

# TOWER



OKLAHOMA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY



***NOW*** more than ever.

2022 ALUMNI & FRIENDS MAGAZINE

# NOW



For over 100 years,  
Oklahoma Wesleyan University  
has sent scholars and leaders into the world.

Our belief in Christ, Scripture, Truth, and Wisdom  
guides us—then and now.

Our mission of sharing the Good News  
to an uncertain world is critical.

Into an unknown tomorrow, we are sending  
teachers, nurses, pastors, leaders—formed by Christ.

We believe this generation can transform tomorrow,  
and we're dedicated to preparing them now.

Invest in building the next OKWU.  
Advance the Kingdom of Jesus.

Tomorrow is Now.

## Now more than ever, we need to encourage each other

### I'm often asked why I would ever consider being president of a Christian University.

To be frank, I serve the Lord and his church in my current station because I believe the youth of our day can change this world. I sincerely believe this. As they get right with Christ and love others with the compassion I see them demonstrate so well, I believe they can fix this crazy, godless world we find ourselves living in these days.

Every generation wonders if the youth of their day will ever figure out the Christian walk in a biblically honoring manner. Older saints question if we are all on the slippery slope of watching Christian living get thrown into the dumpster in their lifetime. The generation before mine had similar thoughts regarding my peers and me. In our current culture of fear, there are a few things we need to remember and remind the next generation of if we will ever experience a Christ-honoring, vibrant, and transformative future.

Now more than ever, we need to encourage each other, especially our young adults. We must let everyone know that there is hope. It may not seem like there is any time left, but we all have the opportunity to share the Good News of Jesus Christ while we still have breath.

Now more than ever, we need to let our young people know their lives count. That they are significant. We need to stoke the fire of God in their hearts and minds as they consider what God is calling them to. We need to let them know that God is for them, and so are we. Now is the time!

Oklahoma Wesleyan University is a biblically centered university in a culture and world that needs the grace and truth of Jesus desperately. It always has been, it is now, and it is my aim to make sure it

always will be, God being our Helper. Deuteronomy 6:5-7 (NLT) says what we strive to teach at Oklahoma Wesleyan University:

**“And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up.”**

OKWU has a leading role in participating in Christ's redemptive work in the world by offering a biblical worldview, Christocentric resources, godly mentorship, and Judeo-Christian scholarship. May we all remember that our biblically-centered ethos is pillared on the Primacy of Jesus Christ; the Priority of Scripture; the Pursuit of Truth; and the Practice of Wisdom.

Now more than ever, I believe in our students and alumni. For Wendy and me, this belief is not just something we say. We want this belief to ooze out of our lives into all of our students, alumni, staff, faculty, and friends. Team OKWU is fantastic! And now more than ever, we need your prayers, partnerships, and generosity for Oklahoma Wesleyan University to thrive as we seek to advance the Kingdom of Jesus Christ! 🙏



*James A. Durson*



# TEACHING THE WHOLE PERSON

By Dr. Keri Bostwick ('98 and '13), Provost

25 years ago, I bounded up the stairs of Central Middle School, excited to begin my student teaching semester.

As I made my way around the classrooms, taking in the sights, sounds, and smells, I introduced myself to the teachers I met along the way. I walked into a seventh-grade geography classroom and asked the question of the morning. "Hi! Who are you, and what do you teach?"

I expected this teacher would tell me his name, the subject he taught, and I would move on. Not so. "I am Gerald Thompson, and I teach future citizens of the great United States of America."

I only blinked in response. What did he mean that he taught future citizens? Why didn't he tell me his subject matter? Didn't we all teach "future citizens"? Why did he phrase it this way?



We want **teachers** in classrooms who understand how language influences culture. We want **nurses** who have wrestled with their own identities, as Hamlet did. We want **pastors** who understand history. We want **entrepreneurs** who understand the way society thinks. We want **scholars** who see the synthesis of all education.

His response challenged my assumptions about my own work. What if English wasn't my subject? What if my subject matter was people?

## Having a Calling

The phrase *liberal arts* stems from the Latin words *liber*, meaning free, and *art*, meaning skill. A direct translation could be the skills that make someone free. A liberal arts education includes the study of history, mathematics, language, arts, sociology, psychology, writing, and technology. The term can also refer to anything outside the professional and technical knowledge and skills related to a job or career.

Recently, some people have advocated limiting or eliminating the liberal arts, arguing that this education doesn't prepare students for career success. The argument is nothing new. In 1977, Donald L. Berry wrote, "Many students and their parents now seek a clear and early connection between the undergraduate experience and employment. Vocationalism exerts pressure for substantive changes in the curriculum and substitutes a preoccupation with readily marketable skills."

Berry's argument prioritizes vocation and skills. It uses education as a means to employment. But consider this challenge from Ellen Lagemann (2013): "The word vocation implies more than earning a living or having a career. The word vocation implies having a calling: knowing who one is, what one believes, what one values, and where one stands in the world."

Education is more than a means to a job. A true education means I know who I am, what I believe, what I value, and where I stand in the world. And a liberal arts education helps me understand all of that.

## What the World Needs

I am a Christian before I am a teacher. I am a believer before I am a leader. I am His before I belong to any entity, group, organization, or political party.

Similarly, we are believers before we are our careers. We seek Him first. OKWU helps students pursue an education that prepares them to live out their *calling*, fully equipped to advance the Kingdom and change the world. We do that with a robust liberal arts core that focuses on the **whole person**. We believe in teaching the whole person so s/he can go out and influence the whole world. We believe in the liberal arts, too, that they help us become critical thinkers who are well equipped to solve the world's complex problems.

We want teachers in classrooms who understand how language influences culture. We want nurses who have wrestled with their own identities, as Hamlet did. We want pastors who understand history. We want entrepreneurs who understand the way society thinks. We want scholars who see the synthesis of all education.

The liberal arts help us see people. Gerald Thompson saw people. He was teaching future free citizens of our great nation, and he understood, intimately, the importance of thinking critically and fully engaging with our senses. He understood that his students would become the problem solvers the world so desperately needs.

The world needs Christians who can think critically and who can help solve problems, people who see others through Christ's eyes. The world needs OKWU graduates who understand how the world works and can advance the kingdom.

The world needs the liberal arts. ☪



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# A PART OF SOMETHING GREAT

As Thompson's time as head coach ends, a dynasty is set to continue for years to come.



Coach Wendell Thompson

In sports, a dynasty can be a tricky thing to explain. Ask five different people and you might get five different answers. But by almost any definition, **Coach Wendell Thompson** has forged the OKWU croquet program into one, securing five national championships since its inception and laying a foundation of success that will last long after his retirement.

When Thompson created the croquet program in 2009, he was already indispensable to the campus community at large, having served as the school librarian for 34 years. But he wanted more—a way to impart his love of the game to a new generation, and to give students the opportunity to be a part of something great. “I wanted to give them the chance to be a champion in something that they’ve never done before,” he remembers.

He’s made good on that promise, too. Since 2009, the croquet program has competed for 11 seasons—taking a two-year hiatus during COVID—meaning that Thompson’s students are taking home a title almost half the time they go out. Nor is this a case of a team thriving on weak competition or a lackluster conference. Thompson’s squads routinely go through top-tier schools on their way to victory: Penn State, the U.S. Naval Academy, St. John’s,

and the University of Florida, among others.

