Dear Alumni and Friends:

I am sure many of you are wondering how your favorite university is faring in these challenging economic times. Let me give you some assurances, along with how OC is responding to these challenges.

The ultimate work of providing high quality education proceeds unabated. Here is just a small sampling of some of the more notable accomplishments of our students, faculty and alumni during the past year: one of our recent communications graduates – an Emmy winner already – won the Edward R. Murrow Award; one of our biochemistry students took first place overall at the Oklahoma Academy of Sciences Convention for her research; our student literary journal, Soundings, was named #1 in the nation by the international English honor society; our history honor society chapter took first in the nation for the 13th straight year; one of our graduates was recently admitted to the top medical school in the U.S.; and our accounting students had the top CPA exam pass rate in Oklahoma for the 11th time in the past 13 years.

As is evident from the articles in this issue of Vision, OC students, faculty and alumni are more engaged than ever in serving these in need and in their communities. The world is a better place because of their Christ-like and highly-professional service.

This strengthens our resolve in these challenging times – the worst economic times since the Great Depression. These times present a unique opportunity for Oklahoma Christian to demonstrate our Christian character and commitment to good stewardship.

Oklahoma Christian remains in stable financial condition. Our endowment has suffered – as have most investment portfolios – and that will significantly impact the amount we have to spend on scholarships and academic and spiritual initiatives,但是 because the endowment is diversified and invested in several areas that are not directly impacted by the current economic crisis, our losses – while painful – are less than most endowments.

Enrollment remains strong. Last fall, we enjoyed the second-highest enrollment in our history after four consecutive years of record enrollment. Our spring undergraduate enrollment is slightly better than projected, and graduate enrollment is up slightly from last spring.

Our first priority – and challenge – in this economic crisis is to keep the cost of attending Oklahoma Christian affordable, while maintaining high-quality, Christ-centered education and ensuring prudent fiscal operations. In January, we announced a plan that allows students for whom price is a particular challenge to select a package of courses, housing, and meal plans next fall that will cost even less than the cost of attending this year.

We also are working hard to control and reduce costs. Recent budgeting policies have given us some financial shock absorption capacity that did not exist a few years ago. Vice President for Finance Jeff Bingham skillfully renewed a major bond letter of credit in a very volatile credit market, with another on the horizon for renewal this summer. He and his staff will be monitoring both the economy and our budgets carefully during the next few months.

Fundraising results have been mixed. While our capital projects continue to receive support, we hear from many friends that the current economic climate does not allow them to continue the same level of operational support which provides financial assistance to students whose families are least able to afford Christian education. If you are blessed to be able to fill in for these temporary declines, we hope you will do so to enable these worthy young people to attend Oklahoma Christian.

While we always appreciate everything you do for OC, we need your support and prayers more than ever during these challenging times. I hope you will join us in being prayerful about our nation, about the world economy, about the church, and about Christian higher education.

Oklahoma Christian is uniquely positioned to have a positive impact as we train and mentor young people who are dedicated to serving their fellow man and their God. Bottom line – our future is in His hands, and thus we do not worry, but we will work diligently to be faithful in stewardship and effective in service. Thank you for joining us in that ministry.

In His service,

Mike E. O’Neal
President
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On The Cover: photo by Lin Yi
Jennifer Ma (93) stands atop the “Bird’s Nest” as she prepares with her team for the 2008 Summer Olympic opening ceremonies.
On Thursday, December 11, 2008, the last time his Civil War and Reconstruction class met for the semester, Dr. John Thompson said, “That was the most fun I’ve had teaching since the first time I taught that class.”

He almost did not teach the fall semester. When it started back in August, he was hospitalized in ICU combating another round of health complications that threatened to sideline him from the classroom. Almost.

But soon he rebounded and put aside thoughts of medical retirement. His strength returned and he was energized. His students energized him. His family, as always, energized him. His work on an important project to research and write a book on the NAACP in Oklahoma energized him. The presidential election energized him. His passion energized everyone else.

That is how he died on Friday afternoon, December 12, 2008.

When John Thompson stepped on the OC campus as a student in the mid-70s from Chickasha, Oklahoma, a legend was in the making.

He was freshman class president and student body president. He earned the Student History Award. He earned the university’s Gaylord Chair of Distinguished Teaching in 1998. He held a master’s degree from the University of Oklahoma and a Ph.D. from Purdue University.

Thompson was an expert in African-American history, African civilization, the Civil War and many other topics. We might also say he was an expert in making the love of history contagious for many self-proclaimed “history haters” who sat in his classes to fulfill general education requirements for our degrees.
"John Thompson was the first professor that ever made me love history. He made everything interesting and fun. I think I love history today because of that one class at OC," said Caryn Blanchard (99), who was one of several alumni who commented through online tributes to Dr. Thompson on OC’s website and on the social media website, Facebook.

For professed “history lovers,” Thompson kindled and cultivated that love and inspired many to seek the same kind of Christian scholarship that he epitomized, as evidenced by this online comment from Jeff Hassman (89), who now teaches history at Northeast Lakeview College in San Antonio, Texas.

“My last history class with Dr. Thompson was 19 years ago, but I can still vividly remember him and the community of learning that he created in his seminars. We all remember the booming voice. I also remember the expressive hands and the quiet reflective moments he created before he drew us (or sometimes even startled us) into a conversation about books and the big ideas they represented. He obviously had important things to say about these ideas, but he seemed more interested in what you had to say. I remember walking into his office and seeing books everywhere. He was literally surrounded by them. I was so impressed! I wanted to be like him. As I decided to pursue history as a profession, he became an important model of how a Christian scholar should think about history and how a teacher can connect to students,” Hassman said.

Walter Hamilton (83), of Idabel, Oklahoma, earned his law degree at the University of Oklahoma and served as district attorney for McCurtain, Choctaw and Pushmataha counties in southeastern Oklahoma for 15 years. He credits Dr. Thompson for teaching him to learn history through critical analysis.

“He also made me believe that Chickasha was the cultural center of the universe, and that the best present any mother could get her son was a set of encyclopedias. When I heard that he had passed, I went out and found my class notes from Jacksonian Democracy, the South, and the Civil War. I sat and read through them, and realized how much I learned from this good man. Rest in peace, my teacher. We are all better for having known you,” Hamilton said.

Although Thompson’s health problems were evident, he did not draw attention to them. When hospitalized, he would lecture via speakerphone. And when he was wheelchair bound, and the logistics of getting him down the stairs of DAH Auditorium were being worked out, Dr. Thompson would lecture on video from the back of the room and the students would watch him on a screen at the front of the room.

That only lasted for a few class periods.

“He told me he wanted to see the history in his students’ eyes and he couldn’t do that talking to the back of their heads,” said Dr. Raymon Huston, associate professor of political science.

Thompson’s remedy was to crawl down the DAH steps to his waiting wheelchair, strongly dismissing any assistance. He would explain to students and his colleagues that he realized it worried them, but it didn’t bother him. It was simply a way to get from Point A to Point B.

Dr. Cami Agan, professor and chair of the Department of Language and Literature, remembers hearing Dr. Thompson speak in Chapel when she was a student.

“He admitted to us, ‘I don’t expect to be alive in 10 years.’ That was 1988, and we were shocked and inspired as Dr. Thompson explained his health struggles and the daily pain he endured. He lived more than 20 more years, and we are all deeply blessed. I loved his teaching, his clear lectures, his probing questions, his house slippers, and his occasional breaks to ‘get a Jolly Rancher.’ He worked hard and was committed to his discipline, and he made his students want to achieve. There is no better academic legacy.

“As a fellow faculty member, I saw him as the moral touchstone of our academic life. His vision and his dedication to the highest scholarship and Christian education kept us all focused on our purpose. We will all miss his wonderful laugh and his presence, which was both commanding and peaceful. We love you, John,” Dr. Agan said.

Up in DAH this semester, the halls are quieter and the reflections are deeper. There is a search to hire a new history professor, and a hope that Thompson’s work for the NAACP Oklahoma book will be completed.

But Dr. John Maple, department chair and distinguished professor of history, who sparred with Dr. Thompson many times over whether his “decadent Europeans” were superior to the “ignorant corrupt Americans,” said there is a strong sense that they should not be sad. John would not have liked it.

So, their grief has turned to hope in building an endowment for the John Thompson Memorial Scholarship Fund that has been established by Dr. Thompson’s best friend, his wife Murrell.

The fund is intended to provide scholarships for students majoring in the Department of History and Political Science who display academic excellence and a commitment to personal growth. Special consideration will be given to applicants from a minority background.

To find out more about the John Thompson Memorial Endowment, contact Will Blanchard at 405.425.5115.

If you have not read the tributes to Dr. Thompson on the OC website, you will be blessed if you spend a few moments reflecting with fellow alumni. This comment from Dr. Matt McCook, assistant professor of history, summarizes the thoughts of many of us and the challenge to live each day to its fullest.

“John’s passing from this life to the next leaves a major hole in many hearts. Students who know him will miss him and those who haven’t will miss the opportunity to know him. I will miss him. I know his family will miss him. He was always acutely aware that each day he lived was another blessed day with his family. But John would remind us not to be sad for him. He’s with God who possesses all knowledge and can satisfy in an instant John’s desire to know more history.”

If you would like to give to the Memorial Scholarship fund in Dr. Thompson’s honor, go to www.oc.edu/givemore.

By Dawn Shelton (90)
The spectacular opening ceremony for the 2008 Summer Olympics wasn’t over yet, and the rave reviews already were pouring in.

“When it comes to opening ceremonies,” said NBC’s Bob Costas, “retire the trophy.”

The four-hour event, featuring more than 15,000 performers and amazing, first-of-their-kind production elements, received glowing praise from all over the world.

The Guardian, from Great Britain, said the ceremony “outdid all of its predecessors in numbers, colour, noise and expense.”

USA Today’s review enthused about “the sheer, satisfying beauty of the best effects. Those incredibly well-ordered circles, the dancers flitting across a giant globe, the fireworks exploding, the paintings come to life.”

Legendary filmmaker Steven Spielberg called the show “arguably the grandest spectacle of the new millennium.”

At the center of this magnificent production was OC alumna Jennifer Ma (93), a member of the core creative team that conceived, designed and executed the opening ceremony.

As the chief designer of visual and special effects, she and her team were directly responsible for all pyrotechnic and special effects, LED effects, screen projection and images, interactive elements and non-traditional stage design.

Three of the most talked-about highlights from the opening ceremony – the levitating Olympic rings, the pyrotechnic “footprints in the sky” and the lighting of the cauldron – were in her purview.

So, with all the rave reviews, how would this OC graduate rate the opening ceremony?

“Artistically, I’d give it a B-minus,” Jennifer said.

A B-minus? She’d give what may have been the greatest show in history a B-minus?

Well, of course, that is the remarkably high standard this team set for itself. And Jennifer is quick to point out that the team did an excellent job worthy of an A-plus.

But the artist in Jennifer, the product of an OC art and design program acclaimed for its quality and rigor, believes the production could have been even better.

“Even though what we accomplished was quite good, there are still things as artists we wish we could have pulled off, things we planned from the beginning that would have struck a chord on a different level that we wish we could have explored more and presented,” Jennifer said.

Jennifer and the core creative team, led by director Zhang Yimou, spent three years preparing for this once-in-a-lifetime event.

The first one-and-a-half years were spent brainstorming, testing, and drawing. Then, from spring 2007 to April 2008, the team worked to finalize the production, literally going back to the drawing board as different ideas or logistical challenges caused the plans to change.

“Eighty percent of the work was brainstorming 10 to 12 hours a day for a year. Thinking back, it is kind of a miracle that it took place,” Jennifer said. “I learned a great deal in terms of working on a project and with people on a massive scale because of all the permissions you have to get and the logistics of the production. The process was pain-
ful for all of us. But the great value was the way the obstacles and pain helped to cultivate the mind and the spirit.”

