



# BIXBY BREEZE

One of Six Greater Tulsa Reporter Newspapers

Oklahoma's Largest Monthly News Group

Volume 17

Mid-Dec. 2021 to Mid-Jan. 2022

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## IN THIS ISSUE:

### CIVICS



# Bixby Spartans Earn 7<sup>th</sup> State Title

*63-14 Win Over Deer Creek Is Historic*

*Record-Setting Team Wins 49<sup>th</sup> Game in a Row*

By **RON HOLT**  
Contributing Writer

It was another dominating, overpowering, impressive performance by Bixby's unbeaten Spartans at University of Central Oklahoma's Chad Richison Stadium in November.

Unlike other Spartan wins this season, Bixby's 63-14 Class 6AII state championship victory over Deer Creek-Edmond in front of 9,000 witnesses was historic for many reasons.

Bixby's 49th victory in a row established a new 11-man state record, toppling 48 straight by Wagoner. It was the Spartans' fourth straight Class 6AII state championship, seventh state championship in the past eight seasons and third consecutive undefeated season.

"Forty-nine wins, that's a big deal for our community, our players and our coaches," said 12th-year Spartan head coach Loren Montgomery, leader of Bixby's development into a prep football power since taking over in 2010. "A lot of hard work has gone into those wins and I'm super proud."

"The big deal is the way our kids and our coaches have bought into our system and the continuity we've had over the past 12 years ... that pays off. We didn't know we were close to the record until this summer, but we just stayed with our routine of one game at a time. "That's a lot of ball games and a



Dean Atchison for Bixby Breeze

**CELEBRATION:** Bixby payers celebrate their state championship after the victory over Deer Creek.

lot of hard work has gone into it by a lot of good players. It was a lot of commitment on the part of our school district," Montgomery added.

In addition, senior sensation Braylin Presley set the school rushing record while going over the 100- touchdown mark in his career. He victimized Deer Creek, rushing 16 times for 171 yards and three touchdowns, throwing a 76-yard TD pass and catching five passes for 20 yards.

"I knew coming into the game that I was close to the record, but I tried not to think about it ... but getting the rushing record was in the back of my mind. We had a lot of good players returning on offense, we knew we could do a lot of great things this season," Presley said.

Senior Preston Solomon, who missed much of 2020 with an injury, ended his Spartan career

with his most productive performance.

He caught four passes for 141 yards and three TDs – including the stunning 76-yarder from Presley on Bixby's first offensive play – and was credited with five tackles, a sack and tackle for 10-yard loss.

"We're going to miss Braylin next year. He's so electric and a great kid. He's a great leader and a hard worker. When your best player works hard that helps your program. Solomon is one of the fastest guys in the state. He just had a big year this year, big play after big play. Getting him healthy this year on both sides of the ball was huge," Montgomery noted.

Bixby's defense turned in another solid, aggressive, hard-hitting performance resembling the previous 12 games this season. "Our defense was tenacious to-

night. Coach (Rodney) Flowers has done an incredible job with those kids year after year. Those kids just pin their ears back and fly around to the football," Montgomery added.

After Bixby (13-0) forced a Deer Creek (10-3) punt on the Antlers first possession, the Spartans struck quickly. Presley took a handoff from senior quarterback Christian Burke racing to his right before pulling up and firing a strike to Solomon behind the Antlers' secondary for a 76-yard TD and 7-0 Spartan lead at the 10:10 mark of the first quarter.

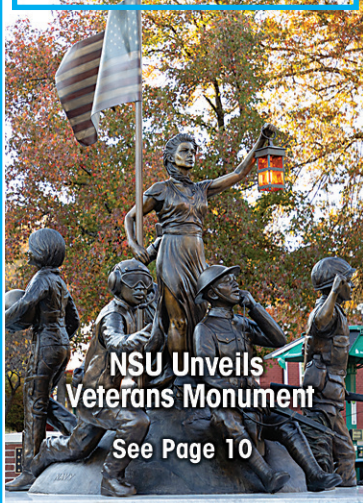
"I knew coming in that would be the first play and, in my mind, I was just saying don't overthrow it. I just tried to get it to him and that's what I did," Presley said. "Preston has improved so much, he's an outstanding player and an even better person."

(Continued on page 12)

### FEATURE



### EDUCATION



### SPORTS



## KUDOS of the MONTH: Restore Hope Ministries

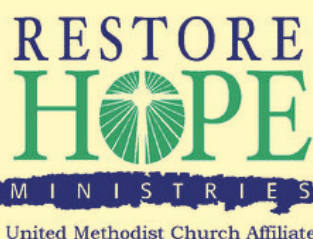
In a continuing effort to support individuals and families struggling with housing instability during the COVID-19 pandemic, Restore Hope has distributed \$759,715 in Housing Stability Grants to six regional organizations in northeastern Oklahoma.

The funds are to be used to increase capacity and support for a variety of programs, including Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) partnership expansion at Broken Arrow Neighbors, Catholic Charities of Eastern Oklahoma, Tulsa Dream Center, Owasso Community Re-

sources, Housing Solutions, Tulsa and the Tulsa Day Center.

All these organizations will be working as direct partners of Restore Hope to prevent homelessness, and to help transition community members from homelessness into housing.

Broken Arrow Neighbors will be offering ERAP application assistance over the phone, and Catholic Charities



will be providing language assistance to Spanish speaking applicants.

"Since March, there has been an overwhelming need for housing support," said Jeff Jaynes, executive director of Restore Hope, which has distributed more than \$21 million in ERAP funds this year. "Partnering with these six organizations who are already committed to increasing housing stability through

various programs and partnerships was a natural extension of our work."

Founded in 1978, Restore Hope Ministries seeks to restore families in financial crisis to economic and spiritual vitality. By reducing hunger, preventing homelessness, and promoting hope, Restore Hope works every day to fight poverty and restore hope for families in need in Tulsa County.

To learn more about Restore Hope, go to [www.restorehope.org](http://www.restorehope.org) or follow @RHMTulsa on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.



Courtesy photo

**VOLUNTEERS IN SERVICE:** Members of the Rotary Club of Tulsa are all smiles as they volunteered to raise funds for the Salvation Army during the holiday season.



GTR Media group photo

**ALL SMILES.** This year's Tulsa Area United Way annual campaign chairs Karen Keith and Tim Lyons celebrate as the UNITE campaign raised over \$25 million for community needs. See page 4 for more information about the campaign.

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# Greenwood Rising Historical Marker Dedicated in Remembrance of 1921

The final project of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre Centennial Commission was dedicated in November. Six boundary markers will ensure visitors know they are entering the historic Greenwood District and remind people that the Greenwood District encompasses a large area of Tulsa than is commonly recognized.

Commissioners, Greenwood leaders and elected officials attended a short dedication ceremony at the first marker at the corner of Archer and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

The following individuals spoke during the event:

Sen. Kevin Matthews, 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre Centennial Commission Founder and Chair; Cassia Carr, Deputy Mayor, City of Tulsa; Jessica Lowe-Betts, Chair, Greenwood Rising Board of Directors; Sam Combs, Vice Chair, Greenwood Rising Board of Directors; Phil Armstrong, Interim Executive Director, Greenwood Rising; and Rev. Dr. Eric Gill, Pastor of Operations for Metropolitan Baptist Church.

Greenwood Rising is the legacy project of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre Centennial Commission. The Commission began in 2015 under the leadership of Senator Kevin Matthews dedicated to a vision of a stronger and more just Tulsa.

The Greenwood Rising History Center and other projects of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre Centennial Commission (including these



**STANDING TALL:** Community leaders gathered to dedicate the first of six historic boundary markers surrounding the Greenwood District. From L to R: Nathan Koob and Stephen Dinnen with Selser Schaefer Architects who designed the boundary markers; Sam Combs, vice chair, Greenwood Rising; Phil Armstrong, interim executive director, Greenwood Rising; Komari Crisp, Booker T Washington student and Youth and Race Leadership Forum 2020 participant; Sen. Kevin Matthews, chair and founder of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre Centennial Commission; and Dep. Mayor Cassia Carr, City of Tulsa.

Historic Boundary Markers) will educate Oklahomans and Americans about the Race Massacre and its impact on the state and Nation; remember its victims and survivors;

and create an environment conducive to fostering sustainable entrepreneurship and heritage tourism within the Greenwood District specifically, and North Tulsa generally.



GTR Media group photo

**HONORING VETERANS:** Uncle Sam led the Tulsa Veterans Day Parade in downtown Tulsa. The 2021 theme of this long-standing parade was "Never Forgotten" which, this year, remembered the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the attacks on 9/11. The 2021 parade focused on bringing attention to 9/11 and veterans' service after the attacks. The parade had a special fly-over at the beginning by the WW II Airborne Demonstration Team. New this year was the ending of the parade at the newly designated Veterans Park which was the previous Centennial Park on 6<sup>th</sup> Street at Peoria. The corporate sponsor this year was OneOK.



GTR Media group photo

**LIGHTS ON IN GREATER TULSA:** Holiday lights are shining brightly throughout greater Tulsa. Above, visitors enjoy the opening night of the holiday lights in Broken Arrow's Rose District.



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918-254-1515 • 918-254-1550 (fax)  
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**MID-DEC. 2021 TO MID-JAN. 2022**

Vol. 29, No. 7 (Union Boundary);  
Vol. 25, No. 7 (Jenks District Gazette, Midtown Monitor);  
Vol. 23, No. 7 (Owasso Rambler, Broken Arrow Express);  
Vol. 18, No. 7 (Bixby Breeze)

**COPY DROP-OFF:** 5401 S. Sheridan Rd. • Suite 302 • Tulsa, OK 74133



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The Union Boundary, the Jenks District Gazette, the Owasso Rambler, the Broken Arrow Express and the Bixby Breeze are distributed monthly to select homes in the Union, Jenks, Owasso, Broken Arrow and Bixby school districts. The Midtown Monitor is distributed to selected neighborhoods in the Tulsa school district. All six papers are distributed to news stands and other outlets in more than 700 locations throughout the Greater Tulsa area.

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## CIVICS

# 2021 Has Been A Year To Be Remembered

## From Tulsa's Mayor

By G.T. BYNUM  
Mayor of Tulsa

One year ago, I delivered my State of the City address to a virtual audience. This year in November, I delivered my 2021 State of the City address in person to a crowd I have missed seeing since the start of the pandemic.

As mayor, I get to be a part of incredible teams working to move our community forward, and there hasn't been a single accomplishment that didn't involve a lot of Tulsans who worked to make those achievements a reality.

2021 was another year of uphill battles that included dealing with a once-in-a-century pandemic, the effects that pandemic had on employment, civil unrest not seen in 60 years, a polar vortex that threatened lives and the very water system we rely on, and a ransomware attack on our systems that tested our resolve.

I work with 3,500 city employees who represent some of the best public servants in America. This year, these employees worked through sub-zero temperatures to fix waterline breaks, a ransomware attack that affected their ability to conduct regular business duties for a period of time, and a workforce shortage.

Yet through it all, our employees and residents reminded me that with each successive crises that arose, we have people here who do not get distracted and discouraged. When I look out my office at City Hall today, I see cranes in the sky and an expanding social and business landscape.

Tulsa is enduring a period of historic growth and investment, and though this year has had its share of challenges, it's never been a more exciting time to serve this city and watch our hard work pay off.

One of the biggest things we did this year was establishing a new mechanism for economic development in Tulsa. We did this by launching the Tulsa Authority for Economic Opportunity (TAEEO) –

a move that merged multiple authorities, boards and commissions to streamline and strengthen how we approach economic development by allowing us to expand our impact by eliminating inefficiencies and increases resources.

We also commemorated the 100th anniversary of the Tulsa Race Massacre, and this summer we completed the first phase of the 1921 Graves Investigation at Oaklawn Cemetery with the archeological exhumation of 19 remains, all of which were processed at the on-site lab and temporarily re-buried while DNA analysis and plans for a permanent burial location continue.

There have been so many amazing things that have happened in Tulsa over the last year. We welcomed our 600th citizen to Tulsa City Hall, we passed a balanced budget, we worked together to distribute COVID-19 relief funds to those who most needed them, we began the largest publicly funded road project in our history with the start of construction on the 81st to 91st Yale Ave. widening project, and much more.



Courtesy photo

**STATE OF THE CITY:** Mayor Bynum delivers the State of the City address in person in 2021 after delivering it virtually due to COVID in 2020.

As we continue to build on our successes and face challenges head on, I want to thank everyone who is doing their part to help

build the kind of globally competitive, world-class city that we set out to establish when I came into office.

# Tulsa Area United Way Raises More Than \$25 Million To Address Community Needs

The Tulsa Area United Way reached the goal for its annual campaign, raising \$25,493,060 for the community. The goal announced in September was \$25,370,129 to work back towards pre-pandemic funding levels of the 59 partner nonprofits.

United Way announced the grand total at the UNITE celebration, held on Nov. 18, at the Herman and Kate Kaiser YMCA.

"The community coming together to reach this goal represents the true power and beauty of living

united. We wanted this campaign to be light for hope, a reminder for the community that better days are ahead when we unite for a common goal," said Alison Anthony, President and CEO. "This amount will address real needs and goes a long way toward easing some of the greatest challenges in our area."

"What's remarkable is just two weeks ago we needed over \$1.8 million to reach this goal. What a testament to the generosity of so many that we could rally and raise the needed amount," said County Commissioner Karen Keith, co-chair of the Tulsa Area United Way campaign.

The campaign will fund Tulsa Area United Way's 59 partner agencies in the areas of education, health/safety and financial stability, as well as several community collaborative projects and social innovation grants that address complex challenges, beginning on Jan. 1, 2022.

"We are blessed to live in a community that comes together so generously and with such a focus on helping one another," said Tim Lyons, president and CEO of TFCU Federal Credit



GTR Media Group photo

**VOLUNTEER CELEBRATION:** Volunteers in this year's United Way campaign proudly display the total amount raised to help those in need.

Union and 2021 campaign co-chair. "Tens of thousands of individuals, along with more than 900 companies and organizations showed their dedication to helping others through participation in this United Way campaign – all in the second year of a pandemic."

Members of the United Way's Campaign Cabinet, as well as other volunteers and contributors,

gathered at the YMCA to learn about the success of this year's campaign. The family-oriented event gave attendees an opportunity to explore the newly renovated facility and featured outdoor games, a hamburger cookout and s'mores.