Each year, the tournament takes place in Philadelphia, at the Merion Cricket Club. For each student able to participate, it’s a dramatic highlight. “It was a unique experience,” **Aaron Fratzke ('18)**, who brought back the championship in April of 2016, says. “Everyone pitched in strategies and different styles of game play. At the end of the day, we were there to have fun and enjoy the team’s accomplishments. Everyone on that team grew closer together and built long-lasting friendships.”

This year, OKWU’s dominance on the field in Philadelphia was almost comical—all four duos in the collegiate semifinals were Eagle players. When the duo of **Leina Casimir** and **Raelyn Gabrel** won the final match, they became the first women’s team to ever win the national title, rattling off nine straight victories throughout the tournament. It would have been a milestone either way, as the duo they faced was all-female, too.

There’s an obvious question here, then: what’s the secret of OKWU’s success? According to Coach Thompson, it’s simple. “I’ve taught the students to do jump shots,” he said. “That was our big secret. The other teams, they hadn’t even heard of jump shots. And they were totally befuddled.”



**OKLAHOMA  
WESLEYAN  
UNIVERSITY**



It sounds simple enough—a player hits his croquet ball up in the air, bypassing an opponent on the way to a wicket—but it’s incredibly challenging to pull off, and OKWU’s mastery of the technique has set the team apart. It’ll continue to do so as the program changes hands, with **Steve Fisher ('91)** taking over as the new head coach next season.

As Thompson closes this chapter of his career, he does so as one of the most accomplished in his sport—and the knowledge he imparted should set OKWU croquet up to be a national powerhouse for years to come. 🍀

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**Oklahoma Wesleyan University** is a biblically-centered Christian university of The Wesleyan Church, modeling a way of thought, a way of life, and a way of faith. It is a place of serious study, honest questions, and critical engagement, all in the context of a liberal arts community that honors the primacy of Jesus Christ, the priority of Scripture, the pursuit of Truth, and the practice of Wisdom.

“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

# “MINE WAS TO STAY HERE.”

By Kedrick Nettleton

## A Foundational Professor’s Reluctant Legacy

When Dr. Mike Fullingim retired from his position as a full-time faculty member at Oklahoma Wesleyan University this May, he was one of the longest-tenured professors in the history of the school, leaving behind a strong legacy on campus—and all over the world through the ongoing work of those he taught. The funny part of the story of his career? He never wanted to teach at all.



April 29, 1984 - Fullingim records the worship music of some of the local men at Wopasale on the Erave River. Worshippers gathered under the shade of trees to avoid the heat. Rev. Yawijah Tugujah, in white shirt, was the primary church leader for the region.



“Teaching was not on my radar. Missions was what I felt I was called into, and for me that was a lifetime call,” he said.

And for almost a decade—eight years total, over an eleven-year period—Fullingim answered that call, working as a linguist and missionary with Global Partners in Papua New Guinea. It was a fertile field, as the country is considered by scholars to be the most linguistically diverse country in the entire world. That’s why Fullingim pursued his graduate studies in linguistics; it was necessary to tackle the country’s complicated wordscape.

“I got a Ph.D., but not to teach,” he said. “I got a Ph.D. to help learn a language better. In Papua New Guinea, there are over 800 languages.”

832, in fact, at least according to the country’s Prime Minister in 2006—and those are languages, not dialects. Linguistic work was a dire need, and Fullingim answered the call.

“I don’t know of one of our missionaries that was fluent in the Wiru language. I don’t know of one of our missionaries that was fluent in Huli,” he said. “So we’re speaking through a second, intermediary language, like Melanesian Pidgin, which is not their heart language.”

The ultimate goal for Fullingim was Bible translation. “I was convinced of the importance of getting God’s Word into people’s language, but that means you better know the language, or at least enough to ask questions,” he said. “Getting my Ph.D. was meant to help me facilitate my work, not to get a teaching job.”

But when Fullingim and his family returned home, and when he finished his degree in 1987, those teaching offers kept coming. Due to his children’s age, it made sense to take a gap year, so Fullingim interviewed and ended up at Bartlesville Wesleyan College—for a one-year contract only.

Eventually, that one year lengthened, and he began as a full-time associate professor in 1989. It was a difficult transition, to say the least, as Fullingim’s heart remained firmly planted in PNG.

“It was kind of challenging to figure out, you know? ‘Lord, send me a postcard and I’ll do what you want me to do,’” he said. “It took me five years to have my stuff returned from Papua New Guinea to here. Five years. I was still wanting to go back. I say we got stuck here, but that was the Lord sticking me here, probably—with me always asking, Lord, is this the year we return?”

A quote from D.L. Moody served to provide a mission statement for this new phase. “He had made the comment that it’s better to train ten people than to do the work of ten people. This is the same work as mission work,” Fullingim said. “There was a message that came to me. You can go back and stay in the jungles again, there’s nothing wrong with that. But somehow, mine was to stay here and train more people.”

And throughout his time at BWC—eventually OKWU—that training has been effective. He’s directly prepared over 200 people to go out into the mission field, a web of global influence that continues to widen with each day, with each convert, in each unique missional context. Alicia is one of those people; she served in a restricted-access field with Global Partners, and her last name is withheld.



1978—Fullingim preparing pagu with a tipu



1982—Uma & Kira (Alia Village)



1983—Translation Session (Korin)





“When I realized the Lord was directing me to missions, I immediately landed in several of his classes, and the intro to linguistics course was one of those. Linguistics was an entirely new field of study for me,” she said. “I’ll never forget when Dr. Mike pulled me aside in the dining commons a few weeks into class to talk about my interest and encourage me to pursue it. He believed in me before I believed in myself, and I went on to take every linguistics class he taught.”

Alicia now serves as a missionary trainer herself, indirectly expanding Fullingim’s influence with each person she works with, like ripples in a pond. “The foundation in linguistics gave me a framework for effectively learning language on the field, and helping others on our team to succeed at it as well,” she said.

Even still, Fullingim makes it clear that he had his doubts: “I still say to the Lord, ‘Why did you have me stay?’ I’d never preached a message in Wiru, and I’d gotten to the place where I almost could.”

In the end, it was a matter of trust. “To turn my back on that was really challenging,” he said. “[But] I said, ‘Okay, Lord. I’m still involved in your work. I’ll train people, rather than doing the work of ten people.’”

## The Work Continues

Towards the end of the 2022 school year, Fullingim paused. As he contemplated the next step of his career, he had a chance to look behind and ahead—back on three decades of teaching, and forward to the future of global mission work.

The highlights of his OKWU career are easy to identify: the trips taken with students and the lives won for Christ. Specifically, he points to the numerous journeys taken to establish summer camps in Russia during the 1990s, after the Iron Curtain fell.

“What happened for me in the raising up of many missionaries was the collapse of the Soviet Union,” he said. “We moved into a vacuum caused by communism.

That was our fervor here for a while. You could challenge students to go, to teach in youth camps and be a part of the youth camp ministry.”

That powerful experience allowed a kind of compromise between short and long-term missions work, as the teams returned each summer. “It created the opportunity to spend a short time with people overseas in a cultural exchange. Maybe it wasn’t highfalutin evangelism, but there was a way to participate in bringing a gospel message through people who wanted to know more about you as Americans, and we wanted to know about Russia,” he said. “I had to pinch myself every morning that I woke up in a former communist youth camp. I’m actually in Russia.”

As for mission work as a whole, Fullingim sees a wholesale change in the water coming. With less students majoring in the work from the get-go, he envisions more being done by second-career workers, called by the Lord later in life. “After you get a job and you’re working and you have some influence, God calls your heart and stirs that,” he said. “But it does require field training. And if you’re going to go, hey, we’ll train you.”

