

# SOONER

WINTER 2016

MAGAZINE



## “Warrior-Scholars”

Page 6



Mason Drumm



Josh Gateley

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**On the Cover** • As a U.S. Navy veteran, Nate Ferraro knows firsthand how difficult it can be to leave military service and enter a college classroom for the first time in years—or ever. Now an engineering graduate student, Ferraro is the first director of OU's Warrior-Scholar Project, which builds on strengths veterans already possess to help them make a successful transition from soldier to student.

Story on Page 6 *Photo illustration by Hugh Scott and George Dotson.*

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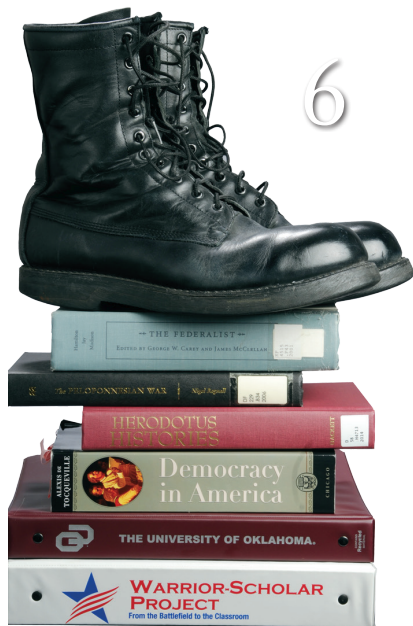
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Wendy Matz

# SOONER MAGAZINE

Volume 36 Number 2

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and members of the University of Oklahoma Alumni Association

**6 THE WARRIOR-SCHOLAR PROJECT** After serving in dangerous war zones across the globe, the most intimidating place for many U.S. veterans is the college classroom. The University of Oklahoma is one of a handful of schools nationwide that offers a leg-up through the Warrior-Scholar Project, an academic boot camp that gives veterans the confidence to tackle their higher education goals.

**14 ALL THE THINGS YOU CANNOT SEE** Audiences in the newly renovated Elsie C. Brackett Theatre were thrilled by the OU premiere of “Ragtime,” but what they may not have realized in the midst of the emotionally powerful musical were all the behind-the-scenes technical improvements that made the production seem effortless.

**18 CELEBRATING NATIVE CULTURES** With 39 culturally diverse tribal nations in the state of Oklahoma, OU is uniquely positioned as a national leader in the study of Native American cultures and histories. A new department designation for Native American Studies and the establishment of the Native Nations Center underscore OU’s commitment to the study of America’s Indigenous peoples.

**26 IN NO ONE’S SHADOW** Ty Darlington had a tough act to follow when he replaced Gabe Ikard as starting center for the Sooner football team. It didn’t take long for coaches and players to discover that Darlington, a two-time All-American who boasts a 3.9 GPA and is active in community service, sets a high bar when it comes to personal goals—on and off the playing field.

*In this issue*

WINTER 2016

# Sooner Shorts



Diane Manchester Drum

## Parade Proposal

**H**undreds of delighted onlookers, family and friends witnessed the moment that Kyle Ferguson proposed to Chloe Tadlock at the OU 2015 Homecoming Parade. It was the perfect spot, since Chloe is chair of the Campus Activities Council and coordinated 2014 Homecoming. Kyle graduated from OU in December, and Chloe will follow in May. The couple attended the same elementary, middle and high schools. “You can say we have known each other a while,” quips Chloe.



## A Daily difference

**Hold onto your pork-pie hats,** OU journalism grads: *The Oklahoma Daily* has gone (mostly) digital. The paper, which has been in production since 1916, will be printed on Mondays and Thursdays. Digital-only issues will be published the remaining three days each week at [www.oudaily.com](http://www.oudaily.com). “We know (our) founders started something special – the independent, student voice of this university,” the paper’s editorial board wrote. “We treasure the *Daily’s* past, but now it’s time to map its future.”

## Fancy footwork

**Sooner quarterback Baker Mayfield** is a man of many talents. After winning the Burlsworth Award in December for the top college football player who began his career as a walk-on, Mayfield wowed the audience of a Norman Public Schools PTA Council fundraiser when he walked onstage lip syncing to Katy Perry’s “California Girls.” Proceeds from the fundraiser will benefit Earth Rebirth, an organization with plans to build a community garden at every public school in Norman.



**Only online:** Catch Baker Mayfield’s performance of “California Girls” and other exclusive features in the *Sooner Magazine* digital edition at <https://sooneromag.oufoundation.org/>.

Subscribers also will receive the latest digital issues of the magazine delivered right to their inbox. Find subscription information at the web address above.

Kyle Phillips / Norman Transcript



April Wilkerson

## A RARE RESEARCHER

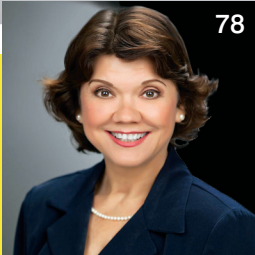
**OU** College of Medicine's Dr. Zhongjie Sun is one of only 13 researchers in the nation ever to be awarded six R01 grants from the National Institutes of Health. The grant is the oldest funding mechanism of the NIH, and just 5 percent of researchers have earned more than two. Sun, a professor and vice chair of research in OU's Department of Physiology, is exploring better methods for treating diabetes and cardiovascular disease through gene therapy. His work focuses on a gene called Klotho, named for the Greek goddess who carried a spindle and was thought to spin the thread of human life.



Robert Taylor

## Hall of Famers

OU President David L. Boren and First Lady Molly Shi Boren were inducted into the Oklahoma Higher Education Hall of Fame in October. The award recognized the unparalleled growth of the Boren era, including more than \$1 billion raised during the couple's first decade of service. Endowed professorships have more than quadrupled to \$2.4 billion; campuses have been added in Tulsa and Italy; and multiple new colleges, programs and building projects have enriched the university. The Hall of Fame also recognized President Boren for authoring the National Security Education Act and establishing the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence.



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Breaking Bad

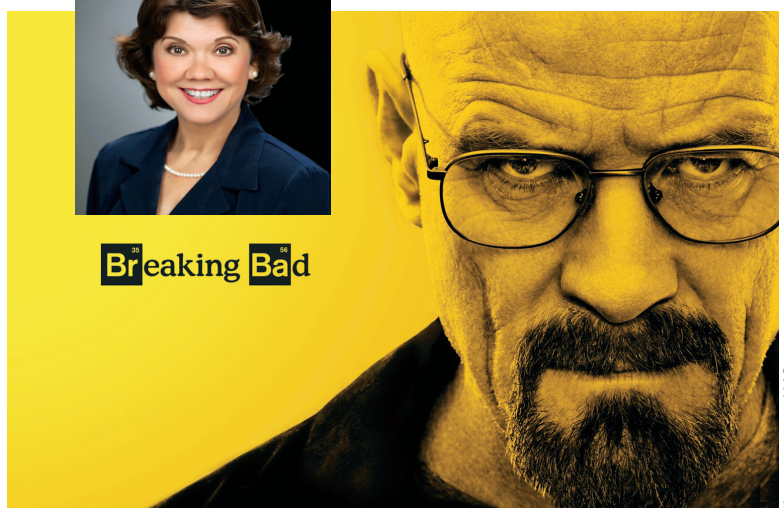


Photo courtesy AMC

## Breaking Barriers

OU Professor of Chemistry Donna Nelson became known as science adviser to the megahit AMC series *Breaking Bad*, but her peers know her as the new president of the American Chemical Society. Nelson's role as an ambassador for "science diplomacy" will include boosting public appreciation of science and networking with international scientists. The Eufaula native and OU alumna is a highly respected researcher who has taught more than 10,000 students; advised Congress; and been named a Fulbright Scholar, Ford Fellow and recipient of a Guggenheim Award.

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# Your Letters

*"I'm proud to be a Sooner, and the article reminded me just how great it is to be a Sooner."*

## Retiring OU Foundation trustee reflects

You always wonder what you will say at a time like this to show your true appreciation. So to all of you who serve either as a trustee or on the great staff of the OU Foundation, I sincerely say thank you.

When driving past the Seed Sower statue on Lindsey Street, we cannot forget the seeds that were given to each of us by our professors to help us plant our own gardens that grow to benefit families, communities and our country. I am most grateful for the influence of our professors.

Fifty years ago, in 1965, my first job out of OU was as a Firing Platoon Leader for an Artillery Battery stationed in Korea. The men in my platoon depended on my decisions each day as we ran our missions along the Demilitarized Zone attached to the Korean Army in the most severe weather and terrain. The success we had is directly related to the influence OU had on me through the College of Business in management and organizational courses, the Army ROTC training in technical and leadership fundamentals, and even through my baseball coach, Jack Baer, who let me walk on as a team member in 1961. For four years, he encouraged me to give my best each day and never give up, no matter what came your way. I am grateful for how all these learning skills have helped me these many years in my profession, as well as in volunteering for many nonprofit organizations.

As I look to the future, I am reminded that, as we were given the seeds for success, it was up to each of us to work hard to grow our own gardens. We now experience the true greatness of a successful garden by sharing it with the OU Foundation for the nurturing of our future students. Thank you, OU Foundation. You have made a difference in my life by emphasizing the value of sharing in a most meaningful way, and thank you trustees and staff for your friendships, loyalty and professionalism. It has been an honor to serve the Foundation, and I know OU will continue to plant the seeds for years to come. Good luck and Boomer Sooner!