As the Olympics approached, they staged three dress rehearsals in front of a stadium filled with 90,000 people. The rehearsals revealed problems and challenges, compounded by the fact that they couldn’t do a full public test run of many top-secret elements such as the footprint, the lighting of the cauldron and the presentation of the rings.

“So many things went wrong. I thought it was going to be a disaster and that we would lose face in front of the world,” Jennifer said.

But on the night of the ceremony, things went right ... very right ... on the world stage.

“We were totally on edge of our seats to see how it would come together. Everything came together so nicely. It went better than any rehearsal,” she said.

Along with praise from around the globe, the team members were hailed as heroes in China. With the controversies surrounding the country and the Games, the ceremony served as a rousing opening that highlighted the best of China’s history, culture, creativity and ability for millions of people around the world to see.

“Afterward, people would recognize us and say ‘thank you.’ That was very nice and made me feel proud,” Jennifer said. “It was immensely challenging and difficult because of the artistic standard we set for ourselves, to do something that had never been seen, and to see a side of China that had never been seen. It was a lofty goal for us to reach.”

Consider it done.

After the Olympics, Jennifer did some traveling and relaxing as a way of transitioning from this massive three-year project back into her “regular” life as an artist. But she didn’t rest long.

Two shows featuring her work opened this month in London – at Haunch of Venison gallery and Guggenheim Museum Bilbao. She is spearheading several public art projects in Beijing, participating in an art Triennial in Japan, and doing a solo show and curatorial project in Washington, D.C. The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao project features an ink-wash painting-video installation that she first conceived for the Olympics.

Even though Jennifer’s successful career has taken her to many of the world’s major contemporary art museums, she remains energized by the impact the Olympics had on her, both personally and professionally.

“As cliché as it sounds, it was a life-changing experience,” she said. “It’s affected me and changed me in so many ways – artistically speaking, as a person, as a Chinese national, as an artist, as a woman. It has had a profound effect on my relationship with China and the world.”

By Wes McKinzie (98)
MEMORY MAKER

ALUM’S COMPANY RECOGNIZED AS INDUSTRY LEADER
Dave Smith (68) got into the symbolic recognition business the hard way. He started as a high school basketball coach.

While building his fledgling business – now called MTM Recognition – into the largest and most successful in its industry, those coaching skills paid big dividends.

“Dave is our CEO and head coach, fostering teamwork and encouraging everyone to take pride and ownership in their accomplishments,” said Donna Lamprecht, MTM’s director of communications. “He dreams big, and those dreams have become reality over the years. He has always had a vision for this company.”

The nurturing work environment has developed a dedicated core of employees with an average tenure of more than 15 years; many of them have been with the company since its beginning.

He admits it didn’t hurt that he also met his future wife, Linda Kern (69), during his recruiting trip.

At OC, Dave helped lead the Eagles’ basketball team to its first national tournament, leading the team in scoring and rebounding his senior year.

“I was fortunate to be part of that team. We had some really outstanding players. Several of them could have played Division I basketball, but they just wanted to play for Oklahoma Christian,” he said. “We had a great coach in Frank Davis and I think our fans were better than any in the state, including the larger schools. Making the national tournament – and playing well in the tournament – brought a lot of positive recognition to OC and was a real bright spot in the history of the school.”

After graduating from Freed-Hardeman, then a two-year college, he was steered by his minister toward Oklahoma Christian to complete his bachelor’s degree. It turned out to be the perfect fit.

“I was from a small town,” he said, “so the smaller campus was very attractive.”

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Dave (at 6’7”), he’s known as “Big Dave” to his employees) grew up in Florence, Ala., and attended Freed-Hardeman in Henderson, Tenn.

After graduating from Freed-Hardeman, then a two-year college, he was steered by his minister toward Oklahoma Christian to complete his bachelor’s degree. It turned out to be the perfect fit.

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After graduating from Oklahoma Christian, Dave coached high school basketball for nine years before returning to his alma mater in 1977 as sports information director and assistant basketball coach.

He left OC again in 1979 to devote more time to a certain small business he started in 1971. From that fledgling trophy shop to the leader in symbolic recognition, Midwest Trophy is now MTM Recognition, the largest designer and manufacturer of custom-crafted awards in North America.

MTM has more than 750 employees in seven locations throughout the United States, including its 20-acre corporate headquarters in Oklahoma City.

The company’s customers include more than 90 major national accounts, including the NCAA, NASCAR and corporate stalwarts such as Disney, FedEx, John Deere, McDonald’s, Mercedes-Benz and OPUBCO, to name a few.

Many of the Super Bowl rings, major bowl game trophies, NCAA championship trophies, Olympic medals, Big 12 awards and much more are produced at MTM facilities throughout the country.

Due to its vertical integration, MTM can provide full service – from concept to final production – on hundreds of recognition items, including rings, watches, plaques, trophies, artwork and more.

The company has a number of “Old-World” craftsmen who can create original works of art, including lifelike bronze sculptures of honorees.

“I’m most proud of our people,” he said. “Our employees understand the value of recognition. We practice what we preach. They also enjoy seeing the fruits of their labor in the media at championship award presentations. As long as there is a need for appreciation, MTM will be there to meet that need through meaningful, memorable, symbolic awards of achievement.”

And, while MTM Recognition is perhaps best known for creating elaborate trophies and rings, Dave is quick to point out that the company’s primary focus is corporate employee recognition. For example, in addition to championship trophies, MTM handles the NCAA’s employee recognition programs.

“More than 50 percent of our business is symbolic recognition,” he said. “One thing about the recognition industry is that it is always changing and growing. Whether the economy is on the upswing or downturn, there is a need for recognition, on the ball field or in the boardroom. In fact, we are continuing to add customers, even in this economy.

A self-made businessman, Dave feels he got a good grounding in life’s fundamentals at Oklahoma Christian and now looks to OC for employees who possess that same work ethic and “intellectual aspect.”

MTM currently employs 25 OC alumni, many in top leadership positions, in its Oklahoma City corporate headquarters; “It’s critical to build your company with quality people,” Dave said.

While not as involved in the day-to-day operation now, Dave maintains a close interest in the overall direction of the company. He spends more time with his family, especially his grandkids, and pursues his great passion for competitive fishing.

He has been fishing professionally for 17 years and is sponsored by Cabela’s and other major companies. He has had several top-10 finishes and more than 50 money finishes in an extremely competitive sport, and won a major tournament, the Toyota Texas Bass Classic, last year.

Dave and Linda are active members of Memorial Road Church of Christ in Oklahoma City. Their son, David, Jr. (97), and daughter, Ashli (00), also are OC graduates and work at MTM Recognition.

By Ron Frost
When Allan Stanglin was a little boy, folks would pat him on the shoulder and tell him he’d be a preacher some day.

This visionary encouragement followed him through his adolescence when he would lead a song on Wednesday night or say the closing prayer.

It came from his parents, grandparents and leaders of his home congregation (Pleasant Grove Church of Christ), some of whom even offered to pay his way to preaching school.

But Allan had a different vision. Sports media.

When he was in seventh grade, he told his sister Rhonda that his dream life would be to lead singing and teach a Bible class at his local congregation … and then cut out of the building and head to Texas Stadium to do play-by-play commentary for the Dallas Cowboys on Sunday afternoons.

This isn’t exactly a never-say-never story. Allan never said he would not preach, but he did not head to Oklahoma Christian in the mid-1980s seeking a Bible degree either.

In fact, he is a little sheepish when he looks back on his OC years.
“Every time someone approaches me with, ‘Hey, I ran into somebody who knows you!’ I always pray silently, ‘Please not somebody from OC, please not somebody from OC.’ But the more I learn about our God, the more I realize he does this kind of thing all the time,” Allan said. Without elaborating (and why should we?), Allan says he understands why his fellow alumni react in surprise when they learn he is a minister now, even though his parents and elders always knew he would be.

But that is getting ahead of the story. After graduation in 1989, and for the next 19 years, he gave sports reporting all he had. And it eventually sent him to Texas Stadium after church services on Sundays to cover his beloved Cowboys.

It even got him on the team plane. He also scored post-game locker room access to the Dallas Mavericks and an open microphone to analyze, pontificate and talk sports, sports and more sports in several Texas radio markets.

“I got paid to give my opinion, and to think about sports. How great is that?” he said.

Most notably, Allan served as sports director for the Texas Rangers’ flagship station, KRLD. On his blog, allanstanglin.com, he says “working for and with the Rangers every single day for five years would drive most people straight into 12-step counseling programs. It drove me into the ministry.”

Along the way, Allan built his own team. He married Carrie-Anne Rowland and they have three “wonderfully perfect” daughters: Whitney (15), Valerie (12) and Carley (9).

Together, Team Stanglin tentatively answered the call leading Allan to ministry. He had always remained active in his local congregation, all the while growing spiritually. He did more speaking, and was getting the questions again, “Why don’t you preach?”

All along, Allan said he sought to glorify God on the airwaves. He had his own bully pulpit for God where he could keep things positive, not tolerate profanity and share his faith. But eventually, he realized he was justifying not making a change.

While Allan, Carrie-Anne and the girls remained prayerful and tentative about him going back to school for more training to go into ministry, things started falling into place … in spite of their hesitancy.

Before he knew it, he was accepted in 2005 to Austin Graduate School of Theology in Austin, Texas, given a part-time ministry job and offered a place to live. Even before he finished school, he found himself in the pulpit fulltime.

The Stanglins had previously lived in Austin, and worshipped with the Marble Falls congregation where Allan was a deacon. He made a call to the church office on the “off chance” his former congregation would be willing to support him as he went to Austin Grad.

“I walked into an elders meeting. And sitting there was Terry Johnson!” he said.

Johnson served as OC president for more than 20 years, including the years when Allan was a student. But Allan didn’t need to sweat, because he soon was on staff at Marble Falls and taking plenty of good natured ribbing from Dr. Johnson about his days at OC.

Even before Allan completed his first year of graduate school, he was contacted by Legacy Church of Christ in North Richland Hills. The longtime congregation needed a new preaching minister.

Allan sent the only two tapes he had. And he was hired. He still cannot believe it, calling the journey “weird and wonderful.”

“I spent my first 40 years living for me. And I have asked God to give me another 40 years for him. That’s our 40-40 deal,” Allan said.

He said he regrets not answering God’s call on his life much earlier, but also recognizes that his experiences have given him much perspective and lots of stories to tell. Not to mention, all of those broadcasting and writing classes back at OC helped him be comfortable in front of a crowd and able to tell a good story.

“That I was hired at Legacy tells me two things. One is they were desperate and scraping the bottom for a preacher! The other is that there is a shortage of decent preachers and that has to change,” he said.

Unlike those who encouraged him as a young boy to follow the call to preach the gospel, Allan has observed that young men are not given that same encouragement anymore.

“I do try to encourage our young and talented men to consider preaching,” he said. “It seems their parents and counselors and youth ministers and teachers usually are talking our best kids out of preaching by telling them they are too smart or talented or gifted and have more potential. But what could be a greater call? How could you be better than to be a proclaimed of the good news of salvation?”

Still, he has noticed that his audiences aren’t always tuned in.

“When I decided to enter the ministry, my little brother (Dr. Keith Stanglin at Harding University) told me that it would be different,” Allan said. “Fewer people would want to talk about what I do now that I’m preaching and not mapping out the NBA playoff brackets or breaking down the Cowboy’s draft. He was right. He and I just sit on the couch together now at family gatherings and talk theology all by ourselves.”

Ministry is work he describes as the most difficult he has ever undertaken, but by far, the most satisfying. Even better than a Sunday afternoon at Texas Stadium.

