

TOWER

OKWU®

OKLAHOMA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY



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**GRACE
& TRUTH**

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**TRANSFORMED BY
GRACE & TRUTH**

Oklahoma Wesleyan University is an orthodox Christian university of The Wesleyan Church located in Bartlesville, OK. An OKWU education prioritizes the transformation of the whole person for the whole world. We help students discover, live, and deepen their relationship in Jesus to influence culture with Grace and Truth.

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” - John 1:14

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

GOD IS STILL GOOD

Celebrating Yesterday and Building Tomorrow

For Such a Time as This

When I was inaugurated in October of 2019, I had no idea what lay ahead of me in my first year as president of Oklahoma Wesleyan University. I was expecting to embrace the unique joys and challenges that come with the job. My focus was on building a foundation, on building a team—on building the Next OKWU.

I had no idea that in a matter of months we'd be facing this challenging season. Like most every other school in America, we made the difficult decision to close our physical doors and move to online learning. It was certainly a new experience, but I'm proud of the way we came together as a school. Our professors worked overtime to help this transition go smoothly. Our students adjusted in a moment's notice, encountering the longest spring break in history. Our staff had to be flexible to shifting schedules and timelines. It wasn't easy for any of us, and it hasn't been easy for you.

Around this same time, people here in America were seeing with fresh eyes the need for biblical justice. Many all over the country lifted up their voices to call for human dignity, especially for people of color. Through OKWU's website, I shared my own response, hoping that this cultural moment could spark positive change and that we would see every person as made in the image of God, both in our country as a whole and for our own campus community. Despite what some may say, we who hold a Christian vision of how God's world should operate cannot look away from cultural issues. We will engage with our students, faculty, and staff from a biblical perspective. And we commit, as before, to listening first and leaning in with the light of Jesus in a dark world, influencing all with His transforming grace and truth.



First Lady Wendy and President Jim Dunn in the La Quinta mansion gardens.

“Thank you for believing in the transformative mission of Oklahoma Wesleyan University.”

JIM DUNN, PRESIDENT

An Everyday Calling

These situations aren't unique to OKWU. Every college alumni magazine in the nation will feature a similar message of hardship this year. They'll write about how they overcame the challenges of 2020. I'm proud to say that OKWU can claim this, too. Even in the face of COVID-19, we brought in steady enrollment numbers on our traditional campus for the fall semester. We're taking the necessary safety precautions to have a wonderful year, continuing our dedication to delivering the life-changing experience of an OKWU education.

And let me tell you: we're still focused on building the Next OKWU. We were doing it before this pandemic, and we are doing it through the pandemic, and we will continue it past this strange season. Even with these challenges, I'm pleased with where we're at.

Annual giving exceeded expectations for the fiscal year. On April 2nd, we hosted our virtual, record-breaking #OKWUGiveDay.

We've revamped our Admissions team and brought key players to join Team OKWU. Our renamed Graduate and Professional Studies (GPS) program has evolved to provide a better online experience for our students. Our entire OKWU brand has shifted—we're changing our logo, our color scheme, and our website to assist in our marketing efforts and student recruitment. The future really is bright, and we seek nothing other than advancing the Kingdom of Jesus Christ through Oklahoma Wesleyan University.

We continue to nurture OKWU's relationship with our local community and with our Wesleyan and pan-Wesleyan church partners. God-willing, we are on the verge of a major campus addition, the Eagle Campus Expansion, which will dramatically impact our community. When the world returns to “precedented” times, we're prepared to launch into the future.

Tomorrow Needs You

Whether you're a recent OKWU grad or an alumnus of one of our preceding institutions, you'll find something to love in this magazine. You'll hear from our faculty and from other alumni, and you'll read stories of the life-changing influence an OKWU education continues to have. More than anything, I hope that you'll be encouraged in these times, when discouragement and division seem to be the default state.

Thank you for your prayers as I seek to lead OKWU with excellence. God is still good. He remains the Lord over all. He's still in control. And He's still working in and through OKWU.

For the Transformation of All! 🙏

James A. Dunn
Dr. Jim Dunn, President

The TOWER is published yearly for alumni and friends by the office of Creative Impact at Oklahoma Wesleyan University. It is named for the historic La Quinta Mansion on campus, built in 1932. The opinions expressed are those of the individual authors. Send comments, letters to the editor, or other communication to creative.impact@okwu.edu.

Subscribe and update contact information at www.okwu.edu/tower

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READ ONLINE

OKLAHOMA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

A BRAND NEW DAY

Three ways OKWU's new brand is making a powerful and bold promise.

Refining OKWU's brand and graphic identity was a key initiative of President Dunn to strategically build the next OKWU. This involved a comprehensive re-design of the logomark, color-scheme, and messaging to position the university to stand apart.

Unveiled this summer, our new brand and website showcase a significant milestone in OKWU's distinguished 115-year history as a leader in Christian higher education. The newly established OKWU Creative Impact team worked on this strategic marketing project for several months to lift the OKWU brand, create impact and alignment, and connect with our many constituents in a clear and compelling way.

During the branding process we have been as strategic, intentional, and inclusive as possible. To that end, we asked for and received great input and ideas from individuals and groups throughout the university since this work began last fall.

The OKWU brand aspires to showcase the people and spirit of OKWU, and it's more than logos and colors. It is a promise of integrity and mark of academic excellence.



1



One university. Centered on the cross. *Period.*

The traditional OKWU cross symbol is foundational to the new logomark, anchoring the new OKWU brand with the beliefs the university has always stood on. Utilizing the existing athletic logotype, the new logo brings together the academic and athletic student experience, creating a unified brand experience. *We're one OKWU. Together.*

2




The future looks *bright*.

Color is emotional. Our updated color scheme embodies optimism by applying the traditional University Navy and introducing a complimentary University Yellow. We know how identifiable our logo and primary colors of navy and yellow will become. We want to make sure that anyone looking at communications from us—even at a glance—immediately knows it's from OKWU. Legacy red and gold remain a part of the university palette, reserved for special use.

3



Tomorrow needs *you*.

So what's the big deal? OKWU's rebranding is ushering the university into a modern era with our aesthetic look and storytelling. Our students are our focus, and our message has evolved to connect with their stories. OKWU is committed to preparing students for a world that desperately needs the Grace and Truth of Jesus Christ. Tomorrow needs leaders. Tomorrow needs nurses. Tomorrow needs pastors. *Tomorrow needs YOU.* 

EAGLE CAMPUS EXPANSION

Kirk Kelley, Athletic Director

Field House & Athletic Training

Approximately 55,000 sq.ft., the field house features an indoor turf field, fitness center, and training areas.

Hospitality & Flex Space

OKWU's athletic front door—offices, hospitality suite, and flex space will promote retention and recruitment.

