Historic Chickasaw Nation gift enhances world-class Native American Law Program

- BIALAC COLLECTION
  One of the largest private Native American art collections
- FULL-TIME DISTINGUISHED SCHOLARS
  in Native American Law
- HIGHEST AVERAGE ENROLLMENT
  of American Indian Students in the nation for the last 10 years
- Native American Law SPECIALIZATIONS
  LL.M. + M.L.S. + J.D. Certificate
- More than a dozen SPECIALIZED COURSES in Native American Law
- Chickasaw Nation NATIVE AMERICAN LAW ENDOWED CHAIR
- Host of 2014 National NALSA MOOT COURT COMPETITION
- 40% OF OU LAW STUDENTS complete a class in Native American Law
- Hosts one of the largest NATIVE AMERICAN LAW SYMPOSIA IN THE NATION
Dear Friends,

As Oklahoma’s premier law school, it is appropriate and important that OU Law is flourishing as a national leader in Native American law. This issue of Sooner Lawyer showcases a number of the important pieces that comprise our comprehensive program. Woven into the fabric of the College, Native American law is central to our strategic vision and an integral part of our curriculum.

Our feature story focuses on the Chickasaw Nation’s historic gift this fall to establish the Chickasaw Nation Native American Law Chair, the first of its kind in the United States. This chair will allow OU Law to attract and retain, as a permanent faculty member, the most outstanding scholar in Native American law. The national reputation of this scholar will elevate and enrich the prominence of the OU College of Law Native American Law Program. This gift is truly remarkable, and we are grateful to the Chickasaw Nation for its generosity.

In this issue, you will find updates on a few of our recent Native American Law Program graduates who have embarked on important careers in this field. You will also see a focus on OU Law faculty who specialize in this notable area of law.

There is a wonderful highlight of the James T. Bialac Native American Art Collection, one of the most important private collections of Native American art in the United States. OU Law is privileged to host over 300 pieces from this extraordinary collection which now adorn the grand spaces of the Donald E. Pray Law Library and the hallways of all three floors of the College of Law. You can view several photographs of the collection in this edition of Sooner Lawyer, but we invite you to visit the College so that you may see this impressive collection in person.

This past fall, we hosted the third Order of the Owl Hall of Fame Dinner. In this issue, we feature the four alumni inducted into the Order of the Owl Hall of Fame: Michael Burrag, Kathy Taylor, Ralph Thompson and Lee West. The induction dinner was filled with laughter and tributes as we recognized their exemplary leadership and accomplishments. OU Law is honored to have these four alumni inducted into our most prestigious society.

Finally, this summer is the 40th anniversary of OU Law’s partnership with Oxford University. To celebrate, we are hosting a four-day alumni celebration, July 6-10, at Oxford. On page 16, you can read about our wonderful Oxford summer program and consider joining us for this special reunion. Whether you attended Oxford while in law school – or wish you had – this is going to be a remarkable alumni event.

We appreciate your continued support of the University of Oklahoma College of Law.

Warmest regards,

Joseph Harroz Jr.
Dean and Professor
Fenelon Boesch Chair of Law
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Historic Chickasaw Nation gift enhances world-class Native American Law Program

You need only look at a map of the state to understand the impact of Native American culture upon Oklahoma and its people. The names of the state and its counties and cities reflect the historical and permanent effects of tribal influences. The images found on the Oklahoma flag and vehicle license plate further illustrate the extent of Native American influences.

In October, an announcement by the Chickasaw Nation demonstrated the important role tribal governments continue to play in shaping Oklahoma’s future. With a generous gift to the University of Oklahoma College of Law to establish an endowed chair, the tribe provided the impetus for history to be made. The Chickasaw Nation Native American Law Chair is the first endowed chair of its kind in the United States, and will allow OU Law to attract and retain, as a permanent faculty member, the most outstanding national scholar in Native American law.

“The Chickasaw Nation’s generous gift underlines the leadership of the OU College of Law in Native American law,” said OU President David L. Boren. “We are deeply grateful to Gov. Bill Anoatubby and the Chickasaw Nation for their remarkable commitment and transformative gift that further enhances the college’s national and international reputation in this field.”

“The Chickasaw Nation is excited to endow this chair at the University of Oklahoma College of Law,” said Anoatubby. “We are proud to support OU Law in its commitment to training the next generation of excellent lawyers who understand and care about the legal issues faced by Native Americans.”

As the 12th largest federally recognized Indian tribe in the United States, the Chickasaw Nation, with more than 50,000 citizens, had an economic impact of more than $2.4 billion in Oklahoma in 2011. The tribe is the seventh largest employer in Oklahoma, with more than 10,000 employees in the state and more than 12,500 worldwide. Based in Ada, Oklahoma, the Chickasaw Nation is a democratic republic with executive, legislative and judicial departments. The tribe’s jurisdictional territory includes all or part of 13 counties in south-central Oklahoma.

This cornerstone gift of the Chickasaw Nation, and the endowed chair it establishes, will provide the foundational elements to build upon and strengthen the already highly regarded Native American Law Program in place at the OU College of Law. Located in the heart of the original Indian Territory, OU Law provides an ideal environment for the study of Native American law and issues concerning indigenous peoples.

Oklahoma contains nearly 40 tribal nations and the second largest Native American population in the United States. Given this presence and the history of the region, Indian law affects virtually all areas of legal practice, making it a vibrant and growing field.

During the past 10 years, OU Law has maintained the highest average enrollment of Native American students among law schools nationwide. That trend continued with the 2013 incoming class – more than 11 percent of these first-year students are Native American.
At OU Law, Native American law is integrated into the curriculum, rather than being an isolated specialty. Approximately half of all juris doctor students take an Indian law class, making the Native American Law Program one of the college’s primary areas of study.

Students recognize that Indian law issues are interwoven within many areas of law from administrative law to zoning law, and are particularly common in practice areas such as contracts, property, family, personal injury, and environmental law. The Native American Law Program prepares students for local, national or international practice through a range of educational opportunities.

The three components of OU Law’s Native American Law Program include the Juris Doctor Certificate, the Master of Laws and the Master of Legal Studies. Each provides specialization in Native American law, tailored to fit the needs of different students.

The Juris Doctor Certificate in American Indian Law enhances a student’s law school experience by providing a solid grounding in Native American and indigenous peoples law through a unique blend of substantive legal knowledge, practical application, and exposure to the field through an externship or other approved employment. The benefits of this certificate, earned concurrently with the juris doctor degree, reach the people of the state of Oklahoma and beyond by educating lawyers to work in the vibrant and growing field of Indian Law.

The Master of Laws in Indigenous Peoples Law is one of the specialized degree programs offered in the John B. Turner LL.M. Program for individuals who have already earned their law degree and want to further enhance their legal education. The LL.M. in Indigenous Peoples Law allows attorneys to focus their advanced legal studies on areas of law that directly impact indigenous people. The degree can be completed in one year of full-time study or two years of part-time study.

The Master of Legal Studies in Indigenous Peoples Law degree is for both lawyers and non-lawyers seeking legal knowledge in indigenous peoples law. The master’s degree benefits those working with tribes who would like a working knowledge of legal issues but not a license to practice law. The degree can be completed online in two years of part-time study.

The importance of Native American culture and law upon the OU College of Law is readily apparent on a walk-through of its building. Coats Hall is home to a portion of one of the most important collections of Native American art in the country, the James T. Bialac Native American Art Collection, displayed throughout its hallways. See pages 8-9 for additional information about this multimillion-dollar collection, which is part of the permanent collection of the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art.

Further evidence of OU Law’s focus on Native American law can be found in the continuous publication, since 1973, of the scholarly journal, American Indian Law Review. On February 27, the AILR hosted one of the largest Native American law symposia in the nation.

In addition, on February 28, OU Law hosted the 22nd annual National Native American Law Students Association Moot Court Competition, which drew law students from around the nation. Third-year student Roy B. Brown is vice president of the NNALSA, and served as the competition administrator.
Recent Native American Law Program graduates

Maryanne Mohan ('13), born and raised in Portland, Oregon, attended the George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and majored in anthropology, focusing on the Northwest Indian culture. She wanted to pursue her interest in Indian law and natural resource law and chose the OU College of Law because “it presented an opportunity to study at an institution with the perfect intersection of Indian law with natural resource and water law.”

As a student, Mohan was a member of the American Indian Law Review and served as vice president of OU’s chapter of the Native American Law Students Association. She twice participated in the National Native American Law Students Association Moot Court Competition, and as a third-year student, she and Sage Garland (highlighted at right) comprised the OU team for the 2013 NNALSA Moot Court Competition, advancing to the “elite eight” round of the competition.

Mohan also gained valuable experience through internships. She interned with Oklahoma Indian Legal Services Inc. in Oklahoma City, the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Tribe in Odanah, Wisconsin, and the law firm Legal Advocates for Indian Country LLP.

After earning a certificate in American Indian law along with her juris doctor degree from OU, Mohan works for the Nisqually Indian Tribe in Olympia, Washington, as a natural resources attorney. In this job, she primarily deals with the United States v. Washington litigation, which involves tribal treaty fishing rights. Since 1974, the case has been litigated in the U.S. District Court for Western District of Washington, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, and the U.S. Supreme Court. Mohan also works on treaty hunting and gathering rights and various environmental issues for the Nisqually Tribe.

Reflecting on her experience as a student in the Native American Law Program, Mohan said, “I would not be where I am today without the education and opportunities OU Law offered me. I am also indebted to Professor Helton for his excellent mentorship in the area of Indian natural resources law.”

Sage Garland ('13), a member of the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes, was born in the Lawton Indian Hospital in Lawton, Oklahoma. She has lived in several Oklahoma towns, including Anadarko, which she considers her hometown, as well as Ardmore and Tulsa, where she graduated from high school.

Garland received her associate’s degree in political science from Tulsa Community College and her bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of Oklahoma. Her political science degrees were part of the career plan she devised as a result of her enthusiasm for her eighth-grade civics class.

Law school also was part of that plan. It was the Native American Law Program that attracted Garland to the OU College of Law. “I chose OU for its Indian law program. I knew early on that I wanted to focus my career in Indian Country, and OU offers numerous Indian law courses,” she said.

In addition to completing the coursework to earn a certificate in American Indian law in conjunction with her juris doctor degree, Garland participated in the International Human Rights Clinic, traveling with a group of OU Law students to Bogota, Colombia. They studied issues affecting an indigenous population and prepared a report for the United Nations Human Rights Council. As a 3L, her team advanced to the quarter-finals in the National Native American Law Students Association Moot Court Competition.

As a second-year student, Garland was among the group of students representing the OU College of Law at the Federal Bar Association Indian Law Conference in Santa Fe, New Mexico. “My second year internship and my current job are a direct result of my interest and experience in Indian law,” Garland said. “Every year, OU sends students to Santa Fe for the Federal Bar Conference. It was there that I met my current employer.”

Garland is a staff attorney for DNA-People’s Legal Services Inc. DNA stands for “Diné be’iiná Náhíína be Aghá’iit’aahí,” meaning “attorneys who contribute to the revitalization of the people.” DNA is a nonprofit legal aid organization working to protect civil rights, promote tribal sovereignty, and alleviate
Jeffrey Cartmell (’12) is proud to be an Oklahoman and a third-generation Sooner. Born in Oklahoma City, where he lived until he left to attend the University of Oklahoma, Cartmell said he has known since elementary school he wanted to be a lawyer.

His appreciation of the legal system deepened one summer during his college years when he volunteered with Habitat for Humanity in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. “The lack of a police presence in the part of the city I was in made me realize how fundamental the law is to our daily lives,” Cartmell said.

This experience solidified Cartmell’s desire to become a lawyer. The OU College of Law was the only law school he seriously considered.

While at OU Law, Cartmell studied Native American law with professors Taiawagi Helton and Barbara Smith. He spoke fondly of both professors, relating Helton’s practice of providing additional historical information beyond what was found in the course materials, and Smith’s candor on sensitive topics, which helped translate an issue from a classroom problem into a real-life situation affecting many people.