The program introduced the volunteer campaign teams and revealed the goal was reached before cheering supporters.

In the last 97 years, the local United Way has invested \$850 million in the community.

This year's campaign will be celebrated, and high-performing company, business and organizational campaigns will receive recognition at the Tulsa Area United Way's annual Live United Awards and Luncheon, on Tuesday, March 8, 2022, at the Cox Business Convention Center.




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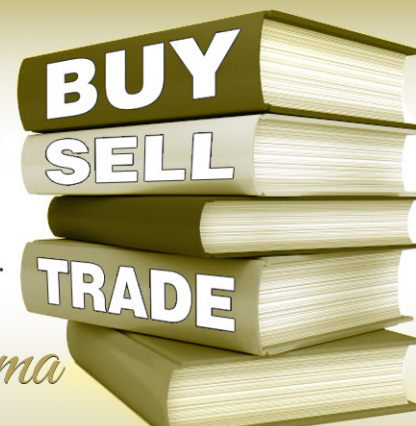
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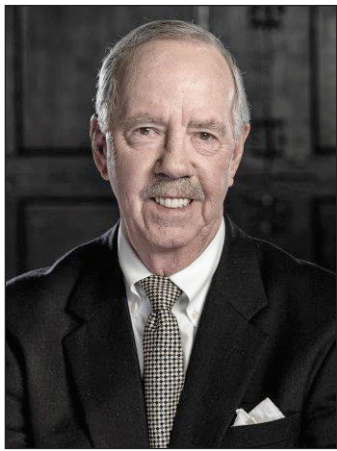
# Many Opportunities Await Tulsa County in 2022

For the past 21 months the Tulsa County Board of County Commissioners has been focused on the countywide effects of the pandemic to individuals, families, small businesses, and government services. While we certainly are not back to the life before the pandemic, much progress has been made to restore, rebuild, and recover from the dramatic impacts of the countywide public health emergency.

As we look ahead on what we can expect and plan for in 2022, there are many opportunities before us.

We will continue to allocate the \$63 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds which we received

## From Tulsa County



By COMMISSIONER RON PETERS

last May. Then, in May of 2022, we will receive another \$63 million of ARPA funds. With the hopes that the most immediate needs of the community and businesses from the pandemic will have been addressed by the spring, Tulsa County will turn its attention to the capital improvements which can be funded with this second tranche of ARPA funds.

Some of the important capital needs we hope to address in 2022 are: (1) repairs to the County Courthouse; (2)

possible relocation of the Tulsa County Election Board to provide better services in a larger and

healthier environment; (3) county road and bridge repairs that have been delayed; and (4) possible expansion of broadband services to county facilities. Other capital improvement needs may also be included.

In addition to being good stewards of our public facilities and being watchful on the continuing impacts of the pandemic, we will turn our attention to the next legislative session, set to begin in February, 2022.

The main piece of legislation which we will be supporting is the County Modernization Act. County governments are still beholden to the approval of the legislature when it comes to providing new and better county services and programs. Unlike cities which can self-govern and managing their own internal affairs, counties are still seen as an extension of state government. Hence the approval of the Legislature is required for even the most mundane expansion or creation of modern services.

The current requirement, when a county wants to improve operations, is if there is no current law



which allows it, then the answer is NO, the county can't do it. This stifles innovation, creativity, responsiveness, and modernization of government.

The County Modernization Act would state that unless there is a law which prohibits what a county wants to do to improve its operation, then the Board of County Commissioners can approve new initiatives, policies, and programs. Every state around Oklahoma al-

lows their counties this governing independence and its time Oklahoma did as well.

This past year has placed county government in a leadership role previously not seen by the citizens of Tulsa County. Thanks to the outstanding county personnel and the commitment by the Commissioners to step up when needed, county government enters 2022 ready to continue to serve the citizens of Tulsa County.

# Tulsa County Commissioner Ron Peters Announces Plan to Retire in January

## Deputy Commissioner Vicki Adams To Serve the Term Through 2022

Tulsa County Commissioner Ron Peters has announced his plans to retire. Peters, a longtime public servant as County Commissioner and former Oklahoma State Representative, plans to resign from the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) office in mid-January.

"It's been a great honor to serve Tulsa County residents these many years," Peters said. "Between my career as a business owner, then in the Oklahoma House of Representatives and these past eight years at Tulsa County, I'm looking forward to spending more time with my family, while playing some golf."

Peters named District 3 Deputy Commissioner Vicki Adams as acting Commissioner to serve out

the remainder of his term, which continues through 2022. Adams has served as deputy commissioner since 2013.

"Commissioner Peters is a true statesman who has worked tirelessly to improve the lives of Tulsa County residents," Adams said. "We've worked together for more than 31 years, but these past eight years have been the most gratifying as we pushed Tulsa County government toward success. I'm honored and deeply grateful for his trust to continue his legacy of service."

Peters served as an Oklahoma state representative for 12 years before running for Tulsa County commissioner. Before his public service work, Peters was co-owner

of a public relations firm. Prior to that he worked for Cities Service Oil and Gas and later for Occidental Petroleum Corp., where he directed government and public affairs efforts.

"Among my proudest achievements are investments and improvements at Expo Square and the Tulsa County Fairgrounds to ensure it's as productive for Tulsa County in 2050 as it was in 1950. Another is LaFortune Park, which continues to be among the best all-around parks in the nation. We've also led legislative efforts to modernize laws that establish county government in Oklahoma, which hasn't seen many updates since statehood.

"During these last eight years, our



GTR Media Group photo  
**GREAT SERVICE:** District 3 County Commissioner Ron Peters stands in the Tulsa County offices in downtown Tulsa. Peters has held his county commissioner seat since 2013 and plans to retire at the end of 2021.

focus was on modernizing and restructuring county government," Peters said. "When we got here, the answer to a lot of questions was,

"We've always done it that way." We started challenging that notion from day one, and I'm very proud of Tulsa County's progress."

# Tulsa Regional Chamber on Commissioner Peters' Retirement

Courtesy MIKE NEAL  
TRC President and CEO

All of us at the Tulsa Regional Chamber congratulate Commissioner Ron Peters on his retirement. He has served the public well in many capacities, and we thank him for his many years of service to the Oklahoma House of Represent-

tatives and the Tulsa County Commission. He has been instrumental in so much of what the chamber does, from advocacy to economic development to tourism.

He was one of two state legislators who suggested we create what became the OneVoice Regional Legislative Agenda. He also suggested that we travel to the state

capitol and the U.S. Capitol to personally advocate for public-private priorities, which we now do regularly.

In support of the chamber-led Tulsa's Future regional economic partnership, Commissioner Peters was part of multiple company recruitment efforts, including Macy's and Milo's Tea, as well as the

Whirlpool expansion.

Commissioner Peters was also instrumental in the facility upgrades to Expo Square, as well as development of the LaFortune Park Tennis Center to be one of the nation's best facilities.

Most recently, he helped provide CARES and ARPA funding to support the pandemic recovery work

of Tulsa Regional Tourism and the Tulsa Office of Film, Music, Arts & Culture.

He has always been a reliable, thoughtful and pragmatic public servant who cares deeply for his colleagues, constituents and our entire community. We wish him all the best as he begins this new chapter of his life.

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VARIETY

# Celebrate the Season with Entertainment

As we continue to contend with social situations in tight surroundings and large-group gatherings, such as theatre events, I want to acknowledge event organizers and venue management who put the safety of their audiences first. I'm happy that this holiday season we have many reasons to celebrate. I hope you and your friends and family will enjoy this time of year with these fun and festive options.

A special outdoor experience awaits at the BOK Center with its annual Winterfest. Visitors can venture out on 9,000-square feet of ice for skate dates through Jan. 3. Take a ride in a carriage while sipping hot chocolate. It's all part of the fest, now in its 14th year.

Another dazzling outdoor adventure begins at Tulsa Botanic Garden. The Botanic Garden of Lights includes music, train rides and thousands of lights. The Garden is open nightly (except for Dec. 24 and 25) through Jan. 2.

Two hallowed traditions continue at the Tulsa PAC with Tulsa Ballet's "The Nutcracker" (through Dec. 19) and American Theatre Company's "A Christmas Carol" (Dec. 10-23). A new magnificent "Nutcracker" production debuts this month. It is a collaboration of two highly admired Tulsa Ballet resident choreographers, Val Caniparoli and Ma Cong.

I have seen American Theatre Company's "A Christmas Carol" a couple of dozen times. Really. I love this musical version, created over 40 years ago by Robert Odle and Richard Averill. It is the perfect outing for family and out-of-town guests. Karl Krause owns the role of Scrooge, and the set is so very picturesque. I also like that it is playing until Dec. 23. Even your young ones will be entertained by the ghosts, the music, the gorgeous set, the many children in the cast and the uplifting story.

After Scrooge, the churlish teens in "Mean Girls" won't seem so bad. Broadway and Celebrity Attractions are back in 2022 with Tina Fey's splashy and energy-driven coming-of-age musical comedy,

Jan. 4-9. It is based on Fey's 2004 film and opened on Broadway in 2018. "Mean Girls" features music written by Fey's husband, Jeff Richmond, who

penned the score for Broadway's "Unbreakable Jimmy Schmidt." Lyrics are by Nell Benjamin ("Legally Blonde") and direction by Casey Micholaw ("The Book of Mormon" and "The Drowsy Chaperone"). The show is recommended for ages 10 and up.

Theatre Tulsa presents "The Sound of Music," Jan. 14-30 at the Tulsa PAC, showcasing all those memorable Rodgers and Hammerstein songs we can sing my heart.

Other notable January productions at the PAC are magician and mentalist Hayden, Jan. 14-15, and two Tulsa Symphony productions --- "Folk Dances: 'London' Symphony" on Jan. 15, with Daniel Hege conducting. The concert highlights music by Bartok, Britten and Vaughan Williams.

The score to "Star Wars: A New Hope" will be performed by the Tulsa Symphony, Jan. 29, while the audience enjoys the film in high-definition on a big screen.

World Stage Theatre has brought some interesting and evocative dramas to the PAC in recent years. They present "The Song of Jacob Zulu," Jan. 27 through Feb. 6. This piece was honed by Steppenwolf Theatre in 1993 and nominated for six Tony Awards. The story follows a man during the time of South African apartheid who is charged with a terrorist act. The music was written by Ladysmith Black Mambazo.

Warming up a late January evening, Signature Symphony continues its concert series at the VanTrece PAC with "Love and Obsession, the Beatles to Berlioz," Jan. 22.

Country artist Jake Owen performs at the River Spirit on Jan. 21. Comedienne Fortune Feimster takes the stage Jan. 27, and Willie Nelson and Family headlines on Jan. 29. A featured guest for the Willy Nelson event is singer Dan Smalley. Nelson also will be joined by his sister, daughters and sons. The group covers songs by

## Show Buzz



By NANCY HERMANN



**A CHRISTMAS CAROL:** American Theatre Company reprises a holiday tradition with its beloved "A Christmas Carol," playing at the Tulsa PAC through Dec. 23.



**THE NUTCRACKER:** Tulsa Ballet returns to the PAC in December with the debut of an all new "Nutcracker" production.



**MEAN GIRLS:** Broadway's hilarious "Mean Girls," written by Tina Fey, opens the new year with laughs Jan. 4-9.

Nelson, and also George Harrison, Hank Williams, Kris Kristofferson and others.

The Cox Business Center welcomes Latin music newcomer and romantic leading man Jay Wheeler, Jan 22. One of the hottest stand-up comedians in the biz, Taylor Tomlinson, appears at the Center on Jan. 28. Tomlinson was a finalist in "Last Comic Standing" and just finished her second comedy special for Netflix.

Ventriloquist/comedian Jeff

Dunham lifts winter woes on Jan. 29 at the BOK Center. It takes a comic of immense stature to fill even a third of that arena. Dunham is irreverent and politically incorrect, taking jabs at institutions and people (including himself) with the help of his puppets, Walter, Peanut, Bubba J and Achmed the Dead Terrorist, among others. Dunham is a native Texan who attended Baylor and worked his way up the comedy chain. He enjoys great popularity in both the U.S.

and Europe. This appearance is part of his "Seriously!?" tour.

Rocking the BOK on Jan. 30 is the popular L.A.-based band Tool. Formed in 1990, Tool is known for its progressive rock, or "art rock." They won a "Best Metal" performance Grammy in 2020 for their album "7empest." The group Blonde Redhead will open for the band.

Have a warm and fabulous holiday season. I wish you the very best of everything in 2022!

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# Some Things You Maybe Didn't Know About Santa

## St. Nick FAQs Answered

By **BOB LEWIS**  
Contributing Editor

There are two endearing symbols of Christmas. One is a huge star shining brightly on a humble manger to announce the arrival of Jesus Christ, the most important baby ever born in the history of mankind to Christians.

The other is a fuzzy-faced fellow who symbolizes and expression of love that is a hallmark of the holiday season.

One of the most recognizable individuals in the world, Santa Claus along with his eight reindeer, devote their Christmas Eve hours to delivering presents to good children around the world every year.

Just about everybody knows this jolly gentleman is married to Mrs. Claus, but some people may have a few questions, like is he a real person? Just how old is he? And when is his birthday?

For the answers to these questions and more, put out some milk and cookies, turn on your favorite Christmas tunes, and get ready to learn a few things you maybe didn't know.

### How old is Santa?

According to the blog Email Santa, the North Pole resident is 1,750 years old as of 2021. In fact, the origins of Santa Claus can be traced all the way back to a monk named Saint Nicholas, who was born between 260 and 280 A. D. in the village of Patara, which is part of modern-day Turkey.

Long before he became Santa

Claus, there were many legends around Saint Nicholas performing acts of kindness for needy kids. Another legend involves him praying for sailors who were being threatened by a powerful storm and ensuring their safe return. Because of these and other fabled deeds, he became known as a protector of children and sailors. That's why people around the world continue to honor him with the Feast of Saint Nicholas on Dec. 6.

### What does Santa look like?

Don't be too quick to reply, because the answer to this question depends on where it is being asked. Since Santa is a worldwide figure, his physical appearance varies by geographic location. The one we know and love in this country was created in 1931 when Coca-Cola commissioned illustrator Haddon Sundblom to paint Santa for its Christmas advertisements. Those paintings established him as a warm, happy character with human features, including rosy cheeks, a white beard, twinkling eyes and laughter lines.