Concessions & Locker Rooms

All-weather access for concessions and locker rooms for activities, training camps, class space, and community events.



THE EAGLE CAMPUS EXPANSION ENVISIONS CHAMPIONSHIP TURF FIELDS AND A UNIFIED ATHLETIC COMPLEX.

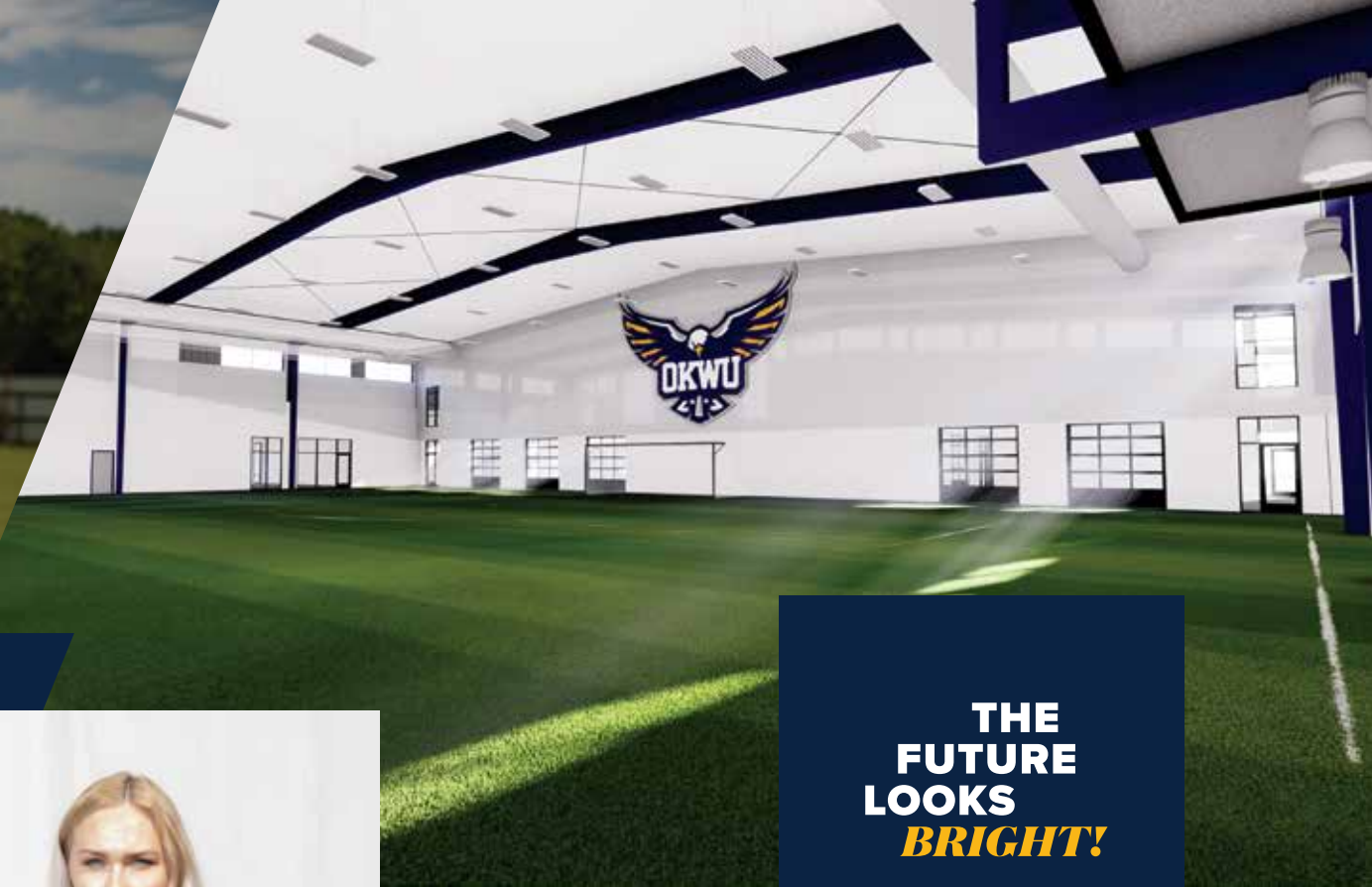
PHASE 1: The Fields + Track Project focuses on new turf fields for soccer, baseball, and softball, as well as a new track and field and cross country course.

BUILDING THE NEW OKWU

"If you build it, they will come."
 It's one of the all-time most famous lines in a sports movie, from *Field of Dreams*. And here at OKWU, it's about to take on new meaning as we seek to build our own field of dreams: The Eagle Campus Expansion.
 The project is a comprehensive plan to bolster our outdoor and indoor athletic facilities through a multi-leveled initiative. All told, we're hoping to

include championship-level turf fields, new softball and track and field complexes, a state-of-the-art field house, and an expansion to the Mueller Sports Center. These facilities will enrich and develop the lives of OKWU's students, faculty, staff, and those in the community who utilize the spaces.
 These plans address several needs that we have here at OKWU, both athletically and for the general student population. The turf fields will provide better drainage for our Silver Lake Road facilities, and the new complexes for softball and track and field will allow two major OKWU sports to finally be headquartered on our campus.

Renderings by Ambler Architects



MAKE A GIFT OR BECOME A SPONSOR
OKWU.EDU/EAGLECAMPUS

“IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE INVEST IN ALL STUDENTS AND HELP POSITION OUR ATHLETIC TEAMS TO COMPETE AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL. THIS EXPANSION ESTABLISHES OKWU FOR GROWTH AND ENHANCES OUR COMMITMENT TO EVERY STUDENT'S SUCCESS.”

A Game-Changer

The new field house will provide flexible space for practice, training, and community events— opening up the existing Mueller Sports Center to serve the student body better. To top it off, the sports complex will be a welcoming front door to the university and local community.

Simply put, this project is a game-changer—and not only for OKWU athletics. It's for our whole community. Think about student recruiting and retention. 67% of students reported that their campus recreational facilities influenced their college decision, and 74% of students confirmed that campus recreational facilities influenced their decision to continue attending after their first year. * The Eagle Campus Expansion will allow OKWU's recruitment efforts to remain competitive in the ever-changing world of higher education.

But don't just take it from me. Here's Jamie Peterson, the head coach of our men's soccer program, on the benefits of the Eagle Campus Expansion:

"This project would significantly enhance our student-athlete experience," he said. "The impact will be felt for years to come and be a game-changer for OKWU's student-athletes and coaches. It's not only going to impact training and game facilities, but it will also drastically elevate our recruiting. I believe it's going to be a rallying point for the entire community to support OKWU."

And Cedric Muteshi, the head coach of our track and field program, shared, "This new facility will give our athletic program everything we need to operate efficiently on a daily basis."