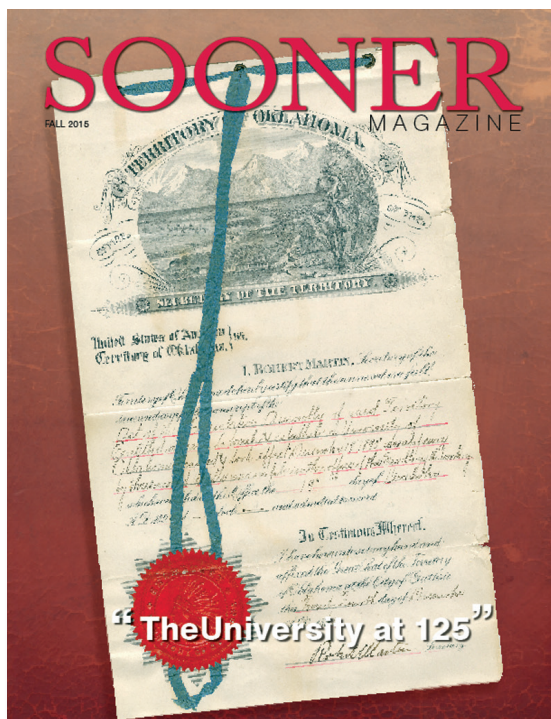
*William L. Ford  
OU Foundation Trustee, retired  
'64 bba, '67 mba  
Shawnee, Okla.*

## Art patron thanks athletics

I am very proud of being a graduate of the University of Oklahoma in 1953. Through the years I have been back to campus from time to time. It has been wonderful to see how it has grown and the campus looks so good. Sometimes when I am there I go to the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art. Your wonderful article about Oscar Jacobson made a trip to the museum a must on my last visit to the campus.

Through the years, I have paid a fee to enter the museum, but not so this time. The attendant told me that the cost of admission was underwritten by the Office of the President and the Athletics Department. That is wonderful. I have told many people about this because I am so pleased with the priorities of my school!

*Nancy Gee  
'53 bs, home ec  
Miami, Okla.*



## OU history

Thanks for writing an interesting and yet relatively brief article on OU history.

The pictures spoke plenty for our history, and I appreciated seeing all of that. It's nice to look back and think about my dad's graduation in '68, mine in '87, and now as my son ponders his college choices, whether OU is the right fit for him.

I'm proud to be a Sooner, and the article reminded me just how great it is to be a Sooner.

*Jay Estes  
'87 bs, aero eng  
Friendswood, Texas*

As an OU graduate, the son and father of OU graduates, I am greatly offended by the homage given to the 1970 hippies shown protesting the Naval ROTC Field Day on page 9 of the Fall 2015 issue. Many of my ROTC colleagues served honorably, and at least one member of my Army ROTC class made the ultimate sacrifice in the Vietnam War.

I am proud of the naval cadets shown in the background in the picture. I am equally proud you honored Congressional Medal of Honor winner John Lucien Smith on page 7.

*William C. McAlister  
'61 bs, mech eng  
Edmond, Okla.*

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## Print vs. online

Congratulations on the best edition of *Sooner Magazine* I have seen in a long time.

Please do not discontinue the printed edition. There is nothing like a hard copy at the breakfast table and I fear I would lose interest in the institution if only a digital version would be available.

David Reith  
'63 ba  
Kent, Ohio

I love the *Sooner Magazine* in any form. I save all my printed issues so I can share them.

The pictures in this issue on the computer are awesome. Some bring back memories.

My parents moved their big family to an apartment house they bought in 1946 at 521 West Symmes, so we were two blocks from OU. Nine of their 11 children are OU grads, as well as a grandson, who graduated in mechanical engineering (his father has a master's from OU in electrical engineering) and a granddaughter, who went several years to OU and did well. We recently had a reunion of the eight living siblings of Andrew and Elsie Pannell.

Our mother started taking OU courses when I graduated from OU in 1956. She got a degree in elementary education (a dream of hers) when a son and daughter-in-law graduated in the 1960s. Three of their sons played football for OU, her first five children played in the OU band.

Thank you for always being a school we can be proud of.

Mary Bearden  
Class of 1956  
Tulsa, Okla.

## Gridiron memories

I started school at OU in 1946, the same year Coach Jim Tatum and his assistant, Bud Wilkinson, were hired. Tatum soon left and Wilkinson took over. At the end of Wilkinson's first season, the record was 7-2-1. Then came 1948, when the team won all 10 of its regular season games but lost the Sugar Bowl to North Carolina. 1949 was even better, because OU won all of its games and the Sugar Bowl against Louisiana State 35-0.

Could Oklahoma continue its winning ways my senior year? OU won its first 1950 game against Boston College 28-0, but then came the game against Texas A&M at Oklahoma Memorial Stadium.

A&M scored first on a 62-yard drive, then OU full-back Leon Heath sped 25 yards to even the count. A pass down the middle from OU quarterback Claude Arnold gave OU a 14-7 lead. Our celebration was short-lived; before the half ended A&M had knotted the score at 14-14. We needed halftime to catch our breath and relax our throats.

The third quarter started well. 1952 Heisman win-

ner Billy Vessels put OU in front 21-14, but A&M staged a 60-yard match capped by a scoring plunge from the 4-yard line. And the game did not get better. On the first play of the final period, A&M made it 28-21 in their favor.

OU's responding scoring drive put them within one point. Kicker Jim Weatherall hadn't missed that season; if he could make the extra point, OU would tie the game with three and a half minutes to play. Our happiness turned to misery when he missed. The chances of winning were slight, but OU did not give up. There was only a little over 100 seconds left. The Sooners weren't known for their passing game, but there was only one option.

Miraculously, Claude Arnold completed five of six aeri-als. OU fans were screaming so hard that most of us became hoarse. The excitement was more intense for a longer period than I've ever felt at a game. And when Leon Heath fought his way into the end zone with 37 seconds left, 40,000 fans went ballistic. There was more hugging and kissing than at all of the weddings in the U.S. for the year. Did it really happen or was I just dreaming? It did happen, and OU went on to win all of their 1950 regular season games.

Since I moved to California in 1956, I have attended three OU games – against Stanford in 1983, UCLA in 1990 and the 2003 Rose Bowl against Washington State. Whether I watch OU games on TV or in person, you can bet that I will be yelling at the top of my lungs, "Go, Sooners!"

Leonard Leventhal  
'50 ba, econ  
Placentia, Calif.

## Galileo

Your fall issue article *Discovering Galileo* brought memories of taking a three-hour course under Dr. Roller. I have never forgotten the course or Dr. Roller. It was an interesting and challenging course. I graduated in 1960, so I think I took the course in 1959. Thanks for a great issue.

Lawrence Williams  
Class of 1960  
Owasso, Okla.

I was astonished that the article on the several Galileo exhibits at OU in the Fall 2015 issue of your magazine, that is intended for donors and alumni, did not mention Everette DeGolyer, the alumnus, geologist, oilman, book collector, and donor who started the History of Science Collections in the 1950s. There are two biographies of him, including a recent one.

Margaret Rossiter  
The Marie Underhill Noll Professor  
of the History of Science, Cornell University  
Ithaca, N.Y.



# The Warrior-

BY ANNE BARAJAS HARP

**A**s a U.S. Marine, Hector Alicea survived one of Afghanistan's deadliest combat zones in the Sangin District of Helmand Province. But when it came time to plan his future, the former sergeant faced a new battle.

"I wasn't the greatest high school student; I struggled a lot," says Alicea, who hopes to become a psychologist and enrolled in a community college near his hometown of Shelton, Conn., soon after leaving active duty. "I was intimidated by the idea of having to go to graduate school, write a dissertation, and get my doctorate."

Last summer, he came to the University of Oklahoma to take part in the Warrior-Scholar Project, an academic "boot camp" designed to help enlisted military veterans get the most out of their G.I. Bill benefit by building a skill bridge between military service and college success. The Warrior-Scholar Project, or WSP, started at Yale University in 2012 with nine veterans and is supported largely by private funds. OU became one of 11 WSP sites nationwide in August 2015 and one of

OU engineering graduate student Nate Ferraro serves as the first director of OU's Warrior-Scholar Project and is helping his fellow former service members transition from the rigors of military life to the challenges of academic life.

Photo by Hugh Scott



BUILDING A BRIDGE  
BETWEEN MILITARY SERVICE  
AND HIGHER EDUCATION  
WITH AN ACADEMIC BOOT  
CAMP THAT HELPS U.S.  
VETERANS TRANSITION INTO  
SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS.

# Scholar Project

only three public universities, with peers at such private institutions as Georgetown University, Harvard and the University of Chicago.

"I knew I was capable of doing so much more and going a lot further with my academic success, so I decided to take a look at it. Once they got me hooked, I thought, 'I have to do this,'" Alicea says.

