacher. I ordered the first volume of his book tonight and look forward to the next volumes.

As a graduate of the University (class of '69, BA in English), I am more and more impressed with all that is happen-

ing at OU. The *Sooner Magazine* is one of them.

*Margaret C. Malloy, '69 ba english
Nichols Hills, Oklahoma*

Married to a Fish

Thank you is not enough to write, nor say—your article on my husband ["Still in the Swim of Things," *Sooner Magazine* Fall 2005] was the most "unbuyable" treasure of a gift to him, and, at this time of year, there is no other way to express it. Jay [Upchurch] did the interviews, got the photos, checked on ideas, worked so hard—and it was a great presentation.



Former OU swimming star Graham Johnston, here with wife Janis at the Straits of Gibraltar Swim in October, continues his winning ways at age 74.

We knew swimmers can't completely "evaporate" from OU's past history—but with no present swim team, we didn't dream there would be interest.

We've heard from so many OU friends from all over the USA, Canada and South America, who were "Boomer Sooners" when we were.

Since you printed the *Sooner*, on October 2, 2005, Graham swam from Europe to North Africa (Spain to Morocco), called the "Straits of Gibraltar"—solo—5 hours 9 minutes—10-plus miles—the oldest one (74) to ever do it since records started being kept in 1928! Next year he

hopes to do the "Sea of Galilee" at 75.

I married a fish, and I love him so.

*Janis Johnston, '55 bs ed
Houston, Texas*

Editor's Note: In the 1954 OU Swim Team photo accompanying the Graham Johnston article, the student manager should have been identified as Lanny Ross, '58 bus, of Clinton, a past president of the OU Alumni Association.

A Sooner Flying Legacy

Great magazine. You have done an outstanding job keeping alumni informed on the continued evolution of Sooner life. I found your article "Flying Sooners" [*Sooner Magazine*, Fall 2005] both interesting and informative. I received a BS degree in Aviation Education in 1982. The program was relatively small in comparison to today's. The emphasis was similar with many of the students interested in commercial aviation. However a group of us had a different calling into the air. We went on to the military.

USAF ROTC Detachment 675 utilized the OU aviation department at Max Westheimer airport for USAF flight screening. In 1981 Col. Kelm (professor Aerospace Studies Det 675, retired in 1982) flew with each of the pilot candidates to evaluate their ability to comprehend basic aviation skills. Many of the military pilot candidates received their private pilot rating as well as multi-engine, commercial, instrument and instructor ratings through the OU aviation program. OU has a long and proud tradition supporting the military. I hope this relationship is still in place.

I was also a member of the resurgent Alpha Eta Rho fraternity and flying team in 1979 through 1982. We had a good run, doing well in regional events and qualifying for the national competition yearly. My Sooner experience prepared me for the exciting career I have had as a fighter pilot and now a senior officer in the USAF.

*Terrence Fornof, Col. USAF, '82 bs ed
Las Vegas, Nevada*

Showtime for Children's Literature

The creators of works for young readers are experiencing their spotlight moment from the University of Oklahoma and a family with a history of rewarding the world's best writers.

BY LYNETTE LOBBAN

PHOTOS BY ROBERT TAYLOR

Kathy Neustadt Hankin of Denver, Colorado, was having trouble with her precocious daughter, Tess. Fresh from the fervor of the 2002 Olympic Winter Games, the four-year-old firmly and abruptly announced that she, too, would settle for nothing less than the gold while making her library selections. She told her mother and father that henceforth she only would read books “with medals on them.”

Lucky for Tess she comes from a family that takes such requests seriously. For the Neustadt clan of Ardmore, Oklahoma, the call of great literature is a siren's song that lures those who follow to the sweet music of poets, playwrights and novelists from around the world. Doris Westheimer Neustadt, matriarch of the pioneering oil family, began this literary legacy nearly half a century ago as a voracious reader and ardent member of the Ladies of the Leaf Book Club, and when OU's Bizzell Memorial Library was expanded in the 1980s, the

new west wing was named in her honor.

Doris also provided funding for the University of Oklahoma's *Books Abroad* International Prize, which evolved, with



the help of her son Walter Neustadt Jr. and his wife, Dolores, into the Neustadt International Prize for Literature. The \$50,000 prize, which is awarded by OU

and its international quarterly *World Literature Today*, the successor to *Books Abroad*, is widely considered to be one of the most prestigious literary prizes in the world, second only to the Nobel. Indeed, so similar are the two awards in spirit and merit that in the past 37 years, 25 Neustadt laureates, candidates or jurors subsequently have been awarded Nobel Prizes.

So Tess's resolution presented an opportunity to the literary-minded Neustadts. They could make due with Newbery and Caldecott winners, or they could, as Kathy's husband, Dr. Joe Hankin, suggested, create a new and unique prize dedicated to children's literature. The idea had great appeal to Kathy, who took the cause to her sisters,

AT RIGHT: Brian Doyle is surrounded by some of his biggest fans during a visit to Norman's Longfellow Middle School. The Canadian author tackles issues of racial and social injustice through the eyes of his young protagonists.



Susan Schwartz of Dallas and Nancy Barcelo of Watertown, Massachusetts.

“Mom and Dad started this wonderful legacy of literature, and it only seemed fitting that the kids would continue that tradition in their own way,” says Kathy. That “way” became the NSK Neustadt Prize for Children’s Literature. The “N-S-K” stands for the Neustadt daughters, Nancy, Susan and Kathy.

“Kathy called me and said she and her sisters wanted to give something back to OU and also honor their parents,” says R.C. Davis-Undiano, executive director of *World Literature Today* and dean of the Honors College.

“They thought a prize in children’s literature could help set a new standard of excellence in a genre that in the past has almost been overlooked by mainstream publishers,” he explains. “We discussed the proposal with President Boren and gradually the three sisters put an endowment in place.”

Despite busy schedules of their own—Barcelo is the director of a hospice volunteer program, Schwartz is a co-founder and board member of a therapeutic equestrian program for the disabled, and Hankin, a freelance field producer for ABC News—all three took a hands-on approach to the project.

“The Neustadt sisters were very personal about this,” says Davis-Undiano. “They didn’t just give us the money and say ‘I hope it goes well.’ They were involved every step of the way.”

Patterned after the biennial Neustadt International Prize for Literature, the NSK Prize consists of a \$25,000 cash award, a medal and a certificate. Also like the Neustadt Prize, the jury is composed of an international pool of writers, translators, editors and publishers, who each



Neustadt daughters (from left) Susan Schwartz, Kathy Hankin and Nancy Barcelo pose with Brian Doyle at the 2005 NSK Prize ceremony at the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History.

select one candidate for consideration. The jurors of the Neustadt Prize convene on the OU campus biennially to determine their champion, while jurors for the NSK Prize meet via summer conference

“The Neustadt sisters were very personal about this. They didn’t just give us the money and say ‘I hope it goes well.’”

call generated from the *World Literature Today* office on OU’s Norman campus.

“We very much want the winner to be selected by a jury of their peers,” says Davis-Undiano. “In many cases, members of the jury have just as prolific and distinguished careers as the writer they are nominating.”

At the end of the call, which can last more than two hours, the jurors are both exhausted and exhilarated by the selec-

tion of the new NSK laureate.

In 2003, Mildred D. Taylor, author of the 1977 Newbery winner *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, emerged as the frontrunner from a field including Tomi Ungerer of France, New Zealander Margaret Mahy and fellow American Lois Lowry, author of *The Giver*. Although not involved in the selection process, the Neustadt daughters were elated with the jurors’ choice of Taylor as the laureate of the inaugural NSK Prize.

“I was not a big reader as a child like everyone else in my family because I was dyslexic,” says Susan. “I was reading *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* in college for a course in children’s literature, and I had this “aha” moment. I felt like I got to make up for what I missed as a child. So when Mildred Taylor won, it was very emotional for me.”

Taylor has long been celebrated for tackling themes of racism and poverty with an honest and unsentimental voice. Her three-decade career has produced classics from *Song of the Trees* (1975) to *The Land* (2001), based on stories from her own family.

Despite a growing philosophy among academics that there is no predictable or measurable way of knowing what children are getting out of the literature they read, Davis-Undiano says Taylor’s works are an exception.

“There is a group of special writers who really can shape and break through the stereotypes and trends and get a lot of people to go a different direction with them,” he says. “Mildred is one of them. She was groundbreaking in her work. She has set a very high standard for what young people’s literature should aspire to.” That standard was met in 2005 by Canadian writer Brian Doyle, the second NSK Prize laureate.



Renowned author Mildred D. Taylor swaps stories with middle school students during her visit to OU to accept the inaugural NSK Prize. Interaction between seasoned writers and young readers is a key component of the international writing award.



An Ottawa native of Irish descent, Doyle is as irreverent as he is charming, a Canadian Bill Murray whose dry delivery is sprinkled with self-deprecating humor and wry observations of life. Like Taylor before him, he visited Norman not only to accept the award, but also to spend quality time with young readers and writers of the next generation.

In October 2005, Doyle took the podium in OU's Meacham Auditorium and faced one of the toughest audiences in the world—a packed house of 11- to 14-year-olds—who are there more or less by some will other than their own. Not known for deference to social convention, the crowd squeaked about noisily in their seats until Doyle took the stage. Within three minutes the room was quiet enough that the author no longer needed the microphone. The now-tamed crowd was eating politely from his hand morsels of the written word, delicacies of divine sentence structure, coupled with such exotic subjects as springtime in Ottawa, where “locals become heady on fermented beaver juice.”

But Doyle's humor is only the bait he uses to get young readers to take the hook of weightier subjects. Like Taylor, Doyle unapologetically reveals society's ugly underbelly from racial prejudice to religious intolerance and child abuse. Often utilizing a first-person narrative, Doyle talks the talk of his audience. He relates to the ubiquitous horrors of pre-adolescence—being called on unprepared in class, having unrequited crushes and running the gauntlet of bullies. Reading a passage from *Angel Square*, he referred to two teachers talking about a student as “two huge robins discussing a worm.”

“I grew up living my life within the pages of a book,” says Nancy Barcelo. “I loved to read. When I began to read Brian Doyle's work, I thought I was going to read these books as an adult, but I was transported back to the fourth grade. It

Brian Doyle answers questions during a visit to Longfellow Middle School. The author met with more than 400 students while in Norman for events celebrating the 2005 NSK Prize.

was like reading from the child's perspective again."

Doyle, who is a three-time winner of the Canadian Library Association's Book of the Year for Children Award, had this advice for his youthful audience: "For those of you who want to become writers, begin now," he said. "If you see geese flying overhead, write it down. Add adjectives to grocery lists. Write your own absent notes for school. Write everyday. Then, when it comes time to write something important, you will be in shape."

To those who love the written word, he said, "You have a lucky fascination. Literacy is power. It will get you through tough times."

Through four decades of the original international Neustadt Prize, the family has done much to empower readers by shining a light on exceptional works from around the globe. But for OU students who share the Neustadts' lucky fascination with literature, the prize takes on an even more personal and profound meaning. The Neustadt Fellowship Program offers a three-credit hour English class structured around the major works of current Neustadt Prize jurors. Then the students receive what many call "a highpoint" of their educational experience—informal face time with some of the brightest literary minds in the world.