And even now, after retiring from full-time teaching, Fullingim hopes to aid in that training process. He’ll spend the next phase poring over his journals and the research materials from his time overseas, hoping to resource other missionaries and anthropologists at work in the region. “That’s scientific data, through and through,” he said. “It’s a lot when you’re trying to pile through your archives. But who else can do it?”

So yes—the work continues, even now, as the work always has. The only difference is that Fullingim is allowing himself to take a step back and consider the legacy he leaves behind. “The Lord allowed me to be a part of young people’s lives,” he said. “To learn more about people, to maybe create that interest and excitement in others? It’s been a rewarding career.”

It may not have been what he wanted when he initially signed that first contract in 1987, but the training Fullingim has provided to hundreds of missionaries has proved invaluable to decades of Wesleyan mission work—and to the overall advancement of Christ’s Kingdom in the world.

“The biggest thing that comes to mind about Dr. Mike is his impact on all of Wesleyan missions today,” Alicia reflects. “A large percentage of those serving in Global Partners have been trained by him. His love for exploring other cultures and his emphasis on building trust are playing out in beautifully incarnational ministries around the globe. His impact undoubtedly reaches further than he knows.” 🌐



**WATCH THE VIDEO AT  
WWW.OKWU.EDU/TOWER**



**WATCH VIDEO**

A man is being baptized in a pool. Two women are assisting him. One woman is wearing a black t-shirt with "I AM NEW" and a scalloped pattern. The other woman is wearing a white cap and glasses. The man is wearing a black t-shirt with "I AM NEW" and has his eyes closed and mouth open. The background shows a building with stone walls.

## DONOR STORY

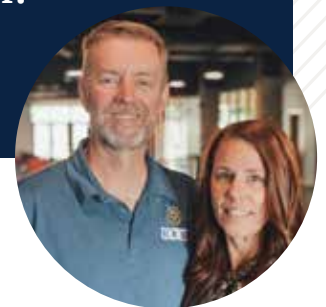
# New Hope partners with OKWU for three reasons:

- 1** We **believe** in how OKWU helps our students prepare for their future.
- 2** We **hear** the stories of God's work in the lives of our students who currently attend OKWU.
- 3** We **commit** to investing in tomorrow's leaders who will lead in every arena.



“My own two children attend OKWU, and my wife, Kiley, and I could not be more excited about how they’ve been challenged and changed for the Kingdom.”

**PASTOR MIKE SKOR '91 (LEAD PASTOR, NEW HOPE NETWORK)**



SUPPORT LIFE-CHANGING EDUCATION AT [OKWU.EDU/GIVE](https://okwu.edu/give)

2022

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 or letters to the editor at [creative.impact@okwu.edu](mailto:creative.impact@okwu.edu).

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#### Special Thanks

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Kylie Skor, Mackenzie Smith ('22), Wendell Thompson

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## VISION

# We're Building the Next OKWU **NOW**

For over 100 years, Oklahoma Wesleyan has focused on helping students discover and deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ in order to be sent out to influence culture with Grace and Truth.

**We believe that now more than ever is the time to answer God's call!**

As we look to what the future might bring, we believe that the world needs OKWU graduates: pastors, nurses, business leaders, teachers, and more. Our desire is to train, develop, and equip our students so that they can transform the world.

In order to accomplish this mission, we must continue to adapt our academic offerings and our campus facilities to meet the changing demands of the culture. We want to offer our students the very best as we look to secure the next 100 years of Oklahoma Wesleyan.

The Now Campaign will raise \$68 million over the next decade – dollars that will be invested in scholarships, endowments, improved facilities, and more.

This is a big, God-sized goal, but we believe God has blessed and will continue to bless the mission and vision of Oklahoma Wesleyan University.

**Will you join us?**

Learn more about the *NOW* Campaign at [www.okwu.edu/now](http://www.okwu.edu/now).



1



## Equip the Next Generation

OKWU's endowment is an essential component of the growth, stability, and future of our university. Scholarships make OKWU affordable and accessible for students and allow them to boldly shine for God's glory in the world.

2

## Empower Holistic Success

A multipurpose facility for athletics, academics, and student life is designed to enrich the lives of every student and OKWU community member—from physical wellness to thriving spiritually. The focus on health, wellness, and athletic success will advance our mission by developing the whole person - the head, heart, hands, and habits - to reach the whole world.



3



## Expand Our Influence

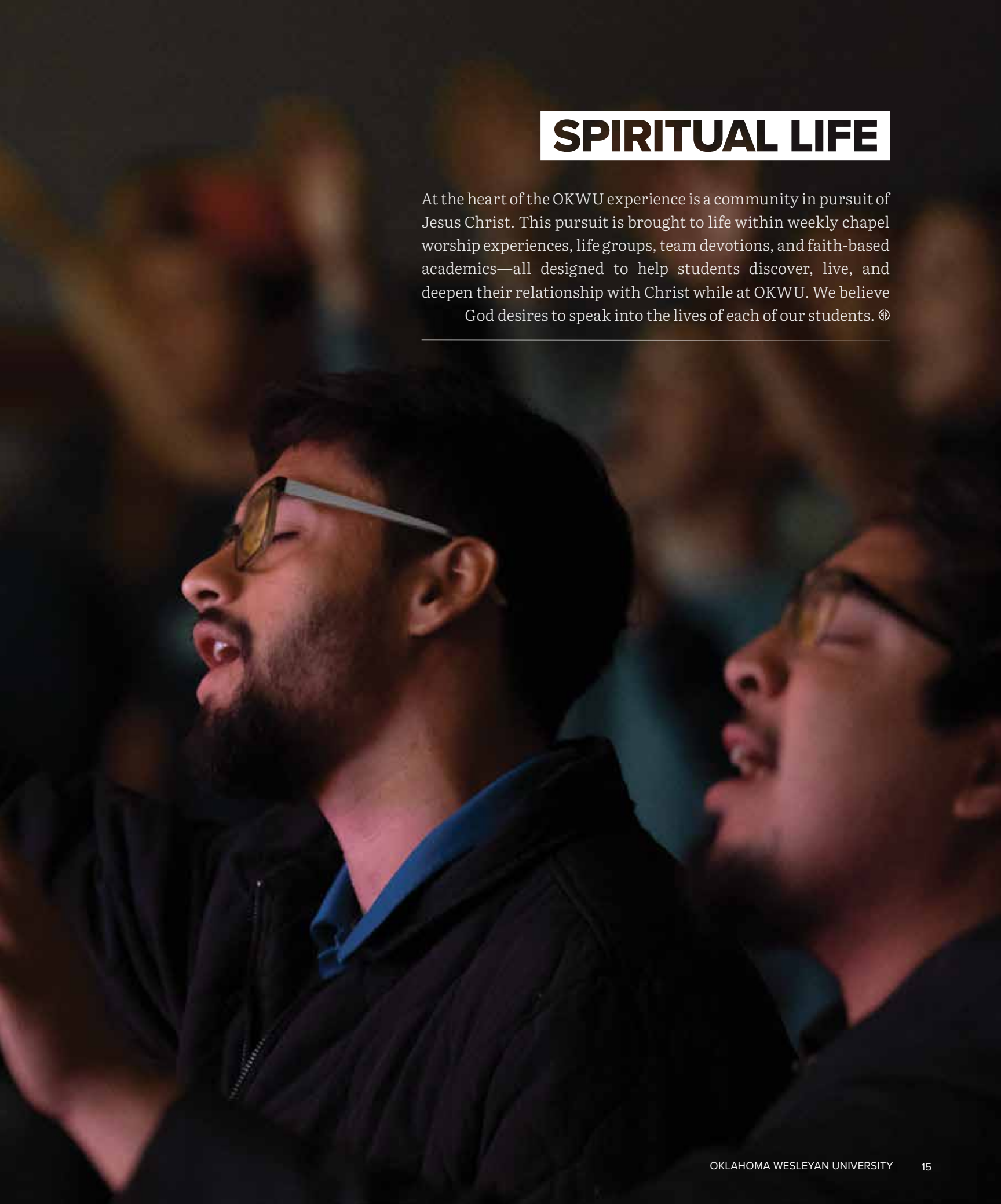
The OKWU experience encompasses what takes place in our classrooms as well as life together in Christian spiritual formation, residential living, athletic competition, and campus life in care for our development of the whole person. Funding will support innovation in academic programs, campus housing, necessary renovations, and expansion of academic and fitness space for tomorrow's students. 🙏