You can listen to Allan’s sermons online at legacychurchofchrist.org.

By Dawn Shelton (90)
Did you know that our alma mater expects something from us? You’re thinking money, aren’t you? It goes without saying, somewhat cheekily, that our school hopes we will give back financially.

But there is something else, far greater than dollars and endowments, our alma mater expects us to be: The OC Graduate.

Have you read the document, The OC Graduate? (You can find it on OC's website at www.oc.edu/oggraduate).

The document describes how OC encourages its graduates to be like Jesus Christ, who “increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.” (Luke 2:52).

In addition to excellence in scholarship and faith, OC wants its graduates to become servant-leaders in their families, churches, professions and communities, by making a difference for good in the world locally and around the world.

For many OC alumni, serving not only is part of who we are as OC graduates; it is a lifestyle. During these difficult economic times, we see alumni who are serving, and serving some more: dentists who donate time and resources to free clinics, doctors who serve in free medical clinics, business leaders who provide their services and or products for free.

Take David Neel. He was at OC in the mid 1980s. He ran in the Chorale crowd and was a business major. After graduating, he went back home to California and now owns Neel Lighting & Controls, Inc., in Ventura. His company opened a spare office for friends or family of his employees to use to search for employment. He's had at least one taker, someone who lost his job and his home, who comes in to use a desk, phone, computer and Internet.

Then there’s Amber Foster. She graduated from OC in 2004 and went to Honduras as a missionary. There, she ministers to youth in Tegucigalpa, cheerfully enduring job-related unpleasantries such as head lice, and opening her home time and time again to orphaned children.

Given OC’s large alumni population in the Oklahoma City area, there are plenty of sightings of The OC Graduate.

Take Ron (96) and Susan Crawford (95). For more than six years, they have served as inner-city missionaries in Oklahoma City. Ron is the youth director for Rock Island, part of Cross & Crown Mission that sits on the corner of NW 10th and McKinley, a part of the inner city that has the unfortunate reputation for prostitution, drugs and other unhealthy choices for the neighborhood’s youth.
“Our work began with foundational principles poured into me at a really impressionable age during college,” Ron said. “As an elementary education major, I learned that children and youth, especially in the inner city, are Oklahoma City’s most valuable, yet underdeveloped resource.”

Ron credits many hours of Bible classes for pointing him toward a Jesus who spent a lot of time in the margins. Ron points to the fourth chapter of Luke:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed.”

A year ago, the Crawford family had an opportunity to practice what they preach when they reached out to one of the girls in the Rock Island youth group who was pregnant.

“She was a youth without options,” Ron said. “This put Su and I at a crisis point. Are we really willing to give our complete life to God, including home life and house?”

The Crawfords, along with their children, said “Yes,” and invited the girl and her baby to live with them.

“I think the experience was good for our family because our children learned that God sometimes asks you to sacrifice for His Kingdom,” Ron said. “They also got to see that we were rewarded far more than anything we gave emotionally and financially to her. The biggest thing we learned is that the most important thing we can offer is inviting people into our lives.”

Across town, OC alumni are teeming at Capitol Hill Church of Christ (Iglesia de Cristo Capitol Hill), where there is no shortage of work to do or volunteers to do it.

The congregation, located south of downtown Oklahoma City, is multicultural and multilingual. In addition to worship services and Bible classes, Capitol Hill meets the needs of its neighbors by providing a free medical clinic two nights a week.

Beverley North (79) manages the clinic and says she is doubly blessed. She is extraordinarily blessed to work with the patients who have no other options for medical care. And she is inspired by the number of OC alumni who volunteer as translators, technicians, nurses, therapists, medical students and doctors.

Capitol Hill also has a vibrant youth group that participates in basketball leagues, lock-ins and even Leadership Training for Christ.

Matt Brazle (06) is the youth minister. He was raised a missionary kid as the son of Paul and Carol Brazle, who continue to serve in Belgium.

“I lived close to Antwerp, which was a port city of one million. Both the city and our church were very international, with many immigrants and people of different backgrounds. In a sense, I am more comfortable at Capitol Hill than I am in Edmond because of these experiences,” Matt said.

Matt was a double major in engineering and missions. Even though he had many career opportunities, he feels God has him where he wants him to be, serving the youth at Capitol Hill.

“It’s an inner-city church and a lot of our kids come from broken homes and situations where they face gangs, drugs and violence daily,” Matt said. “Many times, they are missing a strong parental presence to teach them right and wrong, self-appreciation and motivation to work hard and be a good Christian citizen. A lot of them have trouble at school and at home with obedience and discipline, and as a result, they have a much greater need for organized discipline and positive correction than your typical church might.”

Alumni and students are not the only ones who serve at Capitol Hill. On Thursday nights, you’ll find Dr. John Harrison, chair, Graduate School of Theology, and his wife, Sharon, teaching elementary age students Bible stories about the Good Samaritan and the birth of Jesus.

These alumni and many others personify The OC Graduate. And the university can be proud that there are thousands of other stories of alumni doing the same thing in their communities all over the world.

Each story is unique, but each shares the evidence of humble submission to God’s will, as alumni diligently follow the two greatest commandments: to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all our soul, and all your mind,” and to “Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:37 & 39).

By Dawn Shelton (90)
Oklahoma Christian alumni can be proud of their alma mater and its standing among some of the finest colleges and universities in the United States.

That is the clear message OC president Mike O’Neal came away with following a nationwide tour of 25 schools last semester.

“I believe that OC can very proudly of where it is, the quality of services it provides and the quality of its academic programs, even without the resources of some schools,” O’Neal said. “The purpose of this tour was to help identify how we can take the next steps in what we’re doing at OC.”

O’Neal and his wife Nancy traveled more than 5,500 miles by car and flew to and down the west coast from Seattle to San Diego over a five-week period, taking campus tours and interacting with presidents, provosts and other senior executives at all of the institutions.

“With one or two exceptions, OC has come further faster than most of the schools. It is my observation that we are doing most of our academic and spiritual development work as well as, or in some cases better, than the most of the schools we have seen,” O’Neal said. “While we certainly have things to learn from these schools and some best practices to embrace, OC is competing well and can compete with the best.”

In addition to its academic quality and nurturing environment, OC is a leader in providing opportunities for students to think on spiritual things. Only one other school O’Neal visited required daily Chapel attendance and just one other school required more Bible classes than OC.

However, O’Neal noted that many of the schools acknowledged their Christian foundations in many ways, from public displays to campus activities and recruiting strategies. And since the integration of faith and learning is paramount in OC’s mission, O’Neal said he would like to see the university communicate that more through the display of scripture and other inspiring message and art on buildings, at entrances and on walls in other high-traffic areas.

“All of the schools, even the ecumenical schools, were very purposeful about their spiritual mission. It is evident in just about everything they do. You won’t go to any of them without being fully aware of their commitment to faith,” O’Neal said.

The schools visited generally had greater financial flexibility than Oklahoma Christian, given their higher tuition rates, lower discount rates, contributions from affiliated fellowships, more revenue from graduate and adult programs, and more fundraising resources.

Many schools used the additional funds for faculty development and continuing education, an area where Oklahoma Christian has room to grow.

“Even the strongest and wisest of us need the opportunity to delve back into the philosophy of why faith and learning can not be separated,” O’Neal said.

O’Neal also noted the deep mutual respect among faculty and administration that existed at the strongest institutions, confirming his desire to encourage more collaboration between administration and faculty. Programs that encouraged entrepreneurship, and rewarded faculty and staff for proposing and initiating new programs and new concepts, also piqued O’Neal’s interest.

As Oklahoma Christian and similar universities seek to make an impact in a changing world, there is general agreement among administrators about the challenges facing Christian higher education over the next five to 10 years. These challenges include affordability, financial viability and remaining focused on the spiritual mission.

Given these concerns, set against the backdrop of a struggling national economy, O’Neal is confident that Oklahoma Christian is in good hands ... that the faculty, staff, administrators and trustees charged with moving the university forward are up to the challenge.

“It is more important than ever before, not just to be efficient, but to do the right things, as we seek to do everything in a way that attracts students and families, serves God faithfully, is rigorous academically and prepares students for lives of service,” O’Neal said. “This trip strongly reinforced my concern that we hold true and firm to our mission while being creative and open to new and better ways of fulfilling that mission.”

By Wes McKinzie (98)
Though the current state of the economy is burning holes in Americans’ pockets and many universities and colleges across the nation are being forced to increase their tuition to keep in the black, Oklahoma Christian University students may not have to sing for their supper any time soon.

Officials recently announced a plan to lower overall costs of attending the university that could save students as much as $600 a year.

“We’re very concerned about the economy, just like everyone is,” Vice President for Finance Jeff Bingham said. “The easy thing to do would have been to just say, ‘Well, let’s increase prices four or five percent’ and just keep going, but we were concerned that might put too much of an additional strain on students and families.”

The new pricing plan would lower the overall cost from $22,956 for the 2008-09 school year to $22,356 for 2009-10, depending on the number of credit hours taken and choice of different housing and meal programs.

The new policy has several components. The normal tuition price will stay consistent; however, the general fee will lower $200 a year. The general fee covers most of the non-academic charges associated with being a student, including access to the health center, fitness center and to special events.

“We have a contract for a lot of different things that are provided for our students: our food service contract, for example,” Bingham said. “We are trying to renegotiate as many of those things as possible to keep costs down.”

The definition of what is “normal tuition price” will change under the new plan. Currently, students taking 12 to 16 hours pay a block tuition price, with each hour after that costing around $460. Under the new plan, the block tuition will be considered 12 to 15 hours with every hour over that amount costing $490.

“Most other universities advertise their pricing for a 15-hour-per-semester block,” Bingham said. “For whatever reason, we’ve always priced around 16. So we decided to go study trends for the last couple of years.”

Officials found that 60 to 62 percent of students consistently take 15 or fewer hours each semester. Recognizing an opportunity to lower costs for a majority of the student population, the university decided to take advantage of the situation.

“A majority of our students are paying for 16 hours, but aren’t taking 16 hours,” Bingham said. “So if we would be able to roll it back instead of putting an increase on it, that would help out most of our students.”

Another fee being altered is the housing and meal plan options. Preferred housing, that is the newer or renovated dorms or apartments, will increase five percent. On the other hand, other housing options will be decreasing in price as much as six percent. Many more meal plans will be offered, providing even more opportunities to save.

“If you are in a dorm this year with a full meal plan and you want to be in a dorm next year with one of several different meal plans, that gives you a choice to help lower your cost,” Bingham said.

Bingham says he anticipates many other universities, both public and private, will be increasing their pricing over the next year.

“Whether its cars or clothes, prices of things generally go up every year,” Bingham said. “That’s the trend for university tuition as well. So this might be breaking a trend, though it wouldn’t surprise me to see a few universities maybe try to do something similar to this in anticipation of helping families support college.”

Oklahoma Christian is trying to keep its budget as tight as it can without cutting back on any of the services its faculty and students already enjoy.

“There are a lot of universities making significant cutbacks, and we’re not anticipating anything like that,” Bingham said. “We’re just trying to control costs as much as we can without adding new things. We’re trying to tighten our belt and make Oklahoma Christian as affordable as possible.”

By Will Kooi (10)

Courtesy of the Talon
A sellout crowd of more than 1,200 people packed Oklahoma Christian University’s Hardeman Auditorium in October as recent U.S. presidential candidate Mike Huckabee took the spotlight.

Speaking on the importance of leadership in politics, the former Arkansas governor emphasized his view on what citizens are looking for in their political leaders.

“People don’t care if their mayor is a Republican or Democrat if they are doing a good job fixing roads and helping the economy,” Huckabee said. “People care about the job you do.”

Huckabee’s admirable character and love for people was evident in the way he engaged the crowd and spoke directly to the key issues of our time.