Perhaps one of Cartmell’s most vivid memories from law school is his participation in the 2012 National Native American Law Student Association Moot Court Competition hosted by the University of Hawaii School of Law. In addition to the beauty of the setting for the competition, other memories come from the practice sessions. “I’ll never forget Professor Robertson calling the assistant secretary of Indian Affairs during a practice to help us figure out the answer to a question,” stated Cartmell. “I think this speaks volumes to the type of Indian law faculty that teach at OU.”

He believes his legal training in Indian law and his experience from the competition played a large part in securing his first job. “But for the opportunities and experiences OU Law provided me I wouldn’t be where I am today. I realize this sounds cliché, but it really is true,” explained Cartmell. “Looking back on my OU experience and how it affected my career, you can literally connect the dots to where I am today.”

Cartmell serves as the deputy general counsel on Indian affairs in the office of the Oklahoma governor. Essentially anything that comes into that office relating to tribes or tribal members crosses his desk. Duties of his job include outreach to Oklahoma tribal leaders, collaboration with the governor’s general counsel and other state officials on all tribal issues, and speaking on tribal matters at various meetings, including the 26th Annual Sovereignty Symposium.

Richard Osburn (’00) is an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation. He was born in Muskogee, Oklahoma, and grew up in Briggs, Oklahoma, near Tahlequah, the capital of the Cherokee Nation.

Osburn attended the University of Oklahoma and earned a bachelor’s degree in Spanish in 1990. Upon graduating, he was commissioned and served as an officer in the U.S. Navy. After completing his Navy service in 1994, Osburn again attended the University of Oklahoma, as well as the University of Central Oklahoma, taking courses in education. He obtained an alternative teaching license and taught Spanish and coached soccer for two years, but a long-held interest pulled him in a different direction.

Having watched television attorney Perry Mason as a child inspired Osburn to attend law school. He entered OU Law in 1997, completed coursework in December 1999, and received his juris doctor degree and certificate in American Indian Law, graduating as part of the Class of 2000.

As a law student, Osburn worked on the American Indian Law Review, serving as editor-in-chief his final semester. During another semester, he participated in the Federal Indian Law Externship program in Washington, D.C., working first, with
the U.S. Department of Justice in the Office of Tribal Justice and later, with the deputy solicitor for Indian Affairs at the Department of the Interior.

After law school, Osburn worked for seven years as a prosecutor and staff attorney for the Cherokee Nation. Although he was based in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, the matters he handled sometimes involved travel to other cities. Osburn once traveled to Atlanta to challenge an adoption for noncompliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act.

He currently serves as district court judge for the Mille Lacs Band Tribal District Court in Onamia, Minnesota. He hears all cases filed at the trial court level, including civil, criminal, traffic, natural resources, child welfare, adoption, guardianship and child support.

Osburn has continued his education at the National Judicial College on the campus of the University of Nevada, Reno, earning three certificates. He is one of only four judges in the nation to have attained this level of certification from the NJC, and he is the only tribal judge to have done so.

From his varied experiences as an attorney, Osburn has developed a core belief. "To be the best lawyer you can possibly be, you have to separate the legal issues of the case from the emotional issues," he said. "A good lawyer can represent the client whether the attorney personally agrees with the client's case or not." | SL |

Native American Law Program faculty and tribal judiciary

Lindsay Robertson
Judge Haskell A. Holloman
Professor of Law
Sam K. Viersen Jr.
Presidential Professor
Special Justice, Supreme Court of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes

Stephen H. Greetham
Adjunct Professor of Law

Kathleen Guzman
MAPCO/Williams
Presidential Professor
Orpha and Maurice Merrill Professor of Law
Special Justice, Supreme Court of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes

Gary Pitchlynn
Adjunct Professor of Law

Barbara Smith
Adjunct Professor of Law
Justice, Supreme Court of the Chickasaw Nation

Michael Smith
Adjunct Professor of Law
Judge, District Court of the Sac and Fox Nation

Rennard Strickland
Senior Scholar in Residence

Native American Law SPECIALIZATIONS  LL.M. + M.L.S. + J.D. Certificate
The walls of the OU College of Law are now adorned with over 300 pieces of indigenous art from the James T. Bialac Native American Art Collection. “Our rich tradition in Native American law is now reflected throughout our building so that our culture surrounds us,” said Dean Joe Harroz.

The two-dimensional works from the collection have been installed in public areas of Coats Hall, in accordance with the wishes of the Arizona attorney who donated his multimillion-dollar collection of more than 4,000 pieces to the University of Oklahoma in 2010. In donating his collection, acquired over almost 50 years, Bialac’s primary requirement was that the works be made available to as many people as possible to view and learn about Native American art. Artwork from the collection is also displayed in the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, the Charles M. Russell Center for the Study of Art of the American West and the Peggy and Charles Stephenson Cancer Center.

Bialac’s collection, one of the most important private collections of Native American art in the country, spans 100 years of Native American culture in a wide variety of media. Included are works of major Native artists such as Fred Kabotie, Awa Tsireh, Fritz Scholder, Joe Herrera, Allan Houser, Jerome Tiger, Tonita Pena, Helen Hardin, Pablita Velarde, George Morrison, Richard “Dick” West, Patrick DesJarlait and Pop Chalee.

Learn more about the artwork from the collection displayed in Coats Hall at http://bit.ly/OU-NA-art

1 Joe Maktima; U.S., Hopi/Laguna; Design Spirit II (1988); Prisma-color pencil – 22 ¼ x 21” 2 Gilbert Benjamin Atencio (Wah Peen); U.S., San Ildefonso Pueblo 1930-1995; The Delight Makers in the Process of Making Medicine (1964); Watercolor on paper – 17 ¼ x 36” 3 Beatien Yazz (Jimmy Toddy); U.S., Navajo b. 1928; Tribal Counsel (n.d.); Watercolor on paper – 22 ½ x 19” 4 Alex Seowtewa; U.S., Zuni b. 1933; The Zuni Deity Bear Kachina’s Spiritual Side of Identity Still Dwells With the Prehistoric Cultural Setting (1996); Colored charcoal pencils – 23 x 20 ¼”
5 Spencer Lyons; U.S., Mission; *Madonna* (n.d.); Pastel – 21 ½ x 20”  
6 Tommy E. Montoya (Than Tsay Taz); U.S., Ohkay Owingeh; *Pueblo Spirits* (1992); Watercolor on paper  
7 Harrison Begay; U.S., Navajo 1917-2012; *Squaw Dance* (n.d.); Watercolor on paper – 36 x 44”  
8 Ernest Whitehead; U.S., San Carlos-Apache c. 1945; *The Pubescent Girl* (1992); Acrylic – 21 x 17”  
9 Jane McCarty Mauldin; U.S., Choctaw b. 1936; *Snow Princess* (1985); Mixed media – 13 ¾ x 11 ½”  
10 James King; U.S., Navajo; *Juniper Berries Pickers* (n.d.); Oil on canvas
ALUMNI INDUCTED INTO
ORDER OF THE OWL

BY JESSICA R. JONES
n a night full of laughter and heartfelt tributes, the University of Oklahoma College of Law had the privilege of inducting four distinguished alumni into the Order of the Owl Hall of Fame. Michael Burrage (’74), Kathy Taylor (’81), Ralph G. Thompson (’61) and the Lee West (’56) became the third class of inductees honored at an October 30 dinner in the Molly Shi Boren Ballroom of Oklahoma Memorial Union.

The Order of the Owl recognizes OU Law graduates who have made an indelible mark on the legal profession. The honorees are chosen based on their demonstrated leadership and service through outstanding accomplishments in their careers. Each inductee is presented with an owl sculpture created by OU Art Professor Sohail Shehada. Nine prominent alumni have previously been inducted into what inaugural inductee Bill Ross dubbed “the Parliament,” meaning a group of owls. Four previous recipients were in attendance this year to honor the newest inductees.

The evening started with an opening reception for approximately 470 alumni and friends of OU Law. A feature video was shown of several OU Law students expressing their gratitude for the support of OU Law alumni. The program began with remarks from OU President David L. Boren (’68) and Dean Joe Harroz.

After an elegant dinner, Harroz introduced the honorees, highlighting the impressive accomplishments of each. Prior to the event, OU Law sought comments from dear colleagues and friends of each inductee. Harroz included the heartfelt and entertaining comments in his introductions of the honorees. In addition, four outstanding law students were chosen to present each recipient with their award.
Michael Burrage

Michael Burrage, a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, was born in Durant, Oklahoma. He received a bachelor's degree from Southeastern Oklahoma State University in 1971, and earned a juris doctor degree with honors from the University of Oklahoma College of Law in 1974.

Following law school, Burrage was in private practice in Antlers, Oklahoma, from 1974 to 1994. During that time, he was named Outstanding Young Lawyer in Oklahoma in 1977 and served as president of the Oklahoma Bar Association in 1990.

In one of the funnier moments during the acceptance speeches, Burrage explained how he and fellow honoree Lee West had both lived in Antlers and invited a friend to the celebrations of high points in their careers. Burrage quoted his friend as saying, "I told you, Mikey, if you and Lee Roy will ever get an important job with the government – like being on the Pardon and Parole Board – we’ll come."

In 1994, President Bill Clinton nominated Burrage to be a United States district judge and he was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on June 8, 1994. Burrage served as a federal judge for all three of the U.S. District Courts in Oklahoma (Western, Northern and Eastern).

Burrage gave credit to his law school classmate, Molly Shi Boren, for assisting him in getting appointed. “Most federal judges, if not all, are appointed because of merit, because they’re so damn smart, and so they get appointed to the bench. That wasn’t me. That wasn’t me at all. I think the reason I got appointed is because I became friends with Molly in law school.”

In 1996, Burrage became the chief judge of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Oklahoma, where he served until 2001. He is now senior managing partner at the Whitten Burrage Law Firm in Oklahoma City.

Jason Callaway presented the award to Burrage. Callaway is a third-year law student who currently serves as managing editor of the Oklahoma Law Review. Following graduation, he will be clerking for Judge Claire Eagan of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Oklahoma.

“I have never seen a lawyer more universally respected and admired. I have never seen a lawyer who knew the law better than Mike. I have never seen a lawyer who knew strategy better than Mike. I’ve never seen a lawyer who worked harder, prepared better or worked longer days and nights than Mike.”

– Reggie Whitten ('80)

“I now, my more than 20 years practicing law, I have never met a more prepared or harder working attorney than my dad. When I think about it, I realize that I should be a lot better lawyer than I am just because I’m his son.”

– Sean Burrage ('93)
Kathy Taylor, the second inductee of the evening, earned her juris doctor degree from the University of Oklahoma College of Law in 1981. As an attorney, Taylor worked with Oklahoma-based corporations including Sonic and Thrifty Car Rental. In 2003, she was appointed Oklahoma’s secretary of commerce, tourism and workforce development – the first cabinet secretary given responsibility for leading three separate state agencies – and served until 2006. Taylor was elected mayor of Tulsa, Oklahoma, in a 2006 election with record voter turnout for a mayoral election. As mayor, she oversaw the completion of Tulsa’s “Vision 2025” projects, including the BOK Center. Taylor also advocated for a successful $450 million street bond issue and construction of a new downtown baseball park. She supervised the move of Tulsa’s city hall and has continued to be involved in the advancement of the Tulsa community.

In 2009, Taylor became Oklahoma’s chief of education strategy and innovation. During her time in this position, she spearheaded a reform plan that became law with the passage of the Oklahoma Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Act.

Taylor was inducted into the Oklahoma Women’s Hall of Fame in 2011. In 2012, she served as a resident fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School Institute of Politics, teaching a course on the Pathways to Public Service.

In accepting her award, Taylor expressed appreciation to the “compassionate professors, empathetic administrators, and generous donors” who helped her overcome losing both of her parents while she was in college and provided her a home.

To her fellow OU Law alumni, Taylor said, “I thank you for staying involved with the University of Oklahoma and the College of Law because what you do every day makes a kid like me able to achieve her dreams.”

John Hammons, a second-year law student presented Taylor’s award. Hammons served as the mayor of the city of Muskogee from 2008 to 2012, starting at the age of 19. Hammons is among the youngest mayors in American history. He hopes to use his legal training to help grow Oklahoma businesses and strengthen its economy.
At age 40, Ralph Thompson, was one of the youngest federal judges in the nation. He served on the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma after President Gerald Ford nominated him September 24, 1975. He was confirmed by the U.S. Senate and received his commission in October 1975. He served as chief judge from 1986 to 1993. Thompson assumed senior status on December 16, 1999, and served in that capacity until August 6, 2007.