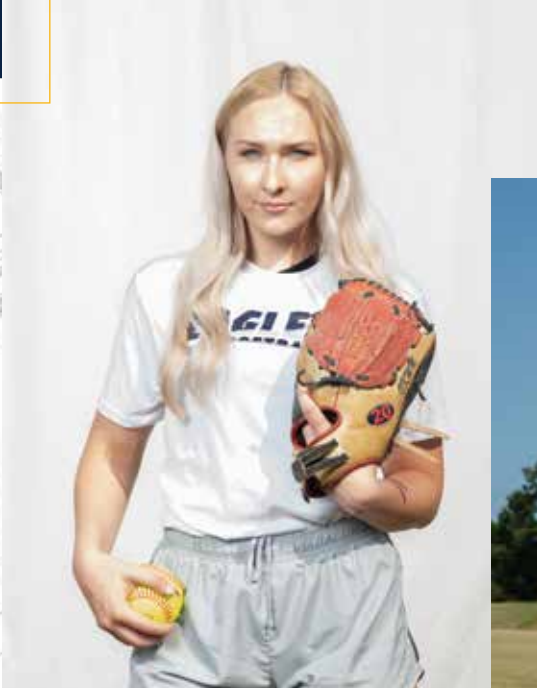
Team Goals

The expansion includes three stages. First, we're working towards our Fields+Track Project, consisting of new facilities for soccer, baseball, softball, track & field, and cross-country, along with parking and lighting. The next two stages include the field house and expansion to the Mueller Sports Center. It's a big step, but OKWU is ready to meet the challenge.

In athletics, the name of the game is teamwork. And as a program, that's something we take seriously. We're one team, even in the 19 individual sports our program supports. By definition, a project like this has to be a team effort. We hope that you'll consider joining Team OKWU on this, either through financial support or by spreading the word about this vision. If you're interested in giving or learning more about the project, visit our web page at okwu.edu/eaglecampus.

Thank you for sharing this dream. Together, we can make it a reality. 🙌

*Forrester, S. (2014). NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation, The Benefits of Campus Recreation.



THE FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT!

okwu.edu/eaglecampus



GO ONLINE

THE **EAGLE CAMPUS EXPANSION** WILL ENRICH THE LIVES OF **EVERY PERSON** THAT ENCOUNTERS **THE PEOPLE AND SPIRIT OF OKWU.**

GIVE DAY 2021

Give Today. Build Tomorrow.
MARCH 25, 2021



#OKWUGiveDay

**MAR
25**

OKWU.EDU/GIVEDAY

This OKWU Give Day, we have 1,440 minutes to support student scholarships and provide the life-changing experience of an OKWU education. More than ever before, tomorrow needs nurses and pastors, thinkers and leaders, truth-tellers and good-news-bringers.

ALUMNI AWARDS

LEGACY

Each year, we seek to recognize a select few individuals for their courage, achievement, and commitment to the vision and mission of OKWU. We are proud to present this year's alumni awards to the following individuals.

- Alumnus of the Year** - This award recognizes an alumnus for outstanding accomplishment in his or her profession and exceptional service to the church, the community, or Oklahoma Wesleyan University.
- Outstanding Service Award** - This award recognizes an OKWU graduate for standout service to the church or their local community.
- Hall of Faith Award** - This award seeks to honor those believers who have "fought the good fight, finished the race, and kept the faith" through careers of diligent service to the Kingdom of God.
- OKWU Achievement Award** - This honor recognizes those alumni who have gone into their communities and achieved outstanding results for their neighbor and for the Kingdom of God.

Alumnus of the Year



>> LYLE OLSON ('74)

Dr. Lyle Olson, a former faculty member at Bartlesville Wesleyan College during the 1980s and BWC's former Director of Publications and Media, is OKWU's 2020 Alumnus of the Year. A 1974 graduate with an Associate of Liberal Arts Degree, he currently works as the director for South Dakota State University's School of Communication and Journalism. In 2009, Olson received the David Adams Scholastic Journalism Division Educator of the Year Award.

Originally vacillating between a career in medicine and a career in journalism, Olson made up his mind while attending a Campus Crusade for Christ event as a teenager. The speaker at the expo called for journalists who are Christians, as opposed to 'Christian journalists,' and the distinction spoke to Olson. "I thought—that's it. That's what I'm going to do," he said.

This desire—to bring a Christian ethic into a generally secular profession—also influenced his later decision to return to South Dakota State as an instructor. "It kind of fit into that entire picture. Here was a chance to train and have a Christian perspective in secular classrooms about journalism," he said.

After graduating with his A.A. from BWC and his bachelor's from South Dakota State, Olson returned to Bartlesville as a professor in 1979; he taught for ten years before taking the job at SDSU. He points to Larry Hughes and Paul Faulkenberry as guiding mentors, along with John Snook, who taught journalism and advised the yearbook.

Together with his wife, Gwen—who is also a BWC alumnus—Olson has two children, Aaron and Alyssa. Both have gone on to serve in the medical profession.

Outstanding Service Award



>> ERROL HADA ('68)

Errol Hada, the 2020 recipient of OKWU's Outstanding Service Award, graduated Miltonvale College with a two-year General Studies degree. But what he actually gained while on campus was much more significant than any piece of paper ever could be: his life's mission statement. And even if his journey has played out differently than he would have expected, he's still serving that calling every day.

It was almost expected that Hada would find himself on the Miltonvale campus. Three of his brothers and his sister went to the school before him, and Wesleyan gospel teams and choirs routinely visited his church growing up. What wasn't expected was the life change he experienced one Saturday night while doing his devotions. He came across Acts 1:8 – "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

That scripture spoke powerfully to him. "I took that as a call to be a missionary," he said.

And throughout his life, Hada has served as a lay-missionary of sorts in the fields of teaching and school administration. He also became actively involved in homeless ministry, culminating in his current role as director of The Lighthouse Mission in Bartlesville.

"Everything in my life, every experience, has been preparing me for what I'm doing right now," he said. "It all fits together. It's beautiful the way God did it."

The best part of the job? It's seeing, firsthand, lives changed for the better. "There are some beautiful things that happen, a lot of them spontaneous. Being here when they happen is great," he said.

Together with his wife, Sharon, Errol has raised three daughters: Jamie, Amanda, and Amelia. All have followed in their father's footsteps in ministry. Two are employed as educators, and one works as a church planter.

Hall of Faith Award



>> FRED & CAROL CROMER ('76)

Perhaps no couple better exemplifies the ideals of the OKWU Hall of Faith Award than Fred and Carol Cromer, the 2020 honorees. Since they graduated from what was then Bartlesville Wesleyan College in the 1970s, the Cromers have served the Lord faithfully as pastors and on the international mission field, working with The Wesleyan Church in Zambia, Swaziland, and Uganda.