# SPIRITUAL LIFE

At the heart of the OKWU experience is a community in pursuit of Jesus Christ. This pursuit is brought to life within weekly chapel worship experiences, life groups, team devotions, and faith-based academics—all designed to help students discover, live, and deepen their relationship with Christ while at OKWU. We believe God desires to speak into the lives of each of our students. ☪

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# CALLED TO TRANSFORMATION

## First University Pastor

Before Torrey Martin took over as Oklahoma Wesleyan University's first-ever University Pastor in July, she spent months strategizing with university leadership. While envisioning what the new position would look like, the team considered an ambitious goal: What if every person that engaged with OKWU came to have a personal relationship with Jesus?

It's remarkably audacious—but after more time thinking things through, the objective made sense. "That's what it's about, right?" she says. "Why wouldn't we make the goal that every person who engages with OKWU comes to find a relationship with Jesus? Some of them for the very first time, others taking the next step. Why not chase these big, audacious things, this Kingdom-sized vision? We serve a God that is more than able."

This message—God is big enough to overcome doubt, obstacles, or even just natural human hesitancy—has been apparent throughout Martin's life and career, as He's guided her on a path to Oklahoma Wesleyan University.

### Flipping the Script

Born and raised in Tipton, Indiana, Martin was the youngest child in a churchgoing family. She gave her life to Christ at the age of six and first sensed her call to ministry in middle school. Still, for a couple of nuanced reasons—including a denominational context that wouldn't have supported a woman in the position of pastor—she kept this calling to herself. After high school, she decided to enroll at Indiana Wesleyan University, but not to pursue ministry.

"I convinced myself, and did my best to convince the Lord, too, that I was supposed to be a nurse," she says. "I was looking at the trajectory of my life and chose to take a step towards what made sense from a worldly standpoint,





rather than taking a step towards the very thing I knew God had long been calling me to.”

In fact, when Martin enrolled, she knew nothing about The Wesleyan Church’s affirming stance on women in ministry or, indeed, much at all about the Wesleyan-Methodist tradition. For some, that might be coincidence. Martin knows better.

“The Lord guided me to attend Indiana Wesleyan, where I was an 18-year-old holding firmly to the script I had written for my life,” she says. “Providentially, the Lord flipped that script on its head, and it happened to be I was in the right environment for that to happen.”

The turning point came early during her freshman year. “There I was, at nineteen, realizing that I never fully gave every part of who I am to the Lord. He was asking for every part of who I was—not just who I am in that moment, but my plans for the future, as well.”

Martin double-majored in Christian Ministries and Business Administration, graduating in 2017. Her first stop was a pastoral ministries residency at a Wesleyan church in Columbus, Ohio, where she was later hired. In November of 2019, she left the posting: “I sensed, in my departure, that the Lord was trying to get me in the lane of ministry that He ordained for me.”

Martin took this step of faith, uncertain of what her path might be but confident that it would involve ministering to young adults, a heartbeat passion for her. A few months later, she got a call from President Dunn. Would she be interested in joining team OKWU?

In short, no—at least, at first. “Moving to Oklahoma was not on my radar,” she says. “But it was an invitation I couldn’t turn down after prayerfully considering it.”

Looking back, Martin remembers one particularly thrilling aspect of God’s faithfulness through this period. “My Gideon moment. After leaving my position in the local church, I said, *God, I know I need a little bit of a reprieve—at least a month, but definitely no more than six months,*” she says. “The date from which I resigned to the date I moved to Oklahoma was six months to the day. Again, the Lord orchestrates the details as only He could.”

## Discovering Together

Martin, who had never been to Oklahoma before, accepted the job of admissions coordinator sight-unseen, arriving in Bartlesville two months into the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through her first two years on campus, Martin’s heartbeat for students’ spiritual formation was



evident. She even worked on a taskforce seeking to further develop spiritual life on campus. It wasn’t long before President Dunn asked her to consider a new position at OKWU: the University Pastor role.

After beginning on July 1, Martin is focused on laying a foundation for spiritual life. “I long for this to be a Christocentric experience,” she says. “Jesus at the center, not simply Jesus as only a part of what we do.”

To that end, her message for students is simple. “God is for you. I see my role as an overflow or an extension of that, for seeing lives completely transformed through a personal, dynamic, and vibrant relationship with Jesus. As the University Pastor, I get to journey alongside our people—students, faculty, staff, alumni, or friends of OKWU near and far. I’m beyond honored and humbled to serve and lead in this way.”

That journey isn’t new for Martin. It just so happens that the future on that path is especially bright in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. ☪

# TAKING CARE OF THE PENNIES

## Taking Care of the Pennies

Sent Out with Grace and Truth

On the day of their graduation, every OKWU student receives the same item: one penny. The one-cent piece is a play on words, a reminder that the goal of this university is to equip students to Be One Sent for Christ into a world that desperately needs His truth. But while the imagery at the end of the journey is the same, the paths to getting there vary wildly.

Take, for example, two students, **Kazden Ammons ('22)** and **Mackenzie Smith ('22)**. They both walked across the graduation stage this May, and they form a picture of the different roads that students take to that pivotal moment. They've overcome challenges as richly varied as they are: relationship struggles, pride, life transitions, and disease. Together, they represent the rich tapestry of experience that makes up the OKWU community, and they left campus ready to be sent out into the world with Grace and Truth.

## Which is More Important?

For Kaz Ammons, an accounting graduate, the biggest draw towards moving to Bartlesville and attending OKWU was playing on the basketball team, and his experience with his coaches and teammates was pivotal to his overall journey as a person.

"It's been a huge part of my life," he said. "I'd say that three out of the four years I've been here, my closest friends have come from the basketball team."

Perhaps more than anything, Ammons' time on the basketball team served as a way to learn lessons about life—tough lessons, often, that wouldn't have come any other way. His path to being a productive starter on the team was anything but smooth. He was recruited with the knowledge that he'd begin at the junior varsity level, but even when he first proved himself enough to suit up for varsity games, he didn't find the playing time he hoped for.

"This might be a general answer in athletics, but the greatest challenge with everything has just been pride," Ammons admitted. He points to one particular moment to illustrate the point: the conference championship game of his sophomore season.

"I got to play almost every game [that year]. The one game that whole entire year I didn't get to play was the conference championship in Wichita, which is my hometown," he recalled. "A bunch of my family and a bunch of my friends came to watch, and that was the one game the entire year that I didn't get to play."