This past fall the 11-member jury included Kwame Dawes, a poet and playwright from Ghana, Carter Revard, an American Indian poet and short-story writer, and Daisy Zamora, a Nicaraguan poet whose candidate Claribel Alegría was announced as the winner of the 2006 Neustadt Prize.

"Being a writer is all about capturing thoughts and turning them into words," says Amy Bourlon, international business and energy management major. "To have the opportunity to hear the author's views straight from the source is so uplifting and fulfilling. It's an intellectual high."

Armando Celaya, an Oklahoma City senior in professional writing, interviewed juror and poet Li-Young Lee of Indonesia for a research paper. "Sometimes when you meet a writer, you don't know what to say, but in the Neustadt class, you are familiar with their work before you meet



Dressed appropriately for the occasion, Brian Doyle speaks to a captive audience in Meacham Auditorium.

them, so you feel as if you already know them," says Celaya. "I want to be a writer, so being able to talk to professionals like this is an amazing opportunity."

The heightened interaction between students, jurors and laureates is largely the work of Davis-Undiano, who has established an intern program at *World*

"This prize is an incredible boost for the writers of children's literature. It recognizes us as legitimate writers in a field that has been neglected for far too long."

Literature Today and organized an annual symposium of Neustadt Prize jurors, which is free and open to the public.

"It's really interesting to think that at one time there was no interaction between students and jurors or students and writers. It was very Ivory Tower," he says. "The key scene used to be the jurors meeting with themselves. The focus has shifted so that the student/writer exchange is the center of it now."

"There have been times when there's a crush of people at my house, and I will

open the study door, and there will be one of the writers with three or four students, just talking. The writers love it. They want to talk about their work."

In addition to the benefit to OU students, the impact of both prizes also reaches into the Norman community. Teachers and librarians from local school districts are invited to all NSK Prize events and are encouraged to bring their students. After speaking to the crowd at Meacham, Doyle even took time to visit a Norman middle school to sign autographs before attending his own award ceremony that evening.

"It is wonderful to have this kind of recognition from the kids," says Doyle. "This prize is an incredible boost for the writers of children's literature. It recognizes us as legitimate writers in a field that has been neglected for far too long."

Eventually, the Neustadt daughters would like to see their prize grow, including building an OU class around children's literature similar to the Neustadt Fellowship Program. Davis-Undiano says that kind of forward thinking is already leading to bigger and better things.

"Walter and Dot Neustadt are so proud of what their daughters have done. They are newly excited," he says. "They are always thinking of new ways to expand. Now they want to bring in at-risk kids to literature classes through the Honors College. Do you know that saying by Kierkegaard, 'Purity of heart is to will one thing'? That one thing for the Neustadts is sharing great literature."

Daughter Susan agrees that the NSK award is a family affair. "The prize is a connection with our parents, with our children and with the University," she says.

"Thirty years ago my grandmother Doris had a vision of endowing a prize for literature. My daughter Tess just wanted more books with medals," adds Kathy. "I think it is appropriate that both NSK winners portray values that my parents have instilled in me. Both Brian Doyle's works and Mildred's address the conflicts of social and moral issues, the cruelty and injustice of racism... yet the protagonists' efforts are supported by strong values of a family and unconditional love."

For the Neustadts, that may be their most enduring legacy of all.

WLT Kids

From the phenomenon of Harry Potter to renewed enthusiasm for *The Chronicles of Narnia*, the spotlight on children's literature has never been brighter. Now a new feature in *World Literature Today*, OU's quarterly literary magazine, showcases works from around the globe written for and by children. The new editorial section works in harmony with the international NSK Neustadt Prize in Children's Literature to address an emerging sophistication and cultural literacy among young readers.

"I didn't want the NSK Prize to operate in a vacuum," says *World Literature Today* executive director R.C. Davis-Undiano. "So we started a children's lit column in *World Literature Today*, talking about the latest trends taking place in children's literature. That was good, but it seemed incomplete. And that's when we started moving in the direction of something children themselves could read and work with."

The result was *WLT Kids*, dedicated to an oft-overlooked niche of readers, ages 9 to 12. The eight-page, tear-out section within *World Literature Today* combines geography and literature in a kid-friendly format that includes poetry, essays and activities for children. Sara Ann Beach, associate professor of reading and literacy in the OU College of Education, serves as editor of the new section. Beach, who teaches Leadership and Academic Curriculum, has defined three main goals for the publication.

"We want this magazine to promote cultural understanding, cultural literacy and teach kids how to become literary critics and researchers," says Beach. "The marriage between the College of Education and the publishing expertise of *WLT* for this purpose is a very good thing."

Each issue is built around a particular area of the world and includes short stories, poetry and essays from or about that

region. The magazine also includes maps, graphics and photographs, activities for exploration and suggestions for further reading. In its first three outings, *WLT Kids* has explored Jordan and Israel, Karakhstan and New Zealand. Upcoming issues will feature China and Canada, home to Brian Doyle, the 2005 laureate of the NSK Prize.


"Global literacy includes awareness of culture," says Davis-Undiano. "*WLT Kids* has literature, poetry and journal entries by and for kids from around the world. What we would like to do eventually is make it the touchstone of a network of kids communicating with each other, sharing their experiences from around the globe."

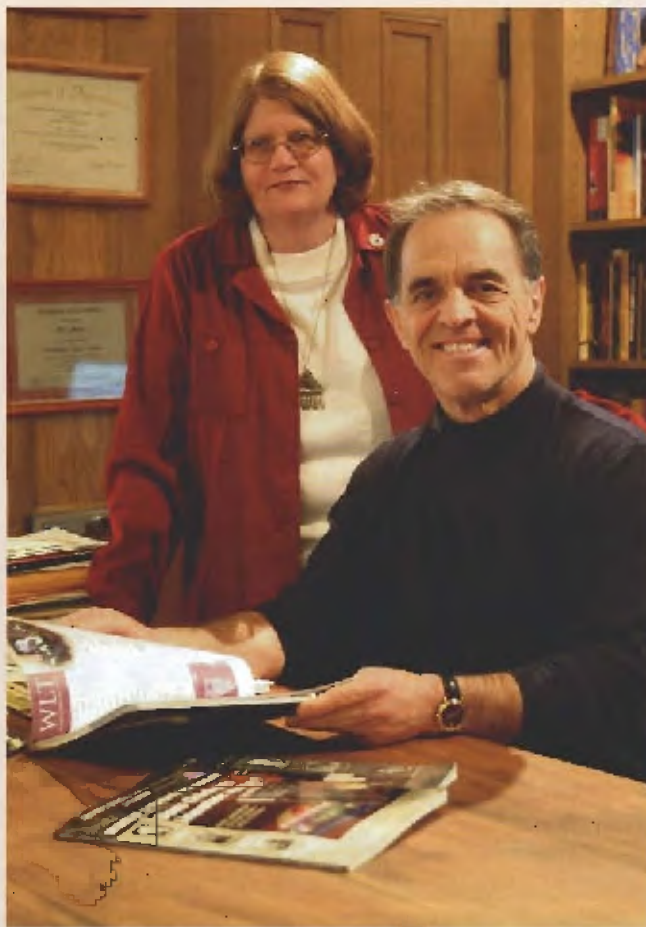
Beach is beginning to work with teachers in local school districts to help them utilize *WLT Kids* as an interdisciplinary teaching tool. Activities provided in the magazine are designed to help students meet the criteria of several national standards, including Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS) and the National Standards for the Social Studies Curriculum.

"We designed a crossmatch matrix between the *WLT Kids* literature activities and the PASS skills or Standards so teachers can choose which activities to focus on," explains Beach. "Each activity is matched with the PASS skill or Standard it helps to reach."

Eventually she would like to include the standards of New York, Texas and California in the cross referencing so teachers across the nation could use *WLT Kids* in their classrooms.

Davis-Undiano has even bigger plans. "I would like to see *WLT Kids* gain the distribution of *Weekly Reader* or *National Geographic for Kids*. Neither one focuses on what we offer—literature.

"We are constantly trying to improve, to make it look right, to be accessible for kids. I think it will grow into a major vehicle, not just connecting with the local school district, but the world." 



Sara Ann Beach, associate professor of reading and literacy in the College of Education, and R.C. Davis-Undiano, executive director of *World Literature Today*, are the driving force behind *WLT Kids*, a literary and cultural window to the world for children 9 to 12.

OU Research Takes a Classical Turn



Open, fluid and imaginative, the design of the new Stephenson Center fosters cross-disciplinary interaction and exciting collaborative initiatives.

BY DEBRA LEVY MARTINELLI

PHOTOS BY ROBERT TAYLOR



Visible from the lobby of the Peggy and Charles Stephenson Research and Technology Center on OU's Research Campus is a reproduction of a 16th-century masterpiece by Italian Renaissance painter Raphael. *The School of Athens* depicts a stylized public building in ancient Greece, on the steps of which stand some of the greatest philosophers and scientists from the 6th century B.C. to the 12th century, surrounded by their students, discussing, debating and, naturally, teaching.

"It's a good symbol of a classical university," says T.H. Lee Williams, OU's vice president for research and dean of the Graduate College.

It also serves as the inspiration for the Stephenson Center, where faculty and students from disciplines as diverse as those represented in *The School of Athens* also discuss, debate and learn from each other.

The \$27 million facility at the corner of Jenkins Avenue and David L. Boren Boulevard, just north of Highway 9, is named in honor of the Stephensons in recognition of their \$6 million lead gift for its construction. Charles Stephenson is chairman, president and CEO of Vintage Petroleum, which merged with Occidental Petroleum during the first quarter of 2006.

Comprising nearly 95,000 square feet of both private and communal laboratory, office and general gathering space, the two-story building is configured to support rapidly changing research programs and new collaborative initiatives in biosciences, bioengineering, robotics and supercomputing.

OU faculty began moving into the Stephenson Center in spring 2004. December 2005 marked another milestone: The addition of the Institute for Environmental Genomics, composed of a premier research group led by internationally renowned scientist Jizhong Zhou and recruited from the U.S. Department of Energy's Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, brought the center to full capacity. In the planning stage just north of the Stephenson Center is a second University research and technology building, which will add another 100,000 square feet of laboratory and office space.

Williams, who coordinates development of the Research Campus, says the idea behind the facility was to avoid a series of individual offices and laboratories with hard walls and doors in favor of an open environment. The design gives identity to individual research groups but also provides great flexibility and stimulates cross-disciplinary interactions.

"We didn't want labs that were fixed and exactly the same size, so that researchers were either cramped for space or had too much space," he explains. The building that resulted has fluid and flexible space, allowing almost immediate reconfiguration of individual or group work areas with movable partitions and furniture as research needs change.

The facility's layout and accoutrements are both functional and aesthetically pleasing. On the first level, laboratories, workspaces and conference rooms surround an expanse of open, airy, atrium-like space. The cork flooring that covers much of the main level

Famous philosophers depicted in Raphael's *The School of Athens* include Plato (center, pointing upward), Aristotle, Pythagoras, Diogenes, Euclid and Ptolemy. A reproduction hangs in OU's Stephenson Research and Technology Center. INSET: The interior of the new research center fosters a similar atmosphere of academic collaboration.