### When is Santa's birthday?

SantaClaus.com says Santa's birthday is on March 15. How exactly they know that is a question yet to be answered. But just to be safe, it might be a good idea to mark it on your calendar for next year.

### How did Santa Claus get his name?

According to TIME, the legend of Saint Nicholas continued



**SANTA'S WELCOME:** Santa welcomes visitors to Woodland Hills Mall in Tulsa.

GTR Media group photo

to be passed around throughout Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. In the Netherlands, St. Nicholas Day was observed by someone dressing up as the saint and going door-to-door giving children small gifts. In other areas he is recognized as Father Christmas.

How the legend of Saint Nicholas made its way to North America remains a bit of a mystery. In the 1770s, one New York newspaper referenced "St. Nicholas, otherwise called Santa Claus," which is the first known reference to Santa Claus in the United States.

The author of Christmas: A Biography, Judith Flanders, said the large populations of Swiss people who settled in New York, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania are probably the reason we know Santa Claus by that name today. "They came from regions that marked St. Nicholas' Day, and St. Nicholas in various dialects of Schweizer Deutsch, or Swiss-German, which referred either to Semichas or Santi-Chlaus." And of course, it's easy to see how "Santi-Chlaus" might have evolved into "Santa Claus" over time.

### How old is Mrs. Claus?

According to Email Santa, Mrs. Claus is just a bit younger than her husband. She's 1,139 years old. And don't forget to wish her a happy birthday after you've opened your gifts this year. Her birthday is on Christmas Day, the same as Lord Jesus, according to the website.

### What is the Economic impact of Christmas?

Our economy depends on Christmas spending because it boosts production, creates jobs and increases the nation's Gross Domestic Production. And we are not alone there. Christmas is typically the largest economic stimulus for many nations around the world at a record breaking \$1,002 trillion. Economists note this is an upward trend has been gaining momentum for years. In 2014, the overall figure was \$842.37 billion, meaning that Christmas spending increased by \$160 billion in just seven years.

Pretty good for a jolly old gentleman who is fed tons of cookies and gallons of milk every Christmas Eve.

# Castle Christmas at The Castle of Muskogee and The Garden of Lights at Honor Heights Park Open

Celebrate the best of family holiday traditions at The Castle of Muskogee! Take a leisurely drive through the Castleton Village, which is filled with thousands of holiday lights and displays. The drive through is FREE, and donations are gratefully accepted. Guests may also view the lights from an old-fashioned hayride or from the rail car of the festive Castle Train, both of which provide visitors with a unique experience through the Castle displays. Also in the Village area, the little ones may ride the cutest holiday ponies in town! For a taller vantage point, Cletus the Camel will be here to provide rides around the Village area. Just want to hang out and snap photos? Grab a bag of Kettle Corn and enjoy the festive environment of the Castle gates before you head inside.

Once inside The Castle, guests may warm up and enjoy a variety of family holiday activities: Crafting ornaments in Santa's workshop, Wax Hands and Make Your Own Candle, Stuff it Up - Plush Adoptions ... and so much more! Discover handmade creations for

the special people on your holiday list. We encourage guests to visit The Christmas Shoppe for home holiday displays or holiday keepsakes. Join us in Rudolph's Cafe for a light supper or snack, hot chocolate and treats!

New for 2021: Many will tour the lights for the love of holiday joy. The Castle also offers a not so traditional holiday treat. In addition to the Castle's holiday Catacombs and Torture Chamber Museum, guests may venture through the Sandy Claws Haunt. This is for our fans of thrill that would like to continue the chills throughout this holiday season! Visit <http://okcastle.com> for a complete schedule of nightly activities.

In nearby Honor Heights Park, the "Garden of Lights" attracts thousands of visitors. The celebration includes a drive-through display of over a million shimmering lights exhibited throughout the park. Christmas lights are placed on trees, bushes and structures throughout the park to enhance the natural beauty of the gardens, waterfalls and ponds. Gates open at 5:00pm nightly, and the event is

free on Mondays and \$5 per vehicle Tuesday- Sunday.

Castle Christmas and Garden of Lights event hours and prices:

Drive through the lights at both locations. The Castle drive-through is complimentary, however, we do appreciate donations. Honor Heights has a fee of \$5 with both cards and cash accepted. If you would like information on a season pass, please contact the Parks Department. Both drive-through events are open nightly from Thanksgiving through New Year's Eve, 5:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Holiday Activities Outside in The Castle's Village Tractor-drawn Hayrides - This ride starts in the parking lot of The Castle and travels through the village on a different route from the car drive-through. Departs every half hour. Cost is \$5.00 per person, children 1 under are free. Fri, Sat, Sun\*

Castle Train - Enjoy the lights with a tour from the conductor

himself! \$10 per passenger. Kids - Under 1 are free. Weekends from Thanksgiving to New Year's\*. If you would like to book the train throughout the week, please call 918.687.3625 or email [info@okcastle.com](mailto:info@okcastle.com) to reserve. Group rates available.

Pony rides - A holiday favorite! \$5 per child. Fri, Sat, Sun\*. The cutest Christmas ponies in town! Camel rides - Live like a Wiseman. Camel rides \$5. This is for

both the young as well as the young at heart. Holiday Activities inside The Castle

The Castle's additional events are open Friday, Saturday and Sunday - Nov 26th through Dec 12th, Nightly- Dec 15th-Dec 31st. Please check the Calendar at <http://okcastle.com> for a detailed schedule of each night's activities.

For more information please visit: [okcastle.com](http://okcastle.com) or [www.cityofmuskogee.com](http://www.cityofmuskogee.com)

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# 2022 Pinnacle Award Winners Announced

YWCA Tulsa in partnership with the Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women has announced the winners of the 2022 Pinnacle Awards honoring exceptional women of Tulsa.

## The winners are:

**Anna C. Roth Legacy Award:** Joy Harjo, the 23rd Poet Laureate of the United States, is a member of the Mvskoke Nation and belongs to Oce Vpovv (Hickory Ground). She is the second poet to be appointed a third term as U.S. Poet Laureate. Harjo is the author of nine books of poetry, two award-winning children's books, several screenplays; and three plays. Harjo has produced seven award-winning music albums including *Winding Through the Milky Way*, for which she was awarded a NAMMY for Best Female Artist of the year. Harjo is a chancellor of the Academy of American Poets, holds a Tulsa Artist Fellowship, directs For Girls Becoming, an arts mentorship program for young Mvskoke women, and is a founding board member and Chair of the Native Arts and Cultures Foundation. She has recently been inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the National Native American Hall of Fame, and the National Woman's Hall of Fame.

The Anna C. Roth Legacy Award is named after Anna C. Roth, who founded YWCA Tulsa in 1914.

**Arts and Humanities:** Connie Cronley, Cherokee author, grew up in Nowata, lives in Tulsa and has been writing for most of her life. "A Life on Fire," a biography of Kate Barnard is Cronley's fifth book. Cronley's career includes working as a writer for Tulsa Tribune, Tulsa People, and Oklahoma Monthly, serving as Executive Director of Iron Gate, and Managing Director of Tulsa Ballet Theatre, and a commentator on Public Radio 89.5.

**Community Service:** Brenda Alford is a descendant of Tulsa Race Massacre survivors and



GTR Media Group photo

**EXCEPTIONAL GROUP:** This year's Pinnacle Award Winners with Mayor Bynum are, from left, Amairani Perez, Joy Harjo, Kuma Roberts, Wendy Williams, Zaida Kepford-Castro, Brenda Alford, Mayor Bynum, a representative from AAON and Stephanie Regan, Connie Cronley and Deborah Gist.

**Black Wall Street entrepreneurs:** A proud third-generation graduate of Booker T. Washington High School, she served as Chair of the Mass Graves Public Oversight Committee at the request of Mayor G.T. Bynum. Alford also serves as a board member at Greenwood Rising, and as a 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre Centennial Commission member.

**Corporate Business:** Kuma Roberts is a leader in the Tulsa community, mobilizing companies and individuals to courageously create space for dialogue about diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice. Roberts is the Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer at Arrowhead Consulting and worked for Tulsa Regional Chamber for 10 years as Executive Director of Talent Attraction, Retention & Mosaic, and most recently as Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

**Education:** Dr. Deborah Gist is superintendent for the second largest school district in our state — Tulsa Public Schools — and leads our city's public-school teachers in the education of approximately 35,000 students in grades pre-kindergarten to 12th grade in 77 district and public charter schools. She is the first female superintendent in the district's history. During her tenure at TPS she has steadily increased the percentage of students meeting their math and reading growth projections, collaborated on the development and delivery of Tulsa Race Massacre curriculum, and increased the graduation rate by more than 11 percentage points.

**Entrepreneur:** Wendy Williams is the owner of Health and Safety Education Consultants Training Center, an approved State of Oklahoma Health Department nurse aide registry program. Williams recognized there was a need to increase the number of training centers to help students become certified nursing assistants and enter other health service entry level careers. She is also the founder and president of Eastern Oklahoma Black Nurses Association, a local chapter of the National Black Nurses Association, Inc.

**Health & Wellness:** Zaida Kepford-Castro moved to Tulsa 17 years ago from Tijuana, Mexico. She is a servant leader who has promoted understanding and collaboration among minority groups: training Morton Clinic departments on how to work with the Hispanic community and providing pro-bono translation and interpretation services to Oklahomans Against Human Trafficking, Tulsa County Sheriff's Office, Tulsa Police Department, Xavier Clinic, Little Lighthouse, and Sooner Start. She currently leads a health collective promoting access to sex education and promoting healthy relationships with Amplify Tulsa.

**Rising Star:** Amairani Perez Chamu is the Hispanic Resource Center Coordinator at Tulsa Public Library, creating programs for all 24 branches and locations across Tulsa County, and overseeing orders and purchases of Spanish materials for the entire system. She is Board President for the Tulsa Global District and is the Tulsa Director for Dream Action Oklahoma. She has led countless DACA clinics and Know Your Rights campaigns and has spoken with state senators to ensure the rights of the immigrant community in Tulsa.

The Rising Star Award recognizes a young woman who already has made notable contributions in her field.

**Corporate Champion:** AAON is a publicly traded company headquartered in Tulsa, and the representation of female leaders starts at the top. AAON has been recognized by 2020 Women on Boards as an Oklahoma "W" Company for having 20 percent or more company board seats held by women. AAON's eight-member board of directors includes two women, or 25 percent. Manufacturing companies often fall short in female representation: women make up 24 percent of the manufacturing workforce nationally. AAON trends higher than the national average, with women making up 29 percent of its workforce. AAON has been recognized as a Mosaic Top Inclusive Workplace by the Tulsa Regional Chamber and has also signed the Tulsa Pay Equity Pledge.

Each honoree upholds the legacy of the Pinnacle Awards, which is reflected in women who are role models in their professions, take risks on behalf of others, perform community service, and advocate for women's issues.

"Each year when we announce the Pinnacle Awards winners, I am honored to recognize these Tulsa women's achievements in many areas, including health, education, arts, business and community service," Mayor G.T. Bynum said. "These women represent the excellence and diversity that make our city strong, enriching our community and extending their influence beyond our city limits."

YWCA Tulsa's CEO, Julie Davis shared, "It's an honor to be able to tell the stories of women who are fearless change agents in our community. These women are creating a Tulsa that is More -- more inclusive, more representative, more creative, and more powerful because of their work."

Winners will be honored on Thursday, March 31, 2022. The Pinnacle Awards is a celebration of the investment that women are making in our community every day. It also supports the work that YWCA Tulsa leads to empower women and eliminate racism. To sponsor the Pinnacle Awards or get more information about this event, visit [www.ywcatulsa.org/get-involved/pinnacle-awards/](http://www.ywcatulsa.org/get-involved/pinnacle-awards/)

## History of the Pinnacle Awards

In 1987, the Pinnacle Awards were established by the Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women to celebrate the important contributions of women to the City of Tulsa. The presentation of these awards honored women who were exemplary leaders in the Tulsa community and demonstrated both professional success and commitment to service. In 2015, the Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women forged a partnership with YWCA Tulsa's event Women of the Year recognizing women who were role models and embodied their mission of eliminating racism, empowering women, standing up for social justice, and helping families.

## About YWCA Tulsa

YWCA Tulsa is on a mission to eliminate racism, empower women, and promote peace, freedom, dignity and justice for all. We focus on eliminating barriers for and investing in the success of women, girls and people of color. Each year YWCA creates real change in the lives of more than 10,000 women, men, and children through our Health Equity and Wellness programs and Immigrant and Refugee Services. For more information, visit [www.ywcatulsa.org](http://www.ywcatulsa.org)

## About the Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women

The Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women acts as the central clearinghouse and coordinating agency for activities and information relating to women. The commission is charged with helping women develop a collective voice to influence public policy and effect positive changes in their lives, in addition to stimulating research in the area of women's legal rights; educating the community on the status of women by publicizing information on women's rights and obligations; reviewing the range of services available to women to enable them to fully contribute to society through their homes and participation in community life; and to strengthening existing services and assisting public, commercial, cooperative or voluntary agencies in pursuing needed services. For more information about the Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women, see the City of Tulsa website.

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# Laizom Asian Market Offers Array of International Cuisine in Greater Tulsa

## Owners Share American Dream

By SAM GROSSO  
Contributing Writer

In a room filled with the aromas of baked bread and spicy curry, I met owner Thang and sister, Cing Boihguite. The interesting Laizom Market, located in South Tulsa County near Bixby at 12141 South Elm in Jenks, shares the beauty of Burma and the culture of Southeast Asian cuisine.

Like America's Heartland, Burma is as unspoiled as sentimental poets claim. Though, in its cruelty, not beauty are many stories of those who have fled the regime. The brutal militia junta that governs Myanmar came to power in 1962 under the leadership of General Ne Win. Claiming to "soothe" ethnic tensions in the fractious nation, home to more than 100 ethnic groups, the regime began a campaign to eradicate all opposition. Spying, beatings, jailing, torture, and disappearances became routine. Immobilized and disconnected by-laws restricting travel and the prohibitive cost of automobiles and cellular service, many in Burma are held hostage, their shackles are the national borders that keep them in.

Thang's mother, father, two sisters, and three brothers came to Tulsa eleven years ago in pursuit of the American Dream, escaping Myanmar formerly known as Burma. "Many people have left be-



**FRIENDLY WELCOME:** Laizom Asian Market owner Thang Boihguite and his sister Cing welcome customers to their store at 121st Street and Elm in Jenks.

cause of the conflict between the Myanmar army and ethnic armed groups."