It was a tough blow to take, but—looking back now—Ammons is grateful for it. "I remember sitting there on the bench and after the game thinking, 'What? Is this about me or is this about glorifying God?' I think that just really exposed my pride," he said.

It's a lesson that applies to more than just basketball. Ammons leaves OKWU in a significantly different stage of life than when he entered it—married to Anna, his high school sweetheart, and preparing to join a growing family business in Colorado. Through it all, he'll take a consistent lesson with him: it's not about you, and it's not about being perfect.

"I remember meeting with Ben Rotz, Associate VP for Student Development, and him asking me a question: Which is more important for you – to know that you love God or to know that He loves you?" he said. "God doesn't love you because you love Him. He loves you. [It was a lesson] to take it off a mindset of it being a workspace."

That conversation might as well have been a mission statement for his time at OKWU.



## That's My Story

Although she, too, came to Oklahoma Wesleyan to play basketball, it's fair to say that Mackenzie Smith's career as a student and player took a decidedly different turn. A seemingly simple action like the one she took in May—walking across the stage to receive a degree in Business Management and Leadership—was no mean feat. If you'd asked her doctors a year before, they probably would have told you not to count on it happening.

In October of 2020, after transferring to OKWU to take a spot on the basketball team, Smith noticed a lump on her underarm. At first, she didn't think much of it, but other symptoms soon followed. A visit to a local urgent care resulted in misdiagnosis and an antibiotic treatment, which solved nothing. When she went back home after the fall 2020 semester, she underwent a biopsy on the tissue and was diagnosed with sarcoma—a frightening thing to hear.

**“The survival rate for that cancer is about fifteen to twenty percent after five years,” Smith said. “It’s just really not what you want to hear at twenty years old.”**

Eventually, the diagnosis was corrected, and it was revealed that Smith was suffering from melanoma, a much more treatable—and survivable—disease. Still, things were harrowing for a while, and when Smith looked back at her journey in May, the week before graduation, the differences from then to now were stark.

“A year ago today, I couldn’t walk. My parents had to help me off the couch. I had a tumor in my spine, and it was pressing on my spinal cord and giving me writhing pain. Things were not looking good. None of the medicine that I was on was working at that point,” she remembered. “To go from that, and then a year later I’m exercising at the gym, I’m running, and I’m graduating—I’ll actually be able to walk across the stage. That’s such an amazing testimony.”

The turnaround came through a few newer treatments that Smith’s doctors prescribed, such as targeted therapy. Two months later, her tumors had shrunk by seventy-five percent. Some disappeared completely.

But even more than the therapy, Smith credits prayer and divine healing. “I had a lot of people praying for me, and I definitely think that was a miracle,” she said. “God has been really amazing through all of this and healed me. That’s my story.”

Even throughout the darkest parts of the cancer, Smith’s goal was always to graduate—on time and in person. She credits her professors for helping her get there by allowing her increased flexibility, and she points to the students and friends who supported her throughout the journey.

After graduation, Smith returned to Texas to become certified as a teacher, expecting to take her experience of resilience and hope to the middle school classroom. Teaching, coaching, an eventual master’s degree—the future is bright, and she’s excited for what comes next.

It’s like that saying—take care of the pennies, and the pounds will take care of themselves. Gather enough one-cent pieces—or One Sent pieces—to send out into the world, and the world just might be changed for Christ. Students like Kaz and Mackenzie are working to bring that dream to reality. ☪



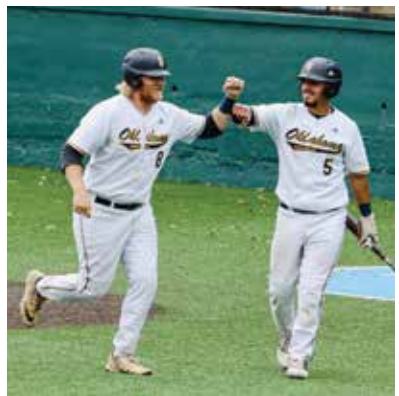
Mackenzie Smith celebrating graduation in Lewis Alumni Park.



Kaz Ammons leading Bible study with basketball teammate in La Quinta mansion.



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# OKWU Headlines

## AUGUST 2021

### Traditional Campus Enrollment is 2nd Highest in History

OKWU experienced an 8.4% enrollment growth for Fall 2021 semester on our traditional campus. Watch the '21-22 Year in Review video at [www.okwu.edu/year-in-review](http://www.okwu.edu/year-in-review).

## JANUARY 2022

### OKWU Announces DBA Program, First of Its Kind in the State

The university's second doctorate program was approved. The Doctor of Business Administration degree is designed to prepare experienced professionals and academics to become senior executives, educators, and consultants. Congratulations to our dedicated GPS team on this achievement.

## MARCH 2022

### Davis Leads Dunn Institute

The Dunn Institute continued on OKWU's campus this year, providing pastors and church leaders practical business instruction. **Norwood Davis** of 12Stone Church served as keynote speaker. Davis will become the successor of **Craig Dunn ('82)**, CEO of the Wesleyan Investment Foundation, in 2026.

## APRIL 2022

### Lo's Loft Named for OKWU Alum

**Dr. Jim Lo ('78)** was honored by Indiana Wesleyan University for 25 years of service. The prayer loft in the IWU chapel-auditorium was officially named the Lo Loft, and he received Professor the Year for the 5th time.



MUELLER AWARDED HONORARY DOCTORATE



RETIRING PROFESSORS



JIM LO HONORED FOR 25 YEARS

## MAY 2022

### OKWU Presents Mueller an Honorary Doctorate

During May's Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony, **Naomi Mueller ('58)** was presented with an Honorary Doctorate of Letters for her decades of strong service to the university.

## MAY 2022

### Cherished Professors Mark Retirement from Full-Time Teaching

Three of OKWU's longest-tenured professors – **Dr. Mike Fullingham**, **Dr. Beverly Hartter**, and **Dr. Bill Vieux** – were honored during May's commencement ceremony. All three professors served OKWU for decades, impacting thousands of students and leaving a legacy not soon forgotten.

## JULY 2022

### OKWU PRO

OKWU's School of Graduate & Professional Studies announced a partnership with MindEdge to provide affordable industry certifications, badges, and training courses. OKWU is now equipped to offer over 350 such courses as part of their online offerings, including Agile Management, Cybersecurity, Data Analytics, and more. To learn more, visit [okwu.edu/gps](http://okwu.edu/gps).



**MAY 2022**  
**Faculty Earns Yearly Honors**

During May's Honors Chapel, faculty were recognized by both student-focused awards and honors from their peers. **Dr. Jon Ensor ('05)** received the Student Government Faculty of the Year Award. OKWU's faculty voted to present **Professor Anna Mangimela ('08)** received the Promising Teacher Award, while **Dr. Josh McNall ('04)** with the Excellence in Teaching Award.

**JULY 2022**

**University Pastor Role Filled by Martin**

**Rev. Torrey Martin** was appointed the first full-time University Pastor in OKWU's history. She'll bring her wealth of experience, passion for students, and pastoral-heart as she advances OKWU's spiritual life experience.

**2022**

**Faculty Achieve Degrees**

**Professor Eric Peterson ('07)** completed a Ph.D. in Criminal Justice from Walden University and was accepted into the Alpha Phi Sigma Criminal Justice Honor Society. **Professor Stacy Pierce** completed a Master of Science in Mathematics from Emporia State University in August of 2021.