WSP strives to mesh the strengths of military experience with those of leading universities and focuses on building strategic skills in analytical reading and college-level writing, alongside tactical skills in such areas as note-taking, test preparation and time management. Veterans' transitional and support needs also are pillars of the program, says OU alumnus and WSP Executive Director Sidney Ellington.

Ellington has a foot in both military and higher education as a retired U.S. Navy Commander and senior Naval Special Warfare (SEAL) officer who earned three degrees from OU and a master's degree in national security from the Naval



Photos Provided

Home safe from one of Afghanistan's deadliest war zones, former U.S. Marine Sergeant Hector Alicea traveled from Connecticut to Norman to participate in the Warrior-Scholar Project. "The WSP helped me realize I'm not alone in this," says Alicea, who hopes to earn a doctorate in psychology and serve veterans suffering from PTSD.



Postgraduate School. He also served as director of Teach for America's Military Veterans Outreach and Support Initiative, which links enlisted veterans with teaching in at-risk public schools.

"The military culture is very unique in that everything is done for the service member so they can concentrate on accomplishing the mission," the native of Fairfax, Okla., says from his Washington, D.C., office. "You leave an environment where it's all about team and go into the civilian world. Veterans don't understand how the game is played in the civilian world because the culture outside the gates of a military base is so different from the culture inside. The transition can be very, very difficult, especially if you are talking about veterans who have spent an extensive amount of time in combat."

But military service also produces strong character traits. "We look at veterans as civic assets, team builders, leaders, technicians. They are problem solvers," Ellington says. "The way to tap into this incredible talent and skill set honed through life-changing experiences they've had during military service is by elevating veterans into leadership roles. They need a good education, and for the enlisted person, that can seem like an insurmountable challenge."

Nate Ferraro understands that feeling all too well. Now an OU engineering graduate student, Ferraro went straight from high school to the U.S. Navy for four years. He entered his first college classroom at Penn State University just four days after leaving the military.

"I was terrified for the first week," he admits. Ferraro's experience made him the perfect choice as the first director of OU's Warrior-Scholar Project. His many tasks included recruiting several of the university's most inspiring professors to teach seminars and daily writing workshops, attracting volunteer staff, and arranging housing and food service. Ferraro also trained at Yale and observed their WSP in action.

"Over the course of seven days, the Warrior-Scholar Project addresses all of the transitional issues I had to struggle through during the first year of college and learn by trial and error," he says. "If we can minimize the fear and stress for veterans by teaching them how to cope with or overcome obstacles before school even starts, that's one of the best things we could do."

Not to say that fear – or at a minimum, nerves – was absent in August, when OU's first 11 Warrior-Scholars were thrust into a whirlwind of intense academic experiences. Most had not seen a classroom for at least six years, and one had not been



Photos Provided

The Warrior-Scholar Project helped former U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Angelika Woods re-enter college while balancing academics with motherhood and marriage to an active-duty soldier. “I thought what an awesome opportunity it would be,” says Woods, who left the military when 1-year-old Amor was born. “I didn’t want someone else to raise my daughter.”



in school for 24 years, yet they dove into a regimen of nightly readings that included Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*, Robert Dahl’s *How Democratic is the American Constitution*, and Thucydides’ *History of the Peloponnesian War*. The readings fueled daily seminars of penetrating, heady discussions led by top OU faculty. Afternoon essay writing and editing sessions with professors and undergraduate student assistants often stretched into evenings, when reading began again.

“I knew I was going to be pushed, but the Warrior-Scholar Project was a wake-up call,” says Alicea. “I spent more time looking over Tocqueville and Dahl than I’d spent in my entire previous semester of study. But I love being challenged.”

“One of the biggest strengths that vets have is they tend to be relentless and won’t give up on something until it’s completed,” Ferraro says. “Every person has some degree of mental toughness, but veterans tend to be on the upper limits of that spectrum. They also have a global perspective that many traditional students don’t have. Their experiences can enrich learning for everyone.”

Those experiences, formed by years of service and sacrifice, added a unique layer of gravitas to discussions on freedom and

democracy during the first WSP seminar led by Wilfred M. McClay.

“I remember thinking how remarkably philosophical this group was, in the sense that they were interested in asking big-picture, reflective questions. Few undergraduates have sufficient life experience for a lot of ‘big’ questions to be meaningful,” says McClay, OU’s G.T. and Libby Blankenship Chair in the History of Liberty. Seminars also were taught by Norman campus Provost Kyle Harper, Honors College Dean David H. Ray, David Ross Professor Emeritus David W. Levy, and Gene and Elaine Edwards Family Chair in Law Michael Scaperlanda.

The Warrior-Scholars didn’t shrink from tough answers, either. “The professors challenge what you read,” says Santos Ramirez, a former Air Force sergeant and medic studying biology at OU in hopes of someday becoming an emergency room physician. “You come in with a certain perspective and you leave with something else.”

In addition, WSP students leave with a kit of academic tools. Foremost is an analytical reading process nicknamed “Ninja Reading,” which teaches students how to deconstruct texts through annotation and extract the most critical infor-



mation. “It’s using the layout of the book to your advantage,” Ferraro says.

Angelika Woods has taken full advantage of Ninja Reading. A former Army staff sergeant now majoring in sociology at the University of Texas at El Paso, Woods had completed online courses while in active service as an air battle management system operator. But she had not been in a traditional classroom for nine years. “Going back to school on campus was going to be different for me. I wanted to focus on how to study and was willing to take whatever the Warrior-Scholar Project could give me,” says the future social worker.

As the mother of a 1-year-old daughter and wife to an active-duty Army sergeant, Woods was especially concerned about juggling child care with academics. And like many for-

“We look at veterans as civic assets,” says Warrior-Scholar Project Executive Director Sidney Ellington. The retired Naval Commander and Navy SEAL has strong OU ties as a triple alumnus who met his wife (two-time OU graduate and former instructor Toni Caldwell Ellington) while both were Athletics Department student employees in the 1980s. Their youngest son, Blair, also is an OU alumnus.

a social media support group of tutors and more than 300 alumni.

“The WSP helped me realize, ‘Hey, I’m not alone in this,’” says Alicea. “There are other people like me in school who deal with the same issues, and the resources are there for us. Issues

aren’t going to affect us in the classroom – if anything, they’ll help us. That was comforting.”

As Alicea, Ramirez, Woods and their WSP classmates wound up their first semester at colleges across the nation, Ferraro was preparing to recruit the next wave of Warrior-Scholars. OU will welcome as many as 15 veterans to an extended program featuring one week each of humanities and STEM-based learning. OU

and Yale were the sole universities chosen to pilot the STEM curriculum, which is focused on physics.

But Ferraro says the most gratifying result of the WSP may be more intangible than readiness to tackle the humanities or the sciences. “The difference in confidence levels was amazing. It was like night and day,” he reflects. “The program shows veterans their hidden potential.”

Confidence and potential have given Afghanistan combat veteran Hector Alicea a new mission in life. “I’m very motivated. Before the Warrior-Scholar Project, I didn’t have that,” he says. “Now, I want to attack college head-on.”



*Anne Barajas Harp is assistant editor of Sooner Magazine.*

## “THE WSP HELPED ME REALIZE, ‘HEY, I’M NOT ALONE IN THIS. THERE ARE OTHER PEOPLE LIKE ME IN SCHOOL WHO DEAL WITH THE SAME ISSUES, AND THE RESOURCES ARE THERE FOR US.”

mer service members accustomed to a life of rigid structure, she struggled with time management. “My hardest adjustment since I’ve been out of the military has been figuring out my own schedule. Ninja Reading has helped me make decisions and take what I needed from each material.”

All aspects of converting from soldier to student can be stressful for veterans. WSP participants attend daily presentations on adapting to a new life and are pointed toward resources ranging from scholarships to PTSD counseling. “The ultimate goal is to make veterans aware of all the transitional issues they’ll face so they’re not blindsided,” Ferraro says, adding that OU has nationally been considered one of the best universities for veterans. WSP graduates also have access to



Hugh Scott

## OU has tradition of veteran support

“Serving veterans is part of the history of OU,” says Nate Ferraro, Warrior-Scholar Project director and Pat Tillman Scholar. Indeed, anyone familiar with the university’s roots knows that Oklahoma Memorial Union and the Gaylord Family–Oklahoma Memorial Stadium were named in honor of those who fought and died in World War I. OU’s Norman campus also features memorials to students, faculty and staff who have died in each of America’s wars.

But many may not know that OU offers a full range of veterans programs that serve as a living tribute and a roadmap for success to the university’s nearly 480 veterans and 1,000 military-affiliated students. In fact, for two years in a row, OU has been named both a “Best for Vets College” by *Military Times* and in the “Top 10 Best Colleges for Veterans” by *USA Today*. Here are a few reasons why:

**OU Veteran Support Alliance:** This volunteer support group has trained more than 500 faculty and staff members as “Green Zone” allies, providing a safe place for active-duty service members and student veterans to discuss issues and learn about resources. The VSA also sponsors special events for veteran students, faculty and staff and supports the Student Veterans Association.

**OU Student Veterans Association:** A student-led organization, the SVA sponsors regular events such as November’s Veterans Recognition and Appreciation Week, the Sooner Salute Graduate Ceremony, and tailgate parties to welcome visiting student veterans. SVA members also sponsor “RED Fridays” encouraging Sooners to wear red and Remember Everyone Deployed.