While Fred and Carol took radically different paths to campus, both experienced a life change during their college careers. The son of missionaries, Fred had been around the gospel all his life, but he wasn't a believer himself. "I felt like I couldn't live the Christian life," he said. "I went to church, went through the motions, but I knew in my heart that I hadn't made that commitment."

On the other hand, Carol grew up in Bartlesville; she attended a church which met on the college campus. For her, BWC was a foregone conclusion. "I had been on that campus since second grade," she said. "It was kind of always something that I thought I would do."

Fred's life changed forever when he accepted Christ into his life in November of 1972, after experiencing the Christian love of friends he'd made on campus. Eventually, Cromer accepted the call to the ministry, and when he graduated in 1976 with a theology degree, he moved to Kansas City for seminary.

Carol had experienced her own change while at college, having transferred out for a few weeks, then returning, and then undergoing multiple major changes.

When she graduated in 1976, it was with a B.S. in Christian Education. She, too, moved to Kansas City after graduation—and ended up at the same church that Fred was serving at.

They became reacquainted in Kansas City, started dating, and got married a few years later, having four children during the ten years they served at the church—Matthew, Nathan, Jonathan, and Hannah.

In 1991, the Cromers left Kansas on the missionary track with Global Partners, going on to serve first in Zambia—until 2009—then in Swaziland from 2012 to 2014, and finally Uganda until their retirement in 2019. They moved to Marion, Indiana to be close to two of their children. They maintain a strong legacy of faithful service and a generational love of missions, continued by their children.



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alumni connect >>

UPDATE YOUR ALUMNI INFO AT OKWU.EDU/UPDATE

Alumni Achievement Awards



>> CHARLANE BLOMBERG

Charlane Blomberg, the first recipient of OKWU's 2020 Alumni Achievement Award, has spent her life serving others. She was an integral part of the campus community at Miltonvale Wesleyan College along with her husband, Ard, who studied theology there. After his graduation, the pair spent 32 years pastoring a church in Wisconsin, where Charlane worked with the church's youth ministries, women's ministries, and children's ministries—all in addition to the variety of professional roles she took to supplement the family income. True to her character, she viewed both of these aspects of her life as a ministry to the Lord, often bringing those she worked with into saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

In 1996, Charlane and Ard left their church for Hephzibah Ministries, where they served as house parents to teenage boys under the organization's care. "That was a really interesting, wonderful, challenging experience," Charlane said. She eventually went on to serve Hephzibah as Direct Care Administrator and Summer Day Camp Director.

As a young woman, Charlane experienced sexual abuse. She has always sought to use this trauma—and her experience afterward coping and healing—to minister to others who have been abused. In 2013, Blomberg published her book: *Desperate Hope: One Woman's Journey from Childhood Sexual Abuse to a Hope-Filled Life with a Gracious God*. "It's my journey through the healing that God did in my life," she said. She also organized a sexual recovery program for both men and women in Brooksville, Florida, where she and Ard currently live.

Throughout all she has achieved, Charlane remains thankful for the experiences she had around Miltonvale, most notably for the spiritual impact the college had on her life. "That was the place where I really laid a foundation for my relationship with Christ," she said.



>> RANDALL JAMIESON ('85)

For Randall Jamieson, the second recipient of OKWU's Alumni Achievement Awards, it's no surprise that he ended up at Bartlesville Wesleyan College. He grew up in a Wesleyan parsonage while his father pastored churches in Iowa and Minnesota, and he attended countless Wesleyan youth camps and summer conventions. Both parents attended Miltonvale, and his older brothers had made the trek to Bartlesville before he did.

But while his path to campus was expected, the result of Jamieson's time at BWC is no less extraordinary: decades of faithful service both as a local pastor and as a chaplain in the United States Air Force. After graduating in 1985 with a degree in Christian Ministry, Randall served with various churches for almost fifteen years, going on to achieve his post-graduate education with Friends University and Asbury Theological Seminary. In 1998, he joined the Air Force, serving at multiple bases across the United States and overseas in Korea.

The ultimate impact at BWC was the confirmation of Jamieson's call to ministry, and he credits the university faculty with playing a significant role in that calling. "I saw their heartbeat [for students] in person," he said. "The whole faculty certainly helped shape my calling to ministry."

His fondest memories of Bartlesville are of the close friendships that he made on campus, which have continued for many years after graduation. One specific memory is when he and his friends placed a papier-mache Loch Ness Monster in the campus pond on a foggy morning. It was a particularly life-like representation of the beast, Jamieson remembers, and caused quite a stir on campus.

In 1986, Jamieson married his wife, Penny. They have two children, Daniel and Sarah. He currently serves as a chaplain at the Grandview Medical Center in Birmingham, Alabama, where he works as a teaching pastor at Brookview Wesleyan Church. 🙏

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OKWU VOICES

SEEING EACH OTHER CLEARLY AT LAST

Dr. Dalene Fisher, *Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences*



"OUR RESPONSE AS A CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY MUST BE ONE THAT SEES 2020 AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE AND DEVELOP STUDENTS WHO ARE PREPARED TO INFLUENCE CULTURE WITH THE GRACE AND TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL."

DALENE FISHER

It's late March, 2020. Faculty and staff are trickling onto the nearly empty OKWU campus to quickly gather their things in preparation for an uncertain quarantine. Parking lots, usually bursting with inexpensive cars crammed into too-few parking spaces, are only sparsely dotted with vehicles. A quietness settles over the campus.

No boisterous undergrads yelling, "Hey, Doc!" No soccer players rushing to the cafeteria after a long practice. No students reclining in the Rose Garden, frantically reading Shakespeare before tomorrow's exam, and no business students in crisp suits hurrying to give their next presentation. No student nurses scurrying to clinicals. No ministry students debating Dr. McNall's latest blog post.

Instead, students were preparing to leave for what we've begrudgingly dubbed "the longest spring break in the history of mankind." An uneasy calm had found its way onto campus—not eerie, but certainly odd.

Responding with Grace and Truth

Like the rest of the world, in the early days of the pandemic, OKWU faculty, staff, administration, and students struggled to come to terms with the reality of COVID-19. But in the stillness of those early days, the quiet that rested over the campus before we began a slow re-opening in early June was appropriate. The

abrupt shut-down prepared us to listen because the quietness demanded it.

So when our black brothers and sisters reeled with brokenness and fear throughout springtime, our hearts broke with them. We asked: what can we do? The pandemic left us with worried students and professors, and we asked: how can we respond?

One thing was clear and remains so. Our response as a Christian university must be one that sees 2020 as an opportunity to engage and develop students who are prepared to influence culture with the grace and truth of the Gospel. We must teach students to see the world—to see others—as worthy of attention and care. Moreover, we must be people who also care for one another. It's why we've responded to COVID and to racial reconciliation with the simple statement: OKWU Cares. Because we do.