The \$27 million facility at the corner of Jenkins and David L. Boren Boulevard boasts nearly 95,000 square feet of flexible laboratory space, offices and communal gathering areas, which encourage a creative exchange of ideas among the various disciplines housed there.

reduces what might otherwise be a cacophony of sounds bouncing off the glass, granite and wood surfaces. The furnishings—from contemporary hardwood chairs surrounding laminate-covered tables to upholstered armchairs on casters, complete with attached swivel desk surfaces, clustered around wireless-enabled tables—enhance an environment that is at the same time vibrant and tranquil.

Behind a floor-to-ceiling curved partial glass wall that faces the main entrance, OU's Supercomputing Center for Education and Research, known as OSCER, dominates both levels of the Stephenson Center's south end. OSCER is the only supercomputing center in the world that focuses on teaching supercomputing to scientists and engineers who do not have significant computing experience. It provides supercomputing resources, expertise and education to more than 250 faculty, students and staff throughout the University.

Just off the main entrance is a maple and glass staircase that leads to upper-level lab and workspaces, as well as central meeting areas. Two benches flank the mid-floor landing, enabling folks to stop, sit and take in the views. Balconies, complete with tables and chairs, pepper the perimeter of the upper level and provide even more space to gather or contemplate.

Flat-panel, plasma screens dot the building's interior landscape. One located just inside the main east-side entrance, along with four suspended side-to-side and back-to-back from cables in the domed, upper level ceiling keep the scientists tuned in to the outside world. The entrance screen also provides an electronic directory and way-finder for the Stephenson Center and the Research Campus. Additional screens are mounted to the



With movable partitions and furniture, Stephenson Center dwellers can create reconfigurable work, study or social spaces that fit their unique needs.



Students, faculty and staff at the Stephenson Center convene each weekday at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. for complimentary coffee and tea at the center's snack bar, Café DNA.

walls of a large second-floor lab and in the multipurpose, glass-walled boardroom and seminar room on the lower level. Both of those popular meeting places are outfitted with large conference tables and comfortable, mobile chairs.

While the facility's hallmark reconfigurable space has more up-front costs than hard space, Williams says the University made a conscious decision to spend more money up front to save money—and headaches—later.

"The rule of thumb is that it costs more to buy configurable material than to construct sheetrock walls. But compare making an average of only one and a half changes to hard construction with the entire cost of the configurable material, and you've more than covered the difference," he explains. "Also, when we previously built labs, the benches were fixed in one location; to take them out or change them was a big expense. Here, we put in lab benches that are demountable so the space can be easily changed at a nominal cost and effort."

The recent addition of the 15-member Institute for Environmental Genomics team is early proof of those benefits. In short order, the Stephenson Center's operations staff made adjustments to the labs and office areas to accommodate the group.

Williams concedes, however, that some faculty who would ultimately move to Stephenson were not enthusiastic about the absence of "hard" space, at least in the beginning.

"When we first proposed this open building design, I'm sure everyone had in their minds the *Dilbert* [comic strip office] cubicle. Now, they are full advocates and very protective of their open, reconfigurable environment, which is marvelous."

Jonathan Wren, a research assistant professor in the Advanced Center for Genome Technology, moved into the Stephenson Center as soon as it opened. "This building is about being cross-disciplinary," says Wren from his second-floor, reconfigurable office. "It's very conducive to collaborative opportunities."

Williams gets similar feedback during his frequent strolls through the building. One day last fall, he encountered a doctoral candidate in the midst of writing his dissertation. "That's a time for privacy and focused thought, so I asked him how his space in Stephenson was working for him," Williams recalls. "I asked whether he prefers to lock himself in a room to work. He said, 'No, I love it. I can turn to my computer and write and then I can turn to see if [biochemistry professor and director of the Advanced Center for Genome Technology] Bruce Roe or one of his students is in the lab and go talk with them.'"

That is the kind of reaction—common among Stephenson Center dwellers—that reassures

Williams that the University hit a home run with the building's design. "A university's core identity is the open discourse of a community of scholars. That was the environment we wanted here. Some very exciting things happen when faculty members from different disciplines get together and come up with ideas for collaborative research," he says.

The seeds for some of those collaborations may very well come from what has become perhaps the first Stephenson Center tradition: free coffee and tea at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. daily at the building's aptly named ground-floor snack bar, Café DNA.

The beverage breaks are Williams' way of reproducing his experience as a graduate student, when his entire department would take mid-morning and mid-afternoon breaks and head to the cafeteria. "I remember sitting down with faculty and having great conversations. That was part of my apprenticeship as a scholar," he recalls.

If the sheer numbers of faculty, students and staff hovering around the café at the appointed times is any indication, the experiment is a success. On any given day, representatives from just about every discipline housed in the building can be found seeking sustenance for both body and mind without taking one step outside.

"The stock and trade of a university is the creation and dissemination of knowledge and ideas," says Williams. "If your environment has only private space and no interaction space, you limit the ability to communicate ideas.

"This building is a living, learning experience. In many ways, it's a radical departure from how we have traditionally designed campus buildings, but I see it as a return to the original roots of what a university is all about."

Debra Levy Martinelli is director of public relations and marketing for the OU Office of Technology Development and writes freelance articles for Sooner Magazine.

At Home in SRTC

The Stephenson Research and Technology Center houses the following programs:

- Advanced Center for Genome Technology, where OU researchers have sequenced the first completed human chromosome;
- Institute for Environmental Genomics, where scientists explore microbial genomics and ecology;
- OU Bioengineering Center, where engineering principles are applied to challenges in medicine and biology;
- OU Microarray and Bioinformatics Core Facilities, which offers the powerful tools of the highly complex technology of functional genomics to OU researchers;
- OU's Supercomputing Center for Education and Research, or OSCER, which provides supercomputing education, expertise and resources to the University community;
- Neuroendocrine Development Genetics Lab, whose scientists study neuropeptides, which play important functions in regulating neurocircuits in the brain and coordinating functions of the brain and other tissues;
- Robotics, Evolution, Adaptation and Learning Lab, where researchers develop robotics applications for space exploration, military operations and medicine;
- Zebrafish Development, Genetics and Genomics Lab, where researchers study the genetics and genomics of zebrafish, which have genes similar to those of humans.

The Inside Story at Stephenson

BY DEBRA LEVY MARTINELLI

Perhaps the best-known research unit housed in the Stephenson Research and Technology Center on OU's Research Campus is the Advanced Center for Genome Technology, which is practically synonymous with its director, biochemistry professor Bruce Roe. Designated since 1990 as a Genome Center by the National Institutes of Health, National Human Genome Research Institute, the ACGT was one of the first three laboratories involved in the worldwide Human Genome Project. Since then, its research team has mapped the first completed human chromosome—chromosome 22—and in the process discovered genes involved in several forms of brain cancer, leukemia, mental retardation and schizophrenia. ACGT's current research covers vertebrates (mice, chimpanzees, baboons and zebrafish) to plant life (alfalfa, soybeans, and plant and grass fungi).

Roe draws on the expertise of several fellow Stephenson Center dwellers, including Han Wang, assistant professor of zoology and an expert on the genetic development of zebrafish; Tyrrell Conway, professor of molecular microbiology and functional genomics and director of OU's Microarray and Bioinformatics Core Facilities; and Randy Hewes, assistant professor of zoology, each of whom brings to the Genome Center valuable knowledge that flourishes within the unique collaborative environment.

Wang's work with the tropical zebrafish is directly related to the function of human genes.

"Of the 25,000 genes in the whole human genome, about 1,000 are predicted on chromosome 22, but scientists know the function of only about 250 of those 1,000," Roe explains. "Zebrafish and humans share 90 percent of their

genes. But while genes in a human embryo are expressed in maybe weeks seven to 10, in a zebrafish embryo they are expressed over a period of only a few hours. That's where Dr. Wang's research comes in."

Wang's Stephenson Center laboratory contains some 1,500 tanks holding nearly 10,000 zebrafish. His team can produce up to 3,000 to 4,000 embryos daily. "The embryos are transparent, so we can watch them develop, which takes only a day. The zebrafish heart, brain and blood cells resemble those of humans. Because the genes are similar, when we alter the gene of the fish, the organ will become malformed and may be similar to human diseases. So we model these diseases and use this fish to study them," he says.

Hewes, meanwhile, uses the laboratory favorite fruit fly as a genetic model to research small proteins called neuropeptides, which are released by nerve and endocrine cells and play important functions in regulating neurocircuits in the brain and coordinating functions of the brain and other tissues. Because the fruit fly develops from egg to adult in 10 days, he can conduct sophisticated genetic studies in a short period of time.

"Many of the features of cells are conserved throughout evolution," he explains. "So if I am looking at secretion of neuropeptide in a fly, I am looking at the same processes that are used to secrete neuropeptides in humans. If I understand some central aspect of that, it may inform our understanding of how this is done in humans."

In a nearby Stephenson Center lab, Conway directs the OU Microarray and Bioinformatics Core Facility, which provides Roe, Wang, Hewes and countless other researchers with the power-

ful tools of functional genomics.

"The genes of humans are almost identical, so just knowing the sequences doesn't explain why we are individuals," Conway explains. "What makes us unique is the level of expression of each of those genes during development and also in response to insults like disease. We each respond differently and have varying susceptibility to diseases. All of that is part of our genetic makeup."

Researchers can measure the gene expression levels with a cutting-edge technology called microarrays—or genome chips—that are thousands of genetic material "spots" typically less than 200 microns in diameter. An experiment with a single genome chip can provide researchers information on thousands of genes simultaneously. Conway discovered the need for a database to manage that "landslide of data" and has spearheaded creation of both a bioinformatics infrastructure for the state of Oklahoma and a database for microarrays.

The technology allows Conway and others to monitor gene expression in a straightforward fashion within a single experiment and compile a comprehensive database with virtually endless capabilities. "Imagine a database that can give the history of the diseases you have had. If you are susceptible to a certain disease, and you come down with it, you want to know the prognosis and best treatment. This is the kind of information we think is locked into the gene expression profiles that you get with these microarrays."

On the ground floor of Stephenson Center, another group of faculty and students are dedicated to a topic that once was the exclusive domain of science fiction: robotics.

In the AIR (Artificial Intelligence Research) Laboratory, experts in computer science as well as electrical, mechanical and industrial engineering converge in true collaborative fashion to design and build robots that can assemble, manipulate and transport other objects and can even play soccer.

Dean Hougen, assistant professor of computer science and founder of the lab, focuses on the intelligent connection between sensing and action, which enables robots to expand their horizons beyond

such tightly controlled environments as factories to find uses in military endeavors, medical and assistive applications, space exploration and elsewhere in our everyday lives. For example, with funding from the U.S. Army Research Office, Hougen's team is developing robots that are better able to conduct surveillance, reconnaissance and battlefield assessment.

In related research, Hougen is exploring the development of robotic teamwork. "A ground-based robot can see what is immediately in front of it, but doesn't have the ability to know the glo-



Photo provided

Chuck Saint is one of many undergraduates who gain hands-on experience in the center's artificial intelligence lab.

bal picture of what the environment looks like," says Hougen. "It can't plan the best path to get from Point A to Point B because it doesn't know what is between the two. But if we team it up with other robots that are exploring the environment, they can share the information they are gathering with one another."