A 1961 graduate of the OU College of Law, he was in private practice in Oklahoma City from 1961 to 1975. He was a member of the Oklahoma House of Representatives from 1966 to 1970 and was an assistant minority leader during that time.

“There’s not a doubt in the world that the quality of my OU legal education and the prestige of my OU law degree made possible the opportunities in my professional career that allowed me to fulfill my highest aspirations,” said Thompson.

Born in Oklahoma City, Thompson is the grandson of Dr. William Bennett Bizzell, OU’s fifth president, and is part of a three-generation OU law alumni family. Thompson reflected on his first day of law school and the journey to this point. “Well, from that anxious, uncertain, and uneasy moment, to the honor of this proud moment, is a distance that seems as far as it is unlikely. So I’m sure you can understand how humbled and proud I am to be inducted into my law school’s hall of fame.”

Thompson also received a bachelor of business administration degree from OU in 1956. He served as a lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force from 1957 to 1960 and a colonel in the U.S. Air Force Reserve from 1961 to 1987.

In 1995, Thompson was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame. Last year, the University of Oklahoma awarded Thompson the honorary doctorate of humane letters, the university’s highest honor.

Presenting the award to Thompson was second-year student Lindsey Campbell, this year’s recipient of the Lee B. Thompson Sr. Scholarship. A former National Merit Scholar, Campbell plans to use her law degree to advocate for those who might otherwise not have access to legal service.
Lee West
CLASS OF 1956

The final inductee of the evening was Lee West.

West started his life in Pushmataha County, where he was born and raised. After graduating from Antlers High School in 1948, he attended OU and graduated in 1952. He was then commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps and served more than two years, spending time in both Japan and Korea. Returning to the states, he attended OU Law and graduated in 1956.

From 1956 to 1961, West practiced law in Ada, Oklahoma. He later returned to OU Law to serve on the faculty until 1962 when he was awarded a Ford Foundation Fellowship at Harvard Law School.

Three years later, in 1965, Gov. Henry Bellmon appointed West district judge of Oklahoma Judicial District 22. West served on the state court until 1973, when President Richard Nixon appointed him as a member of the Civil Aeronautics Board in Washington, D.C., and President Jimmy Carter named him acting chairman in 1977. West left the board in 1978 and returned to private practice in Tulsa, Oklahoma. In 1979, President Carter appointed him to the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma, where he has served as a federal trial judge for the past 34 years.

In 2012, West was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame. Comparing himself to another member of the Oklahoma Hall of Fame, West said, “I choose to think that I am somewhat akin to Will Rogers in that I have never met a man that I didn’t like. But unlike Will, I can get over it pretty quick.”

However, West turned the joke into a memorable moment of sincerity when he said, “But I have never met a man or woman from this university and this law school that I did not like, and I am unlikely to ever get over that.”

First-year law student Robert Brossett presented West with his award. Following his undergraduate studies, Brossett was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Army Engineering Corps. He served in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He is attending law school through the Army’s funded legal education program and, upon graduation, he will continue his service as a judge advocate.

“When he was appointed to the federal bench in 1979 the Western District docket was crowded, and the judges were behind their desired schedule to get cases to trial. So Judge West started working overtime and at night. Soon after, he was in a conversation with the presiding judge, Fred Daugherty, and another judge, Luther Eubanks. Judge Daugherty said, ‘Judge West, you shouldn’t be working at night. Remember, this is a lifetime appointment.’ To which Judge Eubanks added, ‘That’s right, and the way you’re going, it’ll last about six months.’”

— Bill Paul (’56)

“His strength, courage and hopes for this nation to achieve the dream of liberty for all citizens are unequaled. This republic remains free and self-governing because of people like Lee West and the other recipients of our honored profession who are here tonight.”

— Hank Meyer

Robert Brossett, Lee West and Dean Joe Harroz
Making memories to last a lifetime:
The Oxford Summer Program

BY JONELLA FRANK

JUSTICE TAYLOR VISITS THE DREAMING SPIRES

The summer of 2013 marked the 39th year for OU Law’s Oxford Summer Program. For two weeks in July, Oklahoma Supreme Court Justice Steven W. Taylor (’74) served as the distinguished jurist in residence, living and taking meals in historic Brasenose College with program participants while teaching The Bill of Rights.

Taylor’s time at the University of Oxford in Oxford, England (referred to by 19th-century poet Matthew Arnold as “that sweet city with her dreaming spires”), provided him an opportunity to connect with the next generation of lawyers and share his passion for the law. “Every breakfast and every evening we all gathered for meals in the dining hall, which looks like a scene from a Harry Potter movie,” said Taylor. “Each meal I would sit with different students and get to know them and answer their questions – and hopefully cause them to love the law a little more.”

Taylor relished his time spent engaging with students about the origins and values of the Bill of Rights. “The classroom was my favorite place because we had such wonderful discussions. It was hard work keeping up with these very bright students, and I learned as much as I taught.”

For the students, it was a rare chance to interact closely with one of Oklahoma’s leading jurists. “From our chats at breakfast to his work in the classroom, getting to know Justice Taylor was one of the highlights of my trip to Oxford,” said second-year student Callie Marso. “His enthusiasm for the profession was evident in everything he did. He made himself accessible to us and I came away with what I felt was not only a new mentor, but a friend as well.”
Even students who were not in his class appreciated his contributions to the program. “He made a huge impact on the program, even for those of us who didn’t have him in class. He gave a great perspective about what it is like to be a judge and an attorney,” remarked second-year student Nicole Lynn. “He also gave me real-life advice. I told him what I wanted to do long term, and he gave me realistic steps – without the sugar coating – to obtain this goal. I couldn’t imagine the 2013 Oxford Summer Program without him.”

This was the third year for the Oxford Summer Program to have a visiting judge teach a course. Judge Deanell Tacha, U.S. Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals, and Judge Robin Cauthron, U.S. District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma, have taught students in the program. In other years, Justice Stephen G. Breyer, Supreme Court of the United States, and Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin, Supreme Court of Canada, have presented lectures and interacted with students while visiting the program for shorter periods of time.

“We feel very fortunate to have had such strong interest from judges to participate in the program,” said Professor Steve Gensler, program director. “We knew it would be a great experience for our students, and that they would get so much out of being able to really get to know and interact with these great judges. We’ve found that the judges have enjoyed themselves as much as the students, and that’s been very rewarding.”

Taylor described the impact of his time in the magical setting. “As I have told Professor Gensler many times,” he said, “it was an incredible experience and I will never forget it.”

Looking ahead to the 2014 Oxford Summer Program

To commemorate the 40th anniversary of the partnership of the College of Law and Oxford University, OU Law alumni are invited to attend a four-day celebration and partake of the Oxford experience. Alumni and their guests participating in the July 6-10 tour will stay at the Old Bank Hotel, located within easy walking distance of Brasenose College, home of the OU Law Oxford Summer Program.

Included in the tour package is a daily English breakfast buffet at the hotel, a welcome reception and dinner, an Oxford River Thames boat tour, a “Legal London” tour and lunch at Middle Temple Hall, and CLE programming and credit.

For additional information, go to www.soonersportstravel.com/oxford-tour.php
FACULTY MEMBERS FOR THE 2014 OXFORD SUMMER PROGRAM...

Program Director Steve Gensler is the Welcome D. & W. DeVier Pierson Professor of Law. Gensler joined the OU College of Law faculty in 2000. From 2005 to 2011, he served as a member of the U.S. Judicial Conference Advisory Committee on the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. He is the past chair of the AALS Section on Civil Procedure and an elected member of the American Law Institute. Gensler will teach Alternative Dispute Resolution.

Professor Lindsay G. Robertson is the Judge Haskell A. Holloman Professor of Law and History. He received J.D. and Ph.D. (History) degrees from the University of Virginia and joined the OU Law faculty in 1997. Author of the award-winning Conquest by Law (Oxford University Press 2005), Robertson is an internationally recognized expert on indigenous peoples and the law and an elected member of the American Law Institute. Robertson will teach English Legal History.

“One of the highlights for all participants in the 2013 Oxford Summer Program was a field trip by motor coach to “Legal London.” Above, the entire group is shown at their stop at Lincoln’s Inn Hall.

“We’ve found that the judges have enjoyed themselves as much as the students, and that’s been very rewarding.”

— Professor Steve Gensler, program director
Professor Robert G. Spector, Glenn R. Watson Chair and Centennial Professor of Law Emeritus, represented the United States at The Hague Conference on Private International Law Experts Meeting on Recognition and Enforcement of Voluntary Cross-Border Agreement in International Child Disputes. Only 21 experts were chosen worldwide for the December 2013 meeting at The Hague. Spector has represented the United States at various worldwide meetings at The Hague Conference for more than 20 years. He will teach Family Law.

Dean Emeritus Andrew M. Coats ('63) is the Arch B. & Joanne Gilbert Professor of Law at the University of Oklahoma College of Law. From 1996 to 2010, he served as the dean. In recognition of his leadership, OU Regents named the law school building, Andrew M. Coats Hall, in his honor. Before joining the faculty as dean, Coats was a partner at Crowe & Dunlevy after having served as the district attorney of Oklahoma County and as mayor of Oklahoma City. He also served as president of the Oklahoma Bar Association and as president of the American College of Trial Lawyers. In 2005, Coats was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame. He will teach Family Law.

Dr. Jonathan Black-Branch is a professor of international and comparative law at the University of Bedfordshire. He has doctor of philosophy degrees from the University of Toronto and the University of Oxford. Black-Branch also is a barrister, Lincoln’s Inn, and serves as a magistrate in Oxforshire. He teaches in the area of public international law and is particularly interested in comparative human rights, international humanitarian law, and international criminal law. Black-Branch will teach European Union Law and The English Legal System.

Judge DeGiusti to Serve as Distinguished Jurist in Residence

Timothy D. DeGiusti ('88) is a U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Oklahoma. He was appointed to the bench in 2007 by President George W. Bush. Before that, he was a prosecutor in the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Corps and spent 16 years in private practice, most recently as a founding partner of the Oklahoma City law firm of Holladay, Chilton & DeGiusti PLLC. DeGiusti, who previously served as an adjunct professor at OU Law teaching Military Law and Trial Techniques, will teach Issues in Federal Trial Practice at Oxford.
THE CLASS OF 2016:

Variety is the Spice of Law School Life

BY JONELLA FRANK

The College of Law welcomed a new group of first-year students on August 15. They began their law school experience with a two-day orientation period prior to the official start of the semester. The 143 men and women of the Class of 2016 brought with them a variety of experiences, perspectives and interests. Read about a few members of the class to discover the caliber of students attending your law school who will soon join you as OU Law alumni.

MELISSA COWLE
Dallas
Southern Methodist University – B.A., Political Science

Intellectual stimulation coupled with the ability to have an impact on the lives of others led Melissa Cowle to pursue a legal education. “I have wanted to be an attorney since I was a little girl, so attending law school has always been part of my life plan,” she said.

A member of the varsity soccer team at Southern Methodist University, Cowle was an undergraduate major in political science with minors in sociology and human rights. Adding a law degree seemed like a perfect fit.

When contemplating where she would attend law school, Cowle considered a variety of factors in making her decision. “OU Law’s small class size, outstanding reputation, and proximity to my home state of Texas appealed to me,” she said. “Because I am interested in pursuing a career in litigation or oil and gas law, one of the areas in which OU Law really excels, my final decision was an easy one.”
“Without OU Law, I might never have been born!” replied Katie Eissenstat explaining why she chose to attend law school here. “I have always had a special place in my heart for this university because it is where my parents met.”

Eissenstat’s father, mother and uncle are all graduates of the OU College of Law and helped inspire her to pursue a law degree. In addition to her family connections, she chose OU Law due for several other reasons, including “the incredibly helpful faculty, the quality of life, and the top-notch education OU provides at an affordable price.”

Eissenstat looks forward to utilizing her legal education to serve others. “I want to help people solve difficult problems and make their lives a little easier, all while challenging myself both intellectually and emotionally.”