**Pat Tillman Foundation University Partner:** Based on its veteran-friendly atmosphere, OU was chosen to recruit and submit candidates for the prestigious Tillman Military Scholars Program, which provides veterans and their spouses with educational and living expenses not covered by the GI Bill. Tillman, who died in Afghanistan, gave up an NFL career to serve as a U.S. Army Ranger after 9/11.

**Children of Fallen Patriots Partner:** OU is one of only five universities nationwide to partner with this foundation, which provides scholarships and educational counseling to children who have lost a parent in military service.

**Veteran Scholarship Opportunities:** Including the Chevron Student Veteran Engineering Scholarship, the Hugh Reynolds Armed Forces Scholarship, the LaVerne Noyes Memorial Scholarship, the Miller Family Scholarship and the Vietnam Memorial Scholarship.

For a complete list of OU veteran services, visit [http://www.ou.edu/veterans/veteran\\_student\\_services.html](http://www.ou.edu/veterans/veteran_student_services.html).

# The Big Idea



How can band students sharpen their marching formations outside of practice?

There's an app for that.

BY SUSAN GROSSMAN

Like most polished professionals, they make it look easy.

But it is only after many hours of practice and repetition that the 285 members of the Pride of Oklahoma Marching Band step onto Owen Field to create the moving formations Sooners fans enjoy. While those carefully choreographed designs are no less formidable each football season, the time it takes to learn them has been drastically reduced thanks to the One University Digital Initiative.

Each band member is now equipped with an iPad that holds animated drill charts, mp3 recordings of musical parts, a calendar of football season events, a roster of the Pride, and many other applications to assist them in performing at their best. The iPads are provided at no charge to band students. Pride alum Kristopher Davis and David Goodspeed – vice president and director of One University Digital Initiative, respectively – were instrumental in the iPad rollout.

Hugh Scott



With new iPads and an app designed specifically for marching bands, members of the Pride can practice their routines anywhere at any time. Set to the band's music, the app shows individual musicians their position on the field for each specific beat.

"The iPad initiative has really upped the learning curve for our students," says Brian Britt, director of the Pride of Oklahoma. "We are able to make the limited amount of time we have together meaningful and productive."

The Pride stages six new halftime shows every fall. Perfecting each marching drill is perhaps the single most time-consuming aspect of game-day preparation. Because the iPad allows for drill charts to be animated, members can zoom in on their spot on the field, see where they are in the formation and watch exactly how to move into position.

"I was really excited when I first heard about using iPads," says Lauren Chapin, a junior elementary education major from Flower Mound, Texas, who learned about the iPad initiative last spring. As the flute section leader,

Chapin says the elimination of paper has been great and listening to her halftime music is extremely beneficial.

"As soon as we saw the apps and how we could search for ourselves to find our spots on the field, we knew it was going to be better. The iPad shows you exactly where to go. You just hit 'play' and it zooms in so you can watch your moves to see where you are going. It is so much easier than using paper drill charts."



Photo Provided

The Pride was pitch perfect and razor sharp during its halftime performance featuring the music of Bruno Mars for Sooner football's 2015 opener against the University of Akron at Owen Field. Not only did the marching band look and sound great, the Sooners beat the Zips 41-3.

Previously, reams of paper with a static formation of the drills outlined page by page were required for each member. With 285 students requiring 25 pages of drill instruction for every halftime show and another 45 pages each for pregame, Britt estimates that OU will save nearly 65,000 pieces of paper annually.

The iPad helps directors as well. The former paper drill charts were composed of dots and coordinates, and students were known by numbers and letters. Now students and their names are associated with their spots on the field.

"We no longer have to say, 'T1! Who is T1?'" as we learn drill," Britt says. "As directors we can quickly identify our students without having to refer to them as numbers."

By making drill learning easier, the band can focus more time on how it sounds and memorizing new music – which, in turn, translates into confidence and a better halftime show.

"A confident band sounds better and a band that sounds better looks better," Britt says. "I am really pleased with the work that our students have done to learn how to implement this technology."

Pride leadership got the iPad initiative rolling as soon as school was out last spring, says Graham Delafield, a senior biochemistry major from Oklahoma City and mellophone section leader.

"Mr. Britt and Associate Director Dr. Brian Wolfe took time last summer, held classes and trained section leaders first," Delafield says. "They kept in touch with us regarding what apps we might need, what to use them for and let us see how those apps might work. When it came time for auditions we had the iPads out and incorporated them into that process. Our directors really helped us introduce this initiative to the full band."

It has been an ongoing learning curve as the Pride adapts to technology. Soon it became apparent that it would be difficult to carry an instrument and the iPad at the same time. Handles

and straps quickly became part of the hardware. Students and staff also were tuned in to the changing seasons with temperatures falling, addressing the effect of cold on the iPads.

"There is a threshold with technology," Delafield says. "In concept it is great, but as early adopters there are things we have to iron out. Overall, the iPads have been a fantastic addition to our band. And they are certainly better than all that paper we have used up in the past."

The iPad initiative has also had a significant impact on the concert wind ensembles.

"Students who are involved in both the Pride and our concert ensembles use their iPad in a multitude of ways," says Dr. Michael Hancock, assistant director of bands and conductor of the OU Wind Symphony. "They have instant access to the Desire 2 Learn website, which contains content specific to our concert preparations in many ways: access to multiple mp3 files of each piece of music in the concert cycle; scores so that they can examine their part and how it fits into the context of the work; and detailed writings from the composer, or the conductors of these works, and how it may apply to their part."

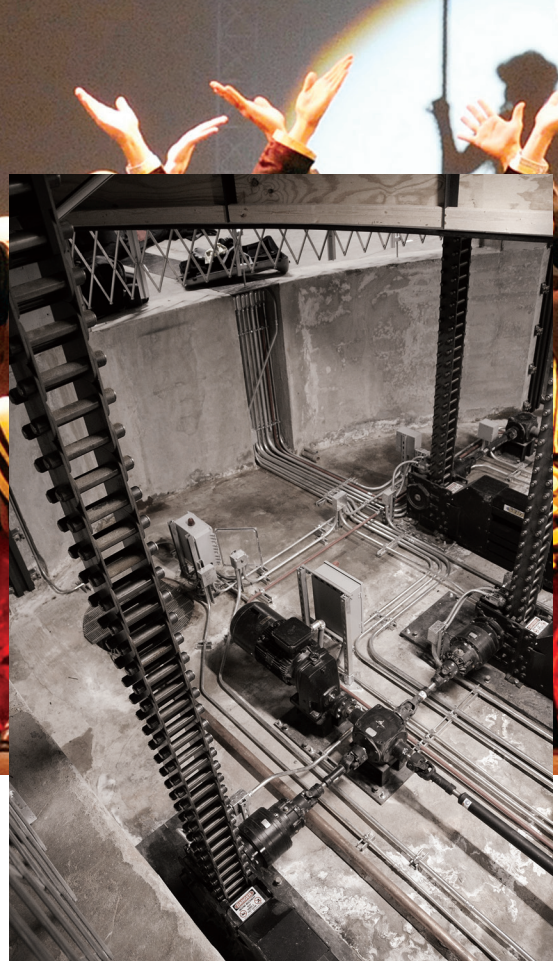
Perhaps most important to Britt is the fact that the iPads alleviate student anxiety. As the semester progresses and class workload increases, students can streamline time spent on the field with the demands of college life.

"My goal is to eliminate anything that could create additional stress in the lives of our students," Britt says. "There is unavoidable angst and avoidable angst. So we are going to get rid of that last one. And then they can focus on the unavoidable stuff."

In short, the Pride iPad initiative is helping OU's storied marching band put its best foot forward, one position at a time.

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*Susan Grossman is a freelance writer living in Norman.*



An October performance of Tony Award-winning musical *Ragtime* thrilled the packed house at the grand opening for the new Elsie C. Brackett Theatre. What the audience may not have noticed were the improvements behind the scenes that brought the show to life.

# *All the Things You*



The high-tech makeover of OU's premier performing arts space gives audiences even more ways to believe in the magic of the theatre.



Wendy Mutz

# *Cannot See*

By LYNETTE LOBBAN



Hugh Scott

OU's beloved student theatre received a total makeover and new name this year. The Elsie C. Brackett Theatre at the Rupel Jones Performing Art Center boasts a revamped lobby, new seating, fresh paint, carpeting, wall finishes, and a crimson stage curtain.



Hugh Scott

The Brackett Theatre's new fly system is responsible for up to 300 different stage elements per show and features five motorized lines – a vast improvement over the previous 1960s rigging that relied solely on arm muscle.

For theatre-goers, there is plenty to love about the newly renovated Elsie C. Brackett Theatre in the University of Oklahoma Fine Arts District. Fresh paint, new carpeting and a luxurious grand drape give the audience a sumptuous visual experience at first glance. Regulars will notice that the cushy new seats not only feel more comfortable, they no longer squeak like the shower scene from *Pyscho*. But what's most impressive to fine arts faculty and students are the improvements behind the scenes.