One way his Stephenson Center group is trying to improve robots' team performance is by engaging them in the specific tasks of soccer. "It's not clear at any given point during a game what the best strategy is. How strongly should you push the offense? How much do you guard against goals? Are you trying to control the ball? How close do you keep it to yourself and how far should you kick it out in


front as you run? You can have the robot learn these things. You can reward it when it earns goals and punish it when it fails," Hougen explains.

Computer science associate professor Andrew Fagg, one of Hougen's lab mates, wants to teach robots to make decisions and perform tasks on their own. "We're already putting them on planet surfaces [such as Mars rovers Spirit and Opportunity] but would like to have much more capable robots be able to go to Mars a few years before humans arrive to build habitats for them. In order to do that, though, robots can't just be passive with cameras and sensors. They'll have to be able to assemble and manipulate things."

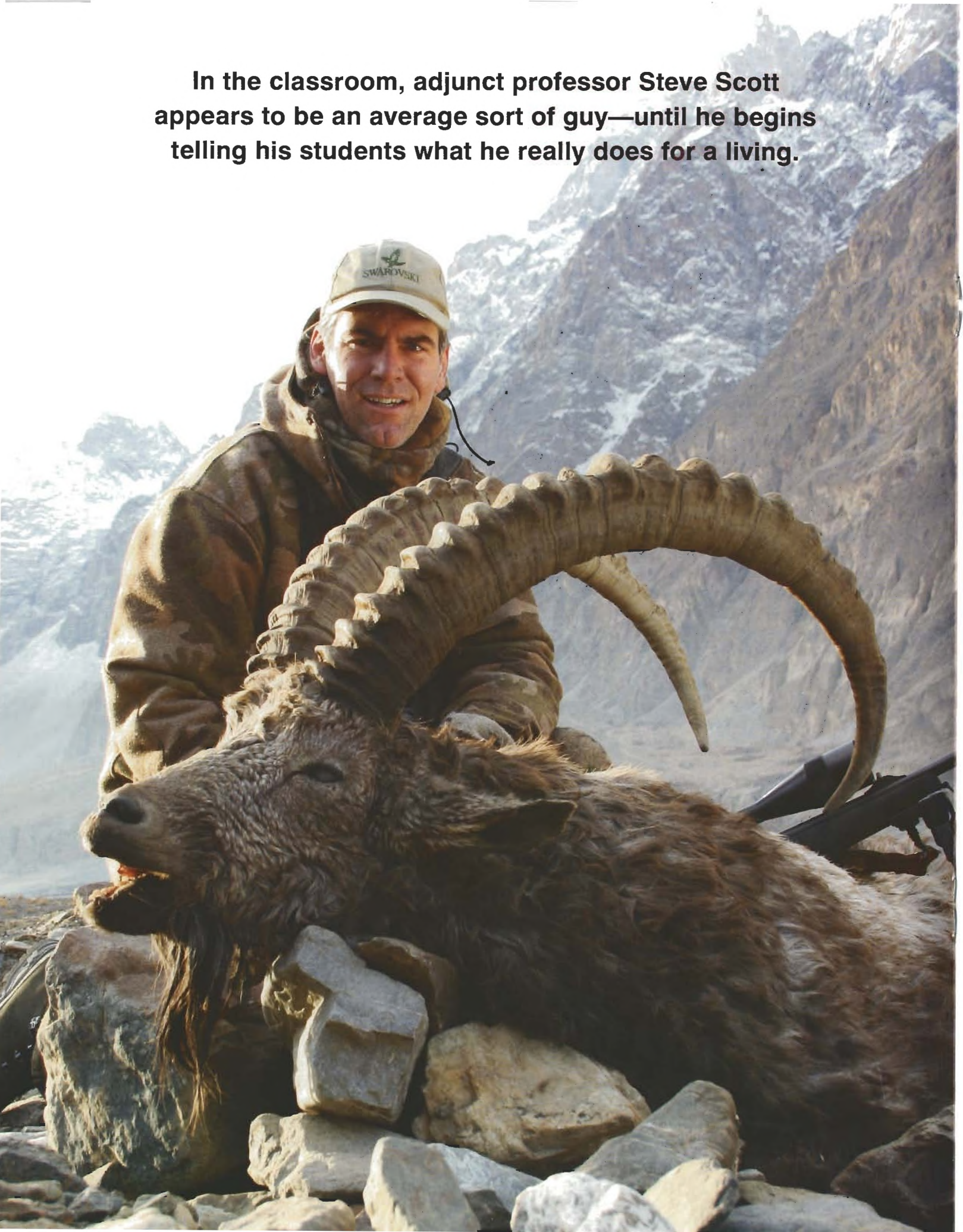
To that end, Fagg and his team are working with the Johnson Space Center to develop control systems structured like human hands that can be controlled by a person and have a built-in automated system as well. Not only would the system be used in space for assembly and maintenance work but could also be called into service for more elaborate functions, including rescue missions, which are still handled by humans. Using the automated robots, Fagg says, would save time and, ultimately, human lives.

Back on Earth, both Hougen and Fagg believe home vacuum cleaners and lawn mowers are just the beginning of many applications of robotic systems that will become commonplace. "There's a lot of momentum building behind humanoid-style robots to perform a whole range of tasks rather than one or two," Fagg says. "And we're making good progress."

Much of these discoveries and inventions already are benefiting the state, nation and humankind in general. With the help of OU's Office of Technology Development, technology created through collaborations at the Stephenson Center is transferred to the marketplace.

"Faculty love discovering knowledge, but they also have an interest in seeing that knowledge put into practice," says W. Arthur Porter, University vice president for Technology Development. "They may want to establish their own spin-off company or license their inventions to existing companies. Whatever their interests, we provide opportunities to help make those things happen." 

In the classroom, adjunct professor Steve Scott appears to be an average sort of guy—until he begins telling his students what he really does for a living.



LIVING ON THE WILD SIDE

BY LAURIE DERNICK
PHOTOS PROVIDED

With his heart pounding and his adrenaline rushing, Steve Scott was running for his life from a charging elephant when things got even worse—he pulled a hamstring and collapsed to the ground. The earth shaking with each thundering step of gigantic feet, Scott lay motionless in the tall grass as the trumpeting elephant drew nearer. He had only seconds to decide what to do before the enraged beast trampled him. Suddenly Scott reached up and threw his hat as hard as he could, desperately hoping it would distract his would-be assailant.

Risky and often life-threatening situations, like nearly being trampled to death by an elephant or stomped by an ostrich, are not daily occurrences for most University of Oklahoma faculty members. For Steve Scott, adjunct professor in the Michael F. Price College of Business, living on the edge is routine.

Scott constantly tests himself against nature—often without meaning to—while hosting two nationally syndicated outdoor television shows, *Safari Hunter's Journal* and *The Outdoor Guide*. On a personal level, Scott's true passion is hunting; professionally he balances time between television and teaching an upper-division finance class at OU.

He did not plan to become a college professor; rather he fell into it. On his way to earning a BBA in finance from OU in 1983 and a juris doctorate in 1986, he sold insurance to put himself through school. Then his former finance teacher, the late Don Childress, approached Scott about teaching. Childress had accepted a position as an assistant to OU's new president, Frank Horton, and asked Scott to take over his life insurance class.

Scott accepted Childress' invitation and began teaching finance in the fall of 1987. He has been teaching the class ever since.

Finance majors at OU identify Scott as the sun-weathered and sharply dressed professor who teaches FIN 4123, Financial

Planning. They are aware, however, that that is not what he does for a living.

Safari Hunter's Journal airs on The Men's Channel Mondays at 9 p.m. CST and Saturdays at 2 p.m. CST, January through June. *The Outdoor Guide* is scheduled on Outdoor Life Network Saturdays at 8:30 a.m.

Scott says his shows differ from mainstream outdoor programs that tend to focus on hunting white-tail deer and turkeys. "We don't do turkeys," Scott says. Instead, his shows feature big-game hunting in exotic locales such as Mongolia, Pakistan, New Zealand and Africa. *Safari Hunter's Journal* features Scott in Africa, and *The Outdoor Guide* features Scott in "the rest of the world."

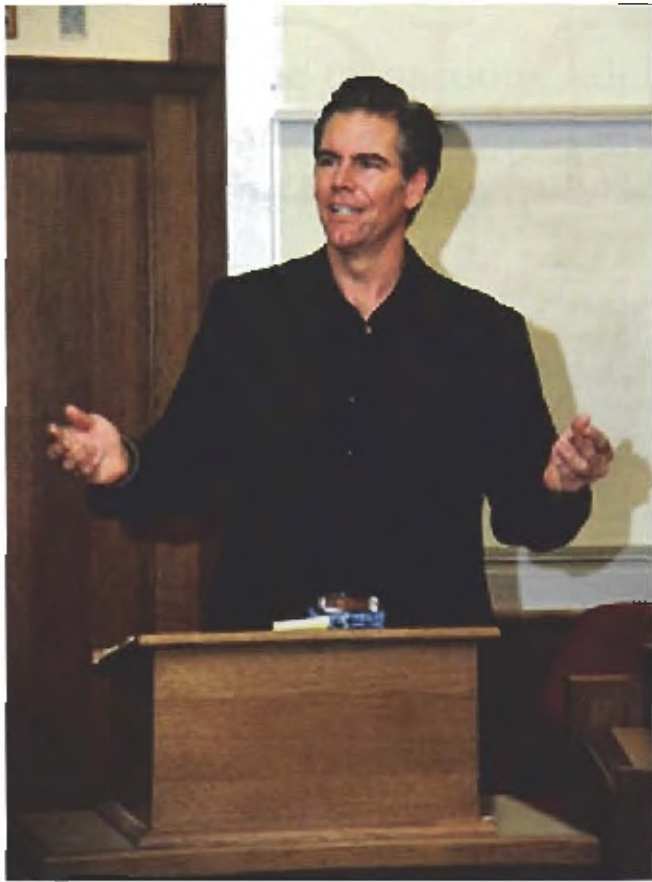
"My mission is to promote hunting as an ethical and economic sport," Scott contends. "My message is 'Hunters don't take; hunters put back.'"

The episode of *Safari Hunter's Journal* featuring Scott dodging the charging elephant is the direct result of helping a team of professional hunters and a veterinarian locate an elephant whose tracking collar no longer worked.

His mission was to find the elephant and dart it with a tranquilizer while a helicopter tracked the animal from above. A helicopter was necessary because the elephant could run for several miles before the tranquilizer kicked in, Scott explains. Once the elephant was down, the veterinarian could repair the broken collar.

Scott recalls the day as bad all around, starting with the helicopter arriving several hours late. When it finally showed, the team had to scramble to find the elephant herd before daylight was lost.

Upon finding the herd, team members carefully positioned themselves about 20 yards from the target. Little did they know



When he is not hunting wild game in exotic locations around the globe, Scott can be found teaching FIN 4123, Financial Planning, in the Michael F. Price College of Business.

that their planning was about to turn disastrous.

As Scott slowly and quietly prepared to dart the elephant, a loud noise suddenly erupted, instantly grabbing the elephants' attention—a guide's cell phone rang!

Hoping to distract the herd away from the team, the veterinarian quickly bellowed like a trumpeting elephant. His effort failed—one of the animals already had spotted the men.