Determining how to respond to the complexities of 2020 has required both grace and truth, with the utmost concern for our fellow man. And understanding this type of complexity is the very skill that a Christian liberal arts education is designed to teach. Subjects aren't studied in isolation. A liberal arts education acknowledges complex realities. History informs our decisions, but psychology asks us to consider human nature in that pursuit. Literature asks us to think about how our stories are interconnected, while science compels us to do more research and ask better questions. And as Christ-followers, this critical inquiry falls under the lordship of Jesus Christ.



"IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE. IF NOT US, WHO? WE ALL HAVE TO BECOME COMFORTABLE BEING UNCOMFORTABLE WITH RACIAL INJUSTICE IN ORDER FOR ANY CHANGE TO HAPPEN."

JOSIAH DONALD
Co-Director of OKWU's Cultural Connections Club

So when racial tensions rose, we asked our black brothers and sisters questions. And then we tried our best to shut our mouths, listen, and love. We read more. We researched more. We asked ourselves why some historical stories had been told, and others had been suppressed. We asked our students about their experiences at OKWU, and we sought reconciliation when it was needed.

An Everyday Suit

Kyle White, VP for Student Development at OKWU, puts it this way: "Our students coming to school don't need a person who dresses in a cape. They need a person who dresses in an everyday suit. A person who lives in their daily skin, who is real, present, and ready to be the hands and feet of Christ, prepared to listen, learn, respond, and break bread.

My experience of having children, family, and friends of color in my life does not make me immune from having racists thoughts, prejudice, and dismissiveness to those in pain. I will not lean on my past positive moments to excuse the responsibility of my daily calling towards loving my neighbor. I need to live in a way that recognizes that there cannot be any peace in my life until there is peace in my neighbor's life."

Kyle's contention that we mustn't merely "put on our capes" resonates with me. After all, we are not called to be saviors of this world; rather, we are called to point others to the Savior. At the same time, we are called to thoughtful action.

We've started to ask more questions. We've started listening. A senior English major, Sidnie Brown, has graciously been encouraging OKWU faculty, staff, and students to engage in healthy dialogue.

While we all can (and probably should) wear

physical masks to protect ourselves and the vulnerable brothers and sisters among us as a demonstration of care, it's time for our metaphorical masks to come off. President Dunn asserted as much during the 2020 convocation ceremony.

It's time for real conversations about race, politics and biblical justice. As a university, we're asking more questions. We're listening to our students and each other. We're striving for authenticity while recognizing our sinfulness. We're seeking holiness and wholeness.

And while we hope that the solid liberal arts education we've offered our students has prepared them for 2020, an all-too-real dystopian reality, we know that ultimately, it is Christ who provides the solutions. At Oklahoma Wesleyan University, we not only call students to be world changers, we ask that they first allow God to transform their hearts and minds so that they can, as Dr. Dunn commissions them, live as One Sent.

OKWU's campus is bustling again. During late-night study hours, laughter echoes throughout the halls of the mansion. When a student inadvertently drops a plate in the cafeteria, good-natured cheers celebrate the fumble. Extroverted, friendly students greet professors walking across campus. We yell back. There is noise. There is worship. (There aren't enough parking spaces again.) There is singing—oh, the singing!

Our voices are louder, but our hearts are quieter. We're wearing masks. As a result, we're looking straight into one another's eyes. We're forced to speak clearly and listen carefully. That's the only way communication works.

And perhaps, just perhaps, we're seeing each other better than ever. ☺



"For a lot of us, 2020 has called us to self-examination. It has called us to step outside of our comfort zones and to enter into conversations that are uncomfortable for us. It has called us out of assumptions we've placed on others. It has called us to seek what unites us as humans and as followers of Christ. Concerning OKWU, I'm excited that we are finally acknowledging the hurt and pain of people of color and that we are not afraid to ask tough questions and to seek understanding of other people's perspectives. I've been longing for this time. I'm not glad about how these conversations are being brought up, but glad that OKWU is starting to have conversations about ethnic relations. Before, I felt that not enough people cared to, because the conversations were uncomfortable. I'm grateful that OKWU is welcoming these conversations, because by doing this they are welcoming me onto campus."

SUMMER SMITH
Co-Director of OKWU's Cultural Connections Club



"With history repeating itself before our eyes, there is a high demand for healing the disparities in our nation. Conversations of racial reconciliation are trending in the workplace and in churches nationwide. However, this process often causes tension and frustration. Racial reconciliation requires pushing past the discomfort, a commitment to listen and learn, and a heart that desires change. There needs to be an acknowledgment of history and its wrongs, repentance from wrongdoings, and the identification of areas needing reparations. Reparations are not to be done by one group of people, but by all of God's children. Sacrifices of comfort, time, preferences, and traditions are also crucial in the reconciliation journey.

One of the strong points of Oklahoma Wesleyan is gathering people from various parts of the world. The goal should not be to be diverse but to be culturally inclusive and unified. Diversity covers a surface level, but cultural inclusiveness allows people to celebrate differences. With prayer, the application of truth, and leading conversations with grace, our nation will grow one step closer to canceling the hostile way of living and replacing it with harmony."

SIDNIE BROWN
Senior, English Major

OKWU HEADLINES

MARCH 2020

**Dunn Institute Resources
Wesleyan Pastors**

This year's Dunn Institute brought more than 40 students and ministry leaders from across the West to OKWU for training in business administration, management, and leadership for local church ministry.

MAY 2020

**Center for Church Planting
Announced**

OKWU is launching a cutting-edge Center for Church Planting, headed by **Dr. Dwight Nash**. Students will be able to take classes as electives or with an aim to minor in church planting. It will be available to both undergraduates and GPS programs offered through the School of Ministry and Christian Thought.

JUNE 2020

**Turn Ministry Training into
College Credit**

CROSS or FLAME courses may be worth up to 48 credit hours towards an OKWU Bachelor's degree. Students can apply and be accepted at any time. For more info, contact GPS@okwu.edu.

JULY 2020

OKWU Launches New Brand

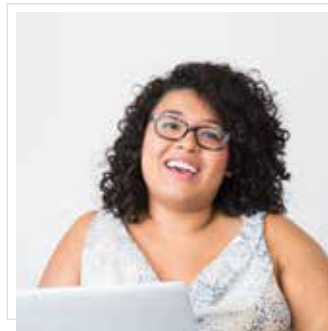
Unveiled this summer, a comprehensive re-design of the logomark, color-scheme, and messaging of OKWU is helping to position the university to stand apart. Learn more at okwu.edu.