“Gov. Huckabee is an inspirational leader who possesses a unique mixture of charm, intelligence and toughness. I was deeply impressed by his thoughtfulness and his ability to communicate complex concepts through memorable stories and illustrations,” said Nathan Mellor, Vice President of University Outreach and Chief of Staff. “One of the goals of bringing this caliber of leader to Oklahoma Christian University is to provide a forum in which hearts and minds will be engaged and challenged; Gov. Huckabee exceeded our already high expectations.”

During Huckabee’s campus visit, OC honors students had special access to a private Q&A session, where they were invited to pose any questions and interact with him during a book signing.

“I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity we had to talk with a person of such great experience and influence,” OC student Emmallee Mattern said. “I was not expecting an atmosphere of intimate conversation and was blown away by the direct conversation the students had with him. He was very personable, shook each of our hands, looked us in the eye, answered our questions directly and was incredibly friendly.”

Huckabee was on campus as part of OC’s Distinguished Speaker Series. Previous nationally-renowned figures that have participated in the Distinguished Speaker Series include: Tony Snow, General Tommy Franks and Dr. Ken Blanchard.

By Piper Johnson (07)
College football All-America and Hall of Fame career at the University of Mississippi

Set passing records, appeared in two Pro Bowls and earned NFL Most Valuable Player honors in 1978 with the New Orleans Saints

Champion of humanitarian efforts for organizations such as Special Olympics, United Way, Boy Scouts and others
Gathering in the pre-dawn hours on the streets of downtown Oklahoma City seems like an unlikely setting for a diverse group of members of the OC community to come together.

But that is just what happened for more than 400 members of TeamOC at the Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon last April.

Current students, alumni, faculty, staff, and friends and family joined together to participate in the range of events the Memorial Marathon offers.

While some took on the challenge of running the entire or half marathon, others enjoyed the more relaxed pace of the 5k walk. The most popular event was the marathon relay, which consists of five-member teams.

TeamOC is a way for Oklahoma Christian to acknowledge that full intellectual and spiritual development includes physical wellness.

Because physical wellness is seen as a fundamental part of the overall education process, people of every fitness and experience level are encouraged to get involved in TeamOC, from the beginner to the most advanced.

OC advancement officer Michael Mitchell joined TeamOC with no running experience at all, but signed up to participate in the marathon relay.

“I saw it as an opportunity to challenge myself and was amazed at how I was able to go from not at all a runner to running a 10k.” Michael said. “The community aspect of TeamOC is a great motivator, especially when it gets difficult.”

Art Sheldon, retired professor of engineering, brought his experience of running multiple marathons. In 2008, he participated in the full marathon at age 69, finishing first in his division and qualifying for the Boston Marathon.

Sheldon especially enjoyed the community aspect of TeamOC, noting that “having so many cheering OC people along the route, especially the students, was very encouraging.”

The chance to enjoy the fellowship and support of TeamOC
was not limited to race day. One of the most popular features in 2008 was a pre-race dinner hosted the day before the marathon at OC’s McGraw Pavilion at Lawson Commons.

Longtime assistant basketball coach Curtis Janz, now OC’s athletic director and chair of the Department of Physical Education, inspired the crowd that night with his personal experience of how the discipline of running has helped him become a more disciplined person in all areas of his life, including faith.

The dinner also gives participants the chance to get their registration packets and the unique TeamOC race day shirt.

“One of the most incredible parts of the marathon was seeing all of the TeamOC shirts,” Dean of Student Life Neil Arter said. “With more than 400 participants, it was easy to see what a showing OC produced, and it made it easy to cheer for all of our Eagles.”

Several of the relay teams consisted of current students and their families, who traveled to Oklahoma City to share in the event together. Other teams were formed by various departments or offices on the OC campus.

This year, the Office of Student Life committed to training together during their lunch breaks to run in the half marathon.

Also joining were teams of alumni who used the chance to have a springtime reunion with college friends, as well as congregations whose members wanted to participate together.

But runners are not the only ones with an important role in TeamOC on race day. Volunteers also are needed to man the relay exchange points, cheer people along the race, and help keep people coordinated and communicating.

“It’s hard to believe how fast TeamOC has grown. We went from just a small group of about 20 in 2005 to hoping for 500 this year and looking forward to seeing growth every year after,” said TeamOC coordinator Darci Thompson, OC’s director of admissions. “We hope that this will be an event everyone can look forward to each year, not only as they set their own fitness goals, but as a chance to reconnect with the OC community.”

To find out more about how you can be involved with TeamOC and the Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon, go to www.oc.edu/teamoc.

By Ann White (04)

Matt Johns - Cutting Weight

OC admissions counselor Matt Johns (06) will run with TeamOC next month. The Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon is just the latest fitness endeavor for Matt, who has worked to lose almost 50 pounds over the last year.

After weighing in at 242 pounds last January, he began cutting fast food from his diet and started exercising regularly. Four months later, he weighed 225 pounds.

He interviewed and was selected for a Food Network show that documented people’s efforts to lose weight.

The crew filmed his weight loss journey from the end of May through the beginning of August as his weight dropped to 206 pounds.

Since then, he’s lost even more weight; he tips the scales at a svelte 196 as he prepares to run the half marathon as part of TeamOC.
A LOT IN 'COMMONS'

More than 500 members of the OC family and surrounding community celebrated the inaugural Lighting of the Commons on December 1. Children enjoyed meeting Santa and young and old alike took horse-drawn carriage rides around the forum. The event featured music from the OC Chorale, Jazz Band, Summer Singers, H2O, and alumna Addi Panter. Warmed by hot cocoa and cider, everyone in attendance had a night to remember.
OC’s “Table for 12” program provides alumnus Major General John H. Admire, U.S. Marine Corps (Retired), much more than an opportunity to meet OC students. It gives him a treasured trip down memory lane.

In a response to an ad for the program, Admire, a highly decorated former Marine who now resides in Chesapeake, Va., was reminded of a similar event in his parents’ home almost 50 years ago.

During the 1960-61 basketball season, limited funds compelled Coach Ray Vaughn to ask his players if their parents could provide meals during road trips. Despite their own limited finances, Admire’s parents jumped at the chance when the team traveled to Fort Smith, Ark.

“My mom loved cooking and was so honored the team would stop in our small home in Tulsa. Somehow, we packed the team into our small dining room and Jim Miller, one of my best friends and one of our star players from West Virginia, attempted to eat us out of house and home,” Admire said.

“This was perfect for my mom because she loved it when people really cared for her cooking. It was a fairly typical Oklahoma meal, certainly nothing fancy, but the team talked about it for the remainder of the year. My mom talked about it for the rest of her life. It was a memory she loved to share with me.”

It is those kinds of memories that OC’s “Table for 12” program hopes to build. The program encourages OC alumni to open their homes to students for small dinner parties that bring alumni and students together in a warm, friendly environment for good food, conversation, and camaraderie.

“The ‘Table for 12’ program typifies the unique and special caring and camaraderie of the OC family,” Admire said. “I live hundreds of miles from Oklahoma City, but I’d be honored to host such a dinner should an OC contingent ever be passing through this area.”

After graduating from Oklahoma Christian with an associate’s degree in 1962, Admire received a bachelor’s degree in advertising from the University of Oklahoma. He subsequently earned four master’s degrees and credits Oklahoma Christian and Dr. Stafford North with inspiring him to become a better student.

Admire served his country for 33 years, including five combat tours of duty in Vietnam and the Gulf War. He also served in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, the Persian Gulf, Germany, Thailand, and Japan.

Admire had a stint as Senior Military Social Aide to President Jimmy Carter and also served in the Pentagon on General Colin Powell’s Joint Staff and with the U.S. Congress as the Marine Corps’ liaison to Capitol Hill.

Since retiring from active duty, Admire has served as the president of a military academy in North Carolina and currently works with the military in a civilian capacity, developing future weapons and communication tools.

He was inducted into the University of Oklahoma Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame in May 2005 and the Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame in November 2007.

By Ron Frost
MILESTONES

1956
Andrew H. (Andy) Martin
Andy retired in 1995 as project
elect engineer at Rocky Flats, a
nuclear site at Denver. He and
Judy, married 56 years, raised three
children in Bartlesville, Houston and
Denver. They have eight grandchildren, and eight great-
great-grandchildren. Andy is a deacon
and the assistant director of the
senior adults at Applewood Baptist
Church in Lakewood, CO.

1971
Walter “Gene” Grassie died
September 16, 2008. Gene was a Bible major and athlete
while attending OC. He leaves
three children, Nathan Grassie, Rebecca Grassie Sherwood and
Stephen Grassie (06), and three
grandchildren. He preached for Churches of Christ in Texas and New Mexico.

1972
Scott Harrison is working on his
PhD in Counseling Psychology. He intends to add online therapy to his behavioral health practice in 2010. hrssn49@hotmail.com.

1973
Steveanna (Murphy) and Jack Giesecke announce the marriage of their daughter, Gretchen, to Brandon Chambers on September 27, 2008, in Port Lavaca, Texas. Giesecke69@hotmail.com.

1974
Rick Bingham is the clinic director for the Anti-Aging and Longevity Center of Texas in Dallas. He is an alcohol and chemical dependency counselor for the outpatient drug treatment center. He now has five grandchildren. 1121 Misty Way, Garland, TX 75040; wildernessexpedition@tx.rr.com.

1986
Steve and Jimmie Byers (86)
celebrated their 25th wedding
anniversary on July 29, 2008. They
also would like to announce the marriage of their son, Adam, on
June 13, 2008, in Wichita, KS. seejimmie64@swbell.net.

1976
Teresa (Parker) and Dan Killebrew announce the marriage of their son, Alan, to Christine Harigan on September 13, 2008, in Fort Worth, Texas. Grady King officiated the ceremony. tkillebrew54@msn.com.

1977
Charles Landon has been working for the Department of Homeland Security for six years after 21 years in the Norfolk Fire and Paramedical Rescue Service. He recently was promoted to Master Transportation Security Officer at Norfolk International Airport in Norfolk, VA. celandon@cox.net.

1979
Mike Walle, the husband of alumna Lori (Phillips) Walle, died
October 25 after a courageous
10-month battle with cancer. Memorial donations may be sent to Harding University, Box 12238, Searcy, AR 72149, with a notation to the Walle Family Endowed Scholarship Fund. LWalleS1@aol.com.

1980
Rick Warner and his wife Alicia Zell (Morris) Warner (79) continue to be active in mission
work, ministering in the United States, Russia and the Ukraine. They were blessed to be involved with three baptisms last summer. HisJubilee@gmail.com.

1981
Debbie (Boothe) Wood is now a 2008 National Board Certified Teacher in Early Adolescent/ Young Adult Music. She teaches choir at Eisenhower Middle
School in Lawton, OK. Prior to moving to the middle school eight years ago, she taught 16 years at the elementary level. Idwood@sbcglobal.net.

1986
Greg and Jennifer Hogue were married November 15, 2008, in their hometown of Jonesboro, AR. They live there along with Jennifer’s daughter Sophie. Greg recently completed his 21st year with the Arkansas Department of Health. He serves as State Preparedness Exercise Coordinator. greghogue@msn.com.

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1992
Bryan and Amy (Beach 93) Jenkins announce the adoption of Haley Sofia (09/02/07) from Guatemala in August. Haley joins her new brothers, Tyler (13) and Harrison (11), in the Jenkins’ family. bathjenkins@hotmail.com.

1993
Carrie Jane (Hicks) and Kevin (92) Arledge announce the birth of their fourth child, Ellie Victoria, on October 14, 2008. carriejane@thecrazy5.com.