With everyone frozen in position, the elephant quickly turned and stared directly at them. As he relates his tale, Scott stands with his body hunched, as if he were the wary elephant, using his arms to mimic the animal's trunk.

"Prrraahhhh!" Scott wails as he becomes the pachyderm furiously raising its trunk, ready to charge.

"One of the hunters yelled, 'Run!' and that's what we did," Scott says.

Scott's only thought was to get away from the charging beast as fast as he could—when a searing pain shot through his leg as a hamstring pulled, and he fell.

Fearing for his life with only seconds before the elephant reached him, Scott gave his hat a "Hail Mary" pass, hoping to divert the animal and send it off course. His flying miracle caught the elephant's eye in the nick of time.

"The elephant ran to my hat and stomped the hell out of it," Scott says. His life spared, Scott painfully crawled to safety.

In the classroom, the hunter-turned-professor often incorporates these escapades into his lectures. "After he threw his hat, he

rubbed his leg until he could crawl behind a tree," says Adrienne Myers, accounting graduate student and a former student of Scott's. "He was like, 'Yeah, I should have died that day.'"

Melissa Sinnott, finance and economics graduate, agrees that Scott's experiences enliven classroom discussions. "He always shares a lot of personal information with the class," Sinnott says. "He adds humorous anecdotes like movie quotes and stories about his trips."

Scott would not add teaching to his more adventurous schedule if he did not like doing it.

"There is not as much practical information taught as there should be," Scott says. "When I teach someone something and they get it, that's very rewarding."

Chris Bearrow, finance and energy management senior, realizes Scott does not have to teach but appreciates that he does. "He gives me the feeling he *wants* to be [in class], not that he *has* to be there," Bearrow says. "He shows an interest in the subject, and that comes across in his mannerisms and teaching style."

Scott insists that his shows depict him accurately. He does not want only "his good shots" used because, realistically, that is not how hunting is. *Safari Hunter's Journal* even featured a run-in Scott had with an ostrich in the Kalahari Desert.



Scott is one of a small group of hunters worldwide who have successfully vanquished a cape buffalo with a bow and arrow. The animal is legendary in Zimbabwe for its bad temper and double rib cage, both of which make it difficult to hunt and kill.

"I was kicked in the head by an ostrich, and it beat the crap out of me," Scott says. "When I can make fun of myself, like put the ostrich [incident] on, people relate to that and appreciate seeing me as I am."

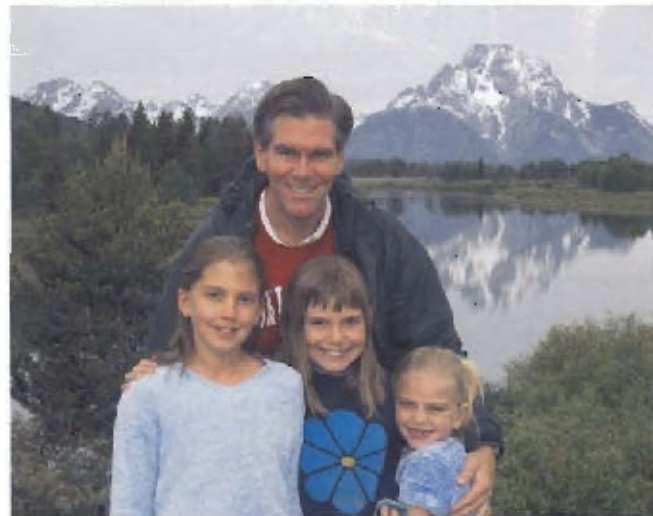
Another mishap featured Scott and a water buffalo in Florida. Scott says that he was in a tree with bow and arrow poised to shoot the water buffalo on the ground below. He had perfect aim.

Releasing the bowstring, Scott was absolutely sure he would hit his target, but the arrow plunged straight down, penetrating the ground below, not remotely close to the unconcerned buffalo. Scott could not believe what had happened.

Foolishly, he had not brought along another arrow for a



Scott checks camera equipment with his guide, Asad, while on location in Pakistan. The upcoming episode of *The Outdoor Guide* was filmed in and around the village of Sost on the Pakistan/Chinese border for a show featuring the Himalayan ibex.



A love for the outdoors runs in the family. Scott and his daughters, (from left) Hayley, Madeline and Alexa, enjoy a family vacation in Yellowstone National Park.

second shot. With the cameras still rolling after the embarrassing misfire, Scott remained in the tree only to watch the water buffalo slowly and lazily approach the arrow in the ground, sniff it and just stand there, directly below Scott for what seemed to him like hours. Then, the animal scratched its back against Scott's tree, making him cling to the trunk as it swayed.

"It was right below me, and I had a perfect shot for what seemed like hours," says Scott as he snickers in disbelief. "I could have dropped an anvil on it from where I was."

Scott did not get his prey that day, but it made for an entertaining episode.

The shows' episodes regularly feature guests who hunt with Scott and share in his excitement. "What I am looking for is something that appeals to the audience and appeals to me," Scott says. "We had [former OU head coach] Barry Switzer and Tom Osborne [former Nebraska head coach and current U.S. congressman] on the same show fishing together."

A recent episode of *The Outdoor Guide* featured Scott and the U.S. Olympic shotgun team hunting pheasants on the former Dole plantation in Lanai, Hawaii. The

team's coach, Lloyd Woodhouse, offered shooting tips and techniques.

Other notable guests have been President George W. Bush, while he was governor of Texas, and Chris Harrison, host of ABC's reality show *The Bachelor*.


One episode of *Safari Hunter's Journal* featured Scott in Zimbabwe bagging his most treasured trophy, a cape buffalo. The buffalo kill brought Scott much esteem from hunters and native Africans. "They are without doubt the most dangerous animal when wounded," Scott says.

"I know he's one of only [a few] white guys to ever shoot a cape buffalo with a bow and arrow," Bearrow recalls from one of Scott's classroom anecdotes. "The reason it's amazing to shoot one with a bow is because when shot, cape buffalo are known for circling down wind and coming back to attack."

Shooting a cape buffalo is physically challenging, Scott explains. The animal has a double rib cage and to successfully kill it, the rib cage must be broken. To do this with a bow and arrow requires great accuracy and strength. The hunter must be able to draw the bow at close range without attracting the animal's attention, Scott says as he slowly and carefully pulls his arm back as if he were drawing a bow.

"I have also shot a lion at about 40 yards and darted a rhino at about 10 yards," Scott says.

Teaching finance is a significant change of pace from Scott's daring hunting expeditions and is almost therapeutic for him. "It's relaxing," Scott says.

But whatever reward teaching provides, Scott always will crave his more exotic pursuits. "For some reason, I really enjoy dangerous stuff because it really gets my adrenaline flowing," Scott says grinning. "I'm like a wild mustang." 

Laurie Dernick, who has a 2004 BA in international studies from OU, is currently a senior in the Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication and a student assistant in OU Athletics Media Relations.

A major revival is under way among the University's across-the-street neighbors as new and existing owners pump life into businesses that appeal to students and non-students alike.



Turning the CORNER



After a long sleep, Campus Corner is back—bolder, brassier and more appealing to a new generation of OU students and Norman residents.

The commercial shopping district, the University's neighbor for nearly 90 years, historically has harbored basic services, eclectic shops and student gathering places, with businesses coming and going regularly over the years. Survivors have weathered vast changes in the University, the economy, consumer shopping preferences, postwar demographics and the fate of the OU Sooners.

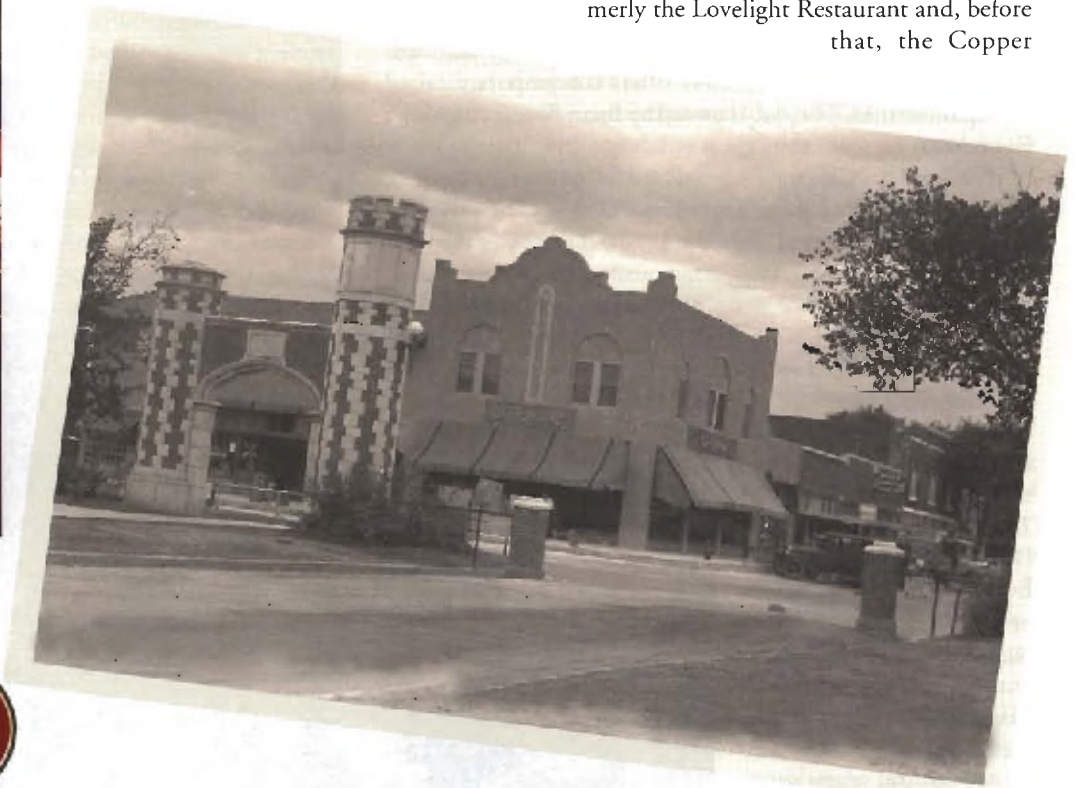
This time, however, major developments on "the Corner" have resulted from a quiet revolution. Properties are being consolidated, with their owners organizing to deal with long-standing challenges. Funds are being set aside for area improvements.

The Corner is undergoing a building boom and establishing new businesses known to draw today's consumers. Big, splashy sports bars—lunch spots by day and student hangouts by night—have been the first wave of businesses calculated to "turn the Corner."

Louie's Deli & Bar occupies the former Campus Corner landmark Town Tavern at Asp and Boyd. Owners Hal Smith and Sooner football coach Bob Stoops are adding a pool room next door in space that had been an ice cream parlor.

Around the corner on Asp, the old Quarterhouse is being gutted for the new Logan's Sports Bar. Across the street, Al Eschbach's Hall of Fame Sports Bar & Grill opened last year in what many years ago was a TG&Y variety store. Owners are Eschbach, a longtime local radio sports personality, and Howard Klubeck, who also owns Othello's, the Italian restaurant at 434 Buchanan that Patsy Benso operated for 30 years.