Coming from an undergraduate performing arts background, Eissenstat has learned to creatively improvise and think on her feet. She believes that creativity, along with public speaking skills developed through a theater background, will serve her well during her years at OU Law and beyond.

Daniel Franklin was a member of the University of Oklahoma football team, lettering each of his four years. After graduate school, he worked as a landman for an Oklahoma land services company. He enjoyed the legal research and curative title work the job required. “I soon discovered a J.D. could open doors in the energy industry,” said Franklin. “The prospect of new opportunities and the chance to develop a unique skill set are what initially drew me to law school.”

Franklin explained there were several reasons for his decision to attend OU Law. “My primary reason, was because it is a great law school with very reasonable tuition rates. But also, because I completed my master’s and undergraduate degrees at OU, as well as competed as a student athlete, all of which were incredible experiences, I could not imagine spending three more years at any other university.”
Family ties to the University of Oklahoma pulled on Kaitlin Higginbotham when she was selecting a law school. Higginbotham played college golf, first at an Oklahoma community college, where her team won the 2009 National Junior College Athletic Association National Championship, and later at a South Carolina university. But once her decision to study law was made, her hometown’s university was where she wanted to go.

“I chose OU Law, specifically, because it is one of the top-ranked law schools in the country, and because my father graduated from OU Law in 1990 and my mother went to OU to get her bachelor’s degree,” Higginbotham said. “I really wanted to come back home to be a Sooner and attend their alma mater.”

For Higginbotham, a law degree will allow her to pursue a career working with people to change lives. “I also wanted a degree that would set me apart when looking for starting positions with different companies and organizations,” she explained. “I feel having a J.D. will allow me to choose from a wide variety of careers.”

A long-held interest in the law eventually led Jason Hubbert to OU Law. “I have always been fascinated by law and the way law shapes and is shaped by a community,” he said. “After eight years in education, it was time to make a change, and I was looking for a versatile degree that would open doors in a variety of areas.”

“Having lived in Oklahoma City for nine years, I am excited about the future here and want to take a part in it,” explained Hubbert about why he chose OU Law. “After talking to several attorneys in Oklahoma and this region, I decided no law school would better prepare and position me to serve the needs of this state than OU.”
“I wanted to be a lawyer after the first time I read a John Grisham novel,” Tom Hubbert said. Taking logic and law classes as an undergraduate solidified this desire. “I really knew the law was the right path for me.”

“I decided to come to OU because I saw a documentary [“The Trials of Law School” by Porter Heath Morgan (’04)] that showcased a group of 1Ls through their first year of law school,” explained Hubbert. “I researched and visited, and the admissions staff, the professors, and the students were all so friendly and welcoming that I was instantly comfortable about coming to OU.”

Hubbert, a music lover who enjoys looking for new artists and sounds he hasn’t previously heard, said his favorite thing about OU law is the people. “The students are friendly, and the staff is excellent. The administration will do anything they can to help you, whether you need a favor or just a friendly conversation to brighten your day.”

A desire to impact the world in a positive way motivated Ge’Andra Johnson to attend law school. “I find joy in helping others,” explained Johnson. “I believe earning a law degree will be instrumental in allowing me to better advocate for those who may not have all the tools necessary to be able to help themselves.”

Two qualities of the legal education provided at the University of Oklahoma College of Law are of particular interest to Johnson. “I chose OU Law because both the strong sense of community and the focus on service align well with my personal values,” she said.

Cognizant of the richness of diversity within her law school class, Johnson listed her contribution to the group personality of the Class of 2016. “I think my academic and industrial background in psychology allows me to offer a unique perspective to the group.”
Samuel Merchant hit the ground running out of high school and hasn’t slowed down. At the age of 19, he opened his first business, and at 20, he acquired another. He has been a research assistant, as well as a teaching assistant, and currently serves as president of the OU Law Class of 2016.

After working in business sales and consulting, his desire for a more rewarding career led him to law school. “I believe this profession is fulfilling in that it provides a unique and meaningful service to individuals, businesses and society in general,” Merchant explained.

Although originally from Oklahoma City, he has lived in many states across the country. When it came to choosing a law school, Merchant said he was drawn back to Oklahoma. “I love this state, and I wanted to receive the state’s premier legal education so I could be the best advocate for future clients. I was also drawn to OU Law by its distinguished alumni across this state and country, and will work to make my place among them.”

Vilard Mullaliu experienced first-hand the terror of war, running from tank and sniper fire on the streets of Rahovec. At the age of 10, he immigrated to the United States with his family, settling in Edmond, Oklahoma, where he began the process of learning the language and culture of his new home.

His early life experiences helped direct the path he embarked upon after college. “I always had a general interest in pursuing a legal education when I was young,” Mullaliu said. “My experiences as an immigrant and courses in international business law further increased my interest and motivated me to pursue a legal education.”

Fluent in four languages, Mullaliu was attracted to OU Law because of its reputation. “Upon touring the facilities and meeting the staff, I was certain OU would provide me with an excellent education and exemplary support to become a successful attorney,” he commented. “Everyone is genuinely friendly and interested in helping you progress as a student and person. I am also very fond of the sense of pride and importance you feel being a part of the OU College of Law family.”
Since childhood, Kristin Newman has known she wanted to study and earn an advanced degree – in something. She explained how she decided the degree would be a juris doctor. "Once I figured out what my passions were, I decided a law degree would be the best way to further those passions."

During the process of visiting law schools and deciding where to attend, OU Law stood out. "From the minute my family and I started communicating with the admissions staff, they were more than helpful, very informed, and quick to respond," said Newman. "When I toured OU Law, everyone seemed to truly enjoy being a part of the school. Why wouldn’t you choose OU Law?"

Newman mentioned three of her personality traits, which have already come into play in law school. She's not afraid to take initiative (she served as the social media marketing director for a PGA golf tournament), she supports her community (the social media job was a volunteer position), and she loves sports and the lessons learned through them (she can name every NFL and MLB team). Explaining how those characteristics have been beneficial, Newman said, "Thus far in law school, there have been countless opportunities to pilot strategies, display humility, and redefine commitment. And I say 'redefine' because commitment in law school is a whole different ball game."

While working at a private nonprofit college following her college graduation, Tiffany Noble encountered students who had fallen victim to organizations, which for a fee, supplied a document purporting to be the equivalent of a high school diploma. "I saw the desperation of these students who had paid hundreds of dollars for certificates that would not help them find gainful employment or allow them to pursue post-secondary goals," Noble said. The desire to help people fight injustice became the catalyst to motivate her to return to school and pursue a career in law.

Noble found the OU College of Law to be welcoming. "Staff members seemed truly excited for me to attend, and unendingly dedicated to seeing me not only graduate, but succeed."

As an avid French horn player, Noble performs in multiple ensembles on local and state levels. She believes this experience, along with her years of work between college and law school, allow her to bring some different perspectives to the subjects she will study as a member of the OU Law Class of 2016.
Life experiences led David Postic in a direction he originally thought he did not want to go. “Both of my parents are lawyers, so for a long time I DID NOT want to go to law school. I wanted to forge my own path,” Postic said. “But after debating in high school, working for an attorney, and figuring out my likes and dislikes – I decided law school was the right fit for me.”

Once he reached that conclusion, his choice of law school was easy. “I chose OU Law because I wanted to stay in Oklahoma, and the University of Oklahoma is my favorite place in the world. The people, the professors, and the opportunities here are things you can’t get anywhere else. It’s just magical.”

By pursuing a dual degree in law and health administration, Alia Ramirez aspires to be a positive force in health care. “My roots are in health care and I look forward to growing as a critical-thinking professional in law school,” Ramirez stated. “As health care policy in the U.S. is rapidly changing, it is an exciting time to be a part of the industry in a legal capacity.”

Attending the OU College of Law was a natural choice for her. “I have attended OU for my undergraduate and graduate education. The people of this institution are like a second family and the campus is like a second home. I am proud to call myself a Sooner!”

Jeffrey Swigart realized something was missing in his professional life. “I determined that working with cutting-edge technology would not match the personal satisfaction I received from working with people,” he explained. “After a transition to ministry, I had the distinct privilege of pastoring for nearly 10 years the church in my hometown. However, numerous occasions of standing by people in courtrooms, seeking to provide some degree of comfort and support, created in me a desire to offer more than a hand to hold, but a shield to protect.”

When deciding where to attend law school, Swigart weighed his options. “I considered the quality of legal education, the caliber of my future colleagues, and the distinction of alumni and determined OU Law was the right investment for my future,” he said.
With a “multifaceted perspective on life,” Swigart hopes he provides a unique contribution to the Class of 2016. “I’ve sat with the police officer in his squad car, the inmate in his cell, the new dad in the hospital, the new widow at the graveside, the spouse who was cheated on, the parent who was lied to, the child who was abused, and beyond. I trust that in the process, I have been a help to some in their time of gravest need, and I look forward to continuing to help others with a new set of tools provided by OU Law.”

At age 7, Emily Taylor knew what she wanted to be when she grew up – a Radio City Rockette or a Supreme Court justice. After earning a political science degree as an undergraduate, Taylor moved to Orlando, Florida, and worked as a performer for the Walt Disney Company, seemingly on a career path similar to one of her childhood dreams.

“I met people from all over the world and got to make magic for thousands of guests each day,” Taylor said. “I’ll cherish the experience forever.” However, after 6 ½ years of performing in parades and shows, she was ready for a new challenge and she began researching law schools.

Taylor visited OU Law in May 2013 and her decision was made. “I couldn’t imagine going anywhere else. I felt like the administration cared about me as an individual. I met professors who encouraged me about the approachability of the faculty,” she explained. “I also was impressed with the job placement statistics of the Office of Career Development, and the vast amount of resources and opportunities available.”

With a new career focus as a first-year law student, Taylor commented, “I really feel like law is a noble profession with the opportunity to touch lives. I’m excited about the possibilities.” | SL |
News briefs

1950s

Tony Massad ('55) was honored at the 2013 Sovereignty Symposium with the Sovereignty Symposium Award recognizing his efforts as an advocate for judicial merit selection. The longtime Frederick, Oklahoma, attorney is now retired, but previously served as a state senator and president of the Oklahoma Bar Association.

Robert L “Buddy” Pendarvis ('57), of Norman, Oklahoma, was listed in The Best Lawyers in America 2014 for his work in the practice areas of education law and municipal law. He has served as the attorney for the Norman Public Schools since 1991.

Ray Dean Linder ('60), of Alva, Oklahoma, received the Award of Merit from Southwestern Oklahoma State University in October. He has served as a state district judge since 1983.

Robert H. Mitchell ('65) was named the first recipient of the OU Physicians Professional Liability Defense Panel Outstanding Service Award. He is of counsel with Sweet Law in Oklahoma City.

David L. Russell ('65) received the Rogers State University Constitution Award for demonstrating a strong commitment to the principles of the U.S. Constitution through his life’s work. He serves as judge of the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma.

Robert H. Gilliland ('66) was appointed to serve on the Oklahoma Workers’ Compensation Commission. For 40 years, he has practiced with McAfee & Taft in Oklahoma City, focusing on business litigation.

Glenn E. Floyd ('67) was recognized in The Best Lawyers in America 2014 in the area of municipal law. He practices with the Floyd Law Firm PC in Norman, Oklahoma, focusing on municipal finance, securities, corporation, municipal and real estate law.

G. Michael Lewis ('67) received the James C. Lang Mentoring Award from the Tulsa County Bar Association. He is senior counsel to Doerner, Saunders, Daniel & Anderson LLP in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where his practice focuses on mediation.

Ross O. Swimmer ('67) was honored in October by AARP Oklahoma at the organization’s fifth annual Indian Elder Honors event, which honored 50 Native Americans for their contributions to their culture and Oklahoma communities. He served as principal chief of the Cherokee Nation and as special trustee for American Indians at the U.S. Department of the Interior.

1960s

G.W. “Bill” Newton ('62) received the Tulsa County Bar Association Golden Rule Award. He is a shareholder and director of Newton, O'Connor, Turner & Ketchum PC in Tulsa, Oklahoma. His areas of practice include real estate law and estate planning.