Sleek and modern when it opened in 1965, the former Rupel J. Jones Theatre had been relying on much of its original equipment through decades of musicals, operas, dance productions and stage performances. "Safety is a primary concern," says Tom Huston Orr, James Garner Chair and director of the Helmerich School of Drama. "We had updated the dimmers, but we were using the same wiring, the same fly system, the same hydraulics as when the theatre opened. It was all functional, but it was all 50 years old and in need of serious repair."

The original wiring in the building had been pulled and stretched for decades and sometimes even rained on from roof leaks, now repaired. The back stage communication system among technicians and directors was in a similar state, fritzing out on a regular basis. "There's a whole show going on backstage that the audience is unaware of," says Orr. "And that infrastructure had really deteriorated. I've run performances talking with our tech students on cell phones because the system's headsets no longer worked."

Theatre patrons and OU supporters Betsy Brackett and her

husband, Gregg Wadley, came to the rescue with a lead gift that not only brightened the front of the house, but also addressed the aging mechanics. Every inch of wiring has been replaced, and crews have an integrated communications system that reaches backstage, downstairs, the green room and the lighting and sound booths.

One piece of theatre equipment the audience may have noticed, but only when it went awry, was the ancient fly system used to lift scenery, lighting instruments and sometimes people, above and across the stage. The system relied on strong arms pulling heavy mechanics hand over hand through a system of ropes and pulleys.

"Every once in a while during a performance, the rigging got stuck and decided not to move," says Orr. With as many as 300 different lighting instruments literally hanging on the integrity of the stage rigging that could be a problem.

All of the pulleys, cables, battens and counterweight systems have been replaced. Five of the batten lines are mechanized, and operate with the touch of a button. Orr says the new fly system is "a wonderful blend of cutting-edge technology combined with age-tested mechanics."

From a wall panel backstage, one person can control most functions of the theatre—raise the curtain, change the stage lighting, turn on the houselights or create different moods on-stage with a host of pre-sets. "Everybody loves it," says Orr. "The actors, the stage managers, the designers—it's user-friendly."

Lighting design student Zakary Houara agrees. "OU strives to give students a world-class education," he says, "And

Hugh Scott



OU's first new theatrical lighting system in 50 years shines down on orchestra members rehearsing for a December production of *The Nutcracker*.

Hugh Scott



we are now working with state-of-the-art equipment at industry standards, which gives us a leg-up on our peers.”

A new sound board in the auditorium is the centerpiece of a dramatically redesigned acoustic system. “Running that board is like flying a plane,” Orr says. “No, it’s more like a starship. The learning curve on ‘Ragtime’ was a bit steep, but the soundscape in the space is fantastic. It’s amazing.”

The last thing the audience would ever want to see, says Orr, was the original hydraulic lift system underneath the stage. “It looked like something out of a Frankenstein movie or the bowels of a huge ship, and it failed regularly.

“My favorite part of the old system was that sometimes in the middle of a show, the lip of the stage would slowly sink about three inches, and then the hydraulic pressure would kick on and it would rise back up again. It happened all the time. Actors got used to it.”

The new lift mechanism looks like a piece of modern art and is both smooth and silent. Not only can it elevate the lip from 17 feet below to nine feet above the stage, it can also tilt, offering directors, actors and designers a greater range of experience for university theatre.

“We have put ourselves in a wonderful position for the future,” concludes Orr. “Personally speaking, we all could use a facelift after 50 years.”

ABOVE RIGHT - The Brackett Theatre’s new Serapid hydraulic system can soundlessly lower the stage lip 17 feet below or lift it an astonishing nine feet above the stage. The lift system was among the most challenging renovation projects, since it was necessary to build an aqueduct to divert a stream that runs below the theatre.

Hugh Scott



Lighting design senior Zakary Houara masters the Brackett Theatre’s new sound board for orchestra members rehearsing *The Nutcracker* in December. State-of-the art sound equipment is just one component preparing students like Houara for professional careers in technical direction, scene technology, stage management and performance.

# Celebrating CN Native cultures



With degree programs and a new department designation, OU has become a national center for the study of Indigenous peoples' complex past and evolving future.

*By Katherine Parker*



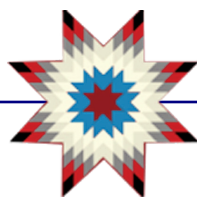
**A**s nimble fingers drive needles down and back through patches of fabric, layers bind together creating a warm, comforting quilt. At the turn of the century, the U.S. government promoted quilting groups among Native American women as a means to sew their way to assimilation. Instead of forsaking their heritage, however, the women incorporated Native American symbols into their work, creating a new Native American art form. The star quilt, historically associated with the Sioux, has become a Pan-Indian symbol of cultural tradition, change and sovereignty, and now serves as the logo for the Native American Studies Department at the University of Oklahoma.

Just as Native American quilts are made with many different pieces by many different hands so, too, is the Native American Studies program diverse, vibrant and reflective of cultural change and growth. Native and non-Native students bring together different perspectives to learn about a complex past and living culture, says Native American Studies Department Chair Amanda Cobb-Greetham, a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation and former Chickasaw Nation tribal official.

“No other campus in the region has the resources that OU has for Native American Studies. We’re poised to be the leading academic program in the country,” says Cobb-Greetham. Growth in both curriculum and enrollment prove her case.

The department offers students a variety of options. Rance Weryackwe of the Comanche Nation is quickly gaining a passion for teaching; Stormie Perdash, who is Shoshone-Bannock, is involved in multiple campus organizations and hopes to compete for 2016 Miss Indian





Mason Drumm

Native American Studies major Kimberley DeJesus will complete her reign as Miss Indian OU in March. DeJesus, who is of Comanche, Otoe-Missouria, Pawnee, Ioway, Sioux and Puerto Rican descent, plans to continue her education in medicine so she can further assist Native American people.

World; and Renley Dennis, a Choctaw citizen, is working to make his grandmother proud with a master's of arts in Native American Studies and Juris Doctorate.

"I came to Oklahoma from Montana specifically for this program. I believe OU has one of the best Native American programs in the country," Perdash says. "I couldn't be happier here. So many programs just have '101-type' Native American classes, but OU has several emphases and a depth you don't get anywhere else."

Weryackwe came to OU after his mother passed away and he had dropped out of school. He joined the Native American Studies Department and found a community and support system, as well as new passions and a connection to his family.

"It's exciting being a student teacher. My mother got her Ph.D. at OU, and she was an educator as well. So I grew up

around education my whole life, but I didn't plan on following this path," Weryackwe says. "But I've enjoyed moving from a student to a teaching assistant. I think the education that transpires here is one in which the teacher isn't the only one who's teaching. There's a joy to it."

The journey to become a top program in the nation has not been without obstacles. With a rich, 22-year history, OU's Native American Studies program became a degree-granting unit in 1994.

"Really though, our roots extend even farther back into the university's history, beginning in 1915 when American Indian students met with the university president and requested classes in Indian subject matter," explains Cobb-Greetham.

Over the years, Native American Studies has taken many different shapes across campus. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s,



Hugh Scott

Amanda Cobb-Greetham, director of the Department of Native American Studies, poses with a star quilt sewn by her Chickasaw grandmother, Ida Mae (Dinah) Pratt Cobb, who was featured in a book about government-run schools for Indian children (inset at left).

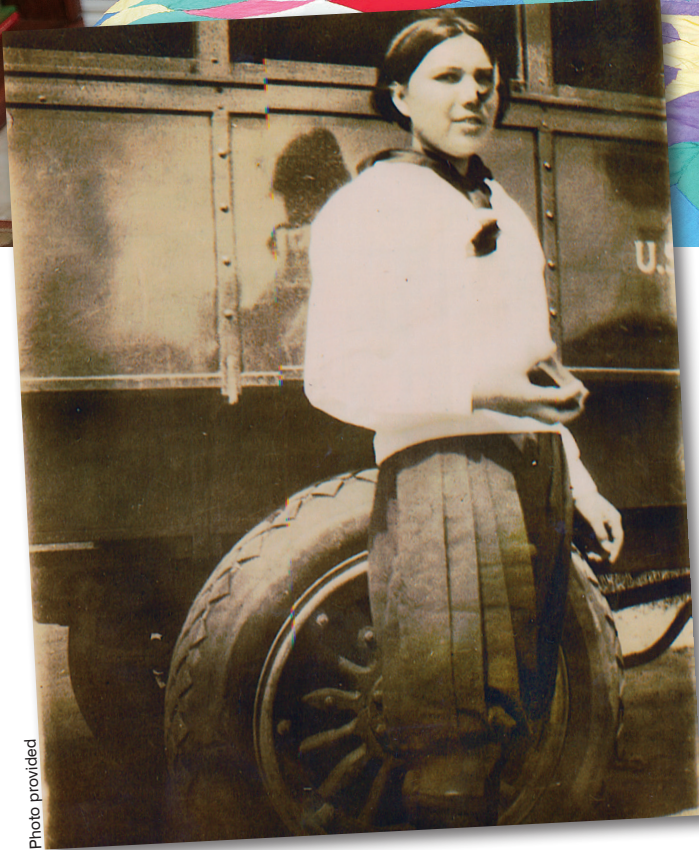


Photo provided

OU President William Bennett Bizzell had a vision to create a building and program dedicated to Native American coursework. Although the physical building never materialized, classes in Native American culture and history became part of the curriculum, making OU the second university nationwide to offer such courses.