Another sports bar, Malone's Cavern, tucked in between Asp and Buchanan in the old Walter Mitty's location, is near La Luna Mexican Restaurant (formerly the Lovelight Restaurant and, before that, the Copper



OU Western History Collections





Up and coming hot spots like Al Eschbach's Hall of Fame Sports Bar & Grill are breathing new life into properties along Asp Avenue.

Kettle). Malone's is next door to Sugers, a club featuring "exotic dancers" that has held a long lease on the Corner.

Other dining and entertainment establishments have emerged or undergone renovations over the past year. At 747 Asp, in an art deco building with a rooftop patio that for many years was University Cleaners, the Seven47 offers contemporary casual dining and drinks. The club is owned by Brian Bogert and Court Roueche.

The Red Dirt Café was reopened as the Red Dirt Bar & Grill, purchased by Rob Goodner from Tim O'Brien. The anchor of the Corner's music scene since the 1980s, the site was the local landmark Liberty Drug, where a famous soda fountain attracted hordes of sailors and bobbysoxers throughout World War II.

Moe's Southwest Grill opened in December 2004 at 788 Asp. Owner Tom Howard specializes in custom-prepared Mexican and American fare with extended hours to 3 a.m. Thursday through Saturday to accommodate overflow from the clubs, as does Lori Treisa's Ruby's All Night Diner at White and Buchanan. Treisa also operates The Deli, a late-night bar that for years has featured some of the best-received musical groups in the area.

At 750 Asp, where several small restaurants have failed in recent years, two young chefs have opened the Turquoise Café. Rich Hull and Adam Westby



blend their backgrounds in French cuisine with Southwest ingredients to keep the 20-seat establishment swarming with breakfast and lunch patrons. At 217 West Boyd, Gino Rosani has completed an extensive remake of New York Pizza & Pasta, adding more upscale, "genuine Italian" fare and a full bar.

Campus Corner has suffered its share of wrenching change since the early 1900s, when most OU students lived north of Boyd and passed through the district on their way to and from classes. In 1929, according to newspaper accounts, a fire destroyed most Campus Corner businesses on the west side of Asp. The shops were rebuilt, just in time for the Great Depression.

Most Corner buildings have been renovated many times, some approaching a century of commercial use. Owners and tenants have found it necessary to demolish interior walls, rewire, replumb and essentially rebuild to meet changing city codes.

After World War II, a new generation of students on the GI Bill strained the resources of the University and Campus Corner. Student housing shifted from boarding houses near the Corner to on-campus dormitories. Fraternity and sorority houses also left the area to concentrate southwest of the campus. Students had cars, and parking, an afterthought in earlier days, became a necessity.

In the '70s, retailers began a long westward progression to malls and strip centers with better access to the newly built Interstate 35. Mobility came with a more casual life style. Many men's and women's clothing stores on Campus Corner, long at the forefront of elegant fashion, moved away or simply closed for good.

The McCall family had three such establishments, two on the Corner and one downtown, the last closing in 1991. "It used to be, men wore suits of clothes—students, too," the late Sam McCall lamented then. "Most people just don't wear suits anymore."

Generally, Sooner football breathed life into the Corner with victorious game-day crowds pouring through the shops and frequenting

Rich Hull, owner and chef of Turquoise Café, left, and sous chef Adam Westby play to a packed house for breakfast and lunch at 750 Asp.



Harold Powell opened a men's apparel shop on Boyd Street in 1948, the company growing into a fashion trendsetter for both men and women throughout the country. The Powell family has had a presence on Campus Corner since 1927.



Mariah Pinkerton, above, and her mother, Barbara Fite, offer an eclectic blend of home furnishings, antiques, jewelry and contemporary clothing at Antique Garden, 323 W. Boyd.

the restaurants. But when the Sooners lost, so did the Corner. A few special events like music festivals and an annual bicycle race drew spectators and shoppers, but OU holidays were bleak times for Campus Corner businesses.

Forerunner of today's sports bars was Town Tavern, whose blurry 50-year history and OU football were inseparable. The tavern was common ground to students, athletes, beatniks, hippies and punk rockers, as well as artists, townies and game-day celebrants, who came for the beer, camaraderie and "the finest greasy spoon menu in town." The walls of Town Tavern were covered with plywood panels listing Sooner game records, year by year.

Longtime owner Ernie Wilson, who operated the tavern for 19 years, sold out to Bette Mafucci in 1976. In mid-1988, tax problems forced the sale of Town Tavern and its fixtures, including the yellow, smoke-coated Sooner schedules, which fetched a hefty price.

In the early '80s, Campus Corner merchants and property owners began to feel the bite of diminishing revenues and the failure to maintain the area's infrastructure. Many complained of the need for more parking and the city's neglect of street maintenance and services. As late as five years ago, Campus Corner was plagued by problems of deteriorating property, darkened streets, crumbling sidewalks, vandalism and other crime. The Campus Corner Merchants Association struggled to find long-term solutions.

The turnaround began in mid-2001, when the City of Norman replaced sewer and water lines on Buchanan Street and reconfigured Asp Avenue to handle two-way traffic. In 2002, the Norman City Council designated Campus Corner a "tax increment district" with the ability to set aside some tax revenues for common area improvements—utility work, lighting, security systems, landscaping, signage, traffic controls, parking, curbs and sidewalks.



A stabilizing influence on the Corner began in 1927, when Elton and Ruby Powell purchased the Sooner Shop, a drugstore and soda fountain, later the Town Tavern site. After returning from military service in 1948, the Powells' two sons, Dee and Harold, launched long business careers on the Corner.

Dee Powell opened a popular soda fountain and card shop known as Dee's, in business for 37 years at 333 West Boyd. Later Dee's soda fountain was replaced by a grill that grew famous for Sunday morning breakfasts and charbroiled hamburgers.

Harold Powell began Harold's Men's Apparel in 1948. The flagship store, which later included women's wear, remains at 329 West Boyd. Harold's stores proliferated throughout the country, and the company recently was sold to a Dutch corporation. The corporate headquarters of Harold's Stores Inc. had been the former Boomer Theater on Asp, which had ceased showing motion pictures by the mid-'70s. The building is now vacant, awaiting some new purpose.

continued



From left, Rainey Powell, Judy Hatfield and David Box represent a new generation of property owners who are investing personally and professionally in the revitalization of Campus Corner. The trio have renovated existing properties and attracted new businesses to the historic area.

Over the years, the Powell family acquired a substantial stake in Campus Corner, their 28 holdings dominating Boyd Street, most of Buchanan and much of Asp. Harold Powell's son, Rainey Powell, manages 329 Partners, the family's real estate business. The management group's priorities are renewing storefronts, attracting promising new tenants, completing major renovation projects and adding new parking spaces.

The Powell group still owns Harold's Outlet Barn (a site formerly Rickner's Book Store and later Ratcliffe's) at 575 South University Boulevard. In earlier days, the location was known as the Tee Pee Building, where an upstairs dance floor was a center of campus social activity.

A passionate new voice joined Campus Corner property owners in mid-2001. Norman Realtor Judy Hatfield and talent agency owner David Box formed a partnership to purchase several properties on Campus Corner from absentee land-

Tobin Vigil, the owner of Buchanan Bicycles since 2001, has brought a fresh look and a new breed of bikes to the shop that opened in 1973.



lords. They now own buildings occupied by Brothers Eatery & Pub and La Luna Mexican Restaurant on Buchanan Street, the Sunshine convenience store, Victoria's, Ruby's All Night Diner, The Deli and six loft apartments on White Street, along with Malone's, Sugers, Turquoise Café and parking lot properties on Asp. Box also owns the Satellite Building on White and Asp and his talent agency building at University Boulevard and White Street, across from the First Presbyterian Church, established on the Corner in 1951.

"I think we can recreate Campus Corner and make it better than it was," Hatfield says. "The charisma of Campus Corner is returning."

Among other property owners involved in Campus Corner improvement are Lawrence and Edna Earle Webb, who own six storefronts on Asp, where for 33 years they operated The Webb, a popular women's shoe store. "We're glad things are picking up," Edna Earle Webb says. "People are spiffing up their properties. I'm so proud."

Jim Miller and his father, the late B.C. Miller, owned Miller's Bike Shop on West Boyd Street for many years. The bike shop closed, and the property leased to U.S. Cellular last year. Jim Miller and his wife, Deanna, own several buildings on Boyd and along the east side of Asp.

The Millers also own a vacant lot at Boyd and DeBarr Streets and have attempted unsuccessfully to get the property zoned for a parking garage. "If Campus Corner needs help, it needs parking," Miller says.



Campus Corner has been defined by White, Asp, Boyd and Buchanan Streets and University Boulevard. In the early '50s, retailers on the Corner numbered as many as 140. That number has declined to about 75 today, primarily because shops and restaurants have

grown larger. Some have survived long-term, defying the turbulent changes around them. Most are “niche” businesses offering products or services not easily duplicated or found elsewhere; a sampling reveals the wide range of these unique enterprises:

- Nancy Russell has operated Cookies-N-Cards for 21 years from various locations on the Corner. Her shop at 754 Asp is crammed with imaginative gifts from around the world, hand-made jewelry, greeting cards and her own home-baked cookies, brownies and cheesecake swirls.
- Keith Allen, a former director of OU Student Activities, and



Tamel Sisney, manager of OU Authentic, organizes an inventory heavy on crimson and cream for the Sooner faithful. The store specializes in equipment and gear worn by Sooner legends.

two buddies opened Brothers Eatery & Pub on Buchanan Street in 1983, gaining fame for copious piles of crayons and paper tablecloths for doodling, yard-tall flagons of beer and hamburgers named for OU coaches. Today, Allen is sole owner of Brothers and a satellite, Stepbrothers, at 423 Webster.

- Joe Walden started Campus TV on White Street 45 years ago. In 1993, he switched from repairing television sets to selling accessories such as drumsticks, guitar strings and repair parts for musical instruments.
- Jim Greenshields has serviced long-obsolete typewriters for over 40 years. He still repairs the noisy iron monsters at Greenshields Typewriters & Printing on White Street, but he makes his living from job printing.
- In 1993, Emilio Salinas opened Pepe Delgados, an authentic California-Mex restaurant at 752 Asp. Last year Delgados expanded into a building next door and added a bar.
- Also in 1993, Manila Whitehorse opened a small haircutting salon, Take Five Hair Company. The two-level salon on Buchanan Street now has 16 chairs. Last year Whitehorse also

opened CUT, a five-chair shop, just up the street in Harold’s Square.

- Beth Talvitie has owned Deco Dence, a retro clothing and accessories shop for 17 years. The shop, now at 307 White, brims with women’s clothing, gifts, books, lamps and many remnants of 20th-century fads. While cheered by the distinct upswing in traffic on the Corner, she worries that the big sports bars dominating the area may be a mistake. “Do we want another Bricktown?” she asks. “The bizarre thing about all this: There are no bookstores left on the Corner. Don’t students read anything besides textbooks?”

Shops specializing in licensed OU apparel, souvenirs and memorabilia have long drawn Sooner fans to the Corner, especially on game days. By far the oldest is Grover Ozmun’s Balfour of Norman, in business for 30 years, now located on West Boyd. Merchandise ranges from sportswear to tailgate party supplies with a variety of Greek-letter gift items.