ERIC PETERSON



STACY PIERCE

**2021-2022**

**Professors Publish New Works**

Three professors from the School of Ministry and Christian Thought have published new works over the past year. **Dr. Jerome Van Kuiken** contributed a chapter to *Theology and Spider-Man* (Lexington Books/Fortress Academic); **Dr. Josh McNall** published *Perhaps: Reclaiming the Space Between Doubt and Dogmatism* (IVP Academic); and **Dr. Jon Ensor** released *Paul and Corinthians: Leadership, Ordeals, and the Politics of Displacement* (Bloomsbury Publishing). Additionally, mathematics **Professor Jana Russell** published *From Stumbling to Soaring: Lose your Job, Find Your Future, Grow Your Faith* (Christian Faith Publishing).

## ATHLETICS

# ALWAYS SOARING

### 2021-2022 HIGHLIGHTS

It was another great season on the athletic fields for the Eagles. In the fall, both the men's and women's soccer teams claimed KCAC championships and clinched a berth in the NAIA tournament. Between the men's and women's soccer teams, 8 OKWU players were named All-Americans. On the court, the volleyball squad went 15-12 in another winning season for **Tracie Gillette ('98)**, who also coached the KCAC Freshman of the Year.

In the winter, both basketball teams posted winning seasons. The men's squad, led by **Donnie Bostwick**, made another NAIA tournament and won the KCAC championship. On the women's side, the Lady Eagles battled to an 18-15 record and advanced to the semifinals of the KCAC tournament. The young wrestling program, led by **Tom Carr**, put together a 10-5 team record and a second-place finish in the KCAC's regular-season standings, with two wrestlers qualifying for nationals.

As the calendar turned to spring, the Eagles saw both the baseball and softball teams perform well. OKWU Baseball went 38-19 on the season, including an impressive 21-7 record at home, and clinched a spot in the conference tournament. OKWU Softball had a remarkable season that included 10 members of the team receiving All-KCAC recognition. The golf teams competed well, with the men's team finishing 4th at the KCAC Championship, while the women earned 3rd place. The tennis team had 2 members earn All-KCAC nods, while OKWU Track had a national qualifier. And in the first year of competition, Beach Volleyball played a full season and had a duo finish 2nd at the Tri-State Conference Tournament.



### Another Sweet Ride

The OKWU basketball squad had a strong season, with a 34-3 record, a KCAC championship, and a trip to the NAIA Quarterfinals. 5 members of the squad were named All-KCAC performers.



### Team of Legacy

The OKWU men's soccer team had another outstanding 2021 season, winning the KCAC regular season and tournament championships and advancing to the quarterfinals of the NAIA tournament. The Eagles had 5 players named NAIA All-Americans.

### Breakout Wrestler

The 133-pound sophomore, **Kolby Encinas**, was one of the Eagles' strongest wrestlers with a 20-6 season record. He placed 2nd at the KCAC Championships and qualified for the NAIA National Tournament, where he won his first-round matchup.







## A New Standard

In one of the best seasons in program history, the Lady Eagles softball team went 35-16 and finished second in the conference standings. **Shawn Woods** coached 5 Lady Eagles towards All-Conference nods.

FOLLOW ATHLETICS AT [OKWUEAGLES.COM](https://www.okwueagles.com)

## ACADEMICS



**JULY 2022**

### Faculty Roles Shifted to Move into Future

**Dr. Jessica Johnson** serves as the Dean of Nursing. **Prof. Jason Flick ('98)** was named the Dean of the School of Education and Exercise Science. **Dr. Keri Bostwick ('98)** was named the University Provost this summer. **Dr. Wendel Weaver** continues to serve as Dean of Business, while **Dr. Mark Weeter** assumed the position of Dean of School of Ministry and Christian Thought. ☪

# Two Doctorates in Two Years for OKWU, Including Oklahoma's First-Ever DBA Degree

After breaking new ground last year with the first doctorate degree in OKWU's 117-year history—the **Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)**—the faculty in the Graduate and Professional Studies program are at it again. This time, they're launching a **Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)** degree, the first-ever program of its kind in the state.

"No other university in Oklahoma has this degree—a professional doctorate in business," said **Dr. Brett Andrews**, OKWU's Senior Vice President for Academic Innovation.

## The Right Education for a Changing Workforce

The new program was designed to address a need for a more diversified business education, as students seek to enter an ever-changing workforce. This meant equipping students to deal with the increasingly difficult scenarios they'd face in the workforce. "The problems facing businesses today require an education that can identify and solve complex problems," Andrews said. "The DBA program helps business leadership do this."

Industry executives will teach courses throughout the program, a key part of OKWU's process.

"Expert faculty will reflect the diversity of perspectives needed to equip our students to be successful," Jackson said. "Some will be full-time faculty and others will be executives, encouraging innovative thinking in our students." 🌐



(L to R) President Jim Dunn, Dr. Wendel Weaver, Dr. Kirk Jackson, Dr. Brett Andrews, Dr. Keri Bostwick ('98 and '13), Prof. Sansy Lynn, Dr. Mark Shannon ('13), Dr. Jason Bussey ('13), Roger Metcalf ('74)

"The DBA empowers graduates to pursue multiple new career paths, because it's not limited to just a research degree," **Dr. Kirk Jackson**, the director of the program, said. "For those that want to teach at the university level, the dissertation track program equips graduates to be successful in full-time and part-time faculty roles. But for those graduates that want to leverage their degree into executive leadership or corporate consulting roles, it provides the research-informed perspective for practical problem solving."

This difference in pathways—a professional degree versus a research-only degree—is the core DNA of OKWU's unique program.

## Your Story Continued

The program takes about 36 months to complete, one eight-week course at a time and entirely online. Students can choose to complete either a work problem or a research-based dissertation, allowing them to shape the curriculum to their own needs.

Learn more at [www.okwu.edu/dba](http://www.okwu.edu/dba).

## EVENTS



OCT 7-8

### Homecoming Weekend

*Celebrate with our extended OKWU family.*



SEP 23 / OCT 28  
MAR 24 / APR 21

### College Preview Days

*Experience the people and spirit of OKWU.*

# Join us this year

MAR 21-22

### Dunn Institute with John Maxwell

*Invite-only and special event registration required.*

DEC 16-17 / MAY 5-6

### Graduation

*Celebrate at Baccalaureate and Commencement ceremonies.*

NEAR YOU

### OKWU Friends Tour

*President Dunn shares the vision for OKWU at various stops around the country. RSVP at [okwu.edu/tour](http://okwu.edu/tour).*



MAR 1

### Give Day

*Support student scholarships on #OKWUGiveDay.*

[okwu.edu/giveday](http://okwu.edu/giveday)

FIND NEWS, EVENTS, AND MORE AT [OKWU.EDU](http://OKWU.EDU)

# 2022 Outstanding Alumni Honored



The annual Alumni Awards recognize graduates for their courage, achievement, and commitment to the vision and mission of Oklahoma Wesleyan.



**Alumnus of the Year:** This award recognizes an alumnus who advances the Kingdom of God through noteworthy, long-term accomplishment in professional endeavors, significant service to the church, and a positive impact in the lives of others.

**Young Alumnus Award:** This award is given to an individual under 40 who displays distinguished leadership in his or her field and shows promise of future growth professionally and personally.

**Hall of Faith Award:** This honor is awarded to an alumnus who is currently or has been in full-time, long-term Christian ministry and has demonstrated faithful, consistent service throughout that time.

**One Another Award:** This honor recognizes an alumnus who has actively served others in some capacity for at least five years, advancing Christ's Kingdom through compassion and exemplary commitment of time, talent, and treasure.