As I take in the aromas of sandalwood and roasted peanuts, it is the breath of a nation that fills the room.

Finding opportunities for prosperity and success, Thang and his family have retained their cultural identity while connecting us as a community. Cing "feels free here

in Tulsa."

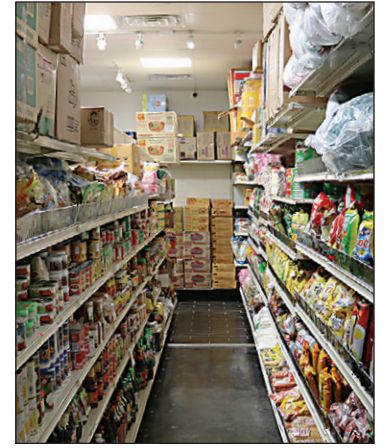
She is 28 years young and happily married to her husband, a Burmese refugee. They have two girls, ages seven and six who attend Jenks Elementary and a boy who is one.

Many who call Tulsa home find comfort in cuisine that reminds them of their friends and family who could not make the journey.

Laizom Market makes certain

their products are accessible, authentic and transparent. Recognizing the need for consumers to be informed, Cing provides flavor and sourcing information about dishes, treats and teas which hail from Myanmar and neighboring countries India, Thailand, Laos and China.

The trend to seek new varieties and explore new flavors such as local favorite Sour Pickle Tea,



**AMPLE PRODUCTS:** Laizom Asian Market offers a wide array of unique Asian products.

Thai Tea, Sweet Corn, Banana Sauce and Pure Butter Shortbread Cookies are found exclusively at Laizom Market. Fresh Veggies arrive at the market on Mondays!

Come visit Laizom Market located at 12141 South Elm in Jenks and discover Asia.



GTR Media Group photo

**LIGHTS ON AT GUTHRIE GREEN:** Music was alive with the Clark Gibson Quintet during the "Lights on at Guthrie Green" event in downtown Tulsa Dec. 3. The event was sponsored by OU Health Physicians.

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**EDUCATION**

# NSU Unveils Veterans Monument on Vets Day

A larger-than-life bronze monument honoring the nation's veterans was unveiled on the Northeastern State University Tahlequah campus on Veterans Day.

Veterans, legislators, higher education officials and the public gathered east of Seminary Hall recently to mark this year's Veterans Day and unveil the new "NSU Veterans: Serving and Communicating Through the Decades" monument and plaza.

Oklahoma National Guard Director of Joint Staff and NSU alumnus Brig. Gen. Jon Harrison said it is appropriate to be celebrating Veterans Day at NSU and to dedicate the new veterans monument and plaza.

"We are gathered to convey our nation's gratitude for those who risked their lives for the land, the people and the ideals they love," Harrison said during the ceremony. "Today, here in Tahlequah, we come together to honor and recognize all of our American service members past and present and salute them for their service to our country both in uniform and out."

NSU President Steve Turner said students, faculty and staff of NSU have always responded when the nation called, adding today there are close to 300 veterans and their family members enrolled at the institution. He said the university is proud of its veterans and that led to conversations about what can be done to portray this pride.

"Based on NSU's history of military involvement it is fitting to dedicate this monument as a permanent and visual way to say thank you to veterans of the past, present and future," Turner said.

Standing around 12-feet tall the new veterans monument designed and sculpted by Oklahoma sculptor Joel Randell, is comprised of six bronze figures arranged on a representation of the world. Randell's design was chosen after a specially appointed presidential committee reviewed a number of submissions.



**NSU VETERANS MONUMENT:** NSU unveiled a new monument titled "NSU Veterans: Serving and Communicating through the Decades" on Veterans Day. The monument was created by Oklahoma Sculptor Joel Randell and is located east of Seminary Hall on the NSU Tahlequah campus.

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Debbie Landry said while the committee was formed in 2018, the conversation about having a monument like this on campus started long before that. Landry, who is a retired Marine, said in doing some



**SALUTING VETERANS:** From left at the veterans event are Dr. Steve Turner, Regent Eric Fisher, Regent Amy Anne Ford, Regent Lake Carpenter, Regent Jane McDermott, Regent Susan Winchester, Artist Joel Randell, Senator John Haste, Board Chair Regent Connie Reilly, Regent Chris Van Denhende, Regent Joy Hofmeister and Regent Gary Parker

research for our veteran centers and lounges it was discovered that throughout NSU's history many students and employees have answered the call.

Randell said each branch of the U.S. Armed Forces are represented and the arrangement of the figures on the world signifies the United States' widespread role throughout history.

Representing the Army is a WWI Cherokee Code Talker. A Vietnam War-era Marine trudging through a rice-patty field was chosen to represent this branch. A Gulf War-era catapult officer, better known as a "Shooter" was chosen to represent the Navy as part of the monument. He is depicted providing the distinctive pose shooters make when signaling a pilot to take off.

A modern-day female officer represents the Airforce as part of the monument. She is shown walking with a flight helmet in hand having successfully completed another mission. Randell said in terms of rank she is also the highest-ranking officer on the monument.

The U.S. Coast Guard is also represented by a modern-day service member. He is depicted as being lowered from helicopter by cable, in a heroic effort to save someone from peril in the ocean.

At the center of monument, representing the home front and national guard, is a woman carrying the American flag and holding a lamp high as a guide for the way home. At the top of the flag, Randell said is a symbol to represent the newest branch of the military, the Space Force.

Randell said the lantern will also be lit at night. He added he chose some amber lenses for the lantern to give a nice warm glow. "This wonderful monument here on the

campus of Northeastern State is a tribute to all of those who have served, many of whom have given their lives to support the values of this country. We're so proud of Northeastern State and all of those who have served," Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Chancellor Dr. Allison Garrett said.

Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation Chuck Hoskin Jr. said he particularly likes this monument because it's not memorializing a single person who proved themselves in the field of battle but it is depicting a collective of people who have fought for this country in different branches and from different walks of life.

"There are values around which we can and should rally and when people come to this monument, they will be filled, I think, with a sense of pride and an opportunity to reflect not on an individual military hero, but on the collective effort to protect freedom and secure peace," Hoskin said.

Along with NSU institutional funds, support for the monument and plaza came in the form of donations from both individuals and area organizations including Cherokee Nation Businesses, Grand River Dam Authority, Lake Region Electric Company, Northeast Oklahoma Public Facilities Authority, Northeastern Oklahoma Community Health Centers, Tahlequah Community Fund, NSU Alumni Association and NSU Foundation.

"Our time and efforts are never wasted when we recognize and honor our veterans and the men and women currently serving in the armed forces," Randell said. "My hope is that this monument will likewise inspire young men and women to also serve and communicate down through the ages to come."

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## U.S. Dept. of Defense Awards \$6 Million STEM Grant to OSU

Oklahoma State University's College of Engineering, Architecture and Technology has been awarded the largest university grant in history from the U.S. Department of Defense.

The \$6 million grant, which will be administered over the next four years, is for development and implementation of additional STEM education programs for schools with economically disadvantaged or underrepresented students. The goal is to create a pathway for successful careers in engineering and innovation.

President Kayse Shrum spoke at an announcement event OSU DISCOVERY in Oklahoma City.

Other speakers included U.S. Rep. Frank Lucas, Oklahoma City Schools Superintendent Dr. Sean McDaniel, OSU representatives, Vice Director of Oklahoma City Air Logistics Complex Wade Wolfe, and a ninth-grader from ASTEC Charter Schools.

Sen. Jim Inhofe provided comments via a video, which were shown at the event.

# Tulsa Tech Graduate Dr. James H. Neel Takes Road Less Traveled to Medical Career

The impact of your job can be felt across your life. The wrong job can impact happiness, home life and even mental outlook. The saying of Chinese philosopher Confucius comes to mind. "Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life."

A great example of choosing a job you love is Tulsa Tech graduate James H. Neel M.D., F.A.C.S. Neel is a Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgeon at Ascension St. John. His Tulsa Tech story doesn't start like every other. Growing up on a sod farm in Bixby, Neel came to Tulsa Tech as an adult student. His dreams of being a doctor were put on hold following college.

"I went to college and got pretty distracted playing baseball and goofing off," Neel said with a grin. "I did not make the kind of grades that I should have, so when I graduated, I didn't have the grades or the degree to even think about medicine."

Neel says it was then he had to take a deep look inside. He talked with his mentors, considered his options and decided to go back to school, all with an eye on his dream of being a doctor.

"I figure while I am getting my grades up, I might as well get as much experience and exposure in medicine as I can," Neel said. "The best way I could think of was going to Surgical Technology school. By the time I started medical school, I had worked in

the operating room (O.R.) for almost three years."

At Tulsa Tech, Neel was able to learn from professionals, taking part in instructor Mildred Hill's first-ever evening Surgical Technology class. Surgical Technologists provide surgeons with the sanitary tools and equipment they need to complete procedures. It was within that program where he found a wealth of knowledge.

"My Tulsa Tech instructors were outstanding," Neel said, smiling. "They are people who are doing what they are teaching all day, every day and they are experts in their field."

It also propelled him down a path to medical school. The Surgical Technology credits were able to count toward his overall grade point average, in a sense raising his grades. After spending three years and scrubbing in for thousands of surgeries, Neel started medical school.

His time at Tulsa Tech opened the doors to the O.R. with knowledge, skills and overall comfort level in a high-pressure situation, which helped create an advantage over his peers. However, beyond the O.R. skills and knowledge, Neel says his time at Tulsa Tech taught him humility.

"Just because you are a surgeon in the O.R., you are the captain of the ship, but that does not mean you get to treat people poorly," Neel said frankly. "As a surgical technologist, you are lower on that totem pole. I had instruments thrown at me. I had people curse and yell at me when you make honest mistakes, we all do, and it never motivated me."

It is those lessons that Neel keeps with him to this day.

"We don't treat people that way. I don't yell in the O.R., I don't curse, we don't throw instruments. It is a team," Neel said.

## News From Tulsa Tech



By DR. STEVE TIGER  
Superintendent

## Tulsa Community College Announces \$2.25M Grant U.S. Dept. of Education

Tulsa Community College has been awarded the distinguished Title III Strengthening Institutions Program Grant for \$2.25 million from the U.S. Department of Education. One of the largest grants a community college can receive, it supports institutions serving a high number of students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

With flexibility on how the money can be spent, TCC will use it to build comprehensive wraparound services for students leading to higher course completion, retention from semester to semester, and college graduation rates.

"As a college, we've made tremendous strides to graduate more students and saw a 22 percent increase in our graduation rate over the past five years. Our work has not stopped and with an additional \$2.25 million, TCC can concentrate and expand academic supports for students to increase retention and success in college and in life," says Leigh B. Goodson, TCC president & CEO.

In a news conference on Thursday, Nov. 18, TCC explained the grant will focus on three areas. TCC will embed tutors in developmental reading and writing courses and embed Success Coaches in sections of the College Success course. This allows TCC to add additional Success Coaches, which has already produced positive student retention results and at the same time, will greatly expand the use of embedded tutors in courses.

"This semester we have embedded tutors in a handful of sections working with about 120 students. Beginning next Fall, we will increase those numbers to include about

1,500 students each semester by 2026," says Dr. Paula Willyard, dean of communication, English, & world language.

The third area adds a career component because it is essential students have early exposure to their chosen career path as they get started in college, rather than waiting until the end as they graduate.

TCC, with a work ready and transfer focus, is an important element within the Tulsa area to provide training and education to meet the needs of the region. The grant allows the College to support individuals where they are today and develop tomorrow's workforce.

"This is an investment in our community and ensures our companies have skilled and trained employees. I applaud the proactive work TCC is doing as well as the partnerships the College continues to build to produce more graduates resulting in a stronger and more vibrant community," says Cassia Carr, Tulsa deputy mayor, who also spoke at the news conference.

In recent years, TCC has intentionally designed a student experience with more student support services such as academic advising, funded in part through a \$20 million campaign and private donors. The \$2.25 million Title III Strengthening Institutions Program Grant will expand and sustain those efforts to support students so they can pursue their dreams of earning a college degree.

The timing of this grant, while not directly related to the pandemic, allows TCC to be proactive in responding to the needs of current and future students and any ongoing repercussions.



Courtesy Tulsa Tech

APPRECIATING FORMER INSTRUCTOR: Dr. James Neel stands with his former instructor Mildred Hill in the new Surgical Technology lab at Tulsa Tech's Health Sciences Center.

"I can't do my job without everybody in the room doing their job. My job is no more important."

Neel attributes that the essence of being a team was something instilled by Hill, for whom he still has a soft spot in heart for, all these years later.

"Every time I would see Mildred Hill until the day she retired, I stop everything I am doing, I go over and give her a big hug. I love that woman like she was my own kin," Neel said, grinning ear to ear.

Her impact is evident in how he speaks of her and how he uses the lessons she taught him to make sure he is the best educator he can be. The boy who grew up on a sod farm

in Bixby, now happy to have his dream job here in Tulsa, a dream that Neel says shows the importance of education.

"Tulsa Tech helped me get to where I do what I love for a living," Neel said, smiling. "I got most people beat. I love going to work every day. I love what I do, and the way I got there was furthering my education."

If you are looking for a new career or want to Make Your Own Path to your dream job, Tulsa Tech can help. With more than 80 career training options, we have one that fits your interests. Log on to [tulsatech.edu](http://tulsatech.edu) to get started or give us a call at (918) 828-5000. Your dream career could be just a few minutes away.

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MAKE YOUR OWN PATH

## BIXBY NEWS

# Spartans Celebrate State Championship

(Continued from page 1)

Senior linebacker Beau Bertelli's interception of Deer Creek senior quarterback Brett Pense and return of 18 yards set up Bixby's next score, which came on a three-yard run by Presley giving BHS a 14-0 lead. It was Presley's 100th career TD.

Deer Creek's defense forced back-and-forth of offensive possessions while remaining in striking distance at 14-0 entering the second quarter. The Antlers had an opportunity to make things interesting starting the second quarter when Pense scrambled away from a Spartan rush before lofting a long pass to Jevion Jones who dropped the ball.