1998
Paul Kelsey recently achieved National Board Certification as a Middle Generalist teacher. He is the first one at his school to achieve this honor. He lives in Pleasant Grove, AL, with his wife Kim and three children: Addi (6), Levi (3), and Lila (1). pkelsey530@yahoo.com.

Michelle (Pearson) and Russ Maile announce the birth of their daughter, Ryan Nicole, on July 24, 2008. They have two other daughters, Madalyn and Rebecca. chellemaile@yahoo.com.

Bobby James Bottoms has accepted the position of Chief Operating Officer at Sugoi Performance Apparel based in Vancouver, British Columbia. He relocated to Vancouver in December 2008. b jamesbottoms@hotmail.com.

1994
James Laucks was honored with the Ruth Arrington Outstanding College Theatre Educator Award for 2008 by the Oklahoma Speech Theatre Communication Association. jclaucks@hotmail.com.

1999
Nancy (Baldwin) Bridgewater announces the birth of her stepdaughter, Leanna, on November 17, 1999.

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Jennifer’s daughter Sophie. Greg recently completed his 21st year with the Arkansas Department of Health. He serves as State Preparedness Exercise Coordinator. greghogue@msn.com.

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SCHAD MCKINZIE

1999
Katie (Eroh) and Troy Baker (99) announce the birth of their son, Nolan Daniel, on March 25, 2008. He weighed 7 lbs., 13 oz. Nolan's big sister Delaney is 3. katie_bake@yahoo.com.

JENNIFER CORUM AND MICHAEL MICHENER

Jennifer (Corum) and Michael Michener (99) announce the baptism of their eldest daughter, Michaela, on January 15, 2009. The Micheners live in Shawnee, OK. emailus@4micheners.net.

HEATHER BERGLUND AND CHRIS PHILLIPS

Heather (Berglund) and Chris Phillips announce the birth of their son, Thomas Owen, on September 18, 2008. Thomas arrived weighing 7 lbs., 4 oz., and measuring 18.5 inches. He joins sisters Kaija (8) and Maddux (3), and brother James (2). Chris works as a telecommunications executive and Heather is a stay-at-home mom. heather@bsdbox.net.

Todd and Kerri Witten announce the birth of their third child, Tyler Ryan, on October 3, 2008. He joins older sister Emma (4) and older brother Blake (2). todd.witten@gmail.com.

Franklin and Tracy Wood announce the birth of their son, Garrison Steven Samuel, on September 29, 2008. He weighed 8 lbs., 15 oz., and was 21 inches long. He gave his parents a scare for about 10 days in the NICU (pneumothorax), but is now doing very well. mxwood2002@yahoo.com.

Heather Phillips and her kids

EMMA SUE MCDOWELL

2000
Seth and Katie (Kelsey 02) McDowell announce the birth of their daughter, Emma Sue, on November 3, 2008. She joins sister Macy (3 1/2) and brother Charlie (22 months). Seth is the senior minister at Shawnee Trail Church of Christ in Frisco, TX. Katie is a homemaker. seth.mcdowell@att.net.
MilenstOnes

Magen (Fuller) and Grant Stewart were married on October 18, 2008, in Dallas, TX. They now live in Dallas. magenchertie@yahoo.com.

2001
Tamra (Townsley) Blankinship graduated with a master of science degree in Child and Family Studies from the University of Central Oklahoma in December 2008. Tamra is the Director for Children’s Ministries at MacArthur Park Church of Christ in San Antonio, TX. tamra.blankinship@gmail.com.

Jennifer (Ball) and Kevin Booker were married on October 18, 2008, in Richardson, TX. They live in Alexandria, VA. lynne_ball@hotmail.com.

Judson and Amanda Copeland announce the birth of their daughter Cade Andreas, on September 2, 2008. Amanda is a CPA for Crawford and Associates and Judson is the Marketing Director for OC.

Amber (Merchant) and Aric Bramlett (98) announce the birth of their daughter Sage on June 2, 2008. She weighed 7 lbs., 14 oz., and was 21½ inches long.

Garrett and Elizabeth (Teague) Kimball announce the adoption of their son Gabe on March 12, 2008. Gabe has been with them as a foster child since he was eight weeks old. lizandgarrett@verizon.net.

2002
Stefany (Slack) and Joe David Bowers (02) announce the birth of their son, Jed Wyatt, on June 2, 2008. Jed Wyatt and Tiffany (Bartolson 02) Lough announce the birth of their son, Austin Wyatt. They live in Columbia, MO, where Andrew works in marketing and Tiffany is a physical therapist. lougha@gmail.com.

Andrew and Tiffany (Bartolson 02) Lough announce the birth of their son, Austin Wyatt. They live in Columbia, MO, where Andrew works in marketing and Tiffany is a physical therapist. lougha@gmail.com.

Josh and Amanda Nichols (03) announce the birth of their son, Joshua Casen, on January 30, 2008. He weighed 9 lbs., 2 oz., and was 21½ inches long. Amanda graduated with her Ph.D. in Chemistry from Oklahoma State University in July 2008. She works as an Assistant Professor of Chemistry at Oklahoma Christian. amanda.nichols@oc.edu. joshua.nichols@alumni.oc.edu.

Jenny (Wittkop) and Jared Mears (04) announce the birth of their daughter, Andie Lynn, on August 11, 2008. He weighed 7 lbs., 8 oz., and was 19 inches long. jennylynn8880@hotmail.com.

2003
Katie (Allen) and Michael Clark (00) announce the birth of their daughter, Macy Kate, on March 17, 2008. She weighed 7 lbs., 8 oz., and was 20 inches long. They live in Edmond, OK, where Michael is an estate planning attorney with Vaughn, Winton and Clark, and Katie is a homemaker. katieallenclark@gmail.com.

Sam Ford (02) and his wife, Hollee, are the proud parents of triplets born on June 2, 2008. The babies names are Beau Huston Ford, Marlee Grace Ford, and Lilly Caroline Ford. Proud grandparents are Tim and Linda (Seat) Ford.

Jenny (Wittkop) and Jared Mears (04) announce the birth of their son, Hudson Gregory, on July 11, 2008, in Newberg, OR. He weighed 7 lbs., 11 oz., and was 21 inches long. jennylynn8880@hotmail.com.

Tess Varner will begin a Ph.D. program in Philosophy at the University of Georgia in Athens, GA in January. tvarnerstui@okcu.edu.

2004
MILESTONES

Ashwin Fritsch

Hilary (Dodillet) and Justin Kamplain (04) announce the birth of their second son, Jonah Alexander, on December 10, 2008. He joins his brother Max (4). Justin completed his Ph.D. in Chemistry at the University of Texas in Austin in August 2008. They now live in the Boston area. hbkamplain@gmail.com.

Jennifer (Reagan) McIntyre graduated on October 10, 2008, with her masters of science degree in Occupational, Safety and Health from Columbia Southern University. coasterdot@alumni.oc.edu.

Lani Bower graduated from Oklahoma City University School of Law in May 2008 and passed the Texas Bar Exam in July 2008. lanibower@hotmail.com.

Hollee (Bland) and Wes McAdams announce the birth of their first child, Malachi Ray, on September 11, 2008. He weighed 7 lbs. and was 19 inches long. holleenotes@hotmail.com.

Elizabeth (Cail) and Shawn McElroy (99) were married on June 20, 2008, in Green Mountain Falls, CO. okloungelizard@gmail.com.

David and Chelsea (Staudinger 06) Sparks announce that they received a referral for the adoption of a baby boy. They invite you to follow their adventure on their blog at: http://www.adoptethiopia.blogspot.com. reach2him@yahoo.com.

2006

Jessica (White) and Daniel Bryant (05) announce the birth of their son, Wyatt Bennett, on September 25, 2008. jessica.bryant@alumni.oc.edu.

Wyatt Bennett Bryant

2008

Alfredo and Laura (Alvarado) Arriola were married on December 20, 2008. They live in Edmonton, Alberta, where Laura is pursuing a master’s degree in biomedical engineering at the University of Alberta and Alfredo is working for Madentec, doing design and support for products that help special people do extraordinary things. alfred.arriola@gmail.com.

JOIN OCWA!

The Oklahoma Christian Women’s Association unites women to serve and support Oklahoma Christian University in its mission to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world. It encourages friendships among women who believe in OC and give of their time and efforts to help others have the OC experience.

Each year, OCWA plans fundraising events on and off campus, including golf tournaments, bake sales, luncheons, new home tours, fashion shows, auctions, cookbooks and our famous OC student gift packages. OCWA needs you! By becoming a member, you can help our future leaders develop spiritually, academically, physically and socially. If you are interested in starting an OCWA chapter in your area or becoming a member, please get in touch with OCWA Coordinator Christine Meredith at (405) 425-5122 or at christine.merideth@oc.edu.
Since retiring from Oklahoma Christian University in December 2000, former OC president J. Terry Johnson has been busy with his “projects,” as he likes to call them.

He has served the past four years as an elder at Marble Falls Church of Christ, where a 31,000-square-foot auditorium/classroom building is under construction.

He also works a few days each month as a consultant for Continent of Great Cities, the Dallas-based ministry involved with planting team-led churches throughout South America. His religious article, “Be of Good Cheer,” appears monthly in the local newspaper, The Horseshoe Bay Beacon.

With seven grandchildren ranging in age from 2 to 15, Johnson and his spouse Marty find many opportunities to spend a few days each month in Austin or Midland, Texas. Two years ago, they took the entire family on a Disney cruise for a post-Christmas vacation.

“We had a marvelous time, but Marty and I were delayed in our airline flight to Florida, and we missed the ship’s departure. The children and grandchildren were all aboard, but we were left, waving to them from the pier,” Johnson said. “It was three days before the cruise line could reunite us in Grand Cayman.”


The book’s theme combined Johnson’s personal testimony of faith with his passion for golf in an allegory he likes to call a “modern day Pilgrim’s Progress.” The late Byron Nelson, one of golf’s most beloved legends, wrote the foreword to Fairways.

More recently, Johnson has completed two paperback youth novelettes, *Kirby: From the Baseball Field to the Battlefield* and *Cardinal Fever*. Kirby, with a foreword written by former U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft, had its public release by Tate Publishing in March. Cardinal Fever, with a foreword by former St. Louis Cardinal manager Whitey Herzog, will be released later this spring.

The Missouri Sports Hall of Fame in Springfield, learning of Johnson’s two paperbacks, selected the 1959 Parkview High School American Legion baseball team, a major storyline in Kirby, to be one of the 2009 honorees at its enshrinement dinner last month.

Johnson and his high school friend, Charles Kirby Wilcox (for whom the book is named), were co-captains of the team. Each of the 1,400 guests attending the hall of fame dinner received a copy of *Kirby* as a place-setting gift.

“It was a magical moment,” said Johnson, who accepted the induction award on behalf of his teammates. “I had not seen some of these men since we graduated from high school. None of us ever dreamed that our state championship team would be worthy of such lofty recognition.”

Commenting on his 32 years of service at Oklahoma Christian, Johnson said, “Marty and I have wonderful memories of our years in Oklahoma City. The university has made some enormous strides in recent years. We salute President Mike O’Neal and all who continue to build the spiritual and academic reputation of the university.”
Ray and Marcheta Felts strongly believe that when you’re blessed with wonderful things in life, you are compelled to share those gifts with others.

So throughout their lives, they’ve extended that spirit of generosity to OC students by establishing a scholarship endowment and establishing four charitable gift annuities at Oklahoma Christian.

Ray grew up in Drumright, Okla., and Marcheta was raised in nearby Sand Springs. From their earliest days, church played a central role in both of their lives. In fact, both of their fathers served as longtime respected elders in their congregations.

Marcheta graduated from the University of Tulsa. She met Ray, a U.S. Navy and World War II veteran and Oklahoma State University student, while she was working in Tulsa. After a whirlwind courtship – initiated partly by an elder at Marcheta’s congregation – the couple was married in December 1949.