Andrew M. Coats ('63) received the Distinguished Service Award from the Oklahoma City / County Historical Society for his outstanding service in the field of law to his community and state. He is dean emeritus at the College of Law, where he teaches Family Law and Torts.

James C.T. Hardwick ('63) was included in Oklahoma Super Lawyers 2013 for his energy and natural resources practice. He is a shareholder of Hall Estill in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

John W. Kinslow ('65) was elected to the board of governors of the Oklahoma Bar Association. He lives in Lawton, Oklahoma, and will represent Supreme Court Judicial District 9.

Robert H. Mitchell ('65) was named the first recipient of the OU Physicians Professional Liability Defense Panel Outstanding Service Award. He is of counsel with Sweet Law in Oklahoma City.

W. Roger Webb ('67) was appointed to the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation Commission. He is the vice chairman of the board of Citizens Bank of Edmond and previously served as president of the University of Central Oklahoma.
Randall D. Mock ('68) joined Conner & Winters LLP as a partner, based in the Oklahoma City office. He specializes in tax-related business matters and estate planning.

Reid E. Robison ('68) received the Neil E. Bogan Professionalism Award from the Oklahoma Bar Association in November. The award is presented to an OBA member, practicing 10 years or more, who best represents the highest standards of the legal profession. Robison is a shareholder of McAfee & Taft in Oklahoma City.

1970s

Robert D. Looney Jr. ('70) was included in Oklahoma Super Lawyers 2013 for the practice area of general personal injury defense. He is a shareholder of Hall Estill, based in Oklahoma City.

Robert D. Nelon ('71) was included in Oklahoma Super Lawyers 2013 in the practice area of First Amendment/media/advertising. He is a shareholder of Hall Estill in Oklahoma City.

Drew Neville ('72) was named Oklahoma City Lawyer of the Year for bet-the-company litigation in The Best Lawyers in America 2014 and was included in Oklahoma Super Lawyers 2013 for securities litigation. He is a partner in Hartzog Conger Cason & Neville, where his practice focuses on complex litigation.

Julia T. Brown ('75) was named county manager of Doña Ana County, New Mexico. She previously worked in the Doña Ana County Sheriff’s Office as a grants assistant, monitoring compliance with law enforcement, education and training grants.

Micheal Salem ('75), of Norman, Oklahoma, received the Fern Holland Courageous Lawyer Award from the Oklahoma Bar Association in November. The award recognizes courageous performance in a manner befitting the highest ideals of the legal profession. This was the second time Salem has received this award.

Michael E. Smith ('75) was included in Oklahoma Super Lawyers 2013 for energy and natural resources law. He is a shareholder of Hall Estill, practicing in Oklahoma City.

John J. Morozuk ('76) joined Ross Molina Oliveros PC in the firm’s Oklahoma City office. His practice is focused on the oil and gas industry, and includes pipeline gathering and transportation, natural gas storage and processing, and exploration and production law.

P. David Newsome ('76) was included in Oklahoma Super Lawyers 2013 for securities and corporate finance. He practices in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where he is a shareholder of Hall Estill.

David A. Poarch Jr. ('77) was elected president-elect of the Oklahoma Bar Association. He practices in Norman, Oklahoma, with the firm of Bailey and Poarch and is the part-time presiding judge of the Norman Municipal Court. He previously served as assistant dean for external relations at OU Law.

Thomas T. Rogers ('77) was included in The Best Lawyers in America 2014. He is a partner in the Austin, Texas, office of Jackson Walker LLP, where his practice focuses on litigation with an emphasis on class action defense, insurance and insurance regulatory matters, financial institution litigation, and energy litigation.

Brice Tarzwell ('77) was named chief legal officer for Par Petroleum Corporation, based in Houston. He previously was a partner at Bracewell & Giuliani LLP and Winstead PC.

Karl F. Hirsch ('78) co-founded the law firm Hirsch, Morris & Heath in Oklahoma City. His practice emphasizes natural resources, oil and gas, and real estate.

Ben Loring ('78) received the Alma Wilson Award from the Oklahoma Bar Association at its annual meeting in November. The award recognizes an individual’s contribution to improving the lives of Oklahoma children. He is an assistant district attorney in Miami, Oklahoma.
Gary A. Rife ('78) was listed in Oklahoma Super Lawyers 2013 for professional liability defense. He is a partner of Rife Walters Stanley & Natarajan in Oklahoma City.

Roger H. Stuart ('78) was inducted into the Del City High School Alumni Hall of Fame in November. He is currently a district judge in Oklahoma County. He previously served as special judge in Oklahoma County, assistant general counsel for the Department of Human Services and assistant U.S. attorney for the Western District of Oklahoma.

John W. Gile ('79) joined Hall Estill as a leader of the firm’s newly established family law practice group in the Oklahoma City office. His previous practice experience includes cases involving large property division, complex child custody issues, and termination of parental rights.

Glen Johnson ('79) was elected to serve on the American Association of State Colleges and Universities’ 2014 board of directors and was re-elected to a second term as vice chair of the Southern Regional Education Board. He has served as chancellor of the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education since 2007.

Michael S. Laird ('79) was listed in Oklahoma Super Lawyers 2013 in the real estate category. He is a director of Crowe & Dunlevy, based in the Oklahoma City office.

James R. Marshall ('79) was elected to the board of governors of the Oklahoma Bar Association. He is a partner at Henson & Marshall PLLC in Shawnee, Oklahoma, where his main areas of practice include estate planning, real property and commercial law.


Judy Hamilton Morse ('79) was named one of the Top 150 Women in Litigation by Benchmark Plaintiff, an annual guide to plaintiff litigation firms and attorneys in the United States. She also was included in The Top 50 and The Top 25 Women by Oklahoma Super Lawyers 2013. She is a director in the Oklahoma City office of Crowe & Dunlevy, where she chairs the litigation practice group.

1980s

Mark D. Christiansen ('80) was elected secretary of the board of trustees of the Center for American and International Law in Dallas. He practices in Oklahoma City with McAfee & Taft, where he is co-leader of the energy and oil and gas group.

Charles E. Geister III ('80) was named Oklahoma City Lawyer of the Year in securities litigation in The Best Lawyers in America 2014. He is a partner at Hartzog Conger Cason & Neville with a practice focused on litigation.

John R. Morris ('80) co-founded the Oklahoma City law firm of Hirsch, Morris & Heath. He specializes in commercial litigation and oil and gas litigation.

David N. Smith ('80) was appointed special judge for Rogers County. His responsibilities include the family law docket in Claremore, Oklahoma. He previously practiced in Ada, Oklahoma.

Melvin C. Hall ('81) received the 2013 Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher Diversity Award at the Oklahoma Bar Association Diversity Conference in October. He is a partner with Riggs Abney, focusing on employment law and civil rights cases in the firm’s Oklahoma City office.

Bert E. Marshall ('81) was named chief executive officer of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas. Prior to joining the Texas health insurer, he served as president of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma.

Karen S. Rieger ('81) was listed in Oklahoma Super Lawyers 2013 in the area of health care law. She is a director of Crowe & Dunlevy, practicing in the Oklahoma City office.

Linda G. Scoggins ('81) received the Oklahoma Bar Association Outstanding Service to the Public Award for her significant community service. She practices in Oklahoma City at Scoggins & Cross PLLC.

Mike Voorhees ('81) was elected vice chairman of the Oklahoma City Board of Adjustment. He practices with the Shelton Voorhees Law Group in Oklahoma City.
Tom Colbert (’82) was named a recipient of the 2013 Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher Diversity Award at the Oklahoma Bar Association Diversity Conference. He serves as the chief justice of the Oklahoma Supreme Court.

Dean Couch (’82) joined GableGotwals as of counsel in the firm’s Oklahoma City office, where his practice will focus on water law. He previously served as the general counsel of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board.

Thomas A. Creekmore III (’82) was included in Oklahoma Super Lawyers 2013 for bankruptcy and creditor/debtor rights. He is a shareholder of Hall Estill, practicing in the firm’s office in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Donald F. Heath (’82) co-founded Hirsch, Morris & Heath in Oklahoma City. His practice is focused on oil and gas title examinations and oil and gas transactions for Oklahoma independent oil companies.

Stephen W. Ray (’82) was listed in Oklahoma Super Lawyers 2013 in the business/corporate law category. He practices in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and is a shareholder of Hall Estill.

Chris Ross (’82) was elected president-elect of the Oklahoma District Attorneys Association. He currently serves as the district attorney for the 22nd Judicial District, which covers Pontotoc, Hughes and Seminole counties.

Monica Amis Wittrock (’82) was named senior vice president of First American Title Insurance Company. She will be responsible for oversight of operations in seven states in the central United States.

Michael Ashworth (’83) received the Tulsa County Bar Association President’s Award for his work with the Bench and Bar Committee and the Think Pink Project. He practices with Schroeder & Associates in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Elizabeth Kemp Brown (’83) was appointed to the board of directors of the Oklahoma Independent Petroleum Association. She is a shareholder of Phillips Murrah PC and also serves as the chief executive officer of Gloria Corporation, an oil and gas exploration and production company based in Ada, Oklahoma.

Peggy Stockwell (’83) was elected to serve on the Oklahoma Judicial Nominating Commission. She practices family law in Norman, Oklahoma, and is also a mediator, arbitrator and guardian ad litem in family law cases.

Renee DeMoss (’84) was sworn in as president of the Oklahoma Bar Association for 2014. She is a shareholder in the law firm of Gable Gotwals, based in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where her practice focuses on commercial litigation, ERISA, insurance law and general business matters.

Deirdre O’Neil Dexter (’84) was elected to the board of governors of the Oklahoma Bar Association as a member-at-large. She practices in Sand Springs, Oklahoma, focusing on alternative dispute resolution.

Robert Fields (’84) was named a shareholder of McAfee & Taft. She is a trial lawyer whose primary practice is focused on the representation of employers in all areas of employment law.

Michael T. Keester (’84) was included in Oklahoma Super Lawyers 2013 for civil litigation defense. He is a Hall Estill shareholder, practicing in the firm’s Tulsa, Oklahoma, office.

Andrew B. Morsman (’84) joined the Tulsa, Oklahoma, firm of Coffey, Gudgel & McDaniel LLC as an associate attorney. His practice will emphasize insurance defense, primarily of interstate trucking companies. He previously worked in the Tulsa office of Bonham & Howard PLLC.

Lyndon Taylor (’84) was named a recipient of the 2013 Distinguished Alumni Award by Oklahoma State University. He is the executive vice president and general counsel for Devon Energy Corporation in Oklahoma City.

Lauren Austin Thomas (’84) was named 2013 Attorney of the Year by the Oklahoma Child Support Enforcement Association. She is an assistant district attorney and managing attorney for the Payne and Logan counties district attorney’s child support divisions.

Jerry Stritzke (’85) was named president and chief executive officer of Recreational Equipment Inc., based in Seattle. He previously served as president and chief operating officer for Coach Inc.
John D. Robertson (’86) was named Oklahoma City Lawyer of the Year for mergers and acquisitions law in The Best Lawyers in America 2014. He is a partner at Hartzog Conger Cason & Neville with a practice in business transactions, securities and employment law.

M. John Kane (’87) was elected as the president of the Oklahoma Judicial Conference. He is a district judge in Osage County.

Laura McConnell-Corbyn (’87) was named one of the Top 250 Women in Litigation by Benchmark Litigation for her family and employment law practice. She is a partner of Hartzog Conger Cason & Neville in Oklahoma City.

Joseph L. McCormick (’87) was named senior vice president, general counsel and assistant secretary of ONE Gas Inc., a newly formed company based in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Prior to the formation of the company, he was vice president and associate general counsel of ONEOK Inc.

Jon A. Epstein (’88) was included in Oklahoma Super Lawyers 2013 in the practice area of First Amendment/media/advertising. He is a shareholder of Hall Estill in Oklahoma City.

Scott Meacham (’88) was appointed to the Oklahoma Governor’s Science and Technology Council. He is the current president and chief executive officer of 2E, a private nonprofit corporation focused on growing innovative small businesses in Oklahoma.