“We consider that to be the origin of our department on campus,” Cobb-Greetham says.

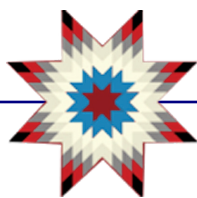
Today, as the program transitions into a full-fledged department in the College of Arts and Sciences, current students, faculty and staff are creating new dreams and visions.

The importance of Native American cultures is felt

across OU’s campus. On October 12, the university replaced Columbus Day with an Indigenous Peoples’ Day celebration. University President David L. Boren continued Bizzell’s vision by choosing this occasion to announce the elevation of NAS to a full-fledged department and the creation of the new Native Nations Center, which will be the hub of Native American activities and resources, as well as a research center featuring internationally recognized scholars with conference rooms and seminar spaces. According to Cobb-Greetham, the Native Nations Center will make OU the undisputed national leader in this area. And, like star quilts, the Center will turn existing pieces into something far greater than the sum of its parts.

This year the department plans to add to its four tenure and tenure-track professors by hiring a new faculty member specializing in Indigenous language revitalization. In the years to come, the department hopes to increase the number of majors and graduate students and to offer a doctoral degree.

Currently, the program offers bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Native American Studies. Since recently revising the degree program, all students take core classes in Indigenous theory and research methods before selecting an area of emphasis in either tribal governance and policy;



Indigenous media and arts; or language, cultural knowledges and history.

“Each area of emphasis draws not only from the strengths of Native American Studies but from the OU campus at large,” Cobb-Greetham says. Indigenous media and arts students have access to the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art collections, and OU is home to the Native Crossroads Film Festival.

“For me, it has always been a living culture. But I definitely think outdated ideas are something we, as Indian students, are

confronted with,” Weryackwe says. “What NAS does is highlight the contributions tribes and tribal members make to the state and country, which I think is beneficial for everyone. We should all realize our worth and communicate that to others, Native and non-Native.”

The NAS also offers a joint master’s and juris doctorate that many students take advantage of to further understand Native history, identity and sovereignty. Perdash says she plans to enter the MA/JD program after she obtains her bachelor’s, while

## Growing a National Resource

BY HEATHER AHTONE

The Native American Studies Department at OU has rich resources at hand, including the Western History Collections and the Sam Noble Museum of Natural History. And since 1996, the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art has grown to become a national treasure for the study of Native American art.

The acquisition that year of the Richard H. and Adeline J. Fleischaker Collection, followed by gifts from Dr. and Mrs. R.E. Mansfield, and Charles H. and Miriam S. Hogan, established OU as a regional center for the study of Indigenous art. With the arrival of the Eugene B. Adkins Collection in 2007, the Rennard Strickland Collection in 2008, and the James T. Bialac Collection in 2010, the OU museum became fully representative of the developments in Native American art throughout the 20th century, with more to come.

A knowledgeable and savvy collector, Jim Bialac continues to purchase and donate contemporary works to the Fred Jones, including the sifter basket pictured above. “Separating the Chaff,” by Cherokee artist Shan Goshorn, is one example of how 21st-century Native art can function on two levels: preserving traditional beauty while making a statement of what it is to be Indian today.

When filled with cracked grain and gently shaken, the large weave at the base of a sifter basket would allow husks to fall through while retaining the desirable kernel. The woven splints of “Separating the Chaff” are printed with illustrations and text from 1960s

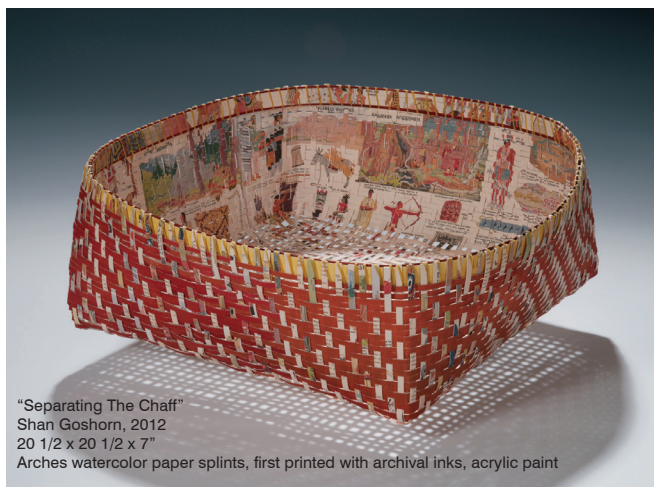
reference books that were used to teach American children about Native cultures. The basket is meant to show that Indian people need to decide how they want to portray themselves and actively filter through misperceptions and untruths.

Building on the strength of the museum’s collections, its curator, OU professors and graduate interns have been developing exhibitions that recognize the arts as a critical form of communi-

cation for oral-based cultures. Their original scholarship is helping to connect materials, designs and metaphors with tribal knowledge expressed in art from pre-Columbian pottery to modern printmaking.

The Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art is located at 222 Elm Ave. Admission is always free.

*Heather Ahtone is the James T. Bialac Assistant Curator of Native American and Non-Western Art at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art.*



“Separating The Chaff”  
Shan Goshorn, 2012  
20 1/2 x 20 1/2 x 7”  
Arches watercolor paper splints, first printed with archival inks, acrylic paint





OU students Randi Hardin, left, and Kelbie Kennedy, both of the Choctaw Nation, celebrate Commencement 2015. Hardin, a dual-degree student, earned both her Juris Doctor with a certificate in Native American Law, as well as her Master of Arts in Native American Studies. Kennedy earned her Juris Doctor with a certificate in Native American Law.

Dennis is currently completing his second year in the program.

“My Choctaw background was important throughout my life because of my grandmother, who passed away in 2004,” Dennis says. “I have an understanding of the more modern Choctaw culture because of her. I would participate in the annual festival at Tushkahoma and other tribal events. Native American Studies at OU is just a continuation of that. My dad recently told me that my grandmother and great-grandmother would be so proud of me for getting my master’s and JD. For my dad to be able to say that ... oh yeah, that’s big.”

By integrating an understanding of tribal issues with his legal studies, Dennis believes that he will be better able to serve individual tribes. Moreover, students who take part in the joint program have an educational opportunity unlike anywhere else.

“As far as I know, we are the only university in the country to offer a joint master’s in Native American Studies and a JD,” Cobb-Greetham says.

In addition, approximately half of all juris doctorate students in the College of Law take an Indian law class, making the Native American Law Program one of the college’s primary areas of study. Oklahoma students recognize that Indian law issues may affect every area of practice, from administrative law to zoning law, contracts, property, family, personal injury, and environmental law. The Native

American law program prepares students for local or international practice.

OU Law is also home to the Center for the Study of American Indian Law and Policy, which provides counsel to tribal, state and national policymakers. The center was founded in 1990 by the late Rennard Strickland, a descendant of the Osage and Cherokee nations and a distinguished law scholar and Native American art collector. More recently, the John B. Turner LL.M. Program was established to offer a combination of courses – available only at OU – that allows students to choose from three specializations: energy and natural resources, Indigenous peoples law, or U.S. Legal Studies. Importantly, the MLS focuses on contemporary tribal governments.

“When many people think of Native American subject matter, they do think of an antiquated past. But the 39 tribal nations of Oklahoma and the 560 some-odd tribal nations of the United States are contemporary, living cultures and governments,” Cobb-Greetham says. “There never is the question of, ‘What are you going to do with your degree?’ Native American Studies at OU is uniquely competitive and highly valuable. We are a part of the fabric of the whole state.”

*Katherine Parker is a freelance writer living in Oklahoma City.*

# Sooner Nation

BY ANDREW FAUGHT

## OU alumna lends voice-and cameras-to America's hungry

**A**S PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES WRANGLE OVER THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY, UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA ALUMNA MARIANA CHILTON POINTS TO A REALITY THAT OFTEN DOESN'T MAKE THE HEADLINES: EVERY DAY, 48 MILLION AMERICANS – OR 15 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION – GO HUNGRY.

"I've been talking about this as a major crisis for years, but it's too uncomfortable to think about children not eating," says Chilton, founding director of the Center for Hunger-Free Communities at Drexel University in Philadelphia, where she is an associate professor at the Dornsife School of Public Health. "We don't talk about poverty in the media in a way that's meaningful and understandable, so it's easy for people with wealth and a modicum of comfort to turn it off.

"And yet," she adds, "people are experiencing food insecurity all around us."

Chilton, who earned her master's in epidemiology at OU's College of Public Health in 1999, is working to incite dialogue in a dramatic way. Since 2008, she's distributed 100 cameras to residents in Philadelphia; Boston; Baltimore; Camden, N.J.; and New Haven, Conn., as part of her Witnesses to Hunger program. Participants are charged with capturing images that tell the story of food deprivation in the United States. Photos aren't just of empty refrigerators. They are pictures of poverty, including snapshots of broken kitchen appliances and boarded-up row houses.

Hunger, which Chilton says, "is not an eyeball diagnosis," is explained through other unstinting apertures. One witness turned her lens on community violence, clicking a picture of pooled blood on a city sidewalk.