READ FULL INTERVIEWS  
AT [OKWU.EDU/TOWER](http://OKWU.EDU/TOWER)



## YORTON CLARK

**Alumnus of the Year**

+ The family business that Yorton Clark (BWC '84) grew up in was ministry. His father and both grandparents served as lifelong pastors within The Wesleyan Church, and the impulse to serve was strong. And it's true that Clark's life has been one lived in service—it just turns out that his calling was a little different.

Through adolescence and young adulthood, Clark maintained an openness to accepting a full-time call to ministry from God—and still remains open, for that matter. But during his senior year of high school, before he'd moved to Bartlesville, he felt God tugging on his heart in a very specific way.

"The one thing that I was called to, I believe by God, is that He said, I want you to be involved fully in ministry, but I want you to close the gap between the congregation and the pulpit. I want you to be a representation and a model and encourage others to engage in ministry," Clark said. "To proclaim that it's not just a pastor's job, but all our jobs together."

Since that pivotal moment, Clark has done all he could to answer the call, infusing his professional career and his personal life with his desire to live for Christ. Throughout his marriage, he and his wife, Janean, have been involved in every aspect of church ministry they could be, and they've also maintained a commitment to the foster care system, nurturing a number of children through the decades.

"I feel a passion for people that haven't had the privilege of a loving, sheltered home like I had," he said. "I want to do something to help those people."

After jobs in the oil industry and healthcare administration, Clark began teaching management classes at MidAmerica Nazarene University. The experience energized him, and he's been in education ever since, receiving his doctorate in higher education administration. Today, he serves as dean for MidAmerica's School of Professional and Graduate Studies and as the program director for graduate studies in management.

Two and a half decades in, Clark remains passionate about the opportunity to speak into lives at a formative time. "I have the opportunity to speak into the hearts, minds, and souls of those individuals, to give them meaning, purpose, and hopefully direction. To transform their lives for eternity... it's the transformation part that stokes me, every day," he said.



## JERMAINE WATKINS

**Young Alumnus Award**



**Jermaine Watkins ('08), 2022's Young Alumnus Awardee, has lived life on a school schedule for almost his entire life, and he's just fine with that. Now, he's working each day to engage with youth at Monroe Demonstration Academy, North Tulsa's only junior high school. There have been twists and turns, confusions and frustrations along Watkins' pathway to Monroe, but God's hand has been evident at each step of the process.**

From an early age, sports was an important focus. "I always tell people that I knew early on that I wanted to be a coach and a teacher," he said. "I grew up in a neighborhood with probably 20 to 30-plus kids, and we were always playing sports in my backyard. I would find myself naturally coaching kids, teaching kids how to do [certain] things."

He pursued baseball all the way to college, but after a few years playing at the junior college level and then at a small Division I school in Texas, Watkins was ready for a change. An old roommate had the solution: why not transfer to a small Christian school in Bartlesville? It was the right call, and the OKWU experience proved vital. "Spiritually, it got me refocused. I had made some decisions, done some things that were uncharacteristic to me, having grown up in the church. I had kind of lost sight. I was able to refocus when I transferred in," he said.

After graduating, Watkins spent 13 years teaching elementary P.E., experiencing consolidations and closures in various schools in Tulsa. When the position of Dean of Climate and Culture at Monroe became available, Watkins felt like the fit was right. "[It] has a lot to offer. We have over 800 kids, a lot of programming, and a really good administration," he said.

The job can be a grind; the students he works with often come in with challenging situations. Still, his passion is contagious, and he's grateful for the work. "It's a God-given grace. I never consider this a job; it's the work that God has called me to do. I'm just walking in that."

Watkins relishes the challenge, and he's not planning on changing careers any time soon. "I'm content with where I am, because I know this is where I'm supposed to be. This is where God has called me to be," he said.



## ELEANOR HUNSINGER

Hall of Faith

It is often the case that spiritual impact cannot be accurately measured during the brief time humans spend on earth—that it is only in heaven that the true extent of a life lived in service to Christ can be seen. This is certainly true with Eleanor Hunsinger (MWC '62), this year's Hall of Faith Awardee.

Hunsinger spent 22 years as a missionary nurse in Zambia. When she retired to America in 1992, she left behind a vast legacy that can only be fully known on the other side of eternity.

Throughout her life, Hunsinger had an interest in missions work due to the missionaries who would visit her church growing up, as well as the ministry biographies her parents kept around the house. When she arrived at Miltonvale Wesleyan College, she chose theology as her major.

"I thought I was going to be a missionary, so I should take theology," she said. "I think there were six or seven fellows in theology class, and I was the only girl."

After she left Miltonvale, Hunsinger spent time continuing her education with a nursing degree, a bachelor's degree from Goshen College, and a master's degree from Wayne State University. Afterwards, she was chosen to go to Zambia for what was originally a four-year term. "I had to get out an atlas to find out where Zambia even was," she remembered. "I don't think I'd ever heard of it before."

Over the course of her terms, the work took many different forms. She provided care from a stationary clinic, mostly, although teams would occasionally travel into rural areas to administer vaccines. Sometimes, there were LPNs to help, but many times it was only Hunsinger herself working to address varied medical needs.

After returning to America in 1992, Hunsinger took a number of home health jobs in the Kansas City area before finally retiring to the Wesleyan Retirement Village in Florida. During this time she cultivated a passion for writing, joining a Christian writer's group and attending conferences. She recently published a novel about Jonathan, Saul's son, and she's working to add more titles to her name—currently, a novel about the woman at the well.

It's a fitting end to a worthy life, as Eleanor Hunsinger has spent decades in service of the story of the Kingdom. It just so happens that now, she's writing that story on paper.



## BLAKE CARLSON

One Another Award

In many ways, Blake Carlson ('85)—the 2022 winner of OKWU's One Another Award—has been on a lifelong search for excitement. That search has taken him all over the world and put him in some tight spots, but the biggest lesson he's learned through it all has been counterintuitive: real excitement comes from being a part of God's movement.

"I used to think that God's kingdom was a boring thing to be a part of—that if I really wanted excitement, I'd be working for the government or being a cop or something," he said. "But now I see that God's kingdom is where the real excitement is."

That's not to say that Carlson hasn't experienced his fair share of intrigue. Over a career in law enforcement spanning decades, he's seen it all: drug raids, undercover operations, top-secret government work, and more. It all started with a directionless teenager arriving at OKWU's campus in 1980, choosing ministry but not feeling passionately called.

"I just knew that I had an overpowering sense that I needed to get a degree, and I would be able to work with whatever degree I got," he said. "My life would go on, no matter what I chose."

A number of jobs followed graduation—youth pastor, English teacher in Japan, pilot-in-training. It wasn't until Blake and his wife, Michelle, were living in Phoenix that a chance conversation with a neighbor set him down his path: Have you thought about being a cop?

During his ensuing career with the Phoenix Police Department, Carlson has accrued vast experience—he's worked as patrolman, instructor, on various white-collar crime task forces, and even as an undercover cop. Six years ago, he began with Phoenix's Homeland Defense Bureau, spending part of the year with the federal government in Washington. He's also brought his expertise to bear on behalf of Wesleyan churches, writing a manual in 2018 on church security for small to mid-size churches.

Carlson recently retired from his posting, but he sees his time there as a culmination. "As I look back, this is exactly what I wanted to be doing, my whole life," he said. It's a testament not only to his planning or skillset, but to God's guidance. That, more than anything, is the lesson: God is in control.