Michael C. Redman (’88) was elected to the board of directors for the Oklahoma Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union. He practices with Neugens Mitchell Freese PLLC in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Robert Sartin (’88) received the Tulsa County Bar Association President’s Award for his service on the TCBA executive director search committee. He is a shareholder and director of Barrow & Grimm PC, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, with a practice focused on commercial, employment and health care transactions and litigation.

Shelly Youree (’88) was recognized in The Best Lawyers in America 2014 in the areas of employee benefits (ERISA) law and tax law. She was also selected for inclusion in Texas Super Lawyers 2013. She is a partner in Thompson & Knight LLP, where she practices in the Los Angeles and Dallas offices of the firm.

Sarah E. Hansel (’89) received the 2013 Roger R. Scott Community Service Award from the Tulsa County Bar Association. She is a shareholder with Hall Estill in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where her primary areas of practice are corporate/commercial and intellectual property.

Debbie Maddox (’89) returned to the Oklahoma Bar Association as assistant general counsel after serving as general counsel for the Oklahoma Ethics Commission. Prior to first joining the OBA in 2009, she was in private practice for five years in Norman, Oklahoma.

Steven W. Soulé (’89) was included in Oklahoma Super Lawyers 2013 for the practice area of bankruptcy. He practices in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where he is a shareholder of Hall Estill.

1990s

Nicholas D. Rouse (’90) was included in The Best Lawyers in America 2014 in the fields of patent law and trademark law. He is the managing shareholder at Dunlap Codding PC in Oklahoma City.

Derek S. Casey (’91) was named to the 2013-14 board of editors for the Journal of the Kansas Association for Justice. He practices in Wichita, Kansas, with Triplett, Woolf & Garretson LLC.

M. Carter Crow (’91) was named partner-in-charge of the Houston office of Norton Rose Fulbright. His practice encompasses a wide range of litigation and arbitration matters, with a focus on employment litigation.
Robert F. Dougherty (’91) was included in Oklahoma Super Lawyers 2013 for business/corporate law. He is a shareholder of Hall Estill, practicing in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Gaylene F. McCallum (’91) received the Oklahoma Bar Association Award for Outstanding Pro Bono Service at the association’s annual meeting in November. She practices part time in law offices in Hugo and Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

Glenn Coffee (’92) was named general counsel of the State Chamber of Oklahoma. He formerly served as Oklahoma secretary of state and president pro tempore of the Oklahoma Senate.

Laura Shaeffer (’92) joined the Office of District Attorney for District 21 as an assistant district attorney in Garvin County and is based in Pauls Valley, Oklahoma.

Paul E. Vrana (’92) was listed in The Best Lawyers in America 2014. He is a partner in Jackson Walker LLP, working in the Fort Worth, Texas, office, where he is co-chair of the firm’s energy practice group.

Ed Evans (’93) joined the Social Security Administration Office of Disability Adjudication and Review as an administrative law judge. He previously served as chief hearing officer for the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission.

Phillip L. Free Jr. (’93) was included in Oklahoma Super Lawyers 2013 for intellectual property litigation, and was listed as a Top 50 Lawyer in Oklahoma. He is a Hall Estill shareholder, based in the Oklahoma City office.

D. Michael McBride III (’93) was appointed to the Greater Tulsa Area Indian Affairs Commission and was elected treasurer of the International Masters of Gaming Law. A director in the Tulsa, Oklahoma, office of Crowe & Dunlevy, he was included in Oklahoma Super Lawyers 2013 for Native American law.

David Prater (’93) received the Oklahoma Bar Association Fern Holland Courageous Lawyer Award for courageously performing in a manner befitting the highest ideals of the legal profession. Prater is the district attorney for Oklahoma County.

Steven C. Kendall (’94), of Pauls Valley, Oklahoma, was appointed associate district judge in Garvin County. He previously practiced with Garvin, Agee, Carlton & Mashburn PC.

Stephanie Dinsmore Phipps (’95) joined the Tulsa, Oklahoma, firm of Johnson & Jones PC as an of counsel attorney with experience in all phases of civil litigation. She previously served as general counsel for an oil and gas company.

Whitney Mackey Eschenheimer (’96) was named shareholder of Johnson & Jones PC, of Tulsa, Oklahoma. Her practice focuses on catastrophic injury, transportation and business litigation, as well as bad faith and insurance disputes.

Robert Don Gifford (’96) was named the Oklahoma Bar Association Criminal Law Section 2013 Professional Advocate of the Year as a prosecutor. He is an assistant U.S. attorney for the Western District of Oklahoma.

Andrew Ingrum (’96) was included in Texas Super Lawyers 2013 and in The Best Lawyers in America 2014 in the area of real estate law. He is the real estate practice leader for Thompson & Knight LLP, based in the Dallas office.

Richard L. Wynne Jr. (’97) was recognized in The Best Lawyers in America 2014 for intellectual property litigation. He is a partner with Thompson & Knight LLP in the Dallas office.

Thad Balkman (’98) was appointed district judge for Cleveland County, based in Norman, Oklahoma. Prior to his appointment, he worked as a consultant and lobbyist after serving as a state legislator.

Michael S. Crooks (’99) co-founded Crooks Stanford PLLC in Edmond, Oklahoma. He will continue to represent clients in transactional matters, as he did in his prior position with the Crooks Law Firm.

2000s

Jolisa Melton Dobbs (’00) was selected for inclusion in Texas Super Lawyers 2013. She is a partner in Thompson & Knight LLP, based in the Dallas office, where her practice concentrates on oil and gas acquisition and disposition transactions.
A. Ainslie Stanford II ('00) opened a new law firm, Crooks Stanford PLLC, in Edmond, Oklahoma. His practice focuses on litigation. He previously was a partner at Corbyn Hampton PLLC in Oklahoma City.

Jenna Henshaw McBee ('01) was appointed special judge for LeFlore and Latimer counties. She formerly practiced law in Edmond, Oklahoma.

Todd Glass ('02) joined The Humphreys Fund, of Oklahoma City, as director of acquisitions. Previously, he was associate portfolio manager with Covenant Global Investors.

Matthew C. Kane ('02) was added to the list of counsel who may be appointed to represent suspects and victims in proceedings before the International Criminal Court, based in The Hague, Netherlands. He is partner at Ryan Whaley Coldiron Shandy PLLC in Oklahoma City, where his practice focuses on federal criminal defense and other complex litigation.

Phillip V. Sumner ('02) was elected shareholder of Foland, Wickens, Eifelder, Roper & Hofer PC, of Kansas City, Missouri. His litigation practice focuses on the representation of individuals and businesses in the areas of commercial litigation, product liability and insurance defense.

Michael N. Clark ('03) joined DeBee Gilchrist Attorneys & Counselors in Oklahoma City and will focus on estate planning. He previously practiced law in Edmond, Oklahoma.

Julianna P. Deligans ('03) was included in Oklahoma Super Lawyers 2013 for intellectual property. She is a shareholder of Hall Estill, based in the Oklahoma City office.

Natalie Carlgren ('04) was elected to partner status at Kelly Hart & Hallman LLP in Fort Worth, Texas. Her practice is focused on corporate and securities transactions.

Jeremy R. Fitzpatrick ('04) joined RKI Exploration & Production LLC in Oklahoma City as legal and regulatory director. He previously served in various capacities at Kirkpatrick Oil Company Inc.

Kaleb Hennigh ('04) will serve as the 2014 chairperson of the Oklahoma Bar Association Young Lawyers Division, and as a result, also will serve on the OBA Board of Governors. He is a founding partner of Evbank, Hennigh & McVay PLLC in Enid, Oklahoma.

Duane Croft ('05) received the Golden Quill Award at the Oklahoma Bar Association’s annual meeting in November. Croft, who practices in Norman, Oklahoma, won the award for his article “Encryption, Privacy and the Dark Side of the Internet,” which appeared in the March 16, 2013, issue of The Oklahoma Bar Journal.

Seth A. Day ('05) was included in Oklahoma Super Lawyers 2013 for civil litigation defense. He is a shareholder with Hall Estill in Oklahoma City.

Jodi Dishman ('05) was named a shareholder of McAfee & Taft. She is a trial lawyer who handles complex litigation matters in federal and state courts across the country.

R. Gene Stanley ('05) was listed as a “Rising Star” in medical malpractice defense in Oklahoma Super Lawyers 2013. He is a partner at Rife Walters Stanley & Natarajan in Oklahoma City.

Thomas K. Ventura ('05) joined the Oklahoma City office of Carr & Carr Attorneys at Law, where his practice is focused on personal injury law. He previously worked for eight years with another Oklahoma City firm.

Maria Gonzalez ('06) was named a shareholder of McAfee & Taft. Her practice focuses on aviation matters.

Bryan J. Nowlin ('06) was included in Oklahoma Super Lawyers 2013 for business litigation. He is a shareholder in the Tulsa, Oklahoma, office of Hall Estill.

Joe Vorndran ('06) received a President’s Award at the Oklahoma Bar Association annual meeting recognizing his service to the bar as the chairperson of the Young Lawyers Division. He is a partner in Stuart, Clover, Duran, Thomas & Vorndran LLP in Shawnee, Oklahoma.
Dara Wanzer (‘06) received a 2013 Jim Thorpe Courage Award at the Integris Courage Award Gala in August. The award highlighted her rehabilitation effort following a traumatic brain injury sustained in a motor scooter accident during her third year of law school. She currently works as an attorney with the Integris Health Network.

Matthew J. Allen (‘07) joined Conner & Winters LLP as an associate in the Oklahoma City office. He specializes in oil and gas conservation matters before the Oklahoma Corporation Commission.

Crystal A. Johnson (‘07) was named partner at Conner & Winters LLP. Based in the firm’s Oklahoma City office, she concentrates her practice on complex litigation, bankruptcy and employment law.

André Caldwell (‘08) was named to the “Lawyers of Color Hot List” as one of 100 early- to mid-career minority attorneys from the Southwest. He also was appointed to the American Bar Association Leadership Fellow Program for its litigation section. He is an associate in the Oklahoma City office of Crowe & Dunlevy.

Kyle D. Evans (‘08) was named a shareholder of Fellers Snider. He practices in the firm’s Oklahoma City office, focusing on civil litigation.
Robert S. Jackson (‘08) opened his solo practice in Oklahoma City and will focus on criminal and family law. He previously worked as an assistant federal public defender in the Western District of Oklahoma.

Tyler Mantooth (‘08) was listed as a “Rising Star” in intellectual property law in Oklahoma Super Lawyers 2013. He is an associate of Hall Estill, practicing in Oklahoma City.

Amanda Swain (‘09) became an associate of Conner & Winters LLP. Based in the firm’s Oklahoma City office, her practice focuses on business transactions, estate planning and tax matters.

2010s

John M. Bunting (‘10) joined the Oklahoma City firm of Phillips Murrah PC as an associate in the litigation department, where his practice is concentrated in general business litigation and insurance litigation. He previously was an associate with a Dallas law firm.

Conor P. Cleary (‘10) was named a “Rising Star” in business litigation in Oklahoma Super Lawyers 2013. He is an associate in the Tulsa, Oklahoma, office of Hall Estill.

Kristen Evans (‘10) joined Hall Estill in the firm’s Tulsa, Oklahoma office. She is a litigation attorney, with an emphasis in trial and appellate motion practice.

Matthew R. Gile (‘10) joined Hall Estill as a leader of the firm’s newly established family law practice group in the Oklahoma City office. In addition to family law, his practice is focused on criminal law and civil litigation.

Michael D. May (‘11) joined Pray Walker PC in Tulsa, Oklahoma, as an associate. His practice is primarily concentrated in the areas of energy law and title examination.

Allie Spears (‘11) received the Excellence in Action Against Domestic Violence Prosecutor of the Year Award in October, as part of the Oklahoma observance of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. She works in Norman, Oklahoma, as an assistant district attorney in Cleveland County.

Elizabeth F. Cooper (‘12) joined GableGotwals as an associate in the Oklahoma City office, where her practice concentrates on litigation. She previously served as a term clerk in the U.S. District Court for Western District of Oklahoma.

Amy K. Lewis (‘12) became an associate at Hiersche, Hayward, Drakeley & Urbach PC in Dallas, where her practice is focused on civil litigation. She previously served a judicial clerkship in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Oklahoma.