Ozmun’s competition is clustered around the corner on Asp. At OU Authentic, owner Jeff Grantham specializes in “game-used” athletic gear, some of it purchased from the OU Athletic Department. Owner Suzy Canon is known for making OU shirts, flags and windsocks for Suzy’s, which also carries its own laser-engraved glassware. In addition to standard Sooner wear, Maria Porkka and Helen Wolney, owners of Apothem Sooner Sportswear, stock hand-made lampshades and pillows and do custom embroidering.

Retail fashion stores are making a comeback on the Corner. Savvy, a women’s clothing store, has settled into

763 Asp. Bethany, a new women’s accessories store, will be opening next door.

Two years ago, Barbara Fite moved her Antique Garden shop from a west Norman strip mall into the original John A. Brown department store building on West Boyd, stocking it with artfully designed settings of new and antique furniture and accessories from the Paris Flea Market and other world centers.

“When we moved here, sales reps called this ‘the death corner,’” Fite says. “But I think this is one of the prime retail spots in Oklahoma. Campus Corner has tons more charm than Utica Square in Tulsa. It’s more like Highland Park in Dallas.”

Fite insists people are tired of “big box” stores and shopping malls. “They want the unique shops and small restaurants. The Corner just has inherent charm. It’s got that excitement and vitality.

“Campus Corner has the feeling it had 30 years ago.”

Randall Turk is the business editor for The Norman Transcript and freelances for Sooner Magazine.

Thurman White's vision for continuing education recognized that the University needed a whole new approach to meet the needs of its adult students.

Lifelong Learning: The Lasting Frontier

BY ANNE BARAJAS HARP

At 84, Thurman J. White can still see it clearly—his beloved mother, shaking a finger in his face and summing up all the rewards of an education with the simple phrase, “get your lessons.” He could not have known those much-repeated words would resonate over half a century to change the lives of countless adult students at the University of Oklahoma.

Numbers tell part of the story. Just last year, OU Outreach—the collective name of the College of Continuing Education and the College of Liberal Studies—educated and assisted more than 200,000 people through 2,000 courses, programs and activities. Half of all grants and contracts on the Norman campus came through Outreach, generating a total of \$90.5 million from its programs. Thanks to these successes, OU is ranked among the nation's top five institutions in the size and diversity of its continuing education programs.

But numbers cannot do justice to the whole story, which starts not long after statehood when the University's extension service offered correspondence courses, traveling music programs and debate clubs. Other chapters ensued. But perhaps the longest portion of the tale—and certainly one of the most important—belongs to White and his vision of what “getting lessons” meant in the world of adult education.

White came to OU in 1936 as a graduate student in psychology. Shortly after graduation, he was hired by the University to begin a prison education program at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in McAlester at the munificent salary of \$100 per month. Some 800 prison inmates were enrolled in the OU Extension Division Short Courses program White coordinated.

“You might think that showed a great thirst for education; actually, they got out of their cells,” quips White, who lives in retirement in Norman and still carries the title of vice president emeritus for continuing education and public service and Regents Professor emeritus of higher education.

World War II service came along, and then doctoral studies at the University of Chicago. White returned permanently to OU in 1949 as director of the Extension Division, where he found himself challenged to meet the needs of other GIs. The war had changed everything, including the economy, and veterans needed training and help finding a place in the new workforce. For many, the Extension Division filled the bill.

“During the war, OU's campus had been a haunted house,” White remembers. Then suddenly, it was flooded

with veterans. Extension classes were held in familiar surroundings—the former U.S. Navy Bachelor Officer Quarters and old mess hall on North Base, where air conditioning meant big window fans pushing around hot air. What White recalls most about the experience is that the veterans helped blaze the path OU adult education needed to take. “It was an amazing thing to have these 25- and 35- and 40-year-old students on campus. They were the ‘no-fool-around’ type of student, ‘I’m here, teach me.’ And then they were gone.”

They left behind a newly appointed dean of extension who was completely certain that continuing education would play a crucial role in a rapidly changing world, an administrator frustrated by North Base facilities “grossly inadequate” for that task.

“For adults to be properly educated and trained, they needed a unique physical facility, one that recognized them as different from 18- to 22-year-olds, and faculty committed to

the kind of program that adult students required,” White says in his book, *My Journey on the Learning Frontier: the Evolution of a Continuing Educator*.

White turned his energies to funding a new home for his division. He soon met with officials at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, which had underwritten continuing education centers in several states. Foundation members had cooled somewhat to the idea of funding more centers, but White was determined. He armed himself with ideas gathered from research and conversations with leading experts. White brought the Kellogg Foundation a different concept: “a community in miniature,” where the architectural design itself played a prominent role in adult education.

The concept for what would become the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education was based on a simple philosophy: Ideas begin in private and then are developed and shared with larger and larger groups. OCCE would embody this philosophy by offering small, private spaces, middle-sized group spaces and a large, public forum.

“It isn’t what you learn; it’s what you do with what you learn,” White says by way of explanation. “And how you ‘do’ with what you learn is that you internalize it. Internalization comes through discussion.”

Hard-fought victory came in September 1958 with a \$1.84



OU Western History Collections

In this 1958 photo, Governor J. Howard Edmondson, center, listens as Thurman White, left, and OU President George L. Cross, right, outline the unique features of the proposed “community in miniature” that would become the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education.

million grant from the Kellogg Foundation. At the time, it was the largest grant in the history of Oklahoma higher education. Even today, OU is one of only 10 Kellogg-funded, university-based residential conference centers in the world.

Still, not everyone was a believer. “People thought we were crazy to build that thing,” White says, adding that one faculty member publicly referred to the newly completed OCCE as an “attractive nuisance—they thought it would keep faculty from doing what they should be doing.”

Getting faculty invested was the key, and then President George L. Cross passed responsibility into faculty hands by telling them, as White recalls, “Now we have it [OCCE], fellas; it’s up to you to decide what to do with it.”

White stayed in the background, helping where needed while faculty mulled over the idea that OCCE would be the perfect home for a degree program designed just for adults. A committee headed by the late Professor J. Clayton Feaver studied and discussed the problem for nearly a year before unveiling the bachelor of liberal studies degree. The degree was tailored to help adults earn a broad-based, liberal arts education at their own pace. Four decades later, options for earning a BLS or the master’s of liberal studies have grown to include a complete online experience, self-paced study and evening and weekend classes.

White says the BLS owed its success to faculty ownership and

“This is one of the premier continuing education units in the country, and Thurman created the basis for what we do. He really was a visionary.”

recognition of adult students' needs. “Traditional instruction is Monday to Friday on campus. That isn't the way people's lives are built. When you're out earning a living and raising a family, you have to splice in your education. It had to be on the terms of the learner's availability and not necessarily the professor's. You take them when they can come.”

Naturally, some potential students could not come at all. In 1964, White and Walt Scheffer, chair of the OU political science department, went to California to hear U.S. Civil Service Commission head John Macy talk about changing the way civil servants advanced in their careers. Previously, seniority had ruled all advancement; Macy thought only the best should rise to the top. He challenged U.S. colleges and universities to offer programs that would help civil servants reach their potential.

“On the way home, Walt turned to me and said, ‘We ought to do something about this.’ So we came home and did it.”

“It” was Advanced Programs, which offers courses to military and civil service personnel around the world. Scheffer, White and David Ross Boyd Professor and Regents Professor of Economics Alexander J. Kondonassis designed Advanced Programs' intense teaching format, which allows students to take OU courses by preparing in advance, completing a directed reading and attending one or two weekend class sessions. The first class held at Tinker Air Force Base attracted approximately two dozen students. In FY 2005, 13,632 attended Advanced Programs courses in 50 locations ranging from Guam to Iceland. Some say that the sun never sets on the University of Oklahoma, thanks to Advanced Programs.

The sun eventually did set on White's formal career in adult education in 1979. But do not try telling him that—or indeed, anyone else in the profession. White's name is front and center on the OCCE forum building, the centerpiece of what many feel is his legacy. He has received plenty of accolades, from an OU honorary doctorate to being named among the first inductees of the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame. But a larger part of White's legacy is the thousands of colleagues and students he has influenced during the past six decades.

Counted among them are James Pappas, OU's vice president for Outreach and dean of the College of Liberal Studies, and Jerry Hargis, regents' professor of communication at the University of Science and Arts in Chickasha and former executive director for the Oklahoma Higher Education Heritage Society.

“This is one of the premier continuing education units in the country, and Thurman created the basis for what we do. He really was a visionary,” says Pappas, who adds that White's fingerprints still are plainly seen on much of what OU Outreach does. Take, for instance, Outreach's online degree program. While figuring out how best to design the degree, Pappas says he and others were able to pattern their efforts after what White, Kondonassis and Scheffer achieved with Advanced Programs.

Pappas acknowledges that the innovations White brought to

adult education at OU were a growing trend nationwide in the 1940s and '50s. The difference is that White got there before most. “Thurman was riding the crest of the wave. When other people were talking about it, he was doing it. OU has always treated the adult learner as a special group. The model for that was established by Thurman.

“At a core level, he really believed that we ought to be offering services to people who needed them. He believes that learning is lifelong learning, that everyone has to continue to change and learn.”

Pappas is proud to call White his mentor and says that if you polled 30 of today's leading continuing education professionals about the most significant influences on their field, White's name still would be mentioned by nearly all of them.

White's name surely would be on the lips of Jerry Hargis, whose 15-year OU career ended as vice provost for continuing education and public service. He left for the University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education, where he retired as director of educational programs. Hargis credits White for introducing him to the world of adult education. “It's an admiration society on my part,” Hargis says. “Thurman had a confidence, an optimism and a persistence that made his staff feel any goal was possible; as a result, it was. We didn't know we couldn't do it.”

Hargis says the secret to White's success was “a remarkable coincidence of character and training . . . he spanned an era of definition, development, growth and progress that we're not likely to see again.”

Both Pappas and Hargis feel White's character was strongly shaped by his childhood on the north-central plains of Kay County. “Thurman has a core practical streak. He's a product of Oklahoma populism, where people pull themselves up by their bootstraps,” Pappas says.

“He happened to be an Oklahoman,” Hargis agrees, “conditioned by the vistas of the high plains, where you have an unlimited view of the horizon and can dream big dreams.”

As for White, he narrows that view back down to his mother's kitchen and the encouragement of a woman granted only an eighth-grade education. “For her, the ladder to climb was the educational ladder,” he says. Of the five children in the White family, three, including Thurman, climbed as high as the ladder went to earn doctoral degrees.

More than two decades after retiring, White still is concerned about helping others reach their potential. “Someone said that change is inevitable, growth is intentional,” he reflects. “I think growth is essential now—and the only way you can grow is by learning. What you don't know can kill you—physically, financially, emotionally. I think I would call continuing education an imperative. You don't have a choice any more. You never get through the need to know.”

Freelancer Anne Barajas Harp lives in Norman, Oklahoma.

A DOUBLE DOSE OF DEDICATION

Two of the six national finalists for the 2006 Wooden Citizenship Cup were OU athletes—the eventual winner, Jackie Dubois, and Jacob Gutierrez. Their lives illustrate what it means to give back to the community. **By JAY C. UPCHURCH**

Sacrifice is a word that gets thrown around a lot when it comes to athletes and athletics. Ditto for the term “hero,” a popular choice anytime some competitor or team produces a performance considered above and beyond the realm of everyday accomplishments.