On Bixby's second possession of the second stanza, the Spartan offense overcame frustrations and penalties to keep a drive alive with big time plays, including a 15-yard pass from Burke to junior Luke Hasz on third-and-15 and a 25-yard burst by Presley, who later finished the drive on a one-yard TD run for a 20-0 lead with 6:06 left until halftime.

Spartan junior defensive back Cale Fugate provided the next offensive opportunity when he jumped in front of a Pense pass, deflected the ball and caught the interception at midfield with 3:42 left before halftime.

"We watched hours of film and I felt like we knew what was coming," said Fugate. "I was ready for the route, I switched with Dylan (Hasz) and just jumped in front, tipped it and caught it. It was a great feeling in a huge game to

make plays for my teammates and the seniors. We want to be great as a defense and as a team."

Five plays after the pass theft, Burke rifled a 23-yard TD pass to Solomon and junior Connor Kirby ran for a two-point conversion, extending Bixby's advantage to 28-0 with 2:26 showing.

Late in the first half, Bixby's Solomon sacked Pense for a 10-yard loss on third-and-two, forcing a punt with Bixby's coaches quickly calling a time out. Deer Creek punter Grayson Miller boomed the punt 46 yards, rolling to a stop at Bixby's six with 54 seconds left.

Presley didn't waste the opportunity as he broke through the Antler defensive interior, ran outside before finding open field near Deer Creek's sideline and used his blistering speed to complete the 94-yard touchdown sprint with 38 seconds left for a 35-0 halftime lead.

Bixby increased its lead opening the third quarter as Kirby tossed a 35-yard TD pass to Solomon and Connor Noland kicked the extra point for a 42-0 lead with 10:06 left. A 36-yard pass from Burke to D. Hasz highlighted the drive.

Deer Creek ended the scoring drought when Bryson Rouse returned a pass interception 25 yards for a TD and Miller kicked the conversion making it 42-7 with 5:50 left in the third stanza.

Bixby responded with a five-yard TD run by junior Jersey Robb and junior Jakeb Snyder returned a pass interception 39 yards for a TD and 56-7 Spartan lead at the 2:00 mark.



Dean Atchison for Bixby Breeze

**CHAMPIONSHIP TROPHY:** Bixby teammates celebrate with their championship trophy.

Rouse scored on a six-yard run making it a 56-14 game with 11:40 left in the game but the Spartans ended the scoring onslaught when senior Zach Blankenship scored on a 16-yard run

with 8:57 remaining. Bixby's offense overcame the pesky Antlers' defense, finishing with 624 yards of total offense – 322 yards rushing and 302 yards passing. The Spartans averaged 8.4 yards

per offensive play and scored 22 points off turnovers.

"Whenever we scored twice in a row that really got us going, we were able to calm down and do our

(Continued on page 13)

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BIXBY SPORTS

# Amazing Effort Leads to Bixby Success

*(Continued from page 12)*  
 thing,” said senior offensive lineman Cody Paschall. “We just went week-by-week and I think that’s why we had so much success. “Winning three state titles in a row as a starter is pretty cool. Never losing a game is something I won’t forget. I’m just ecstatic.”

Burke, in his first season as the Spartans’ starting quarterback, was 18-of-29 passing for 191 yards and one touchdown. Blankenship had 68 yards rushing and Snyder ended with five pass receptions for 54 yards.

Defensively, the Spartans dominated. Deer Creek was limited to 149 offensive yards while being intercepted four times and converting only two of 14 third down attempts. Pense was eight-of-22 passing for 31 yards and was sacked twice, while Deontayue Wilson led the Antlers’ ground attack with 81 yards on 15 carries. “This is the outcome everyone wanted and worked hard for ... it feels great,” said Spartan senior linebacker Jack Puckett. “It’s a great experience, I’m so happy it ended this way. I think what you saw tonight was what you’ve seen the last 13 weeks, we just played hard, worked our butts off and helped set the tone for this team. “Winning 49 in a row is insane when you really put it down on paper. I’m glad to have been a part of all that.”

Senior defensive end Miles Hill added, “It’s been a journey and a learning experience. This week we were laser focused and locked in. Everyone was holding each other

accountable ... that’s what makes Bixby so good. We held everyone to a higher standard, especially ourselves. I couldn’t be happier.” This will be the last Class 6AII championship for the Spartans because of a move to Class 6AI in the 2022 season.

“I’m happy the way we went out and I’m excited about the move to 6AI,” Puckett said. “I think the guys returning will pick up where we left off.”

**Noteables:** This was Bixby’s largest margin of victory in seven state championship games.

Bixby’s football season was celebrated during the Bixby Spartan Football Banquet on Dec. 6.

Bixby’s focus and preparation during this season was remarkable but it’s a part of the Spartan culture. “Our senior class was one of the most focused, we just tried to stay as focused as we could,” Presley said. “I knew we could get it done but it’s emotional to see it end.”

Solomon caught TD passes from three different passers: Presley, Burke and Kirby. Senior Connor Nolan was successful on seven of eight extra-point kicks and punted four times for a 39.2-yard average.

Snyder and Bertelli recorded their fourth pass interceptions of the season while Tyson Williams had his second interception and Fugate registered his first interception.

Puckett led the Spartans balanced defensive effort with eight tackles and a sack while Bertelli and Brayden Darrell each were credited with six tackles. Finishing



Dean Atchison for Bixby Breeze

**PLAYER OF THE YEAR:** Gatorade’s Star Player of the Year Braylin Presley scores a touchdown in the championship game. The senior running back is a finalist for Gatorade’s National Player of the Year and is committed to attend Oklahoma State University.



Dean Atchison for Bixby Breeze

with five tackles were Solomon, Fugate and Caleb Rogers.

Deer Creek kicked Grayson Miller punted nine times for a 44.3-yard average and boomed three kickoffs into the end zone.

Remarkably, Bixby ended the season averaging 61 points a game while allowing 11 points an outing. The Spartans scored more than 70 points three times and more than 80 points once.

**GREAT DEFENSE:** The Bixby Spartans used excellent defense on their championship victory.



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**SPORTS**

# ORU Celebrates Mike Carter Athletic Center

## Facility Named in Honor of Former Athletic Director

The Oral Roberts University Athletic Department broke ground on the new Mike Carter Athletic Center in November. It is the third of four new buildings to begin construction on the growing campus.

"This is truly a transformational day for ORU Athletics," Athletic Director Tim Johnson said. "This athletic center will be the cornerstone for the future of the athletic department and will impact every student-athlete for years to come. ORU's Athletic facilities will be among the best in the country while providing our student-athletes all the resources to compete and win at the highest levels. We cannot thank the ORU Board of Trustees, our donors, and President Wilson enough for their commitment to athletics and our student-athletes. The future is now for ORU Athletics!"

The Mike Carter Athletic Center is estimated to cost more than \$15 million and will be built debt free. The building will be located on the southeast side of the Mabee Center and construction will take approximately 18 months to complete. The facility will house a 10,000-square-foot sports performance area with turf and a fueling station allowing multiple

teams to train at the same time. A new Eli Academic Center will have open study space as well as individual and group study rooms and a team room large enough for 100 people. In addition, two, full size practice courts are being built for the men's and women's basketball teams along with administrative and coaches offices.

"The Mike Carter Athletic Center exhibits the excitement surrounding ORU athletics," ORU President Dr. William M. Wilson said. "This facility will provide a quantum leap forward for our program. Our student-athletes will continue to develop in their sport and in all aspects of their academic life. The new athletic center is a message to the elite student-athlete, there is no place like ORU."

The building's namesake is former Athletic Director Mike Carter. Hired initially at ORU on November 4, 1994, he was the fourth-longest tenured athletic director running a NCAA Division I program at the time of his retirement. He guided the Golden Eagles to nine Commissioner's Cups, winning 153 regular season and tournament titles, and sent 84 teams to NCAA Championships, including ORU's magical run to



GTR Media Group photo

**APPRECIATIVE THANK YOU:** Recently retired ORU Athletic Director Mike Carter, foreground, gives thanks to ORU students, employees, alumni and supporters during the ceremonial ground breaking for the Mike Carter Athletic Center in November. At the lectern is ORU President Dr. William M. Wilson.

the NCAA Sweet 16 last March.

ORU athletics has shown tremendous growth and the center will be at the forefront of its move into the future. ORU has already made significant upgrades to the Mabee Center consisting of new blue seats, new arena lights and sound system and exterior paint and glass to match the current look of campus in order to better

the fan experience.

Over the last five years, ORU has made extensive additions and improvements to its campus. Construction of the Global Learning Center, the Nursing and Engineering Complex, the Stovall Center for Entrepreneurship and Niko Njotorahardjo Hall have all been completed, while a new Welcome Center, library and Media

Arts Center are in various stages of planning and construction.

For the latest information on ORU Athletics, follow the Golden Eagles on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, or go to [www.ORUAthletics.com](http://www.ORUAthletics.com). Fans can also receive updates on the team by downloading the ORU Athletics app from the App Store or Google Play Store.

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**INNOVATIVE FACILITY:** The \$15 million Mike Carter Athletic Center will house a 10,000-square-foot sports performance area with turf and a fueling station allowing multiple teams to train at the same time.

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# Victory Christian Conquerors Win Fifth Consecutive State Volleyball Championship

By MIKE MOGUIN  
GTR Sports Writer

Victory Christian's nickname is the Conquerors. It lived up to that name when it won a state championship in volleyball for a fifth consecutive year in October.

The local private school won the 2021 title with a win against Regent Prep in the Class 4A final, winning three sets to two (25-23, 23-25, 25-20, 19-25, 18-16).

"It blows my mind that we've done this because I've never expected to win four rings before," senior outside hitter Bella Wakley said.

Along with fellow senior teammates Jessa Gilyard, middle blocker and Hannah Warlick, another outside hitter, Wakley is the first class in the program to win a state title in all four years of their high school careers.

"For this to happen to me changes my life, my future, my high school career and everything," Wakley said. "It's been amazing to have all these teammates by my side. I could not have done it without my them. We all could not have done it without the coaches. We could have not won four rings without them pushing us."

With players having graduated and a new class coming in annually, campaigning for another state championship every season is always a challenge.

"I think it's a blessing because almost every year we had to restart our team," Gilyard said. "Because the seniors who had gone were like the main players on the court, each grade had to step up each time. It's crazy every time they've stepped up to play."



Photo Courtesy of Dan Donohue

STATE CHAMPIONS: The Victory Christian volleyball team is all smiles as they celebrate their fifth consecutive state championship.

"God did bless us," Wakley said. But this year the challenge was greater, the girls said.

"We had a lot of younger people," Wakley said. "Most of the people that played were mainly seniors, but only three of us had varsity experience."

"We almost had to start fresh," Gilyard said.

The No. 1 Lady Conquerors struggled early in the year having lost two of their first three matches. But they went through the rest of the season going 34-1 for a 35-3 finish.

"It was like we were very determined to not let our streak down. We were really determined to keep it going," Gilyard said.

"We always have a target on

our back. We clicked really well at the end of the season," Wakley said.

Victory won at the Class 5A level in 2017, the first year of their current run. The following year, it was moved down to 4A, where it also won state. It then went back up to 5A the next two seasons, winning in that class again. This year, it was back down to 4A.

When it reached the state tournament, the Lady Conquerors won in the semifinals against Lincoln Christian, a three-time state champion, having won 3A in 2018 and 4A the next two years. It was the fourth time this season Victory beat Lincoln.

"The semifinal against Lincoln was tough, because it was the

fourth time we played them this year," Victory coach Dan Donahue said. "We smoked them the first two sets and then they beat us in the third set, then we smoked them in the fourth set. It's hard to beat any good team four times."

"They (Lincoln) know how you play, so we had to work around that," Gilyard said. "We had to change our defense sometimes in the middle of the game to work around any strategy they used against us. When playing Regent we learned where they hit the most and we had to move our defense around for that."

Victory also played Regent, ranked second, for a fourth time for 2021 when they met in the final. Regent was the last team Vic-

tory lost to back on Aug. 31. It beat the Lady Rams in their next two meetings in September.

"I thought it was very challenging," Wakley said. "We didn't have our best game. But we played hard and we were determined not to lose and everybody was giving it their all, even though not all of us played our A game. But it was probably one of the most challenging games we had this year for sure."

"I think it was more of a mental challenge, because we are a pretty good team," Gilyard said. "When you are mentally out of it, that's when it gets us. But we all came together and stayed focused on it. We didn't give any last points at the end."



Harry Lentz for GTR Media Group

HURRICANE STRENGTH: Tulsa basketball is off to an interesting start this season. Above, during the 64-58 win over Oregon State in Tulsa, Keyshawn Embury-Simpson, left, and Rey Idowu go up for baskets against the Ducks.

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# Myrtle Beach Bowl TU's 23rd Bowl Game

When the Tulsa Golden Hurricane, representing the American Athletic Conference, face the Old Dominion Monarchs of Conference USA in the 2021 Myrtle Beach Bowl in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, it will be the 23rd bowl game in TU's football history.

The game is scheduled to be played at Coastal Carolina's Brooks Stadium on Monday, Dec. 20, at 1:30 p.m. (CT).

This is just the second year of the Myrtle Beach Bowl. Last year's inaugural game was won by Appalachian State, 56-28 over North Texas.

The Myrtle Beach Bowl appearance is the 12th bowl game in the last 19 years for the Hurricane. Head Coach Philip Montgomery takes his fourth team into a bowl game in his seven seasons, including the 2015 Independence Bowl, 2016 Miami Beach Bowl and the 2020 Lockheed Martin Armed Forces Bowl.

This is the first meeting on the gridiron between Tulsa and Old Dominion. The Myrtle Beach

Bowl is just the second bowl game in the short history of the Old Dominion football program.

Tulsa has fielded a football team since 1895, while ODU began its football program as an FCS program in 2009.

The Monarchs transitioned to the FBS in 2013, entered Conference USA in 2014, and made the school's only other FBS bowl game appearance in the 2016 Popeyes Bahamas Bowl, defeating Eastern Michigan by a 24-20 score.

"We're excited for the opportunity to continue our season at the Myrtle Beach Bowl against a very good Old Dominion football team. We look forward to representing our university, the city of Tulsa and the American Athletic Conference in Myrtle Beach," said Montgomery.