Mitch D. McCuistian (‘12) was named by Oklahomans Online as a recipient of the 30 Under 30 Next Gen 2013 Award, which recognizes young Oklahomans for their leadership qualities in their career or community involvement. He is an associate at Evans & Davis in Edmond, Oklahoma, where his practice focuses on estate planning and corporate business representation.

Ensieh Mohajeri (LL.M. ‘12) teaches at the Petroleum University of Technology in Iran. She teaches English Legal Text in the university’s Petroleum Law Program.

Grayson M. Barnes (‘13) joined the Tulsa, Oklahoma, firm of Crutchmer & Barnes as an associate attorney. His practice is focused on oil and gas law.

David E. Burget (‘13) joined Gungoll, Jackson, Box & Devoll PC as an associate in the Oklahoma City office. His areas of concentration include employment law and business formation, in addition to civil litigation.
Benjamin K. Davis (’13) became an associate with Gungoll, Jackson, Box & Devoll PC. He is based in the Oklahoma City office and his areas of practice include agriculture and natural resources law, banking law and general civil litigation.

Scott M. Delaney (’13) joined McAfee & Taft in Oklahoma City as an associate. As a corporate attorney, his practice includes a broad range of complex business transactions, as well as counseling clients on corporate structure, governance and internal operations.

Lauren D. Fagala (’13) became an associate at Pignato, Cooper, Kolker & Robertson PC in Oklahoma City. Her practice will focus on insurance coverage disputes and general insurance defense.

Jaklyn F. Garrett (’13) joined Crutchmer & Barnes, of Tulsa, Oklahoma, as an associate. Her practice is concentrated on oil and gas law and title examination.

Allison E. Hay (’13) was named legal counsel for Integris Health Inc. She is based in Oklahoma City, where she represents Lakeside Women’s Hospital and the Integris Health system’s departments of graduate medical education, intellectual property and durable medical equipment.

Elizabeth A. Knox (’13) joined Phillips Murrah PC as an associate. She works in the Oklahoma City firm’s litigation department representing clients in a wide range of commercial litigation, with an emphasis on construction-related matters.

Halli Martin (’13) joined Martin, Jean & Jackson as an associate attorney, based in the firm’s Stillwater, Oklahoma office. Her practice is focused on personal injury law.

Andrew J. Morris (’13) joined McAfee & Taft as an associate and will work in the firm’s Oklahoma City office. His practice is focused on general civil litigation, including complex commercial litigation and appeals.

Gauri Nautiyal (’13) joined Johnson & Jones PC in Tulsa, Oklahoma, as an associate. She will practice in the firm’s litigation department.

Drew O’Gwynn (’13) became an associate attorney at Henson & Marshall PLLC in Shawnee, Oklahoma.

Allison Osborn (’13) joined Crowe & Dunlevy as an associate in the firm’s Tulsa, Oklahoma, office. Her practice is concentrated in business and complex litigation matters.

Kaycee R. Spears (’13) joined Pray Walker in Tulsa, Oklahoma, as an associate. Her practice will include energy law and oil and gas title examination.

Alex F. Trinidad (’13) became an associate at Titus Hillis Reynolds Love Dickman & McCalmon PC in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Megan A. Winter (’13) joined the Oklahoma City firm of Pignato, Cooper, Kolker & Robertson PC as an associate. She will practice in the areas of insurance coverage disputes and general insurance defense.

We remember

Robert S. Baker (’61)
Robert M. Beck (’78)
Ruth Ann Box (’82)
Mary H. Brumback (’91)
George Wendell Cathey (’67)
Paul C. Duncan Jr. (’64)
Roger O. Housley (’70)
Frank Hesketh Jaques (’58)
Richard James (’49)
Chester Randall “Randy” Jones (’81)

J. Richard Kunkel (’59)
Norman Landa (’63)
James Duke Logan (’55)
John D. Luton (’51)
Jack Taylor Massey (’57)
Albert Ray Matthews (’60)
Benjamin L. McCullar (’92)
Donald T. McDevitt (’73)
C.D. “Dale” McDoulett Jr. (’70)
Monica E. McKnight (’76)

James A. McNeese (’47)
Steven Mortimer (’03)
Gary E. Payne (’69)
Kenneth C. Rhoads (’87)
K. David “Dave” Roberts (’71)
Robert Sterling Settles (’77)
John Romig Smith (’59)
Stephen W. Smith (’71)
Godfrey “Budge” Sperling Jr. (’40)
Sam E. Taylor (’54)
Staff changes

New faces and titles

Elizabeth Base (’94) was named director of the Office of Career Development in June after serving as the associate director for two years. Prior to joining the College of Law, she served as the pre-law adviser for OU undergraduates after practicing law in Norman for 15 years.

Autumn Hobbs began in August as assistant to the associate dean for academics and dean’s suite receptionist. Before coming to OU Law, she served as director of social services for Bridges, a nonprofit organization that provides assistance to homeless high school students living in Norman, Oklahoma.

Becky Lucas was named registrar and study abroad coordinator in August. Before assuming these responsibilities, she worked at OU Law for four years as assistant to the associate dean for academics and dean’s suite receptionist.

Shannon Overstreet came to the College of Law in July as a financial associate. She has been employed at OU since 1999, and prior to joining the OU Law staff, she worked at the Cognitive Science Research Center, overseeing the financial and personnel matters.

Lisa Ross joined the OU Law staff in August as the executive assistant to Dean Joe Harroz. She previously worked in the OU Office of Legal Counsel, where she served as assistant to the general counsel for 13 years, which includes the period Harroz served as general counsel.

Autumn Lockett was promoted to director of admissions in October. In this position, she oversees all aspects of recruitment and admission of students. She has worked at OU Law for two years, previously serving as an admissions counselor.

Trudy Sickles returned to the College of Law staff in December as the associate director of admissions. From 2004 until 2009, she worked as staff assistant in the Office of Career Development.

Ashley Streight (’09) began in August as the associate director of the Office of Career Development. She joined the staff after working as a title specialist at Chesapeake Energy Corporation and an associate at Ryan Whaley Coldiron Shandy PLLC in Oklahoma City.

Jessica Jones (’09) became the director of communications in February. Before attending and graduating OU Law, Jessica spent six years as an anchor and reporter in Wausau, Wisconsin, and El Paso, Texas.
State judges meet in Coats Hall

Members of the state judiciary met at the OU College of Law July 17 to kick off the 2013 meeting of the Oklahoma Judicial Conference. Judges from around the state gathered in the Bell Courtroom for the first day of the three-day educational and training meeting, held for the first time in Norman, Oklahoma. The opening day of the event closed with a reception in the Sneed Lounge and Boren Atrium, sponsored by OU Law and the Cleveland County Bar Association.

Bolivian indigenous law scholars visit College of Law

Ten Bolivian professors and students were guests of OU Law in August. The group participated in workshops, interacted with Native American Law Program students and professors, and visited interesting sites around Oklahoma.

Professors Lindsay Robertson and Taiawagi Helton coordinated the 10-day visit, which culminated with the signing of an academic cooperation agreement between the OU College of Law and the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés Faculty of Law and Political Sciences in La Paz, Bolivia.
Orientation and academic convocation

Welcome first-year students  August 15-16
CDO presents Lunch and Learn events for students

The Office of Career Development (CDO) coordinated 12 Lunch and Learn events for students during the fall semester. Speakers provided information about a variety of possible employment opportunities, including the energy industry, the health care industry, government positions and different types of law practice.

The CDO will continue providing these educational events for law students through the end of the academic year. Fifteen Lunch and Learn programs are scheduled for the spring semester.

Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt tells students, “We’re hiring and we want you to consider being part of our team at the Attorney General’s Office.”

Legal Clinic hosts dinner for area judges

Each semester, the OU Legal Clinic hosts a dinner to introduce clinic students to judges from Cleveland and McClain counties, where they will be representing clients. The event provides students with an opportunity to network and interact with the judges in a professional, yet informal, setting. Pictured at right, at the August 26 dinner in the Sneed Lounge, are 2L Rebecca Ross, Cleveland County District Judge Lori Walkley (’94) and 2L Daniel Buran.
Hartzog Conger Cason & Neville hosts 1L networking event

Less than a month after starting classes, more than 100 first-year students attended a networking reception at the downtown Oklahoma City law office of Hartzog Conger Cason & Neville. Students visited with attorneys, learning about the firm’s practice areas and clients. Firm members explained their specific legal career paths and offered tips for students desiring a similar type of practice.

“This is often a student’s first exposure to a law firm and interacting with attorneys,” said OU Law Dean Joe Harroz. “Hartzog provides an incredible opportunity for these students to learn about the operations of a firm and to begin establishing network contacts with legal professionals. We are truly grateful for the firm’s commitment to mentoring the future of the legal profession.”

Recent grads sworn in as attorneys

OU Law graduates take the Oath of Attorney during the Oklahoma Bar Association Admission Ceremony on September 25 in the House of Representatives Chambers at the Oklahoma State Capitol.

Photo courtesy of Oklahoma Bar Association
OU Law named a “Best Value” law school

The University of Oklahoma College of Law was ranked number 16 out of 200 law schools nationwide in the 2013 National Jurist list of “Best Value” law schools. The list ranks the Top 20 law schools based on placement in legal jobs, bar passage rates and amounts of student debt, among other criteria, and provides letter grades for schools below the Top 20.

OU Law is one of two law schools in the Big 12 to make the list and the only law school in Oklahoma to be included. This is OU’s second consecutive year in the Top 20.

“OU Law is honored to be recognized again as a Top 20 Best Value Law School by National Jurist,” said Dean Joe Harroz. “Our ranking reflects that we are providing an unsurpassed legal education at a reasonable price. In the last three years, OU Law has more than tripled the number of employers recruiting at OU Law; added three world-class, full-time faculty; and doubled its scholarship endowment. We are pleased that national publications are recognizing the exceptional value of the OU Law degree.”

Fellers Snider helps orient first-years students

The Fellers Snider law firm joined with the Office of Career Development on October 2 for the annual 1L orientation and reception. The incoming class learned about the services available to them from the CDO, and got advice from practicing attorneys about the importance of internships and other career development opportunities. Following the orientation in the Bell Courtroom, students and Fellers Snider attorneys had an opportunity to visit at a reception hosted by the firm in the Boren Atrium.

Fellers Snider attorneys Lance Leffel (’02), Sofia Nagda (’10) and Nicholas Merkley (’04) participated in the 1L orientation in the Dick Bell Courtroom.

Students and attorneys visit at a reception in the Boren Atrium following the orientation session.
On October 18, second-year students Kelsey Frobisher and Blake Johnson were declared the winning team in the 2013 Calvert Moot Court Competition. Also competing in the final round was the team of Joe Trail and Mahtab Doty, also second-year students.

“All of these students did a tremendous job,” OU Law Dean Joe Harroz said. “The distinguished panel of judges complimented both sides on their preparation and professionalism.”

Joining Harroz on the judging panel were Noma Gurich (’78), Oklahoma Supreme Court; Douglas Combs, Oklahoma Supreme Court; William C. Hetherington Jr., Oklahoma Court of Civil Appeals; Stephen Friot (’72), U.S. District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma; David Russell (’65), U.S. District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma; Wayne Alley, U.S. District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma (retired) and jurist in residence; and Rick Tepker, Floyd & Irma Calvert Chair in Law and Liberty Professor of Law.
OU Law Updates

2013 Race Judicata receives certification

The 2013 Race Judicata was held November 2. For the first time in the history of the race, the event was certified by USA Track and Field. Race Judicata is a 5K run and one-mile walk hosted by the Student Bar Association to raise funds for the Cindy Foley Memorial Scholarship Fund. The event is held in honor of the late Cindy Foley, a faculty member at the College of Law who dedicated her life to public service.

The family-friendly event, where children, dogs and costumes were welcomed, drew participants and spectators from the College of Law and the community.

Professor Steve Knippenberg checks in for the race.

Race Judicata runners cross the finish line.

OAWL Auction marks 25th anniversary

The Organization for the Advancement of Women in Law held the 25th Annual OAWL Charity Auction benefiting the Norman Women’s Resource Center October 24 at O’Connell’s Irish Pub and Grille on Campus Corner. The event raises awareness of the work done by the WRC and has become an important source of funding for the nonprofit.