The Felts’ connection to OC began in 1950 when they attended the official dedication of Central Christian College in Bartlesville. Marcheta joined the Stepping Stones, the predecessor to the Oklahoma Christian Women’s Association (OCWA).

Stepping Stones was started, in 1955, by the late Dr. James O. Baird and his wife Avanelle. The Bairds asked for help in generating funds for the then-fledgling Christian college that later became Oklahoma Christian.

“It’s been a wonderful way to not only help young students, but also for women to get to know one another,” Marcheta said about working with OCWA. “I truly value the friendships I’ve made over the years.”

Ray and Marcheta now spend time with their children and grandchildren. Ray, an avid bridge player, has been retired from the oil business for more than 20 years. Marcheta remains active in OCWA and continues to lead a women’s Bible class at South Brook Church of Christ, where she and Ray have attended for more than 50 years.

As Ray and Marcheta reflect on their life together, they don’t dwell on what they have accomplished or accumulated, their greatest satisfaction comes from what they have done for others.

“We have been given such wonderful blessings through the gift of Jesus; we have always wanted to turn around and share whatever we have, whether it’s friendship, money or emotional support,” Marcheta said.

Bob Rowley, senior advancement officer at Oklahoma Christian, has counted the Feltses as dear friends since the early 1970s.

“When I think of Ray and Marcheta, their name is synonymous with doing good works. If there is a good work to be done, you know they’ll be involved with it,” Rowley said.

The Felts established the Felts-Felts Scholarship Endowment in honor of Marcheta’s parents. This important scholarship endowment provides financial assistance for OC students from Christian children’s homes and students from the Churches of Christ.

“Ray and Marcheta provide a wonderful example for us all in how they have chosen to honor God through their lifetime of creative philanthropy,” said Stephen Eck, OC’s director for planned giving.

Ray and Marcheta have ensured their spirit of generosity will continue in the future. They recently received a thank-you letter from a scholarship recipient planning to help others through studying conflict resolution.

“We feel so strongly that providing scholarship funds for OC will help students and families for years to come,” Ray said.

“There’s no way we can explain it to others in full. There are so many positive side-effects from giving. It really ends up with the smiles and notes from those young students.”

Stephen Eck (92)
Two of the top jazz awards in Oklahoma recently went to a professor and student from Oklahoma Christian.

Heath Jones, associate professor of music, was named the Outstanding University Jazz Educator by the Oklahoma Jazz Educators organization.

Mason Drumm, a freshman who plays in the OC jazz ensemble, was named the Outstanding High School Jazz Musician for his accomplishments last year.

“Heath is an excellent teacher who really connects with his students,” said John Fletcher, professor and chair of OC’s Department of Music. “We are really proud of Mason as well. He was an accomplished musician before coming to our campus, and he has been a welcome addition to our performing groups.”

Jones and Drumm received their awards at the Oklahoma Music Educators Association annual convention in February.

“Receiving this honor from my peers in Oklahoma is very humbling,” Jones said. “I love both playing music and helping students cultivate their own musical talents. This award carries a responsibility to maintain that focus, something I take very seriously.”
For the 13th consecutive year, the OC chapter of the National History Honor society – Phi Alpha Theta – was given the Best Chapter Award for its division.

“We are extremely excited about our students’ continued outstanding performance in chapter activities,” said Dr. John Maple, chair of OC’s Department of History and Political Science. “The students deserve all the credit for this excellent achievement.”

Dr. David Lowry, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, said, “This department is setting a high standard for academics on this campus. Dr. Maple deserves much of the credit because of his leadership style, attention to detail and his rigorous expectations of academic excellence.”

Dr. Burt Smith, OC associate professor of marketing and management, was recently chosen to moderate a panel at an event hosted by the American Marketing Association of Oklahoma City.

The evening showcased how Oklahoma City is marketing itself for the 21st century. The event featured Mayor Mick Cornett, former mayor Kirk Humphreys, and Greater Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce president Roy Williams in a panel discussion moderated by Smith.

“When we decided we wanted to host an event of this magnitude, we immediately thought of having Dr. Smith serve as the moderator,” said Brian Blake, vice president of programming for the American Marketing Association of Oklahoma City. “In addition to being an award-winning past-president of our chapter, he has served on the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce board of directors and is a recognized leader in the community.”

Dr. Smith has been an active member of the Oklahoma City’s AMA chapter since 1995. He served two terms as president of the chapter and is the only president to have won a National Chapter Excellence Award.

As part of its 2008 Excellence in Marketing awards ceremony, the board of directors honored him as the first-ever “Volunteer of the Year” for his service to the chapter and his contributions to the marketing community.

Smith maintains an active presence in the business community as a way to help ensure his students benefit from relevant, ongoing, “real world” experience. Along with Dr. Kerianne Roper, Smith is the faculty co-sponsor of OC’s student chapter of the American Marketing Association.

“What I look forward to is seeing our former students make their mark on the marketing profession,” Smith said. “I can’t wait to be in the audience one of these days to see one of our marketing grads be recognized for their contributions to the business community.”
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Minerals Technologies
Morgan Stanley Matching Gifts Program
New York Life Foundation
Newfield Exploration
Noble Drilling
O & E
Peaple Inc.
Pfizer Inc.
Progressive Insurance Foundation
Prudential Foundation Matching Gifts Program
Raytheon Matching Gifts for Education Program
Scriptus Howard Foundation
State Farm
State Farm Foundation
Sigma Corporation
Texas Instruments Foundation
The Arthur J. Gallagher Foundation
The Boeing Company
The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation
The Williams Companies Inc.
Union Pacific Corporation
United Technologies Corp

VISION SPRING 2009

Vision is still Oklahoma Christian University’s alumni magazine, but you’ve never seen it like this before. All of the same OC news and stories are now available in an easy-to-read online format. Find out what great things OC alumni have been doing in their time since college. See Christian higher education at work in the world. And see why, after all these years, you should still be proud to be an Eagle!

www.oc.edu/vision

NOW ONLINE
For more information about OC accomplishments, activities and other news, go to news.oc.edu.

OC RANKED IN AMERICA’S BEST COLLEGES

OC has been named a “Best University – Master’s” in the West region in U.S. News and World Report’s 2009 edition of “America’s Best Colleges.”

This is the 10th consecutive year that U.S. News has ranked Oklahoma Christian in its America’s Best Colleges Guidebook.

Last year, Oklahoma Christian was elevated to a higher category known as the master’s group due to a growing number of graduate students and the addition of new graduate programs. OC moved up five spots from its initial 2007 ranking in this higher category even though it is a newcomer to this category and not as well known by its peers.

“We’re very pleased to be ranked as a best college in the West,” OC president Mike O’Neal said. “Our master’s programs continue to grow in scope and stature, so we expect our rankings to climb higher because of the overall quality and exceptional professors we have teaching in these rigorous programs. Our undergraduate program is certainly one of the most outstanding in this area. The real proof is how well our graduates perform in the marketplace.”

LA.MASCUS NAMED HONORS PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Dr. Scott LaMascus will succeed Dr. Bailey McBride as director of Oklahoma Christian’s Honors Program this fall.

Under McBride’s leadership since 1996, OC’s Honors Program has grown both in numbers of students and in quality. McBride will remain involved in teaching Honors and Language and Literature courses.

LaMascus (84) has taught in the Department of Language and Literature for the past 10 years. During that time, he chaired the department during a phase of growth from 37 majors to 117. He also has been an active teacher in the Honors Program.

“I always have enjoyed the Honors students and one of the highlights of my career has been the chance to co-teach with colleagues such as Dr. Cami Agan, Dr. John Maple and Dr. McBride,” LaMascus said. “I am looking forward to getting opportunities to champion the program and to work with these amazing students who come to study at OC.”

During LaMascus’ tenure as chair, the Language and Literature Department redesigned its facilities, built a model assessment and planning process, established the Community Literacy service project, and expanded the OC Writing Center.

In addition to a focus on strategic planning and academic excellence, LaMascus championed the establishment of the McBride Center for Faith and Literature, which brings to campus high-profile speakers such as Pulitzer Prize winner Dr. Marilynne Robinson and former U.S. Poet Laureate Dr. Robert Pinsky.

“Along with other faculty, Dr. LaMascus has worked closely with OC students to bring national prominence to the Language and Literature Department through the presentation of papers at national conferences and the recent recognition of OC’s student literary journal as the top journal of its type in the nation,” Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Allison Garrett said. “He will bring tremendous experience, as well as a great love for OC and its students, to this new role.”

FOUNDATIONS HELP FUND SCIENCE INITIATIVE

The J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation, Inc., and the Robert Glenn Rapp Foundation have stepped forward to help Oklahoma Christian complete its Science Facility Initiative.

A matching gift of $723,000 from the Mabee Foundation and a $100,000 grant from the Rapp Foundation will be used to complete the third and final phase of the project – a new wing housing classroom and office space on the north side of Harold Science Hall.

“We are deeply indebted to the Mabee Foundation and the Rapp Foundation for these generous gifts, which we consider an investment in the future of Oklahoma,” OC president Mike O’Neal said. “The expansion and enhancement of our science facilities has been our top academic capital project and this gift will help ensure that our students have an outstanding science facility.”

Phase one of the Science Facility Initiative included the renovation of the science laboratories on the first floor of Harold Science Hall in the summer of 2006. Phase two featured the renovation of Vose Hall, completed in the fall of 2008. Altogether, this three-phase project has been in excess of $6 million.

O’Neal said that the addition of classrooms, faculty offices and storage space will take pressure off of other academic facilities and will enhance the ability of OC’s outstanding science faculty to teach, mentor and research – all with excellence and from a Christian worldview.

“Our science students have an exceptional record of achievement in competition with other universities and our graduates enjoy a 90 percent plus acceptance rate into medical and graduate schools,” he said.

Construction is slated to begin this summer, with its completion expected in the summer of 2010.

NEW VOSE CHEMISTRY LABS DEDICATED

Oklahoma Christian University unveiled its new Vose Hall Chemistry Labs at a ribbon-cutting ceremony in November.

The completely renovated facility in the Department of Chemistry and Physics is comprised of four labs, one each for organic, general and advanced chemistry, as well as an instrument lab.

The new labs include the most up-to-date safety features and are fully handicapped-accessible. New fume hoods remove noxious smoke, while the labs’ air purge systems can replace the air in the labs in minutes, which is especially important during experiments.

Also, faculty previously had to schedule one lab at a time in Vose Hall, resulting in

Dr. Scott LaMascus
some evening classes. The instrument lab is separated from the organic chemistry lab by a wall of glass, allowing faculty and students to use both labs at the same time.

“Before this facility was renovated, we had chemistry and biology labs spread between two buildings,” said Bill Luttrell, chair of the Department of Chemistry and Physics. “Now students can do all of their biology labs in one place, and all of their chemistry labs in Vose. It really gives us a lot more options when it comes to scheduling different chemistry courses.”

The advanced lab has a research area for faculty and undergraduate student research projects, creating more research capabilities throughout the school year and especially during the summers.

“I’m really impressed that the university invested so much in research capabilities for our students. The research area will really help us prepare our students for graduate school,” chemistry professor Amanda Nichols said. “I did undergraduate research here when I was a student and I know these new labs will inspire more students to choose a career in chemistry.”

Students Celebrate Funding of 14 Wells

Wishing Well, an Oklahoma Christian University student-led organization that raises funds for clean water projects, recently celebrated the completion of its first 14 wells.

“Amazi 09,” a February event at the OC Art Gallery, featured work by professional photographer Esther Havens, who vividly captured the clean water crisis in Rwanda. The photos previously were on display in New York City. Amazi is the Kinyarwanda word for “water.”