"Old Dominion has done such an outstanding job in building a solid foundation for its football program in such a short time since adding the sport and moving to the FBS level," Montgomery added. "It should be a tremendous

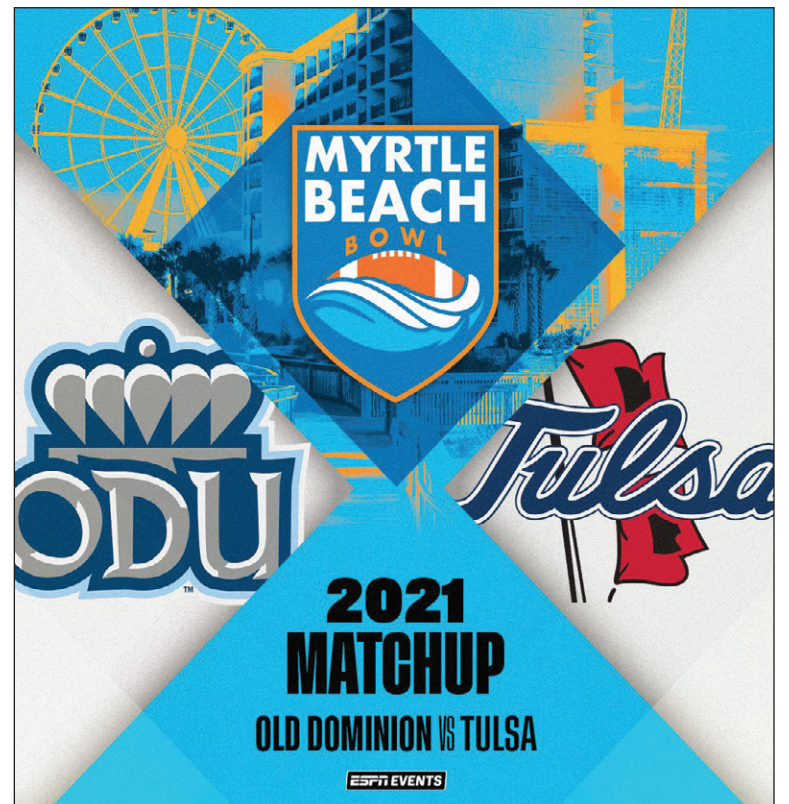
matchup between two teams that finished their regular seasons extremely strong."

Tulsa goes into the Myrtle Beach Bowl with an overall 6-6 record. The Hurricane is on a three-game winning streak, defeating Tulane, Temple and SMU, winning two of those games on the road. Old Dominion also comes into the contest with a 6-6 record and is on a current five-game winning streak.

The contest features a Tulsa team that averages 436.3 total offensive yards to rank second in the American Athletic Conference, while defensively the Hurricane has held its opposition to 381 yards, ranking fifth in The American.

The Monarchs, coached by Ricky Rahne (pronounced Ronnie), finished the season in third place in the C-USA East Division with a 5-3 record. ODU has averaged 28.5 points and 385 yards per game, while the Monarchs defense has allowed just 28 points and 372 yards per game.

The game will be televised on ESPN.



# University of Tulsa Cross Country Runner Scott Beattie Named American Athletic Conference Runner of the Year

## Senior is Second Hurricane to Earn Honor

Scott Beattie claimed American Athletic Conference Men's Runner of the Year honors, capping a fantastic cross-country season, the league announced recently.

Beattie is the second University of Tulsa athlete to earn the award since it was first announced by popular vote in 2017, after Patrick Dever was honored last season.

"We wouldn't be where we're at without Scott Beattie," head coach Steve Gulley said. "He's been a backbone of our program and has worked so hard. Scott has been a big contributor to our success the past four years, so we're excited he is getting a bit of the limelight."

Beattie paced the Golden Hurricane in four of the five meets he competed in this season, taking 11th at the Cowboy Jamboree and 18th at the prestigious Wisconsin Nuttycombe Festival.

Beattie became the fourth different Hurricane runner, fifth overall, to finish as the individual men's champion at the American Cross Country Championships, navigating the Lakeland, Fla. course in 23:49.2 to claim the gold medal. He had finished runner-up the previous three seasons.

"He's been a big team runner his whole career," Gulley said. "There have been times where he'll ask, 'What does the team

need from me at this meet?'" So now it was nice to sit there and tell him to go and win the race and bring glory to the team. We're happy he gets to achieve this and even more happy he's getting the attention he's deserved. He's sacrificed for the good of the team in the past."

The senior from Newcastle, England finished the 2021 campaign with an all-region performance at the NCAA Midwest Regional 10K, logging a third-place finish in 30:23.2. He then helped Tulsa to a sixth-place finish at the NCAA Division I Cross Country Championships, crossing the line in 58th-place with a 10K time of 29:45.2.



**HURRICANE PACER:** Scott Beattie of Tulsa leads all runners in the American Athletic Conference.

# Two Tulsa Sports Events Nationally Recognized

Two Tulsa Sports Commission events, the 2020 Big 12 Wrestling Championship and the 2020 USA BMX Grand Nationals, were named Champions of Economic Impact in Sports Tourism.

Sports Destination Management, the leading publication with the largest circulation of sports event planners and tournament directors in the sports tourism market, unveiled the winners of the 2020 and 2021 Champions of Economic Impact Awards in Sports

Tourism Presented by Traveling Teams. This year's winners are responsible for contributing a more-than-welcome boost of over \$400 million to the national economy over the past two years.

The following are quotes from participating organizations:

### Big 12 Conference

"We appreciate the effort and coordination among all our partners in being able to stage the 2021 Big 12 Wrestling Championship," said

Bob Burda, senior associate commissioner for communications. "It took an extraordinary team effort to safely achieve the level of success and impact made during such a difficult time."

### USA BMX

"After the meticulous planning and painstaking details it took to host a safe and worthy event for BMX sports in 2021, it truly is an honor to be recognized as a champion," said Shane Fernandez, pres-

ident and chairman of USA BMX. "After all, that was our goal. To champion for everyone who entrusts us to deliver what many call the Greatest Race on Earth no matter the challenge. And expect nothing less in 2022, as we unveil our Tulsa-based headquarters and Hall of Fame."

### Tulsa Regional Tourism

"Receiving multiple awards of this caliber reflects the tremendous work the Tulsa Sports Com-

mission has been doing over the last decade," said Ray Hoyt, president of Tulsa Regional Tourism. "Dual national recognition reinforces to event planners that Tulsa is one of the best destinations in the country to host a sporting event, a major goal of Tulsa Regional Tourism. As our momentum continues to bring in even larger events, more and more people will come to Tulsa and experience what our unique city has to offer."

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**THE ECONOMY**

# NOMA (North of Market) Planned for Mixed Use Development in Midtown Tulsa

The City of Tulsa and ITULSA, LLC unveiled plans in November for a new mixed-use development on the northwest corner of 11th St. and Lewis Ave.

NOMA (North of Market) is a planned \$60 million development slated to open in 2023, featuring modern apartments with luxury amenities, curated retail, restaurants and a neighborhood gathering space.

"I want to thank ITULSA for helping bring this transformational project to this portion of Route 66," Mayor G.T. Bynum said. "As more projects along Route 66 start taking shape, especially around the 11th and Lewis area, I'm eager to see what additional opportunities are made available to our residents and visitors who want to take in the possibilities our Mother Road has to offer."

Construction has begun on the four-acre development, which meets the growing demand for housing, public spaces and walkable destinations in the Tulsa Market District. NOMA's mission is to create an elevated living and neighborhood experience through a culture of innovation, exploration and new encounters.

"The accelerated growth in the area presents exciting opportunities for new development on Route 66," said Chris Ellison, CEO of ITULSA. "NOMA will provide additional opportunities for people to live, work and do business in the area, while also expanding public space for the growing community

and new opportunities for locally owned businesses. Welcome to the new heart of Tulsa!"

Residential plans include 256 one, two and three-bedroom apartments with amenities that include co-working spaces, a fitness center, rooftop clubhouse with dining room and lounge, hotel-style lobby, bike storage room, a shaded dog park and indoor dog wash facility, pool with cabanas and grills, multiple greenspace courtyards and dedicated parking for residents and businesses.

"NOMA will serve as a catalyst for increased development along Tulsa's Route 66 and will make the Tulsa Market District competitive with other major markets," said Brad Carson, President for the University of Tulsa. "This project benefits Tulsa in its pursuit of talent and the retention of intellectual capital."

Community spaces will include 11,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space, a central neighborhood gathering space complete with trees, native plantings and festive lighting (dubbed the "Route 66 living room"), planned public art and added lighting and security for the area. NOMA is within walking distance to a major grocery store, retail and restaurants, and will have front-door access to Tulsa's new Aero BRT system. It is located within minutes of downtown Tulsa, the University of Tulsa, two major healthcare complexes, and Utica Square. "I am thrilled to support this de-



GTR Media Group photo

**DEVELOPER DISCUSSION:** NOVA developer Chris W. Ellison, founder of ITULSA LLC, explains his project during the opening press conference event. At left is Monroe Nichols, Oklahoma House of Representatives, District 72 and at right is Tulsa Mayor G.T. Bynum.

velopment in my district," added Rep. Monroe Nichols, D-Tulsa. "NOMA is transforming a vacated concrete parking lot into housing and adding public space for the neighborhood and visitors to connect and experience the new Tulsa Market District."

The development is supported by experienced design and construction teams and is funded in part by a \$5 million development agreement with the Tulsa Authority for Economic Opportunity

(TAE0). The design team is led by the highly experienced mixed-use architecture design firm, Hord Coplan Macht (HCM), along with Wallace Design Collective, MDP Engineering Group, and Planning Design Group. Construction is by multifamily expert Strategic Construction, Ltd. Financing is by Mason Joseph Company, Inc. Additional development and construction consultation is provided by Cornerstone Development and Red Dog Construction.

**About ITULSA**

ITULSA, LLC was formed by Chris W. Ellison to design and construct NOMA, an elevated living and neighborhood experience. The primary goal of this development is to transform a 4-acre desolate parking lot into a flagship neighborhood hub focused on walkability and community engagement by building residential density, adding additional commercial space and creating public spaces for neighbors to gather.

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# Looking Forward: Global Energy Outlook 2022



Before I address the global energy outlook for 2022, I want to thank all of those who have been an important part of my journey in the energy industry in 2021. Many thanks to readers of my columns, blogs, magazine articles, presentations, and radio/podcast interviews. A special thanks to GTR News/Forrest Cameron! Also my appreciation to Emmanuel Sullivan/Oilman Magazine, all the listeners of my National Energy Talk podcast, Shawn Wilson, Butch Black, and the Exploring Energy Team!

It was great to be back on the speaking circuit, including presentations at York College, (York, Nebraska), National Association of Royalty Owners Annual Convention, Professional Petroleum Data Management Association's Houston Expo, and the World Trade Summit in Oklahoma. A

highlight of 2021 was attending the World Petroleum Congress in Houston.

My presentations in 2021 focused on strategic optimization and developing pathways to our energy future, emphasizing natural gas/LNG, hydrogen, infrastructure, and the digital transformation.

As an advisor to IngenuitE, Inc., I continue to be encouraged by the opportunities for the energy industry in the IT world.

As compared to 2020, 2021 was truly a time of uncertainty



By MARK A. STANSBERRY

and challenges, to say the least. Many of the issues continue to exist. The future of regulations, executive orders, tax issues, fiscal and monetary policies, international trade issues, COVID-19 vaccination outcomes, supply and demand of energy, and private/public education challenges are some of the numerous issues before us.

Energy education is needed more than ever. Nothing moves without energy. We need to work together to provide energy efficiency and environmental preservation. The oil and gas industry is strongly need-

ed for necessary energy usage and petrochemical products.

As I state in my book, America Needs America's Energy: Creating Together the People's Energy Plan, "Future generations are depending on us to keep the American dream alive. For too long we in America have been wasting time blaming the energy industry or the government for failure to adopt a national energy strategy, when we should be responsible for creating the plan. As consumers of energy, we must drive the process, evaluating how we can best leverage our natural resources here at home to ensure long-term energy independence and security. American citizens must take individual responsibility for the state of this great nation, striving to protect the land we call home."

It is my strong belief, that current infrastructure and pipelines must be maintained along with the implementation of an energy transition. The concerns before us are the challenges of accessibility, affordability, efficiency, availability,

reliability, cyber security, sustainability, and energy security. Therefore, energy supply must match up with energy demand.

There are many moving parts that will impact the energy outlook for 2022, including weather, geopolitics, digital transformation, supply chain, OPEC+, and semiconductor chips.

Investments are needed in the oil and gas industry to achieve ultimate results. The selling of oil from the strategic petroleum reserves is only a bandaid approach. A strong energy workforce, which includes America's energy, all forms, are needed more than ever. Innovation and technology will lead us to pathways of a brighter future.

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Mark A. Stansberry is Chairman of the GTD Group, an award winning author and Energy Advocate. National Energy Talk podcast.

## Supermercados Morelos Opens Fifth Store in Greater Tulsa

Supermercados Morelos has opened its fifth grocery store in the Tulsa Metro region with the Broken Arrow location. It is the ninth location in Oklahoma.

Supermercados Morelos is Oklahoma's largest Hispanic grocery store chain with now nine locations across the state of Oklahoma. According to the company, "Supermercados Morelos is deeply committed to the communities it serves and currently partners with over 20 community organizations to help

develop initiatives that will impact our cities for generations to come in the areas of: education, family well being, cultural preservation and Nutrition."

The Broken Arrow store is located at Oakwood Plaza (2011 W. Houston St.) The official ribbon cutting was held Dec. 3 with the official Grand Opening Day and celebrations being held the next day. Supermercados Morelos invited the community to take part in the Fiesta themed opening day celebration.

City of Broken Arrow Mayor Debra Wimpee and other officials, as well as Tulsa Regional Chamber and Broken Arrow Chamber of Commerce officials assisted the welcoming ceremony, followed by an afternoon of giveaways, free food and live entertainment.

"Supermercados Morelos is looking forward to being a contributing force to the City of Broken Arrow's economy," said Francisco Ibarra, CEO of Supermercados Morelos.



OPENING DAY: Francisco Ibarra, CEO of Supermercados Morelos, gets ready to cut the ribbon at his Broken Arrow location. At right holding the ribbon is B.A. Mayor Debra Wimpee and at left with the ribbon is Miss Rooster Days. Others participating are representatives from the Tulsa Regional Chamber and the Broken Arrow Chamber of Commerce.