"The Lord puts us where we're good at what we do," he said. "I have great confidence in God's ability to lead in our lives, even though we can't see into the future." ☪

OCTOBER 7-8, 2022  
SAVE THE DATE

# HOMECOMING

OKLAHOMA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

## MWC REUNIONS

1940s-1950s  
1960-1966  
1967-1972

## BWC/OKWU REUNIONS

1972, 1982, 1992  
1997, 2002, 2012,  
& 2017

## EVENTS

### COMMEMORATING

100th Year of "The Christ" Oil Painting  
90th Birthday of La Quinta Mansion  
50th Year of MWC & BWC Merger

### THURSDAY, OCT 6

Miltonvale Wesleyan College Gathering

### FRIDAY, OCT 7

Registration 9 AM  
Homecoming Chapel w/ Dr. Jim Garlow  
Golf Tournament\*  
Reunions & Activities  
Alumni Banquet\*

### SATURDAY, OCT 8

Reunions / Activities  
La Quinta Mansion's 90th Birthday Party  
Athletic Games & Coronation

\*REGISTRATION REQUIRED

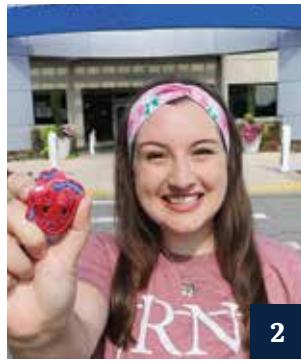
**GENERATIONS OF EAGLES.**

**ONE OKWU FAMILY.**

SCHEDULE & REGISTRATION  
[OKWU.EDU/HOMECOMING](http://OKWU.EDU/HOMECOMING)



SCAN ME



## ALUMNI UPDATES

# OKWU on the Move

**1. Dr. Jerry Pence ('75)** retired after 51 years of pastoring. The former General Superintendent of The Wesleyan Church and most recently 10-year pastor of Brooksville Wesleyan moved to Bartlesville with his wife, **Calene (Mueller '75)**.

*When Faith is Forbidden: 40 Days on the Frontlines with Persecuted Christians*, written by **Todd Nettleton ('92)**, was recently announced as winner of the 2022 Christian Book Award in the category of Biography and Memoir. The book shares 40 stories from persecuted Christians Todd has met in 20+ years serving at The Voice of the Martyrs.

**2. Emily Balliviero ('21)** is currently serving as a new grad pediatric nurse in Little Rock, Arkansas, on a cardiovascular intensive care unit at Arkansas Children's Hospital.

**3. Chris ('10) and Whitney (White, '10) Breiland** have moved to Tulsa and are now serving at Wright Christian Academy. Whitney serves as the school counselor and Chris is the high school principal, coordinating chapel as well. They have a 4-year-old daughter, Charlotte, and recently welcomed boy/girl twins, Shepherd and Caroline.

**4. Larissa Hale ('20)** teaches 5th grade at Wilson Elementary School, and was selected by Bartlesville Public Schools as Rookie Teacher of the Year for 2022-2023, receiving her award at the District Teacher of the Year celebration. Her husband, **Anthony ('19)**, is a Management Trainee at Bargain Center. They have a 3-year-old Border Collie, Daisy, and a 5-year-old Bombay cat, Jade.

**5. Shane ('15 & '17) and Krista ('16 & '19) Grate** welcomed their firstborn son, Isaiah, on November 20, 2021. Shane works for The Voice of the Martyrs and Krista is a 3rd grade teacher at Richard Kane Elementary School.

**6. Don ('54) and Naomi (Ireland, '58) Mueller** are celebrating a wonderful life of service to the Lord. They have been married for 64 years. Both taught for a time at preceding OKWU institutions, while Naomi served for decades on the OKWU Board of Trustees, receiving the President's Award in 2012. This May, she received an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from Dr. Dunn at commencement.





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**7. Stevan ('10) and Sladjana ('19) Djukic** welcomed a beautiful daughter, Senna, to their family on April 29, 2022. Stevan serves as an assistant coach for the men's soccer program and campus safety director at OKWU.

**8. Clay ('73) and Sherlene ('70) Gibbs** celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in December 2021. They are retired and live near Nashville, close to their two children and six grandchildren. Their retirement comes after careers in the pastorate and engineering field for Clay and a career in guidance counseling for Sherlene.

**9. Rebecka Peterson ('10)** was named the 2022 Oklahoma Teacher of the Year in March 2022. As Teacher of the Year, Peterson will spend one year on hiatus, working as an ambassador for teachers in the state public school system.

**Amber (Mitchell, '05) Stewart** and her husband recently purchased the Jarrett Farms property, between Bartlesville and Tulsa. They will renovate the property and use it to host community events, outreach opportunities, weddings, leadership retreats, and so much more, and ask for prayers as they embark on this new journey of the Lord.

**10. Tommy and Sarah (Kingery '07) Blain** welcomed twin boys, Lucas, and Lane, on February 25, 2022. Twice the cuteness!

**11. Alex ('19) and Megan ('19) Young** welcomed their firstborn son, Ezra, on April 14, 2022. They both serve on the Student Development team at Oklahoma Wesleyan University.

**Jake Good ('15)** teaches 6th and 7th grade science at Central Middle School in Bartlesville. He and his wife have been married for seven years and have one daughter together. They are expecting another child

in October. In December of 2021, Jake graduated with a Master's in Educational Leadership from Southeastern Oklahoma State University, hoping to transition to school administration.

**Spenser White ('20)** took a position at Waggoner's Inc., selling pew cushions to churches and gathering places around the country. He and his wife, Billie ('19), live in Hutchinson, Kansas.

**12. Don Daake ('71)** is a professor emeritus at Olivet Nazarene University. During his career, he has written or co-written over 350 columns for the Kankakee Illinois Daily Journal on such topics as positive psychology, emotional intelligence, leadership, and marketing—all from a Christian perspective. Several columns have been picked up by organizations such as the Associated Press and CBS online. Much of his writing is available online at his website. 🌐

## BENEDICTION

Prayer excerpt from Brianna Hudson ('22)  
Fall 2022 Commencement Ceremony

### FROM BEGINNING, TO END, AND ON INTO ETERNITY, REIGN.

*Lord,*

*We come before you, humbled. You are a God who performs wonders, whose power has no rival, whose love knows no end, and You are here with us. We welcome Your presence today.*

...

*I thank You for allowing us to pursue an education at an institution that magnifies Your Name both in and outside the classroom.*

...

*Lord, most of all, as myself and these graduates exit this university, I pray that You would seal upon our hearts the Call of the Kingdom. Let us not leave here and forget what we have learned—that You are Lord and Master and in You there is hope for the hopeless and healing for the broken-hearted. Always. There is still so much more we have yet to learn. So, no matter what we face as we leave this place, teach our hearts to yearn for the Kingdom, teach us to speed Your return and lovingly serve others in the wait. Teach us to hold fast to You as You have held fast to us and to grow up into maturity in Christ, that we may be a unified Body, that the whole world may know that Christ is King of all and in Him is Life and Life everlasting. God, You've gotten us this far, to the end of another chapter. I know You will hold us through the next and forever. Thank You.*

*Amen!*



Arika Thomas ('22) celebrating commencement in spring 2022.





**OKLAHOMA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY**  
2201 Silver Lake Road, Bartlesville, OK 74006

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# COLLEGE PREVIEW DAYS

SEPT. 23, 2022

OCT. 28, 2022

MARCH 24, 2023

APRIL 21, 2023

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