"Hunger magnifies other problems across the country," Chilton says. "Families don't go hungry in a vacuum."

Since launching Witnesses for Hunger, Chilton, joined by witnesses and their photos, has testified three times before Congress on the need for such programs as the Farm Bill to support health and nutrition. Children are at highest risk. A healthy baby's brain grows by 700 neurons a second, less if it is

undernourished, according to research.

"Hunger affects math and reading scores," Chilton says. "Children are more likely to repeat a grade and less likely to complete high school. It's not just about food. It starts to spiral down into other social and emotional problems. Basically, food insecurity is driving up health care costs and causing an enormous amount of social and emotional pain among a huge swath of the American people."

Witness photos have been featured in exhibits and have been highlighted in the media, including CBS News and *The Washington Post*.

"The photographs are an attempt to break down the barriers for people who don't want to know about food insecurity and for those who are afraid to ask questions about it," Chilton says. "We also want people to break out of the stigma of hiding in shame."

The conversation is incrementally gaining traction. In 2014, Chilton was appointed to serve on the bipartisan National Commission on Hunger, of which she is co-chair. The group released its findings in November 2015 to Congress and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which administers the national food stamp program, known as SNAP, or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Some of the commission's major findings were the need for job-training and assistance programs to lift low-income Americans out of poverty, special attention to families with children and veterans who are

hungry, as well as adjustments to the SNAP program to allow families more time to stabilize after getting a job.

As hunger goes, Philadelphia ranks number one in food insecurity among the 10 largest American cities, according to Eva Gladstein, the executive director of the Mayor's Office of Community Engagement and Opportunity. Twenty-six percent of residents – nearly 400,000 people – live below the federal poverty line, she notes. Gladstein's office uses Chilton's data and hosts programs that give residents financial counseling and money management skills as one way to foster food security.

Gladstein praises Chilton as a "straight talker," but "I think her greatest value is that she understands and listens to other



Photo Provided

Lesha, a mother in Boston, took this photo of her son for the Witnesses to Hunger Project. She writes, "Looking back at this picture, I realized how much I hated to take the T, but my son always seemed to enjoy the ride. It's hard for me to do a lot with my son ... I'm telling myself it's only temporary."



MARIANA CHILTON

people's points of view and learns from them. She helps them speak for themselves and tell their own stories. Mariana is very creative in terms of being able to get those voices in front of people who can make decisions and affect policies."


For its part, the Drexel Center for Hungry-Free Communities hosts the Philadelphia site of Children's HealthWatch, the largest data set in the nation about food insecurity and its impact on children younger than 4, ages in which mild to moderate under-nutrition can have long-term consequences on brain development. Children's HealthWatch is headquartered at Boston Medical Center and collects data from clinics and emergency rooms in five cities, including Philadelphia.

Chilton is a familiar sight on Capitol Hill. Representatives from her office travel to Washington, D.C., every six weeks to meet with legislative staffs in hopes of advancing hunger as a policy concern. Chilton has provided data to lawmakers who are considering reauthorizing the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids

Act, which funds all federal child nutrition programs, including school breakfast and lunch programs.

Chilton first began to consider hunger in America while pursuing her master's of public health at OU. Working with the southern Cheyenne and Arapahoe tribes, "I realized the centrality of food in their lives," she recalls. "I learned about the sacredness of food, but I also saw how very deep poverty can really mess up the nutrition and health of people."

More than 15 years later, hunger continues to be her life's work. Chilton's language is blunt, her words easily mistaken for anger.

"What you're hearing is courage and fearlessness," she says. "What people need is more compassion, and in order to get that you have to be fearless and talk about what's real." 

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*Andrew Faught is a freelance writer living in Fresno, California.*

# IN NO ONE'S SHADOW

BY JAY C. UPCHURCH

TY DARLINGTON PROVED HIMSELF A **POWERFUL FORCE**, NOT ONLY IN HIS POSITION AS OU'S CENTER, BUT IN THE CLASSROOM AND COMMUNITY AS WELL.

**W**hen Gabe Ikard departed for the National Football League after the 2013 season, he left a void in the Oklahoma lineup that was significantly larger than his sizable 6-foot-3, 298-pound frame.

Ikard was more than just a great football player; he was the epitome of a student-athlete at the collegiate level, the type of young man whose accomplishments off the field rivaled those he produced as a four-year starting offensive lineman and center for the Sooners.

Finding one player to step into that position and not be overwhelmed seemed like an almost impossible task for Coach Bob Stoops and his staff. After all, consensus All-Americans with 4.0 grade point averages don't exactly grow on trees.

Amazingly, Stoops needed only to look as far as the next guy on the team's depth chart. That's where Ty Darlington resided for much of his first two seasons at OU, working as a part-time starter and main understudy behind Ikard in 2012 and 2013.

Darlington came equipped with a great football pedigree, an abiding love for the University of Oklahoma, valuable game experience, and aspirations similar to those of his former teammate and mentor where football and classwork are concerned. All he needed was an opportunity to start building his résumé.

And that is exactly what Darlington has done in the past two seasons, not only proving himself to be a more than capable replacement at center, but also serving as an exemplary student-athlete who has matured into an outstanding ambassador for the football program and university.

"It's unusual to have two high-caliber guys like Gabe and Ty playing the same position and following each other up like they have the last few years here," says Stoops. "Gabe set the bar very high for anyone who came after him — All-American, a number of great academic achievements and just a great all-around leader — but Ty has stepped in and lived up to the standards that he inherited and really has been everything we hoped he would be."

All Darlington has really ever wanted to do is play football at OU and represent the Sooners to the very best of his ability. He dreamed about it as a child growing up in Florida and has gone on to live it as a young man who put together two final seasons that would make Ikard proud.

**He succeeded on all counts.**  
*continued*

As scary as he is on the field, there is more to OU center Ty Darlington than intimidating size and fearsome ability. When he wasn't hiking the ball to Baker Mayfield, Darlington could be found studying—he has a 3.9 GPA—or offering his help anywhere from tornado victims in Moore to earthquake survivors in Haiti.



Josh Gateley



National Football Foundation

Ty Darlington accepts the Campbell Trophy as college football's scholar-athlete of the year Dec. 8 at the Waldorf Astoria in Manhattan. The OU center also won the Wuerffel Trophy, which honors athletic performance combined with community service and academics, and the Bowden Award, a national honor presented annually to one exemplary college football player by the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

"Ty's combination of talent, intelligence and passion for the game has made him a great leader for OU football," says Ikard, now a backup offensive lineman for the Detroit Lions. "With his performance in the classroom and his display of toughness on the field, he has been a great example for the young guys in the program."

“TY'S PASSION FOR HELPING OTHERS IS DRIVEN BY HIS FAITH AND HAS MADE HIM A GREAT LEADER FOR THE ENTIRE OU COMMUNITY. HE IS THE ULTIMATE EXAMPLE OF A COLLEGE ATHLETE.”

Darlington basically picked up where Ikard left off and has been very conscious about trying to have a similar impact on people.

"Gabe was my mentor and an excellent role model my first two years at OU and I learned a lot about how to play at this level from him, especially how to prepare yourself and how

to operate on the field," says Darlington. "He set the bar extremely high and I've worked hard to live up to that. To be able to follow in his footsteps has been a real honor for me."

The Sooners would have been happy for Darlington to step in and become a good, solid contributor, a player who does his job on and off the field without much fanfare. That is normally

the life of a college lineman — working in the shadows of the trenches while the higher-profile players soak up all of the glory.

Darlington is certainly no headline seeker, but he is also not your average college offensive lineman.

He's not even your average college student.

Besides earning a 3.91 career GPA at OU (he made one B while completing his undergraduate degree in the College of Arts and Sciences' Planned Program with an emphasis in Health Promotion) Darlington has twice garnered First Team All-Big 12 Academic honors and is a two-time Academic All-

American. This season alone, he took home both the William V. Campbell Trophy and the Wuerffel Trophy, something that even Ikard did not accomplish during his OU career.

The Campbell Trophy is annually awarded to the individual recognized as the top football scholar-athlete in the country, while the Wuerffel Trophy honors the collegiate football player who best exhibits exemplary community service, along with qualifying academic and athletic achievement.

“Ty’s passion for helping others is driven by his faith and has made him a great leader for the entire OU community. He is the ultimate example of a college athlete recognizing the platform that he has and making the most of it,” says Ikard, the 2013 Wuerffel Trophy winner.

When he is not on the football field or in the classroom working on his graduate degree, Darlington somehow finds time to involve himself heavily in campus life. He is currently the 2015-16 president of the Big 12 Student-Athlete Advisory Committee and one of 15 Division-I student-athletes who serve on the NCAA’s autonomy legislation committee, which oversees an ongoing quest to provide student-athletes with more of a voice in their intercollegiate athletic experience.

“That whole deal has been a great experience. I learned a lot as far as how the legislative process works and what the NCAA represents; just to be a part of the governing process and to have the responsibility of representing so many student-athletes is an honor,” says Darlington, who also served two terms as president of OU’s Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter and continues to be very involved in the FCA.