Wishing Well is a non-profit organization that raises money through art shows, prayer nights and concerts for clean water projects in Kenya, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Haiti, Sierra Leone, the Gambia, and the Philippines. All funds raised by the organization go directly to clean water projects.

Safe drinking water is one of the most pressing humanitarian needs in the world, particularly in developing countries. Contaminated drinking water is responsible for an estimated 5 million deaths per year and roughly 80 percent of all diseases. More than one billion people worldwide do not have access to clean drinking water.

For more information, go to www.wishingwellafrica.com.

OCL Partners with Project Impact

Project Impact of Oklahoma City is a nonprofit organization that needed a partner to help serve more of the area’s youth. When professors from OC’s School of Education saw how their students could help Project Impact reach more children, the department quickly got on board.

In an example of a true community endeavor, Project Impact sponsored a presentation on financial management from Bank of America that was hosted at Oklahoma Christian.

Project Impact gave checks to young people so they could start their first savings or checking accounts. In addition, former University of Oklahoma and NFL football player D.J. Wolfe talked about the importance of staying in school and learning how to manage money at an early age.

Project Impact also provides early intervention and prevention services to at-risk youth. According to Terrence Bell, Project Impact’s executive director, the organization combines mentorship with technology training, cultural awareness and economic empowerment.

“We are a mentoring organization,” Bell said. “We give opportunities to kids that they wouldn’t have.”

The partnership came about after a chance meeting between Bell and Denise Hutchinson, assistant professor of education at OC.

Oklahoma Christian agreed to provide Project Impact with a meeting space in the education department. The department also donated two laptops that will enable students to receive technology training.

Robyn Miller, education chair and director of teacher education at Oklahoma Christian, said Project Impact’s work with school-aged children was a perfect fit with OC’s School of Education.

“We have education majors who do their student teaching in Oklahoma City schools, so this just made sense,” Miller said. “However, the partnership quickly grew beyond the education department. It turned into the perfect win-win situation for everyone.”

One of Project Impact’s biggest needs was mentors for at-risk boys. Miller connected Project Impact with Kappa Sigma Tau, one of OC’s male social service clubs. In addition, Oklahoma Christian is offering free admission to basketball games as a reward for young boys at Project Impact.

After learning that Project Impact was a vendor at all Oklahoma City Thunder home basketball games, Miller reached out to OC female social service club Lambda Chi Zeta. Lambda Chi now sells concessions at Thunder games, with the proceeds going to Project Impact.

Bell hopes the partnership will continue to grow. With so many services, he is always looking for more volunteers and different types of donations.

For more information, go to www.projectimpactoc.org.

Concert Raises Funds for Project Rwanda

Oklahoma Christian hosted a December concert by Christian recording artist John Waller to raise funds for Project Rwanda.

The 1994 genocide wiped out a large portion of the Rwandan infrastructure and claimed the lives of thousands of educators. Project Rwanda is working directly with that country’s government and department of education to plan and develop a high school that will provide all Rwandan children an opportunity to go to school.

In addition to the high schools that will be built, Project Rwanda is working to establish a teacher’s college to begin training
qualified educators and provide a higher quality of education to existing students.

Project Rwanda is a partnership of Oklahoma Christian’s Academy of Leadership & Liberty, Greater Atlanta Christian School and OC alumni Mark and Susie Jackson.

OC HOSTS CRYSTAL DARKNESS WATCH PARTY

Oklahoma Christian collaborated with Edmond Family Counseling, Inc., in January to host a watch party for people interested in learning more about crystal meth and the major impact it is having on the community.

The documentary featured graphic testimonials aimed at uncovering the devastating impact of meth usage on individuals and families across Oklahoma. The film aired simultaneously on television stations throughout Oklahoma.

Following the documentary, an expert panel comprised of licensed alcohol and drug counselors, a medical doctor, the Edmond Police Department, the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics, and an area private therapist answered questions from the audience. Counselors also were on hand to offer aid to people in need.

“OC is proud to partner with Edmond Family Counseling to provide this service to the community. We are so thankful for the leadership of First Lady Kim Henry and (former Oklahoma County district attorney) Wes Lane in their efforts to bring this issue to the forefront, and we are honored to be a part of the overall effort,” said Elaine Kelly, OC professor and J.J. Millican Chair in Accounting. “Ethics need to be at the forefront of their minds, and we see a lot of value in having discussions from different perspectives.”

A professor at the University of Alabama, Hamill gained national attention for evaluating state and federal tax policies under the moral principles of Judeo-Christian ethics. Her work has been featured in publications such as The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times.

The event, co-sponsored by the Oklahoma Christian Accounting Club, was worth one credit hour of continuing professional education for certified public accountants.

The annual ethics symposium is made possible by the J.J. Millican Ethics Endowment, created by Don Millican, chairman of OC’s board of trustees, and his wife and Donna, to honor his father. The endowment provides academic opportunities to OC students, faculty and the community through scholarships, programs and guest speakers.

OC MARKETING HONORED WITH 6 OKC ADDYS

The Oklahoma Christian Office of Marketing won six awards at the prestigious ADDY Awards Gala last month.

The ADDY Awards recognize and celebrate the top creative talent in Oklahoma City. The entrants include major advertising agencies, media outlets, sports franchises, universities, and more.

OC’s marketing staff won two Gold ADDYs, given in recognition of the highest level of creative excellence and judged to be superior to all other entries in the competition. Oklahoma Christian also won two Silver ADDYs and two bronze ADDYs.

The local ADDY Awards, sponsored by the Oklahoma City Advertising Club, are the first stage in a three-tier national competition. OC’s gold and silver winners are eligible for entry into one of 14 district competitions nationwide, with the best work at that level eligible for entry into the national contest.

“I’m never surprised when the staff is recognized for their outstanding ability,” Vice President for Enrollment Management Risa Forrester said. “Our web team, designers, writers and editors collaborated to produce award-winning work. That is exactly what they do for the university every day.”

Forrester and Director of Marketing Judson Copeland lead a team that includes Stephen Bell, Jonathan Curtis, Scott Hill, Wes McKinzie, Rachel O’Donnell, Ann White and Micah Wooten. All the members in the marketing office are graduates of OC’s design or communication departments.

RENEWED TAX EXPERT SPEAKS AT ETHICS SYMPOSIUM

Nationally-recognized law professor Susan Hamill was the featured speaker at Oklahoma Christian’s third-annual J.J. Millican Ethics Symposium in February.

Hamill’s topic was “Taxes and Ethics: What Does God Really Say?” According to Hamill, since Judeo-Christian ethics are used as the moral compass by most Americans, it is vital that tax policies are compared with the moral texts on which they are based.

“We are committed to our students learning ethics in and outside of the classroom,” said Elaine Kelly, OC professor and J.J. Millican Chair in Accounting. “Ethics need to be at the forefront of their minds, and we see a lot of value in having discussions from different perspectives.”

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OC HOSTS AUTHOR, ENVIRONMENTALIST

Best-selling author and environmental activist Bill McKibben delivered the fourth-annual McBride Lecture in October.

McKibben is author of the national bestseller, Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future, as well as books such as The End of Nature and a host of essays in the nation’s top magazines.

“As always, faith played a unique role in this year’s lecture programs,” said Dr. Scott LaMascus, professor of English and director of the McBride Center for Faith & Literature. “McKibben’s book, The Comforting Whirlwind, should be read by every Christian because it calls readers to appreciate all nature’s marvels as well as to humbly accept our place of responsibility in it.”

The McBride Center is endowed by donations from alumni, foundations, and humanities organizations to honor the lifelong work of Dr. Bailey McBride, a longtime professor of English and university leader, and his wife, Joyce McBride.

“The McBride Center creates and funds innovative programs that engage the very best ideas — whether in fiction, poetry, or nonfiction — so that we can help build a stronger humanities culture for our university, city, state and region,” LaMascus said.
COBURN DELIVERS COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

Senator Tom A. Coburn delivered the fall commencement address to Oklahoma Christian graduates in December.

In addition to his speaking duties, Dr. Coburn was awarded an honorary degree from the university for his service to the people of Oklahoma and the United States.

Almost 200 students received degrees during the ceremony: 135 bachelor candidates from OC's three colleges – arts and sciences, biblical studies and professional studies – along with 49 degree candidates from the university’s Fast Track MBA program.

Dr. Coburn represented Oklahoma’s Second Congressional District in the House of Representatives from 1995 through 2001. He became the first Republican to hold the seat since 1921 and the only one to hold the seat for consecutive terms.

After returning to his medical practice in Muskogee for four years, Dr. Coburn was elected to the U.S. Senate in 2004.

His priorities in the Senate include improving health care access and affordability, protecting the sanctity of all human life – including the unborn – and reducing wasteful spending, balancing the budget, improving health care access and affordability, protecting the sanctity of all human life – including the unborn – and representing traditional Oklahoma values.

ALUM WINS TAX FOUNDATION VIDEO COMPETITION

OC alumnus Andrew Patterson recently won a national video competition to explain the problem with the tax code on small business owners.


The Tax Foundation is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that has monitored fiscal policy at the federal, state and local levels since 1937.

The contest was part of a campaign aimed at raising awareness of America’s high business tax rates and how those taxes have an impact on people’s competitiveness, wages and living standards.

JANZ BECOMES NEW ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

Oklahoma Christian named alumnus Curtis Janz as its new athletic director in January.

Janz, who is associate head coach for the men’s basketball team and chair of OC’s physical education department, is concluding his 20th and final season as an assistant basketball coach this month.

“They have great confidence in Curtis, as he has proven his strengths during his many years at Oklahoma Christian. Curtis has a great understanding of our mission and the role athletics plays in it,” OC president Dr. Mike O’Neal said. “We also believe Curtis is a man of great vision who will push our athletic department to great results and we know he has the skills that lead the department.”

Janz takes the reins from Chuck White, who had served as interim athletic director. White remains as OC’s director of athletic operations and head baseball coach.

“I feel honored to have this new role at a university that has such a great tradition,” Janz said. “Oklahoma Christian is a great place, with great people, students, staff, faculty and administration. Athletics should be a great part of the university. It should build pride, excitement and memories for every student. This will be my goal and our department's goal. I hope that we will gain the support of all in the OC community.”

Janz played on head coach Dan Hays’ first basketball team at Oklahoma Christian in 1983-84 and stayed on as an assistant following his graduation in 1986. He and Hays have teamed to produce four Sooner Athletic Conference championships and six NAIA National Tournament appearances.

“I have great enthusiasm for Oklahoma Christian athletics,” Janz said. “We are going to pride ourselves on having very competitive teams, student-athletes that strive for academic excellence, and representing the university in a way that makes all of us proud. I believe that we are going to have an exciting athletic program that will be easy to support.”

Janz, who will continue as an associate professor and chair of OC's physical education department, earned a master’s degree from the University of Central Oklahoma in 1988. He and his wife Kathryn, who serves as an adjunct instructor in OC’s Department of English, are the parents of a daughter, Delaney.

THOMPSON NAMED CROSS COUNTRY HEAD COACH

Oklahoma Christian elevated Mark Thompson to the position of head cross country coach in January. Thompson took over for Wayne Strohman, who resigned to pursue other interests.

Thompson has served as an assistant coach for OC’s cross country and track and field programs the past two seasons. He was instrumental in helping the Eagles win the 2008 Sooner Athletic Conference cross country championship.

“I enjoyed every minute of working with Coach Strohman. He put his heart and soul into the program and much of our present and future successes can be attributed to his work,” Thompson said.

Thompson is among the most accomplished track and cross country athletes in Oklahoma. He was a six-time state champion in track and cross country at Edmond Memorial High School. He ran on two national championship teams at the University of Arkansas.