## Tulsa Financial Empowerment Center Offers No-Cost Council

The Tulsa Financial Empowerment Center (FEC) celebrates one year since launching the first center of its kind in Tulsa that offers one-on-one financial counseling at no cost.

"Thanks to the FEC I've been able to set manageable financial goals, and I no longer feel anxious when I check my bank account balance," said Bria Brown-King, an FEC client.

Since its launch on December 10, 2020, FEC financial counselors have helped more than 170 clients and held nearly 500 sessions. Because of the program, clients have built \$57,397 in savings and reduced their debt by \$31,866.

"The City of Tulsa is part of a network of cities that are embedding financial empowerment in city services and in communities. We are proud to offer a service that is for everyone including— individuals, families, college students, small business owners, retirees, and everything in between," said Krystal Reyes, the Chief Resilience Officer at the City of Tulsa. "And we look forward to growing the program in year two to serve more Tulsans and deepen our partnerships."

The City of Tulsa, along with Goodwill Industries of Tulsa, are celebrating this milestone with the dozens of local partners who help spread the word of the FEC and make referrals to the program. The FEC is part of the Resilient Tulsa Strategy to help Tulsans build financial resilience.

"Goodwill Tulsa is honored to be the nonprofit partner with the City of Tulsa in the Tulsa Financial Empowerment Center," said Karla Davis, Goodwill Tulsa's Vice President of Administration. "This first year has brought many opportunities for FEC Counselors to help our neighbors meet their financial goals. We are looking forward to the second year of service; of making financial counseling available to more of our neigh-

bors who need some direction and accountability to reach their financial goals and become more financially resilient."

Counselors are available to provide services in English, Spanish, Zopau and in other languages through Language Line.

For more information about the FEC and to schedule an appointment with a financial counselor at no cost, visit: [www.goodwill-tulsa.org/fec](http://www.goodwill-tulsa.org/fec) or call 918-802-7279.

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# Oklahoma Foundation For Excellence Names Elizabeth Inbody Executive Director

Elizabeth Inbody, a Tulsa-area education and nonprofit leader, has been named executive director of the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence, a statewide nonprofit that recognizes and encourages academic excellence in Oklahoma's public schools.

Inbody will take the helm of the Foundation for Excellence on Jan. 3, 2022, after serving seven years as executive director of the award-winning Jenks Public Schools Foundation. She succeeds Emily Stratton, who recently retired after serving 22 years as executive director.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to continue Emily's legacy of advancing outstanding educational initiatives throughout Oklahoma," Inbody said. "I share her passion for public education and for the pursuit of academic excellence in Oklahoma public schools. I am motivated and honored to be joining such an accomplished organization."

Jami Rhoades Antonisse, president of the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence, said the foundation board and staff are thrilled to welcome Inbody as the new executive director.

"Elizabeth Inbody brings a wealth of experience as a nonprofit leader and executive director of one of the state's largest and most successful public school foundations," Antonisse said. "Her knowledge and experience, coupled with her commitment to excellence in public education, will be great assets for the future of our foundation and for our state's public schools."

While at the Jenks Public Schools Foundation, Inbody completed a five-year STEM learning initiative to fund and support STEM learning labs at six Jenks Public Schools' sites. She increased the foundation's funding to Jenks Public Schools by 580 percent and created a strong strategic relationship between the foundation and the Jenks Public Schools' leadership team, teachers and staff.



ELIZABETH INBODY

Prior to joining the Jenks Public Schools Foundation, Inbody served as communications and events coordinator for Cross-town Learning Center of Tulsa. She began her professional career in retail and served as the lead buyer of ladies' apparel for Harold's Stores for eight years.

Inbody is a past member of the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence Board of Trustees and has served on its Academic Awards Banquet, Oklahoma School Foundations Network and Executive committees. She currently serves on the Discovery Lab Children's Museum Board of Directors and is an active member of the Jenks Rotary Club and the Jenks Chamber of Commerce. Inbody is a graduate of Leadership Jenks and Leadership Tulsa. She is an active member at her church, her sorority alumni organization, and the Jenks National Charity League. Inbody graduated from the University of Oklahoma with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in marketing. She and her husband, Brian Inbody, a shareholder at Hall Estill law firm, are the parents of one son and three daughters.

## BUSINESS & PEOPLE NOTES

# Trustees Appointed To OSU-Tulsa Board

The Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence, a statewide charitable organization that recognizes and encourages academic excellence in Oklahoma's public schools, has announced the addition of 12 new members to its Board of Trustees.

Appointed to serve three-year terms are **Casey Gilliam**, educator and community volunteer, Edmond; **Stephen G. Butler**, assistant dean for Advancement and External Affairs, Oklahoma City University Law School, Oklahoma City; **Dr. Sonja J. Hughes**, vice president, Strategy & Service Excellence, Aetna, Oklahoma City; **Sheryl Lovelady**, executive director, Oklahoma Afterschool Network, Oklahoma City; **Marion Paden**, executive director, Leadership Oklahoma, Oklahoma City; **Jennifer Dille**, senior vice president and chief strategy officer, American Heritage Bank, Sapulpa; **Mike Boynton**, Oklahoma State University men's basketball coach, Stillwater; **Annie Chang**, concept and story lead, Gitwit Creative, Tulsa; **Michael Epps**, vice president, Network Management, Zayo Group, Tulsa; **Melvin R. Gilliam Sr.**, associate vice president, SpiritBank, Tulsa; **Dr. David Kendrick**, chair, Department of Informatics and assistant provost, OU Health Sciences Center, Tulsa; **Jennifer Loren**, director of the Cherokee Nation Film Office, Tulsa.

Three of the new trustees – Butler, Chang and Kendrick – received Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence Academic All-State Awards when they were high school seniors.

"It is our honor to welcome such exemplary community leaders to our Board of Trustees," said Jami Rhoades Antonisse, president of the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence. "Our foundation and our work on behalf of public education in Oklahoma will be strengthened by their talents and contributions."

One of the keys to the foundation's success is the leadership of its 180 trustees. They are leaders in business, education and public service who represent every region of the state and help promote the foundation's mission and its programs.

The Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence was founded in 1985 by then U.S. Sen. David L. Boren to strengthen support for public education in Oklahoma. Through its flagship Academic Awards Program, the foundation has presented more than \$5.1 million in cash awards to honor outstanding public school students and educators. Through its Oklahoma School Foundations Network, the foundation provides training and networking opportunities to more than 200 public education foundations across the state.

Among its other initiatives, the Foundation for Excellence coordinates a summer fellowship program to send Oklahoma fifth- and eighth-grade teachers to the Colonial Williamsburg Teacher Institute. Through its statewide mentoring initiative, the foundation supports the development of quality youth mentoring as a positive step toward academic success.

Since 1987, the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence and its partners have invested more than \$12.6 million in teacher grants, scholarships and awards directly benefiting Oklahoma public school teachers and students.

Oklahoma State University-Tulsa has welcomed four new members to the Oklahoma State University-Tulsa Board of Trustees this year to fill several vacancies. Lance Lively, Luke Strawn, Billy Taylor and Ginger Kollmann were each appointed by Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt and confirmed by the State Senate.

Kollmann, the most recent appointee, is an executive director and head of J.P. Morgan's Private Bank in Oklahoma, handling all aspects of the region's operations while managing a team of bankers and investment professionals. She also spent 12 years in the commercial and wealth management divisions at the Bank of Oklahoma and earned bachelor's degrees in management information systems and management from Oklahoma State University. Kollmann replaces John O'Connor, who was appointed as the state attorney general by Gov. Stitt in July.

Strawn is the CEO of First Title and AllFirst. He also served as president of McGraw Realtors and was vice president for The Lending Partners and Home Team Mortgage, both of Dallas. Strawn is a member of the Young Presidents Organization and Leadership Tulsa and has recently served on the board of Down Syndrome Association of Tulsa. Strawn replaces Brett Lesley, whose seven-year term expired in June.

Taylor is the CEO of Armstrong Bank and the CEO and vice chairman of Ironhorse Financial Group, as well as a member of the OSU/A&M Board of Regents. Taylor graduated from OSU with an agriculture degree. He replaces Tucker Link on both the OSU/A&M Board of Regents and the OSU-Tulsa Board of Trustees.

Lively has been a financial advisor at Edward Jones in Tulsa for more than 17 years. He also serves on several other boards, including the Sand Springs Chamber of Commerce and Green Country Federal Credit Union. He earned a Master of Business Administration from OSU in 2010. Lively replaced the late Sen. Charles Ford after his retirement from the board in April.

The OSU-Tulsa Board of Trustees consists of nine members, with seven appointed for seven-year terms by the governor and approved by the Oklahoma Senate as well as two who are also members of the OSU/A&M Board of Regents.

The new trustees join board chair Pete Patel, vice chair Scott Vaughn, secretary Dr. Chad Phillips, Dr. Trudy Milner, who is also chair of the OSU/A&M Board of Regents, and Michael Coonce.

Oklahoma State University-Tulsa is the metropolitan branch campus of a modern land-grant university that prepares students for success. Founded in 1999, OSU-Tulsa's downtown campus offers bache-



GINGER KOLLMANN



LUKE STRAWN



BILLY TAYLOR



LANCE LIVELY

lor's, master's and doctoral degree programs and graduate certificates geared toward working adults. For more information on OSU-Tulsa, visit [tulsa.okstate.edu](http://tulsa.okstate.edu).

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# Four Historic Art Deco Buildings Preserved

In reviewing the many Tulsa buildings about which I've written, I've found four art deco structures that were not addressed and deserve attention in this column: The Mayo Motor Inn, La Maison, the Morrow Geophysical Building and the Midwest Equitable Meter Co. Building. These buildings were constructed in the later years of the art deco popularity which began in the boomtown years of the 1920s.

The Mayo Motor Inn at 416 S. Cheyenne Ave. was built in 1950 as a covered parking amenity for

the Mayo Hotel. The architectural firm of this small two-level parking garage was Leon B. Senter and Associates. At the center of the east façade was originally a control office which serves now as a small retail shop with main vehicle in and out entrances on either side. Corners of this shop are rounded in a streamlined manner and balanced by a tall art deco neon sign centered above. The buildings exterior is finished in a smooth white stucco punctuated with upper-level black steel casement

windows. The north elevation is highlighted by a large painted mural sponsored by "Film/Music/Arts/Culture".

La Maison at 1736 E. 11th St. was originally a small dry cleaners' establishment. Today it houses a custom lamp and lighting company. The ground floor is faced in terra cotta tile and orangish tan brick. At the second floor the exterior has been refinished in cream colored stucco. The north elevation, the main front, is a series of Tudor arched storefronts with black marble bases and dark blue stained-glass transoms and sidelights. The arches are framed in terra cotta.

The long streamline art deco building at 3345 S. Harvard Ave. was built in 1948 and was originally called the Morrow Geophysical Building. A massive stucco fascia emphasizes its long one-story look and is augmented by a bright horizontal painted stripe located directly below the fascia's soffit. The rest of the exterior is finished in two colors of stucco with strongly rounded north and south corners. A massive semi-circular arch frames the main entrance and was probably the product of a later remodel. After it's Morrow Geophysical era, the building was the headquarters for Tulsa's American Red Cross. After some subsequent changes in ownership, it was purchased by its current owners and is occupied by Tulsa Spine and Rehab, Midtown Dentistry, and Cannon Oral Surgery. A spacious centered lobby runs east and west thru the building to front and rear parking. Little of the original interior remains.

A review of the fourth building, the Midwest Equitable Meter Company concludes this column. It is now located at 3130 Charles Page Blvd. in Tulsa's west industrial district which has seen more prosperous days, the building was built in 1929. It was the work of architectural firm Rush Endicott and Rush and designer Bruce Goff. This architectural firm was responsible for the Page Van Lines Building, the Tulsa Club Building, the Guarantee Laundry Building, and the Spotlight Theater Building. The Boston Avenue Church Building which also received the input of RER opened the same year.

The building's exterior is an interplay of two colors of brick utilizing alternate courses of corbeling and 2 1/2 courses of soldier brick to form a fascia. The structure's footprint is a narrow rectangle with a series of tall windows (now boarded up) at the long sides. A V-shaped parapet crowned with a pointed stone block featuring, in raised letters, Midwest Equitable Meter Company highlights a small single door main entrance.

## On Architecture



By ROGER COFFEY, AIA



**MAYO MOTOR INN:** The Mayo Motor Inn at 416 S. Cheyenne Ave. was built in 1950 as a covered parking amenity for the Mayo Hotel. The architectural firm of this small two-level parking garage was Leon B. Senter and Associates.



GTR Media Group photo

**MORROW GEOPHYSICAL BUILDING:** The long streamline art deco building at 3345 S. Harvard Ave was built in 1948 and was originally called the Morrow Geophysical Building. This photo shows the entrance to the elongated structure.



GTR Media Group photo

**MIDWEST EQUITABLE METER COMPANY:** This 1929 building was designed by the architectural firm Rush Endicott and Rush and its designer Bruce Goff. This architectural firm was responsible for the Page Van Lines Building, the Tulsa Club Building, the Boston Avenue Methodist Church and more.



GTR Media Group photo

**LA MAISON:** La Maison at 1736 E. 11th Street was originally a small dry cleaners' establishment. The building features terra cotta tile and orangish tan brick, cream colored stucco and a series of Tudor arched storefronts with black marble bases and dark blue stained-glass transoms and sidelights. The arches are framed in terra cotta.

## Richard Lloyd Jones, Jr. Airport Name Being Changed To Tulsa Riverside Airport

The Tulsa Airports Improvement Trust's Board of Trustees has approved a resolution to change the name of the Richard Lloyd Jones, Jr. Airport to Tulsa Riverside Airport.

After surveying pilots, tenants, and other key community stakeholders, TAIT decided to return to the airport's original name to assist with clarification in regards to its airport code (RVS) as well as geographic location.

Richard L. Jones, Jr. was the longest tenured board member of Tulsa Airport Authority, serving from 1948 to 1978, many of those years serving as Chair of the Board of Trustees. On July 22, 1978, the Tulsa Riverside Airport was renamed the Richard Lloyd

Jones, Jr. Airport to recognize his devoted service. In his thirty years of service on the Board of Trustees, Jones saw Tulsa International Airport transform to the existing modern terminal facility it is today. He was a strong advocate for the building of the Tulsa Riverside Airport to support the growth of general aviation traffic in the Tulsa area. TAIT will continue to recognize Richard L. Jones, Jr. and his impact on Tulsa's rich aviation history by highlighting him in a new airport history display in Tulsa International Airport's main Schwab Hall.