The list of Darlington’s non-football efforts is seemingly endless. He helped lead the OU football program’s volunteer efforts to aid victims following the May 2013 Oklahoma tornadoes and is a regular volunteer at the Oklahoma’s Children’s Hospital. For the last three years, he has traveled with other OU athletes to Haiti as part of Mission of Hope, which provides earthquake damage relief to children and families.

Where does he find the time and energy to reach so far beyond the normal scope of an average college student?

“That’s the way I was raised — you always strive for excellence and you work to serve your community and help others any way you can. My favorite verse in the Bible is Colossians 3:23, which says, ‘Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for man.’ So that’s pretty much the approach I take with everything I do,” says Darlington. “I am always going to give my best on the football field because that is what I was recruited here at OU to do. But my life and who I am go way beyond football.”

Those principles are easily traced to his parents, Rick and Shelly (Fried) Darlington of Apopka, Fla. They provided a fundamental road map of hard work, charity and ambition



Holly Cowden

OU center Ty Darlington blocks for quarterback Baker Mayfield during the Texas Tech game Oct. 24 in Norman, which the Sooners won 63-27. After the Orange Bowl, his last game as a Sooner, Darlington tweeted that his four years at OU “have been a heck of a ride.”

that have served their oldest son very well, especially during his OU journey during the past four years.

“My mom and dad always stressed the importance of a good education and how you should treat people. I guess I took those things to heart and do my best to live by them,” says Darlington, the oldest of seven siblings.

His mother believes her son’s generous disposition and wide range of accomplishments can be traced to a more compelling source.

“The Lord has blessed Ty with a special drive to do well in everything he chooses to do. It doesn’t matter what he is doing, he always gives a maximum effort,” says Shelly Darlington. “He continually sets very high standards for himself and then makes it look easy. His father and I are obviously proud of everything he has accomplished at OU, but even more proud

“I always dreamed of someday playing for the Sooners, and to have that become reality has been even more special than I could have imagined.”

because of the person he has become.

“He makes us a better family, and I believe he makes the people around him want to do better and be better.”

Two other qualities he received from his parents have also helped define Darlington as he has grown into a young man — a love for all things OU and a passion for football.

His mom grew up in Midwest City, Okla., and was a member of the OU pom squad during the latter part of the Barry Switzer era. She came from a long line of Sooner faithful and shared that devotion with her son at a very early age.

“My first baby clothes had an OU logo on them and I was a diehard Sooner fan growing up. I always say that, ‘I’m Sooner born and Sooner Bred,’ and I was taught to say, ‘Texas sucks’ when I was a little kid,” says Darlington. “I always dreamed of someday playing for the Sooners, and to have that become reality has been even more special than I could have imagined.”

Of course, a critical part of the equation came from his father, a prep football coach who taught his son the fundamentals at an early age and coached him all the way through high school.

“Growing up, all I ever wanted to do was play football at OU. And by the time I was a senior, I had grown enough and developed and matured to the point that I found myself in a position to potentially play at the next level,” says Darlington. “God blessed me in a lot of ways, but having my father for a coach was the best blessing of all.”

He arrived on the OU campus as a four-star recruit in 2012

and eventually saw action in nine games that fall. The following season, Darlington was limited to just three games due to injuries, but he spent much of his time shadowing Ikard in an effort to better understand the center position.

All of his hard work finally began to pay off in 2014 when he became an integral part of the offense as the starting center. Prior to the start of the 2015 season, Darlington was voted team captain by his teammates, an honor he cherishes as much as being an All-American or national award winner.

“It’s great to be recognized for what you do, but to know that you’ve earned the respect of your teammates and coaches — that’s a pretty special feeling,” says Darlington. “I take an awful lot of pride in that role.”

Oklahoma quarterback Baker Mayfield credits Darlington with playing a major role in the team’s overall success.

“Ty has been such a positive force for our young offensive line all season. He really has been a great leader for the entire team, just in the way he works and approaches the game,” says Mayfield. “I couldn’t ask for a better center. There is a lot of trust involved there and we’ve developed a great relationship during my time here.”

Darlington’s time at OU will come to a close this spring. He is scheduled to earn his master’s degree in Adult and Higher Education with an emphasis in Intercollegiate Athletics Administration in May. But that could potentially be put on hold depending on how things go with April’s NFL combine and his pro football future.

“Ty is an athletics director in training, but he may have much bigger sights than that,” said OU Athletics Director Joe Castiglione. “He’s exceptional. I start to run out of adjectives. He’s just an extraordinary leader.”

Whatever the future holds, Darlington will no doubt be ready for it. For now, he’s soaking in his last few months on campus and looking back on what has been a memorable collegiate journey.

“My time at OU has been such an incredible experience, from being a student-athlete and being a part of this special program and playing for Coach Stoops to all of the experiences I’ve had outside the game of football,” says Darlington. “So many incredible opportunities have opened up for me during my time at the University of Oklahoma, and I’ve embraced them and enjoyed every second of it.”

“You kind of know what to expect with the atmosphere, the facilities, the level of tradition and things like that, but there is no way to predict some of the experiences and the people you meet along the way. Those experiences and people have made a lasting impression on me.”



Jay C. Upchurch is editor of Sooner Spectator.







# Postscript

## One Good Turn

**L**ong before oil prices fell below \$27 a barrel and the Oklahoma State Legislature was grappling with a \$1 billion budget shortfall, administration at the University of Oklahoma grew concerned that the cost of a college education was rising beyond the reach of middle- and lower-income families. The unrealized gains of future scientists, doctors, teachers and engineers in the state was a loss the university was unwilling to accept.

In 2004, OU launched the Campaign for Scholarships and in 2015, the Live On, University Campaign in honor of the university's 125th anniversary. With the two efforts combined, more than \$315 million has been raised through the generous support of private donors. But raising money alone doesn't help students. Scholarships must be awarded before parents and students can breathe a sigh of relief.

With more than 4,000 scholarships available campus-wide, the former application process could be time-consuming and confusing. Colleges and departments used different forms, different deadlines, and students had to fill out the same information again and again. Even the brightest and

**“THE WHOLE POINT OF THIS SYSTEM IS TO INCREASE APPLICATIONS AND GET MORE STUDENTS THE HELP THEY NEED.”**

most deserving found the process daunting and would often overlook scholarships for which they were qualified.

Guy Patton, president of the OU Foundation, and Nick Hathaway, executive vice president of administration and finance, met with Alison Baker, director of the Scholarship Office, to see how all parties could better serve the wishes of scholarship donors and the students they wanted to help.

“We realized the application process for continuing students was difficult to maneuver,” says Baker. “Freshmen fill out one application for admission and scholarships; as soon as they become sophomores, they have fifty or more applications to choose from. So that's where we started. We needed something comprehensive and streamlined for sophomores, transfers and upper-division students.”

The result of a year's work was the creation of CASH or Centralized Academic Scholarship Hub. The online program is nearly sentient in its ability to direct students to every

scholarship for which they are qualified with a minimum of duplication. Personal information—name, hometown, major, GPA—is pulled from the student database and appears on the form after students log in with their university ID. Once they have answered a few broad-based questions and checked boxes relevant to particular needs or disciplines, a flowchart directs them to any follow-up pages that are necessary.

Baker explains: “The system looks at the information and says, ‘This student is in Arts and Sciences, they will be available for these scholarships.’ So it directs the student to the page that has specific Arts and Sciences questions.”

If students check the box indicating financial need, interest in study abroad, or a range of other interests, they are directed to any additional questions that apply. Most students will fill out only two to three pages and will have applied for all scholarships for which they are eligible instead of filling out 40 different forms.

In addition to saving time, the intuitive software often finds scholarships that students may not have even known existed. For example, if the work history section shows that an applicant was once a carhop at Sonic,

CASH searches and discovers a scholarship for Sonic employees, past or present, majoring in Arts and Sciences with a 3.0 GPA, and will include an additional question from that application. If there is an award that requires a very specific essay, the Scholarship Office will let the student know.

“The frontload of organization on this effort was huge,” Baker admits. “The hardest part was getting

everyone coordinated. It wasn't that the colleges or departments were doing anything wrong, it was just they were all doing their own thing, different applications, different deadlines, and a student had to fill out the same information over and over.

“This way we only ask an additional question or two. And we now have a deadline of Feb. 1 for the vast majority of applications. On the other side of the system, the committees that award scholarships are only seeing applications that qualify. There is little wasted effort at either end.”

The new system is easy for students, easy for committees, and the generosity of donors is rewarded by matching gifts with gifted students. “The whole point of this system is to increase applications and get more students the help they need,” concludes Baker. “School is hard, scholarships shouldn't be.”

—Lynette Lobban

# *Epilogue*



**PAS DE DEUX SANS FIN-** When Native American ballerina Yvonne Chouteau died on Jan. 29, newspapers from New York City to Los Angeles mourned her passing. After successful careers in the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, Chouteau and her husband Miguel Terekhov, who died in 2012, founded the University of Oklahoma School of Dance. Author and dance critic Edwin Denby called Chouteau “lovely in every way.”

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**CELEBRATING NATIVE CULTURES** - A teepee stands in front of Bizzell Memorial Library where participants celebrated OU's first Indigenous Peoples' Day. Festivities included a tribal flag procession across the north oval, Native dancers and drums, and information tables about Indigenous cultures. For more on OU's Native American Studies Department, see article on *Page 18*.