The 29-year-old Thompson is an active runner. Over the past two years, he won the 2007 Tulsa Run 15k and the 5,000 meters at the 2007 Stanford Invitational. He earned runnerup honors at the prestigious 2008 Drake Relays Special Invitational Mile.

Thompson, who holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees in physics from Arkansas, also is a physics instructor at Oklahoma Christian. He joined the OC faculty in 2005.

“Transitioning into the head coaching role is a tremendous opportunity for me.
I have a passion for athletics and for OC, and the opportunity to merge the two is exciting,” Thompson said. “The coach-athlete bond is special, and I want to be the best for our athletes both athletically and spiritually. The future is bright for OC distance running.”

Thompson is married to the former Darci Grisso, who serves as OC’s Director of Admissions.

**OC VOLLEYBALL LAUNCH SET FOR 2010-11**

Oklahoma Christian will begin playing intercollegiate volleyball in the 2010-11 academic year.

The university originally planned to introduce the program in 2009-10, but facility development and staff changes persuaded officials to delay the launch for one year.

The university continues to work on facility enhancements that will accommodate volleyball and make additional space available to OC’s basketball programs and its large intramural athletic program. Additional time to further develop these projects will allow Oklahoma Christian to launch volleyball in a way that helps the team be immediately competitive.

OC also continues the search for its new volleyball head coach after an abbreviated application and interview process last year.

“Selecting the right coach is vital to the success of any athletic program, especially a new program. We have talked to a number of good candidates, and we want to give everyone the opportunity who has an interest,” Director of Athletic Operations Chuck White said.

Resumes and applications for the new part-time head coaching position should be sent to: Chuck White / c/o Oklahoma Christian University / P.O. Box 11000 / Oklahoma City, OK 73136-1100. Previous coaching experience is preferred.

**FERNANDES EARNs ALL-AMERICA HONORS**

OC junior midfielder Cristian Fernandes was named a third-team Brine NAIA Men’s Soccer All-American in November, recognizing him as one of the NAIA’s top 33 players.

The Maringa, Brazil, native is OC’s 17th NAIA All-American in soccer, and only the fifth to be named to one of the top three All-America teams.

Fernandes was the Sooner Athletic Conference’s co-leader with 15 goals. He ranked second in points with 35. He also earned first-team All-SAC honors along with senior goalkeeper Bryan Cochrum and junior defender Ryan Frampton.

On the women’s side, OC’s Emma Cole (midfield), Stephanie Duncan (forward) and Kacie Hoppe (defender) were all named second-team all-conference.

Duncan, Hoppe and Frampton also were named to the SAC All-Tournament teams in November.

**POWELL PLACES FOURTH IN NAIA**

OC senior Jordan Powell became the highest Eagle finisher in school history by placing fourth at the 2008 NAIA Cross Country National Championships in November.

Powell and teammate Silas Kisorio, who finished 28th, earned All-America honors. The Eagles placed 18th overall in their first national championship team appearance since 1969.

Powell, who placed 10th in 2007, completed this year’s eight-kilometer course in 24:36 to become just the fourth two-time All-American in OC history, joining Tom Story (1977-78), Wayne Strohman (1992-93) and Kenneth Bowling (2003-04). He surpassed Mike Herndon as the highest Eagle finisher at the national meet. Herndon placed sixth in 1979.

In addition to OC’s All-America hardware, Josh Wayland, Rachel Snider and Kayla Goode earned scholastic recognition with NAIA Scholar-Athlete honors.

Scholar-Athletes must maintain a minimum 3.50 GPA with junior or above academic standing. Wayland (3.75 GPA in marketing) is now a two-time Scholar-Athlete, while Goode (3.78 GPA in science education) and Snider (3.63 GPA in nursing) were first-time honorees.

**FLORES WINS REGIONAL TENNIS TITLE**

Oklahoma Christian’s Esteban Flores won the Intercollegiate Tennis Association’s Southwest Regional singles championship for the second straight year.

He went on to place sixth at the ITA National Championships in October after finishing fifth in the nation last season.

Flores and the Eagle tennis team, led by new head coach Kris Miller, will seek to win a second-straight Sooner Athletic Conference championship and advance to the NAIA national tournament as a team later this spring.

**OC WINS CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIP**

Silas Kisorio and Jordan Powell placed first and second to lead Oklahoma Christian to the Sooner Athletic Conference cross country championship in November.

Kisorio took the individual title in 24:34 on the eight-kilometer course in Shawnee, Okla. Powell finished in 24:36.

Frezer Legesse (10th place) and Josh Wayland (11th place) joined Kisorio and Powell in earning All-SAC honors.

OC head coach Wayne Strohman was named the SAC’s Men’s Coach of the Year for 2008.

In the women’s race, OC’s Sylvia Chirichir placed third to lead the Lady Eagles to a fourth-place team finish. She and Nicole Lair (14th place) earned all-conference distinction.

**OC’S WAYLAND WINS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP**

OC senior Josh Wayland won the national championship in the 1,000 meters at the NAIA Indoor Track and Field National Championships.

Wayland’s national title is the first for the OC track and field program since Damon Sims won the outdoor 200 meters in 1994. It’s the 23rd track and field national championship in school history.

“Josh being national champion is an outstanding accomplishment,” OC head coach Randy Heath said. “He was the chart leader most of the season and he lived up to the billing. He definitely deserved it by running a perfect race to be in position to win. We had great performances by our whole team.”

Four OC runners earned All-America honors in helping the Eagles earn a sixth-place national finish overall. Wayland teamed with Silas Kisorio, Curtis Pratt and Jordan Powell to place second in the distance-medley relay, while Kisorio (third
Taylor enjoys career week

OC junior Jason Taylor, a third-team NAIA All-American last year, recently had one of the most prolific weeks in school history.

Taylor scored 30 or more points in three straight games: a career-high 34 against Mid-America Christian (Okla.) and 30 each against Southern Nazarene (Okla.) and Science and Arts (Okla.).

The three-straight 30-point performances were the first at OC since two-time NAIA All-American Jay Mauck tallied totals of 36, 36 and 38 points in consecutive games during the 1997-98 season.

Taylor, who has been named Sooner Athletic Conference Men’s Basketball Player of the Week four times this year, also surpassed 1,000 career points and established another personal career high with 17 rebounds in a game during his remarkable stretch.

Men’s basketball team gets national bid

The OC men’s basketball team, led by Sooner Athletic Conference player of the year Jason Taylor, earned its first NAIA national tournament bid since 2005-06.

The Eagles took a 23-9 record into the 32-team tournament, which began after Vision went to press. For information on how the Eagles fared at nationals, go to www.oceagles.com.

OC honored for character focus

Oklahoma Christian was one of 199 NAIA colleges and universities to be named a Champions of Character institution for 2007-08.

The mission of the NAIA Champions of Character program is to restore character values and raise a generation of students who understand and demonstrate in everyday decisions respect, responsibility, integrity, servant leadership and sportsmanship.

Oklahoma Christian was selected by demonstrating these core values in athletic contests, public-service projects, established policies related to behavior in practice and game situations, athletic and academic environment, and character education.

“We strive to be an institution that models the values of Champions of Character,” OC director of athletic operations Chuck White said. “This honor reflects the outstanding student-athletes, coaches and fans we have here at OC.”
Oklahoma Christian’s Dan Hays won his 600th game as a collegiate head coach in November with the Eagles’ 91-46 victory over Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College (Okla.).

Hays, who stood at 529-288 in his 26th season coaching at Oklahoma Christian following the milestone victory, has the most wins at the NAIA or NCAA level of any active coach in Oklahoma.

Including his 71-68 record in five years at Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Hays ranks third all-time in the state behind Bloomer Sullivan (662-222 at Southeastern Oklahoma State University, 1937-67) and Henry Iba (652-317 at Oklahoma State University, 1934-70).

Hays has made Oklahoma Christian a mainstay among the top programs in NAIA basketball since coming to Oklahoma Christian for the 1983-84 season.

OC has won six of its 10 Sooner Athletic Conference championships and qualified for seven NAIA National Tournaments during Hays’ tenure. He has taken five teams to the Sweet 16 of the national tournament and earned SAC Coach of the Year honors five times.

Twenty-two Eagles have earned NAIA All-America honors under Hays’ tutelage. Two players – Jay Mauck (1998-99) and Jarred Merrill (2004-05) – have earned NAIA National Player of the Year. His coaching career also includes multiple stints as an assistant coach with USA Basketball in various international competitions.

Off the court, Hays has seen more than 90 percent of the seniors in his program complete their degrees. Last year’s squad had the third-highest cumulative GPA (3.35) of all men’s basketball teams earning NAIA Scholar Team designation.

A native of Albuquerque, N.M., the 62-year-old Hays twice earned All-America Honorable Mention as a player at Eastern New Mexico.

Hays was inducted into the NAIA Hall of Fame in 1998 and became a member of the Oklahoma Christian Hall of Fame in 2001. He also is in the Eastern New Mexico University Athletic Hall of Fame.

The recent addition of lights to Dobson Field gave the baseball team the opportunity to add night games to the schedule this year. This photograph is from the first night game of the season against Bacone (Okla.). If you haven’t seen Dobson Field lately, stop by to catch a game and see the great progress on the facility. For information on how you can help support the next phase of the Dobson Field construction, contact head coach Chuck White at 405.425.5354 or at chuck.white@oc.edu.
Corlie (Swan) Agnew

To be a mom

My time spent at OC and all the people I met I wouldn't give up those years for anything.

Cami Agan

August 22, 2008- the day our daughter Hadleigh Ann was born

Adjusting to living back in a small town and missing all my dear friends that I worked with at OC!

Jennifer Jane Winton Edmunson

Corporate Lawyer.....yawn.... OR Mrs. Shawn Cassidy

Chris Taylor saying... Hey do you remember John Edmunson? He's here now go say Hi!

Pulling the kids out of school and traveling all over the USA

On the Husband's side....Duh....

Dr. Jim Wilson and Dr. John Thompson - The Land, Oh Oh, the Land....

Becoming the Mrs. and becoming my kids' Mom

Saying "No" and doing well what I say "Yes" to

The kids are iced out of school for several days....SERIOUSLY....

A movie theater hot dog or two - YEAH BABY!

Ecclesiastes, The dedication to our family by The Hubs and My Mom

More than I deserve, blessed beyond I could imagine!

Oklahoma Christian University

Jennifer Jane Winton Edmunson

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Oklahoma Christian University
HOMECOMING ATTENDANTS 1974
Sheila Hartman (senior homecoming attendant)
Glenda Pope (homecoming queen, 1974) Roxie Fuchs (sophomore attendant) Cindy Kelsey (junior attendant) Kathy Cunningham (freshman attendant)

1974 SUMMER SINGERS
Left to Right: Bob Bowden, Gail Roberts, Linda Seat and Bob Lashley

ANDY BENTON, Mr. Aerie, 1974 and Student Senate President 72, 73, 74. Currently the President at Pepperdine University
Coached by Bill Villines, the Eagles faced with the task of rebuilding, rose to the occasion by winning three of the last four games, one of the wins being an overtime win over playoff-bound Oklahoma Baptist University.

Tom McLemore (12) gets ready to bat as Tony Sellars (10) waves Tony Lightsey (14) on in to home plate with another big OCC run.

Kurt Conner and Cary Branscum climbing the walls.
Here’s a three-point plan for the next time you take that vacation or mission trip to some famous or exotic location:

1) Take some OC gear.
2) Take your picture with you wearing it.
3) Tell us where you are and what you’re doing.

If you email or mail the photo to us, we’ll post it on our alumni website ... and it might even appear in the next VISION. We look forward to seeing those pictures!

Send your photos to:
alumni@oc.edu

You can update your alumni information on Oklahoma Christian’s website. Visit www.oc.edu/alumni to update your name, address, email and other information.