“Over the past 25 years, the OAWL annual donation has not only grown in size, but in significance to the mission and continued vitality of the Resource Center,” said Mary Sue Backus, OAWL faculty adviser. “We can be very proud of the law school’s long-standing relationship and unflagging support of this important community resource.”

As a result of the auction, OAWL was able to donate $11,000 to the Norman Women’s Resource Center. Mehronissa Modgil, OAWL president, and Caroline Lewis, auction chair, present a check to JoAnn Smith, WRC executive director.
Harold Koh visits OU Law

Harold Hongju Koh, an international law professor at Yale Law School, spoke to a packed house at the College of Law November 21. Koh first began teaching at Yale Law in 1985, and served as dean from 2004 until 2009, when he left to join the U.S. Department of State as legal adviser. He returned to Yale in January 2013 after nearly four years of service with the U.S. Department of State.

Koh’s presentation, “Obama Global Legal Strategy,” explained the concept of using an international law “smart power” approach in dealing with international affairs complicated by the inability of governments to react to evolving societies and circumstances. Through engagement, translation and leverage, Koh believes some of the tension between 20th-century laws and 21st-century problems could be eased.

Competition teams rack up successes

The Competitions Program at the College of Law is comprised of three major components: in-school competitions, traveling team competitions and an intercollegiate mock trial competition. The moot court portion of the program was recently recognized as a Top 20 program by the Berkeley Advocacy Institute at the University of Houston. In its 2013 Moot Court Program Ranking, OU Law’s moot court program was ranked as number 19 among all moot court programs in the nation.

The significance of participating in the OU College of Law Competitions Program was succinctly stated by one student competitor:

“Each year students from OU Law compete in various regional and national moot court, mock trial, arbitration, negotiation, and mediation competitions. These competitions are invaluable to students, as we hone important legal practice skills. Competitions are also an opportunity to represent OU Law on a national level.”

— Elise Puma, 2L

The fall competition season was a busy one. Many students, faculty, staff and friends of the OU College of Law are involved in the numerous hours of preparation and practice required for each competition. A few highlights from the fall competitions are found below.

National Health Law Moot Court Competition
Southern Illinois University School of Law in Carbondale, Illinois

The teams of Elizabeth Isaacs/Elise Puma and Rachel Sibila/Justin Hedges were coached by Professor Gail Mullins. Isaacs/Puma advanced to the final round and placed second. Sibila/Hedges advanced to the quarterfinals and placed seventh.

American Bar Association Negotiation Regional Competition
Texas A&M University School of Law in Fort Worth, Texas

The team of Zach Ryan/Taylor Jones advanced as top seed into the final rounds, finally placing second in the competition. The team will compete in the 2014 Negotiation Competition National Finals, which takes place during the ABA Midyear Meeting in Chicago in February. Professor Erin Means coaches the team.
John B. Turner LL.M. Program participants gain recognition

Graduates of the John B. Turner LL.M. Program, as well as current LL.M. students have received recognition for their scholarly work.

Lais Palazzo Almada (LL.M. ’13) co-authored “Oil Royalties Distribution in Brazil: From the Petroleum Law to the Brazilian Supreme Court Decision,” presented at the Brazilian Congress of Energy (2013), held in Rio de Janeiro in October.

Almada also co-authored “Oil & Gas Industry in Brazil: A Brief History and Legal Framework,” which was published in the 2013 issue of Panorama of Brazilian Law.

Carolina Araújo de Azevedo (LL.M. ’13) co-authored “The Relationship between Corruption and Foreign Investments in Brazil: Some Responses Against Corruption” in the 2013 issue of Panorama of Brazilian Law.

Nicolas de la Plaza (LL.M. ’13) published “The Agreement With Chevron Is a Good Agreement” in the Argentine online journal, infobae.com, on July 20, 2013. The article deals with the oil and gas concession agreement between YPF, the Argentine national oil company, and Chevron.

A follow-up article, “The Chevron Deal Is Still Good,” was included in the October 24, 2013, edition of the same online journal. This article discussed some force majeure clauses in the agreement, previously disclosed in a story in The New York Times.


Costa also co-authored “Oil Royalties Distribution in Brazil: From the Petroleum Law to the Brazilian Supreme Court Decision,” presented at the Brazilian Congress of Energy (2013), held in Rio de Janeiro in October.

In addition, Costa was recognized by the Brazilian Petroleum and Gas Association for having written the best 2013 doctoral tome in/on petroleum, natural gas and biofuels in the category law, economics, regulation and energy management.

Current student Nawzad M. Yasin received a $5,000 summer research grant from the Association of International Petroleum Negotiators to interview Kurdish and Iraqi officials and to prepare research on possible solutions to the Iraq-Kurdistan oil impasse.

Russian law professors visit OU College of Law

A group of law professors from Lobachevsky State University at Nizhny Novgorod, Russian Federation, were special dinner guests of the OU College of Law on September 30. The Russian delegation, hosted by Judge Stephen P. Friot (’72) of the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma, were in Oklahoma as part of the Open World exchange program.

Documentary film, book tell Sister Rosemary’s story

Reggie Whitten (’80), of Pros For Africa, Sister Rosemary Nyirumbe and Dean Joe Harroz pause for a photo at a special brunch presentation November 25 in the Sneed Lounge. Sister Rosemary’s work at St. Monica’s vocational school in Gulu, Uganda, is the subject of Sewing Hope, a 2013 documentary film and book.
Faculty changes

New faces and titles

Evelyn Aswad joined the OU College of Law in August as professor of law and the Herman G. Kaiser Chair in International Law. She teaches courses in International Human Rights Law, International Law Foundations and International Business Transactions, as well as an Arab Spring seminar. Her current research interests focus on the fundamental freedoms of expression, religion and assembly.

Aswad serves on the Advisory Committee on International Law to the U.S. Department of State Office of the Legal Adviser. She also has been appointed to serve as the U.S. substitute member on the Council of Europe’s Commission for Democracy through Law, which issues opinions on a variety of international human rights, constitutional justice and rule of law matters to governments as well as international organizations.

Prior to joining OU Law, Aswad served for about 14 years as an attorney in the Legal Bureau at the U.S. Department of State, most recently as the head of the Office of Human Rights and Refugees. In previous legal positions at the State Department, she worked on non-proliferation as well as employment law matters. She also taught international human rights law and multilateral negotiations to U.S. diplomats at the Department’s Foreign Service Institute. She taught international courses as an adjunct professor at Georgetown’s School of Foreign Service as well as its Law Center. Prior to joining the State Department, she worked at the Washington, D.C., law firm of Arnold & Porter and clerked for the Honorable Arthur J. Gajarsa at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in Washington, D.C.

Maria Kolar is a visiting assistant professor of Legal Research and Writing, having joined the OU College of Law faculty in August.

She graduated from Yale Law School in 1995, where she was an editor and served on the Admissions Committee for The Yale Law Journal. She was also an editor on the Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities. In her third year of law school, she was a research assistant and co-taught a Legal Research and Writing course.

Following law school, Kolar served as a law clerk for the Honorable Joel M. Flaum on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. She then moved to Oklahoma and worked in private practice as a litigation associate at McAfee & Taft and Hartzog Conger Cason & Neville. Kolar was actively involved with the Young Lawyers Division of the Oklahoma County Bar Association and served on its board of directors. In 2000, she received the Oklahoma County Bar Association's Outstanding Young Lawyer Award.

Prior to joining the faculty, Professor Kolar served as a law clerk for the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals for nearly 13 years, first for the Honorable Charles S. Chapel and later, for the Honorable Clancy Smith. She also served as a law clerk for the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma, working solely on capital habeas corpus cases.

Rhett Larson joined the OU Law faculty in August. He teaches Property, Administrative Law, Water Law, and other courses in the field of natural resource law.

Prior to joining the faculty, Larson taught at the Arizona State University Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law. Previously, he practiced environmental and natural resource law in Phoenix for several years and studied water science, policy and management at the University of Oxford as a Weidenfeld Scholar.

Larson’s scholarship focuses on water law and policy, particularly the security and international aspects of water resource management. His most recent paper, published in the Utah Law Review, uses the example of desalination in international river basins to propose reforms to international law to encourage the responsible development and implementation of new technologies to facilitate water security.
Faculty honors

Aswad appointed to Venice Commission

In June, Professor Evelyn Aswad was appointed to serve as the United States substitute member on the Council of Europe’s Commission for Democracy through Law, which is better known as the Venice Commission. The Venice Commission was established in 1990 to assist emerging Eastern European democracies in drafting constitutions. Experts appointed to the Commission serve in their independent capacity.

The Venice Commission now provides advice on human rights and rule of law matters to a wide variety of countries. At the June meeting of the Venice Commission, Aswad participated in consideration of Egypt’s draft NGO (nongovernmental organizations) law. She provided recommendations on a variety of matters, including Tunisia’s constitution, at the October meeting.

Also in June, Aswad participated in an Istanbul Process conference held at the United Nations in Geneva. As an international human rights expert, Aswad was invited to speak to U.N. member countries on the state of international law with respect to freedom of expression and incitement to imminent violence.

The Istanbul Process is an initiative launched by former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and others to combat religious intolerance throughout the world. The Process implements a landmark U.N. Human Rights Council resolution that sets forth an action-oriented approach to combatting religious intolerance while promoting freedom of expression, freedom of religion and non-discrimination.

“I believe the Istanbul Process has the potential to build bridges in the international community on one of the critical issues of our time,” Professor Aswad said.

Anderson honored by alma mater

Professor Owen Anderson, a recognized expert in international petroleum transactional law, was honored as an outstanding alumni of the University of North Dakota at the school’s homecoming in October. He was named a recipient of the Sioux Award, the highest honor given by the UND Alumni Association and Foundation at a ceremony in Grand Forks, North Dakota. Anderson earned a bachelor’s degree in 1971 and a law degree from UND.

Anderson is the Eugene Kuntz Chair of Law in Oil, Gas and Natural Resources, a George Lynn Cross Research Professor, and director of the John B. Turner LL.M. Program in Energy, Natural Resources and Indigenous Peoples Law.

Professor Owen Anderson (second from right) accepts the University of North Dakota Sioux Award from Dr. Robert Kelley, UND president; Dr. Debbie Storrs, dean of Arts and Sciences; Kathryn Rand, dean of School of Law; and Tim O’Keefe, chief executive officer/executive vice president of the UND Alumni Association and Foundation.
Beyond the classroom

Tisdal recognized at Kuntz Conference

Mart Tisdal (’76) was named the recipient of the 2013 Eugene Kuntz Award at the annual Eugene Kuntz Conference on Natural Resources Law and Policy held in Oklahoma City November 8. Established in 1993 to honor Eugene Kuntz, a national expert on oil and gas law, former dean, and oil and gas law professor at the University of Oklahoma College of Law, the award is presented annually to an attorney who has made major contributions to the field of natural resources law and policy.

The Kuntz Award is one of the most respected awards given to attorneys in the field and is a highlight of the annual conference co-sponsored by OU Law, OU Outreach and the Energy and Natural Resources Law Section of the Oklahoma Bar Association. The conference provides updates on current law and policy in the oil and gas industry for attorneys, landmen and other industry professionals.

Tisdal is a partner in Tisdal & O’Hara PLLC, and practices in the firm’s Clinton, Oklahoma, office. His practice areas include oil and gas law and complex civil litigation in the areas of ad valorem taxation of energy-related property, business law, commercial disputes, and county government representation.

OU Law announces new agreement with German university

Professor Lindsay Robertson, faculty director of the Center for the Study of American Indian Law and Policy, has entered into an academic cooperation agreement with Mita Banerjee, director of the Center for Comparative Native and Indigenous Studies at the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany. The universities agreed to strengthen their relationship and explore the joint production of scholarship.

“This partnership will create a unique, international opportunity for students, allowing for further expansion in their studies of indigenous peoples,” Robertson said.

OLR symposium features scholars from across the nation

OU Law Professor Stephen Henderson opens the 2013 Oklahoma Law Review Symposium held November 15 in the Dick Bell Courtroom. Two panels of law professors discussed “Law Enforcement Access to Third Party Records.” Much of their discussion centered on the American Bar Association Criminal Justice Standards.
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