The airport is managed by Tulsa Airports Improvement Trust, which also manages Tulsa International Airport.

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<p><b>19</b></p> <p><b>A CHRISTMAS CAROL</b> American Theatre Co. 2 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets.</p> <p><b>THE NUTCRACKER</b> Tulsa Ballet 2 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets.</p> <p><b>TULSA OILERS vs. Orlando</b> BOK Center • 7:05 p.m. Visit tulsaoilers.com for more information.</p>	<p><b>20</b></p> <p><b>GOLDEN EAGLES vs. South Dakota</b> • 7 p.m. Women's Basketball tulahurricane.com for tickets.</p> <p><b>A CHRISTMAS CAROL</b> American Theatre Co. 7:30 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets.</p> <p><b>COLLEGE TRAINING CENTER YOUTH WINTER CAMP</b> Soccer City Dec. 20 – 22 p.m. Visit soccercitytulsa.com for more information.</p>	<p><b>21</b></p> <p><b>GOLDEN HURRICANE vs. North Texas</b> • 5:30 p.m. Men's Basketball tulahurricane.com for tickets.</p> <p><b>A CHRISTMAS CAROL</b> American Theatre Co. 7:30 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets.</p> <p><b>DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE: WEIRD FICTION BOOK CLUB</b> Tulsa Library – Virtual 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. Visit tulsalibrary.org for more information.</p>	<p><b>22</b></p> <p><b>A CHRISTMAS CAROL</b> American Theatre Co. 7:30 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets.</p> <p><b>OK   JENKS – NETWORKING LUNCHEON</b> George's Pub, Jenks 11:30 a.m. Visit boldnetworking.com for more information.</p> <p><b>New Name. Same Bank.</b> <b>Central Bank of Oklahoma</b> Strong roots. Endless possibilities.™</p>	<p><b>23</b></p> <p><b>A CHRISTMAS CAROL</b> American Theatre Co. 7:30 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets.</p> <p><b>SILENT NIGHT DEADLY NIGHT</b> Blackbird on Pearl 8 p.m. Visit blackbirdonpearl.com for more information.</p> <p><b>CHRIS COMBS TRIO</b> The Colony 8 p.m. Visit colonytulsa.com for more information.</p>	<p><b>24</b></p> <p><b>WINTER WONDERLAND</b> Gathering Place Dec. 17 – 28 Visit gathering-place.org for more info.</p> <p><b>ARVEST WINTERFEST</b> BOK Center Through Jan. 3 Visit tulsawinterfest.com for more info.</p>	<p><b>25</b></p> <p><b>Merry Christmas</b></p>
<p><b>26</b></p> <p><b>2021 KWANZAA PROGRAM – CELEBRATING REPRESENTATION, IDENTITY AND DIVERSITY</b> Tulsa Library – Virtual 5 – 6:30 p.m. Visit tulsalibrary.org for more information.</p> <p><b>Happy KWANZAA</b></p> <p><b>We Offer Health Savings Accounts</b> <b>Central Bank of Oklahoma</b> Strong roots. Endless possibilities.™</p>	<p><b>27</b></p> <p><b>TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS</b> BOK Center Dec. 27 – 29 Visit bokcenter.com for more information.</p> <p><b>KWANZAA CRAFT KITS</b> Suburban Acres Library All Day Visit tulsalibrary.org for more information.</p>	<p><b>28</b></p> <p><b>YOGA FOR EVERY BODY</b> Central Library 6 – 7 p.m. Visit tulsalibrary.org for more information.</p> <p><b>CHRIS BLEVINS BAND</b> Mercury Lounge 8 p.m. Visit mercurylounge.com for more information.</p> <p><b>DOG PLAY WEDNESDAY</b> Gathering Place All Day Visit gathering-place.org for more information.</p>	<p><b>29</b></p> <p><b>GOLDEN HURRICANE vs. SMU</b> • 7 p.m. Men's Basketball tulahurricane.com for tickets.</p> <p><b>GOLDEN EAGLES vs. Denver</b> • 7 p.m. Men's Basketball tulahurricane.com for tickets.</p> <p><b>GARY ALLAN</b> The Joint-Hard Rock &amp; Casino 8 p.m. Visit hardrocktulsa.com for more information.</p>	<p><b>30</b></p> <p><b>G.R.O.W. MOBILE LIBRARY (GATHER AND READ ON WHEELS)</b> Gathering Place 8:30 – 11:30 a.m. Visit gatheringplace.org for more information.</p> <p><b>GOLDEN EAGLES vs. Denver</b> • 7 p.m. Men's Basketball tulahurricane.com for tickets.</p> <p><b>GARY ALLAN</b> The Joint-Hard Rock &amp; Casino 8 p.m. Visit hardrocktulsa.com for more information.</p>	<p><b>31</b></p> <p><b>RON WHITE</b> River Spirit Casino 8 p.m. Visit riverspirittulsa.com for more information.</p> <p><b>WILLIAM CLARK GREEN WITH JOSHUA RAY WALKER</b> Cain's Ballroom 8:30 p.m. Visit cainsballroom.com for more information.</p> <p><b>GARY ALLAN</b> The Joint-Hard Rock &amp; Casino 8 p.m. Visit hardrocktulsa.com for more information.</p>	<p><b>1 January</b></p> <p><b>GOLDEN EAGLES vs. Omaha</b> • 7 p.m. Men's Basketball tulahurricane.com for tickets.</p> <p><b>Happy New Year 2022</b></p> <p><b>ROGER CLYNE &amp; THE PEACEMAKERS: HANGOVER BALL</b> Cain's Ballroom 7:30 p.m. Visit cainsballroom.com for more information.</p>
<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>BRANDON CLARK'S SUNDAY SERVICE</b> Mercury Lounge 4 p.m. Visit mercurylounge.com for more information.</p> <p><b>PAUL BENJAMIN'S SUNDAY NIGHT THING</b> The Colony 10 p.m. Visit colonytulsa.com for more information.</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>BUILD A READER STORYTIME: BABIES</b> Hardesty Regional Library 10 – 10:20 a.m. Visit tulsalibrary.org for more information.</p> <p><b>YUCHI LANGUAGE CLASS</b> Zarrow Regional Library 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. Visit tulsalibrary.org for more information.</p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>BUILD A READER STORYTIME: FAMILY</b> Owasso Library 10 – 10:30 p.m. Visit tulsalibrary.org for more information.</p> <p><b>MEAN GIRLS</b> Celebrity Attractions 7:30 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets.</p> <p><b>Free Small Business Checking</b> <b>Central Bank of Oklahoma</b> Strong roots. Endless possibilities.™</p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>MEAN GIRLS</b> Celebrity Attractions 7:30 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets.</p> <p><b>PILGRIM</b> Mercury Lounge 8 p.m. Visit mercurylounge.com for more information.</p> <p><b>WHIRLIGIG TRIO JAM BAND NIGHT</b> The Colony 8 p.m. Visit colonytulsa.com for more information.</p>	<p><b>6</b></p> <p><b>GOLDEN EAGLES vs. St. Thomas</b> • 1 p.m. Women's Basketball tulahurricane.com for tickets.</p> <p><b>MEAN GIRLS</b> Celebrity Attractions 7:30 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets.</p> <p><b>PAUL BENJAMIN BAND</b> Mercury Lounge 8 p.m. Visit mercurylounge.com for more information.</p>	<p><b>7</b></p> <p><b>MIKE RYAN</b> Cain's Ballroom 7 p.m. Visit cainsballroom.com for more information.</p> <p><b>MEAN GIRLS</b> Celebrity Attractions 8 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets.</p> <p><b>OMALEYB: TULSA UNSUNG LIVE RECORDING</b> The Vanguard 8 p.m. Visit thevanguardtulsa.com for more information.</p>	<p><b>8</b></p> <p><b>MEAN GIRLS</b> Celebrity Attractions 2 &amp; 8 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets.</p> <p><b>TULSA OILERS vs. Allen</b> BOK Center • 7:05 p.m. Visit tulsaoilers.com for more information.</p> <p><b>THE COMMODORES</b> Osage Casino 8 p.m. Visit cainsballroom.com for more information.</p>
<p><b>9</b></p> <p><b>MEAN GIRLS</b> Celebrity Attractions 1 &amp; 6:30 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets.</p> <p><b>TULSA OILERS vs. Kansas City</b> BOK Center • 7:05 p.m. Visit tulsaoilers.com for more information.</p> <p><b>DAVID MINER AND THE REASONS TO QUIT</b> Mercury Lounge 8 p.m. Visit mercurylounge.com for more information.</p>	<p><b>10</b></p> <p><b>LIFE-SIZE CANDYLAND</b> Judy Z. Kishner Library All Day Visit tulsalibrary.org for more information.</p> <p><b>JARED TYLER AND FRIENDS</b> Mercury Lounge 8 p.m. Visit mercurylounge.com for more information.</p>	<p><b>11</b></p> <p><b>DIGITAL LITERACY LAB</b> PETTING ZOO - DLL OPEN HOUSE FOR TEENS Central Library 6 – 7 p.m. Visit tulsalibrary.org for more information.</p> <p><b>BIXBY TEEN MANGA/ ANIME CLUB</b> Bixby Library 6 – 7 p.m. Visit tulsalibrary.org for more information.</p>	<p><b>12</b></p> <p><b>GOLDEN HURRICANE vs. Temple</b> • 6 p.m. Men's Basketball tulahurricane.com for tickets.</p> <p><b>TOMMY STEWART'S DYERWOLF, GRAVE NEXT DOOR, &amp; GRAVEHUFFER</b> The Vanguard 8 p.m. Visit thevanguardtulsa.com for more information.</p>	<p><b>13</b></p> <p><b>KINGSMEN QUARTET</b> New Covenant Bible Church 7 p.m. Visit ncbctulsa.org for more information.</p> <p><b>SETH LEE JONES</b> The Colony 8 p.m. Visit colonytulsa.com for more information.</p> <p><b>Ask About Fraud ID Protection</b> <b>Central Bank of Oklahoma</b> Strong roots. Endless possibilities.™</p>	<p><b>14</b></p> <p><b>TULSA OILERS vs. Allen</b> BOK Center • 7:05 p.m. Visit tulsaoilers.com for more information.</p> <p><b>HAYDEN CHILDRESS</b> H2C Productions 8 p.m. • Jan. 14-15 myticketoffice.com for tickets.</p> <p><b>THE SOUND OF MUSIC</b> Theatre Tulsa 8 p.m. • Jan. 14-15 myticketoffice.com for tickets.</p>	<p><b>15</b></p> <p><b>GOLDEN HURRICANE vs. Houston</b> • 5 p.m. Men's Basketball tulahurricane.com for tickets.</p> <p><b>FOLK DANCES</b> Tulsa Symphony 7:30 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets.</p> <p><b>RIVERFIELD ROCKS 2022</b> Cain's Ballroom 6 p.m. Visit cainsballroom.com for more information.</p>

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AREA NEWS

# New Bell's Rekindling Fond Memories

By **BOB LEWIS**  
Contributing Editor

An undeveloped, 102-acre tract of land in east Broken Arrow is slated to become the new home of Bell's Amusement Park.

That bit of news came as an early Christmas present for legions of people who loved the original facility that was situated on the Tulsa Fairgrounds from 1951-2006.

Third generation park owner Robby Bell said the new site at Kenosha and the Creek Turnpike will be about 10 times larger than what they had in Tulsa and will include a kiddie area, a world-class arcade, its favorite rides and a 24-acre water park, which is about twice the size of Safari Joe's H2O in Tulsa. When completed, Bell forecast the facility will attract 1-1.5 million people a year and like the original park will be a source of jobs for local high school students.

The family-owned operation began in 1948 when Robby Bell's grandfather, Robert Bell, built a mini-train around his home in Tulsa and ran some children's rides at the Admiral Twin drive-in. In early 1951, the Senior Bell launched his fairgrounds park with a small collection of rides and attractions that included the original mini-train. The first adult offering was a bumper car attraction in 1955. Then a Tilt-a-Whirl and mini-golf course were added. High on the favorite rides list were Zingo and Phantasmagoria.

It was operated by the founder's son and Robby's dad, Bobby Bell, before closing after 55 years in operation.

While some eastside residents have expressed concerns about the noise and traffic the new park may generate, most Broken Arrowans are welcoming it with open arms.

City Manager Michael Spurgeon said he's pleased to have Bell's as the latest invest-



Photo courtesy of the Tulsa Historical Society & Museum

**WEEE!** – A highlight of Bell's Amusement Park on the Tulsa Fairgrounds was an assortment of rides, highlighted by Zingo. The park, which closed in 2006, has announced plans to open a new, much larger operation on 102 acres at Kenosha and the Creek Turnpike in Broken Arrow.

ment in Broken Arrow. "When you live around 21st and Sheridan just down from Hoover Elementary, you spend a lot of time there," he recalled. At the park's announcement ceremonies, Spurgeon told reporters, "Some of my fondest memories go back to the time that I spent in that amusement park on the Zingo, which to this day, I'm still scared of thinking about riding again."

Like Spurgeon, Dr. Eugene Peterson grew up a few blocks from the original Bell's and has fond memories of the landmark. "I spent so much time riding Phantasmagoria I'm sure I left butt-prints on its seats," he joked.

Pollard's next-door neighbor was Bill McVeigh who proudly claimed the title of "world champion" on the park's amateur golf course. "I must have played it a zillion times," he recalled, "and got pretty hard to beat."

Former Owasso resident Lesley Lang said, "To be honest, Bell's wasn't my cup of tea. But after seeing how much fun my niece,

nephew and their friends were having, my perception changed."

Marylou Evens said she has warm memories of the park because her very first real date was a visit to Bell's. Over the years, she said she returned for school outings, company picnics and to share the fun associated with the place with her friends and family.

Jim Edwards grew up in Broken Arrow but like many of his friends spent a considerable amount of time at Bell's. His favorite ride was Zingo. "There just weren't many things to do in Broken Arrow in the 1950s and 60s," he said, "but there was always Bell's and we knew we would have fun there."

Tulsa resident Barbara Trecek said simply, "I can't wait."

Initial planning is currently underway. No timeline for the start of construction and opening the amusement park has been announced.

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