OKWU.EDU/GPS



OKWU.EDU/PREP



OKWU.EDU/CROSS

JULY 2020

**Adult and Graduate
Studies Changes Name**

OKWU's AGS program was officially renamed **Graduate and Professional Studies (GPS)** after undergoing a structural reorganization. This moniker better reflects the changing landscape of online education. Additionally, the AGS Tulsa office, currently housing the program, will transition to a virtual office to continue serving students, the Tulsa market, and beyond with convenient, 100% online courses and degrees.

OKWU remains committed to helping students stand apart through affordable, flexible, and innovative programs.

AUGUST 2020

OKWU Prep Launches

OKWU Prep is a new dual-enrollment initiative to help motivated high school students earn college credit and make a smooth transition to college. Juniors and seniors in high school can earn up to a full year of college credit taking general education courses through the program, including College Algebra, American Government, Language and Composition, and Introduction to Communication. The partnership with TEL Library provides a custom online curriculum that is rigorous, objectives-based, and reflects the OKWU tradition.

AUGUST 2020

Alumni Board Announced

The Alumni Association is proud to announce its new Alumni Board, led by **President Sandra Kent**. Janell Westveer, Nancy Howell, and Andrea Novak round out the new board, along with Leeann Little and Charissa Dunn, OKWU's new Director of Alumni Relations.

To stay connected, like our alumni Facebook page and update your information at okwu.edu/alumni.

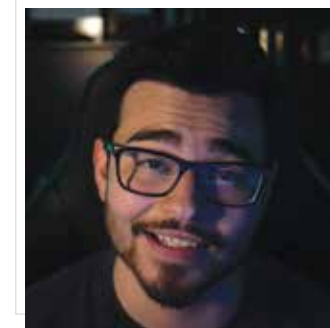
FALL 2020

Esports Program Kicks Off

We are proud to announce our groundbreaking new Esports program, offered on campus as a varsity athletic team and led by coach **John Merritt**. The team has already been featured by *Christianity Today*, and we're very excited about where they're headed.



SANDRA KENT
OKWU.EDU/ALUMNI



JOHN MERRITT
TWITCH.TV/OKWU

OCTOBER 2020

**New Wesleyan Scholarships
Opportunities Announced**

With our Wesleyan member scholarship, active members of The Wesleyan Church are eligible for a guarantee of at least 50% of their OKWU tuition. Plus, we're committed to matching each gift from a church, district, or church organization, up to \$750 per semester. Additional details are available at okwu.edu/wesleyan.

2019-2020

New Coaches Welcomed

Congratulations to the new coaches joining OKWU's nationally ranked athletics program! We're excited to welcome Tom Carr (Wrestling), Shawn Woods (Softball), Julie Mongin (Tennis), and John Merritt (Esports).



2019-2020

Congratulations, new doctors!

(L to R) Professors Keri Bostwick, Jon Ensor, Rosa Ketchum, and Amanda Dickinson (not pictured) have all recently earned their doctorates. Congratulations to them, and all OKWU professors, for the academic and Kingdom impact they continue to make in the lives of our students. 🌍

ATHLETIC PROFILE



The 2019-2020 season was a banner year for OKWU soccer. It was uniquely special for Stefan Lukic, a junior midfielder who was named the 2019 NAIA National Player of the Year.

If you've followed his career, the award isn't surprising at all—Lukic lives and breathes the sport of soccer. Born in Sremksa Mitrovica, Serbia, he's been playing at the highest level since he was a child. His resume includes time on the Serbian national team, and his performance back home eventually earned him the interest of Everton F.C. of the English Premier League. Before making the transition, though, Lukic had a bad experience with an agent, souring him to the process.

Disenchanted with the world of professional soccer and left aimless, Lukic began to consider his options. Former teammates in Serbia had ended up at OKWU, and when he reached out to a friend who'd made the transition, it seemed like the right place for him. He committed without ever visiting the country, much less the campus.

The results, to say the least, have been outstanding. In addition to the Player of the Year honor— and being named a 1st Team All-American selection—Lukic was instrumental in OKWU's National Championship appearance, powering the Eagles to the quarterfinals. He led the nation in assists with 17

and ranked fourth nationally in assists per game (.77).

But even more than the success Lukic has found on the field, he's experienced the life-changing outcome of a community focused on biblical truth and fellowship. "What surprised me the most is the people here," he said. "The community is just amazing. I have never seen as many kind and good people as I see here at Oklahoma Wesleyan."

The Promised Land

Through relationships with faculty, friends, and the OKWU community, Lukic experienced a spiritual awakening. "I think that's where I changed the most: spiritually," he said. "My theological knowledge was not great, so when I came here, I got that knowledge. I really learned a lot about the Lord, and I think that's the basis for anything in life. Without theological knowledge, we can't understand the problems of society."

After graduation, Lukic hopes to play soccer professionally in the United States or, if plans change, to pursue a career in business. For now, though, he has one more year of athletic eligibility, and he's got plenty more he wants to achieve—namely, helping his teammates and coaches get to the promised land.

"This is my last chance to get the ring. I would change everything for that," he said. "I pray to the Lord that he gives us the wisdom and strength and energy to go and get it this year." 🏆

ATHLETICS

SPORTS HALL OF FAME 2020 INDUCTEES

The OKWU Hall of Fame exists to honor those Eagles who have achieved excellence athletically, academically, and through high personal character consistent with the university's mission. Inductees are graduates of OKWU, five or more years removed, and must have participated on an OKWU varsity athletic team for at least two years.



Jose Ruiz – *Baseball*

A native of Venezuela, Ruiz came to OKWU as a non-English speaking student in 2011 to play baseball. During his time on campus, he overcame the language barrier and developed into an outstanding Eagle both on and off the diamond.

Ruiz played from 2011-2014, working at Short Stop and 2nd Base. He maintained a batting average of .337 throughout his career, with 21 home runs and 212 RBIs. In 2014, Ruiz was named the NAIA National Player of the Year.

"God has been incredible to me," Ruiz said. "He put me in the right place, and when I stepped onto OKWU's campus, my life changed right away. Since then, I have adored my Savior every single day of my life."

Since graduating, Ruiz has played professional baseball in America, Australia, Europe, and Venezuela.



Lucas Almedia – *Soccer*

A true OKWU legend, Almedia came to OKWU from Houston, though he originally hails from Brazil. From 2010 through 2013, his resume at OKWU speaks for itself: four-time 1st team All-Conference, MCAC Freshman of the Year, MCAC Offensive Player of the Year, and NAIA 1st Team All-American in 2013.

Almedia finished his career with 41 goals and 34 assists and helped lead OKWU to the 2013 NAIA National Quarterfinals. He was named to the All-Tournament team the same year.

"Lucas' talent, leadership, and passion changed the trajectory of our program," Coach Jamie Peterson said. "He was creative and brought a joy to the game that attracted other players and fans to want to be a part of OKWU soccer."