Jacob Gutierrez



Jackie Dubois

In truth, sacrifice and acts of on-the-field heroism are fairly common in the sports world, particularly at the Division I collegiate level where student-athletes are endlessly tested by the rigors of daily schedules that begin with early morning workouts, are filled with classroom work and demanding practices and end with a few hours of study hall. While long days of total dedication and perseverance are the norm, finding time for a personal life within these parameters is a challenge.

Jackie Dubois and Jacob Gutierrez have jumped all the requisite hurdles, yet neither has been deterred from making their lives count for something more. During their time at the University of Oklahoma, both have excelled in their respective sports, as well as in the classroom, but what they have done beyond the scope of everyday college life is the most impressive.

“We are talking about two young people with overwhelming

schedules who somehow find the time, energy and passion to go out and try to help others any way they can,” says Joe Castiglione, OU’s director of athletics. “We would hope all of our student-athletes have the kind of charitable dispositions that Jackie and Jacob

have demonstrated while being part of the Sooner family. It is no wonder they both were nominated for this year’s Coach Wooden Citizenship Cup.”

Dubois and Gutierrez were among six finalists who were originally part of more than 100 nominees from around the country, both amateur and professional. OU was the lone university with more than one representative in the group of finalists honored on January 24, 2006, at a formal presentation ceremony in Atlanta by the organization Athletes for a Better World. The Coach John Wooden Citizenship Cup is awarded to an athlete who the selection committee believes has made the greatest difference in the lives of others.

“The mission of Athletes for a Better World is to use sports to develop character, teamwork and citizenship through commitment to an athletic code for living that applies to life, and to

Photo provided



After meeting in a group Bible study, OU runner Jackie Dubois, right, became a mentor to Norman North High School sophomores Caroline Carter, left, and Haley Hudson.

create a movement that will play a significant role in the transformation of individuals, sports and society,” says ABW founder and president Fred Northup.

This year’s collegiate winner was Dubois, who delivered an emotional acceptance speech after receiving a standing ovation from an intimate crowd at Atlanta’s East Lake Country Club that included her parents, Martin and Twyla Dubois, and several other family members and friends.

“It was an incredible feeling just to be a part of that group of amazing [nominees]. To actually win the award was beyond my imagination,” said Dubois after returning to Norman two days later. “Honestly, I was sitting there at the ceremony thinking about all of the other athletes who had been introduced and the stories that had been told, and I felt honored just to be there.”

Dubois’ story is inspirational on many levels, considering she was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis at birth, a chronic and progressive disease that can cause breathing disorders and lung disease. She was



OU Athletics Media Relations

Jackie Dubois overcame the challenges of cystic fibrosis to run cross country for OU and become the only athlete in school history to win all four of the Athletics Department’s top honors, as well as the national citizenship cup.

not expected to live to see her 21st birthday.

But Dubois, 22, has never allowed that initial prognosis to hold her back. She began running as a pre-teen and quickly discovered it helped in her battle with CF. The Kansas native eventually earned All-State honors twice as a prep cross-country performer, which helped her earn a track and field scholarship to the University of Oklahoma.

“My exercise and lifestyle have been beneficial. Our family raised us to be active, and it has definitely made a difference in our lives,” says Dubois, whose sister Leslie also suffers from the disease.

A four-year letter winner with the Sooners, Dubois was a key contributor on an OU squad that earned the cross country program’s first national ranking. That same group also helped the Sooners to their best-ever showing in the Big 12 Cross Country Championships in 2004.

Besides earning First Team Big 12 All-Academic honors three times each in both cross country and track, Dubois somehow found time to volunteer with the Special Olympics, the American Red Cross, Norman Public Schools and the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, among others. For a person who understandably could be caught up in her own daily struggles, Dubois demonstrates extraordinary enthusiasm for reaching out to others.

“I considered it a blessing every time I stepped out onto the track or onto a cross country course at OU.

I’ve always been grateful for my opportunity to be in that situation. No matter whether I finished first or last, I felt fortunate to be there, competing,” says Dubois, who will gradu-



Lazling Photo

Sooner football fans learned last season what students at Madison Elementary School have known for a long time: At 5-foot-6, 185 pounds, running back Jacob Gutierrez is the complete package.



Regina Bell

As part of Madison Elementary's reading program, Jacob Gutierrez earned such an outstanding reputation as a popular role model that two other Norman schools drafted him; then the schools backed his selection as the 2005 United Way Youth Citizen Volunteer of the Year.

ate in May from the OU School of Meteorology.

Dubois takes the same approach to life outside the competitive arena. Although her schedule is jammed with schoolwork and other activities, like representing the cross country team on OU's Student Athlete Advisory Board, Dubois is never short on time when it comes to helping others.

Last April at OU's annual Scholar-Athlete Honors Breakfast, Dubois became the first student-athlete in school history to earn all four major awards—the 2005 Big 12 Conference Medal, the Athletics Council Achievement Award, the Athletics Director's Leadership Award and 2005 Athletics Council Service Award.

"Jackie has made a habit of defying the odds. She is so vibrant and upbeat—she is an inspiration to everyone she comes in contact with," says Debbie Copp, publications coordinator for

OU Athletics Media Relations. "I know she works with kids who suffer from cystic fibrosis, and what better gift to give than the gift of hope? They can look at Jackie and how she lives her life, and be inspired."

Like Dubois, Gutierrez devotes much of his spare time to helping various community causes, particularly public education. A red-shirt sophomore running back for OU's football program, he was honored last spring with the Youth Citizen Award, given by the United Way and the Junior League of Norman in recognition of his volunteer work with local schools.

Even Dubois marvels at the labor of love Gutierrez has committed himself to within the Norman school system. "Jacob is an incredible person, so involved in the community and very selfless in his work. It was great having the chance to spend some time together in Atlanta and get to know him as a person," says Dubois.

Gutierrez' realization that football provides him with an opportunity to positively influence other peoples' lives prompted him to sign up to assist with a reading program that sends members of OU's football team to Madison Elementary School in Norman. He became such a popular contributor, he since has been asked to read and interact with students at Cleveland Elementary and Irving Middle School.

"Jacob is amazing in the classroom. He works so well with the students and has become such a role model for so many of them," says Regina Bell, a music teacher at Cleveland Elementary. "Jacob has basically become part of our family here at the school."

"You can always find time to help others," says Gutierrez. "It may cut into your TV watching or naptime, but it's a pretty small sacrifice when you are talking about doing something for young people. Going to schools and reading is such a great experience, because you can see their faces light up, and they are so excited just to have you there. And they're very attentive to what you do and say. To see you can have a positive influence on someone makes you feel good inside."

Gutierrez has been a positive influence on OU's football program, as well. The 5-foot-6, 185-pounder made the most of his first career start this season when he ran for 173 yards and two touchdowns in the Sooners' 37-30 win over Baylor. He is a top-notch special teams performer and a player who should factor heavily into OU's future.

"Jacob is a solid, caring individual. It is gratifying to see him recognized for all that he is as a citizen, a student and a football player," adds OU football coach Bob Stoops. "There is no way you can place a value on what it means to have someone of his character on our team and on our campus."

Gutierrez suffered a serious knee injury during the Holiday Bowl win over Oregon and underwent surgery on January 25 that will require some rigorous rehabilitation. Neither prospect, he insists, will keep him from returning to the Sooners' lineup—or to the classrooms where his most important fans expect him to be. 🍷

Jay C. Upchurch is a regular contributor to Sooner Magazine. He also is editor-in-chief of a new independent publication devoted to OU sports, Sooner Spectator, and sports columnist for the Oklahoma Gazette.



postscript. Tradition of the OU Flag

When a muscular Ruf/Nek runs onto Owen Field waving the huge, unwieldy OU flag, the crowd knows to jump to its feet and unleash the manic vocal support that ushers the home team into the stadium. A similar scene greets the OU basketball crowds when their teams take the floor in Lloyd Noble Center. The flag and other manifestations of Sooner spirit are meant to send a message to fans and foes alike: This is our house.

The big school flag whipping through the air at sporting events is tradition now, at Oklahoma and most other college venues around the country—but at OU this particular custom was born more of desperation than calculation more than 30 years ago.

Ted Jacobs, a sophomore from Waco, Texas, and grandson of legendary Sooner track coach John Jacobs, had been named to the OU cheerleading squad just prior to the 1975 football season. The tryouts, by his own admission, were not exceptionally strenuous, the only requirement being an ability to perform “double stunts” with a partner. This Jacobs could handle.

He quickly learned, however, that he was the only cheerleader who did not have in his repertoire the typical individual gymnastics moves that have become so routine—handsprings, front somersaults, cartwheels, flips and the like. Jacobs loved his place on the squad, and just days before the first game, he was frantic for a way to keep his gymnastics shortcomings from being exposed to 70,800 game-day spectators.

Driving down Lindsey Street, Jacobs passed a car dealership flying several OU flags. He screeched to a stop and inquired



Robert Taylor

Ted Jacobs led the 1975 national championship Sooner football team onto the field with this orange-juice stained flag, which he gave back to OU to be framed and hung in the Union's Crossroads Restaurant.



Robert Taylor

The OU flag carried by the Ruf/Neks today has grown in size and tradition in the 30 years since a cheerleader named Ted Jacobs established the custom.

where such a flag could be purchased. Then he convinced the OU cheerleader sponsor, Chris Purcell (then assistant director of the Center for Student Development and now vice president for University governance), to buy a flag and allow him to lead the team onto the field.

While tradition was born, Jacobs' standing in the school spirit world was short-lived; the following year gymnastics skills were added to the tryout requirements, and Jacobs was out. He cannot swear that he originated the now-universal school flag practice across the nation, but he insists he knew of none other, certainly not in Big 8, except for the banner used by the Texas band in halftime shows.

By today's measure, Jacobs' flag might be considered puny. While the cheerleaders launch themselves airborne with increasing daring on the sidelines, the OU Ruf/Neks have assumed responsibility for leading the team with a much larger version of the University's standard, and using it to celebrate touchdowns, victories and to exhort the fans to greater frenzy.

The original flag landed in Jacobs' possession. Now the director of the Energy Management Program in OU's Price College of Business, Jacobs donated the historic relic to the University several years ago. It was framed and is displayed in the recently renovated Crossroads Restaurant in Oklahoma Memorial Union.

Close inspection reveals some stains on the white “OU” portion of the flag, which Jacobs claims came from oranges tossed onto the field during a 35-10 trouncing of Nebraska. That win earned the Sooners the 1975 Big 8 title and sent them to the Orange Bowl, where a 14-6 victory over Michigan gave Oklahoma its second back-to-back National Championships.—CJB



McNeese Fitzgerald and Associates

“DREAMCATCHER”—Gracing the August page of the new 2006 OU Calendar is the bronze sculpture of a American Indian woman holding a child and a “dreamcatcher.” A gift from OU alumni Earl Ziegler and his late wife, Fran, the work by New Mexico artist and sculptor Star Liana York stands near the Basic Sciences Education Building at the OU Health Sciences Center in Oklahoma City. Today dreamcatchers are made by American Indian artists of many nations and help assure good dreams to those who sleep under them.