Lucas Cordeiro – *Soccer*

One of the most talented players to ever play for OKWU, Cordeiro was a two-time NAIA 1st team All-American and a four-time All-Conference selection. He was named the MCAC Conference Player of the Year three times in a row and appeared in four NAIA National Tournaments. His OKWU career spanned 2010-2013.

Cordeiro ended his career with 48 goals and 51 assists, leading the nation in assists in 2012. He also developed on a personal level during his time on campus, growing into a leadership role.

"He came in as a young kid with his own ideas and matured into a young man who put others first," Coach Peterson said. "He began serving his teammates and transformed into a leader. Lucas continues to show his servant leadership by serving the communities he has been a part of."



EVENTS

AHEAD IN 2021

FEB
19

OKWU Visit Day

Register online for a personalized tour

MAR
11

Foster Bonanza

Annual fundraising dinner

MAR
25

Give Day

Support student scholarship on #okwugiveday

APR
9

OKWU Visit Day

Register online to experience our beautiful campus

MAY
8

Graduation

Welcome our graduating class of 2021

Join us October 8-9, 2021

OKWU HOMECOMING

FIND NEWS, EVENTS, AND MORE AT OKWU.EDU

GRADUATE PROFILE

EMPOWERING KINGDOM NURSES



Jennifer Butler ('19) is committed to making a difference in people's lives through kindness, compassion, and quality care.

OKWU's Graduate and Professional Studies program is providing empowerment through education to people all over Oklahoma—and beyond. Take Jennifer Butler, who recently began a nurse management job in Bartlesville, OK. Due to the scholarships she received from OKWU and her hospital, Butler graduated with her BSN without any debt, free to pursue her calling in nursing.

Butler encourages other students—especially those students in the GPS program who are juggling their career and their education—to take things as they come. "Just take it one step at a time," she said.

Tomorrow needs nurses! 🙌



“We came out **debt-free**. A Bachelor's degree really **opened the door** for me to climb the ladder.”



OKWU.EDU/GPS
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GPS@OKWU.EDU

Accelerate your career with a 100% online degree from OKWU's Graduate & Professional Studies. We are experts in online learning for working professionals. Financial aid available.

WHY I GIVE



“I give to OKWU because it's more than a place I work; it's my second family. As an alumna, I am proud to be able to be part of a community that loves the Lord and gets to make an impact on future generations.”

—Tirzah ('11) and Travis Knight ('10) with Graham, Marshall, and Jasper

Will you support students with the life-changing power of an OKWU education?

Students at Oklahoma Wesleyan University receive a Christ-centered education that's only made possible by the generous support of donors like the Knights, who give faithfully through payroll deductions. **VISIT WWW.OKWU.EDU/GIVE**

Oklahoma Wesleyan University is deeply committed to developing the whole student's heart, soul, strength, and mind (Luke 10:27).

STUDENT SUCCESS

REMAINING UNBROKEN

ABBY POWELL

“I REALIZED — THIS WAS THE BETTER THAT GOD WAS TALKING ABOUT. THIS IS WHAT HE'S BEEN DOING ALL ALONG. THIS IS WHAT IT WAS ALL FOR.”

Abby leading worship at Christ Community Church

Kedrick Nettleton, *Editor*

The graduating class of 2020 experienced perhaps the strangest semester in the history of American higher education due to the COVID-19 pandemic—campus shut-downs, online learning, and socially-distanced graduation ceremonies. But Abby Powell overcame more than Zoom classes to reach graduation. In fact, she's already overcome more adversity in her short life than most will ever endure.

Abby's story is one of despair and hope, of families torn apart and then sewn back together again. It's an inspiring journey of reconciliation and proof of the perseverance of hope. But more than anything, it's a testament to the life-changing power that comes with salvation in Jesus Christ.

Born in 1997 in Oklahoma City, Powell and her twin

sister, Alyssa, immediately knew chaos. Six months after their birth, Abby's biological father left home. Her earliest living memory was watching her mother chase her stepdad out of the house, knife in hand.

In 6th grade, she learned that her mother had been addicted to methamphetamines since age 15 and had been diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

"It was really just like that growing up," Abby said. "Things would be normal for a short time, everything would feel really joyful and happy, and then all of a sudden my mom would divorce someone or break up with somebody."

Learning about her mother's addiction—and meeting her biological father the same year—put Abby over the edge. She soon became addicted to various things herself—at only 11 years old—and started fighting in school. In the 7th grade, she got kicked out.

Despite this, Abby's teachers didn't regard her as a failure. In fact, many of them saw the spark of something great. "All of my teachers saw potential in me," she said. "I hated that. Why are you guys seeing potential in me, but nobody that I want to see potential in me is seeing that?"

Made for This

It was in this constant cycle of fear, anger, and despair that Abby first attended a youth event at church—not so much because she was interested in the church part of it, but for the free pizza. She ended up leaving with something she'd never experienced before: security.

"It was the first time I just got to be a kid," Abby said. "I didn't have to worry about the adults in the building. I didn't have to wonder if I was going to eat at the next meal."

She was intrigued enough to keep attending Wednesday night services over the next few months. When a friend invited her to church camp, she took the leap and attended. On June 6, 2012, during an altar call at Falls Creek Baptist Conference Center, Abby gave her life to Christ.

"I just had the sense that this was what I was made for," she said. "I felt so full, and I wasn't afraid, and I was so ready to go back home and tell my mom and my sister what I had experienced."

But sharing the gospel with her family wasn't easy. Alyssa thought her sister's transformation was strange. Her mother felt threatened. A few months later, Mom was arrested for methamphetamines, and because she'd used the family car and home as collateral, both were lost. Adrift again, Abby and Alyssa moved in with their older sister and her husband.

Things only got worse from there, and there's no easy way to write what happened next. Abby's brother-in-law began to take an unhealthy interest in her, and eventually sexually abused her. Rather than try to make the situation right, Abby's sister blamed her, kicking her out of the house. In December of 2012, Abby had no place to turn.

She's blunt about the effect this experience had on her life. "I became homeless," she said. "I've never felt more defeated in my life."

Light in the Darkest Place

From December to March—the coldest months of the year—she squatted in a home without water, heat, or food, surrounded by cockroaches and abandoned by her family. Abby felt let down. Wasn't her life with Jesus supposed to be easier? "God, I gave my life to you. I thought that things were going to get better. And every time I think something can't get worse, it just happens."

During this time, she took comfort in Ephesians 6. "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

"I felt like I was getting bullied and picked on," she said. "I felt like all humans were against me... [that verse] gave me the reminder of the strength and the armor that I find in God, in His goodness, and in prayer. It reminded me that He had something better in store for me and for my family."

“FOR OUR STRUGGLE IS NOT AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD, BUT AGAINST THE RULERS, AGAINST THE AUTHORITIES, AGAINST THE POWERS OF THIS DARK WORLD AND AGAINST THE SPIRITUAL FORCES OF EVIL IN THE HEAVENLY REALMS.”

EPHESIANS 6

When the system became aware about Abby and Alyssa's situation, they were moved to Bartlesville to be with their father—despite Abby's unease about the situation. "I didn't want to live with my dad, but I didn't want to leave my twin," she said.

Things became better for a while, and Abby and her sister even reconnected with their mother when she moved into The Lighthouse Mission in Bartlesville. Soon a dramatic transformation began to occur in their mother's life, culminating when she gave her own life to the Lord in 2013. Abby was understandably skeptical at first.



Abby, her mom, and her sister Ally.

"I didn't want anything to do with my mom at that point. I felt so betrayed by her," she said. "When [she] told me she had been saved, I didn't believe her."

It impacted Alyssa, though, and she moved into The Lighthouse. Soon, she found Jesus, too. They were both baptized in July. And when Abby's father abruptly packed up and left, she moved in with her mom once again.

It's here that things truly began to look up for the family. Both Abby's mother and Alyssa grew in their faith, moving out of the mission and into a home together. Abby describes one vivid day when God tugged on her heart. She was in the kitchen, her sister praying on one side of the house and her mother singing worship songs on the other.

"I realized—this was the better that God was talking about," she said. "This is what He's been doing all along. This is what it was all for."

A New Chapter

Abby began volunteering at On the Rock Ministries. The role soon progressed to a staff position, and Abby started meeting older believers. Two, in particular—young women from OKWU—made an impact.

"They both became my mentors and really challenged me in my faith. They brought me to this next level. And it was because of meeting them that



WATCH ABBY'S TESTIMONY AT
GO.OKWU.EDU/ABBY

I decided I wanted to go to OKWU... I wanted to learn what they had been learning while they were here," she said.

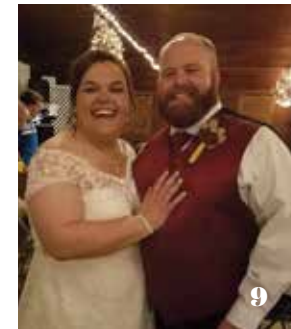
Abby absorbed her classes in the School of Ministry and Christian Thought well, representing the department as chapel speaker her senior year. During the virtual 2020 graduation ceremony, Abby delivered the class prayer, and she and her sister rang Sam's Bell—an honor reserved for those who exemplify the university's spirit.

"One of the best things about being a professor is to watch your students grow over time," Dr. Josh McNall, professor of pastoral theology, said. "From her first year, Abby has always been humble, bright, and eager to learn. But in her last two years especially, she has stepped into her gifts and calling with the confidence that shows what God has done in her."

There's plenty of joy in Abby's life now. Her sister is married, her relationship with her mother is good, and she recently got engaged. Now she's hoping to pursue a graduate degree in marriage and family counseling to bring her own experience to bear on families like her own. She has no illusions about who is responsible for the drastic turnaround in her family.

"God took a woman who had been addicted to methamphetamines for 35 years," Abby said. "She tried forever to get clean. And since she surrendered her life to Jesus, she's been clean for seven years, and she has no intention of going back."

And no matter what the future holds, Abby knows exactly what her life message is. "Life—and life in abundance—is truly found in Jesus. And I can't wait to be a catalyst used by God to help other families find that too." 🙏



ALUMNI UPDATE

OKWU ON THE MOVE

1 Lauralyn (Bettis, '18) and Gabe Belden ('19) were married May 15, 2017 and will be welcoming their first child in March.

2 Blythe (Freshwater, '20) and Kody Moseman ('18) were married August 31, 2019. They are expecting their first child in March.

3 Sierra (Roth, '17) and Kyle Essary ('16) proudly announce their career developments. Kyle currently serves as Project Coordinator at Community Care, while Sierra works for Children's Musical Theatre in Tulsa, OK.

4 Natalie (Noble, '08) and Darek Keen were married August 2018 in Sioux Falls, SD. They welcomed their first child, Adelaide Keen, in May of this year. They currently live in Houston, TX, where Natalie works for Phillips 66 and Darek works as a mechanical engineer.

5 Mitsy (Cardoso, '18) and Jake Campbell ('19) were married March 21, 2020, in Arvada, CO.

Ashleigh Johnson ('15) is excited to be entering her fifth year of teaching at Wright Christian Academy, in Tulsa. She teaches English, ACT Prep, and Comp. 1.

6 Mandy (Muncy, '14) and Andrew Blain ('13) were married May 24, 2014. Their first daughter, Harper, was born February 1, 2019. Andrew teaches at Madison Middle School and Mandy is working as an ER nurse at Jane Phillips Medical Center in Bartlesville.

7 Lindsay (McKenna, '19) and Ryan Jones ('19) were married in June 2019. They live in Sioux Falls, SD, and are expecting a baby girl in November.

8 Mikaela (Jones, '18) and Adam Smailes were married November 16, 2019, in McKinney, TX.



9 Brandi (Smith) and David Dunn ('12) were married May 26, 2017. They welcomed their first child, Marilyn Ruth Dunn, on May 1, 2019.

10 Cassie (Burpo, '18) and Keaton Divelbiss ('18) were married January 19, 2020. They live in Norman, OK.

Todd Nettleton ('92) looks forward to the publication of his new book, *When Faith is Forbidden: 40 Days on the Frontlines with Persecuted Christians*, to be released by Moody Publishers in March. Todd and his wife, **Charlotte (England, '93)**, continue to reside in Bartlesville.



11 Kirsten (Fisher, '17) and Caleb Wilson ('17) were married September 3, 2017. On January 13, 2020, their first child, Elsa, was born.

12 Katie (Stone, '19) and Colton ('17) Frederick were married May 19, 2018, in Yakima, WA. They welcomed their son, Benjamin, on August 18, 2020.

13 Sarah (Dunn, '15) and John Sutton were married November 18, 2017. They welcomed their first child, Mikel Glenn, on September 13, 2018, and their second, Charles Andrew, on July 24, 2020.



14 Grace (Wilson) and Justin Bowman ('18) were married May 5, 2018. Grace gave birth to twins—Libby Ann Bowman and James Asher Bowman—on April 9, 2020.

Ruann ('20) and Sunshine ('10) Hattingh welcomed their first child, Julietta Setsuko, May 14, 2017, and their second, Lynetta Catherine—a pandemic baby—on June 24, 2020.

Becky (Dunn, '09) and Ishmael Maldonado were married on September 1, 2019.

Kameron (Mendez, '19) and Colby Martinez ('19) were married on August 1, 2020.



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