The Journal Record's Power 2021 Education List
The Most Powerful People in Education in Oklahoma

CONGRATULATIONS!
Dr. Freda Deskin, Ph.D.
CEO/Founder, ASTEC Charter Schools

- Teacher trainer, public speaker, civic leader, national curriculum developer
- Oklahoma Educators Hall of Fame member (15 years as a teacher at the pre-collegiate level, 9 years as a university faculty member and 6 years as a university dean)
- NASA training as “Teacher-in-Space” Oklahoma finalist
- National Women in Aviation Hall of Fame member
- Founder of Oklahoma Aerospace Academy, Oklahoma Odyssey of the Mind, and Team Quest Ropes

ASTEC CHARTER SCHOOLS
The Advanced Science and Technology Education Charter Schools (ASTEC) is a tuition-free, public school of choice serving Oklahoma City students from preschool through the twelfth grade. ASTEC was the first start-up charter school in Oklahoma and is accredited by the Oklahoma State Department of Education.

- Students are required to take 9 weeks of character education, manners, and etiquette training.
- Liberal arts education that integrates science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) is offered.
- Technology is a core subject and all scholars are issued computer devices.
- Robotics, rowing, basketball, soccer and student council are just a few of the clubs and activities.
- ASTEC values diversity, equity, and inclusion. ASTEC’s Diversity Council guides this effort.
- Clothing closet, food pantry, and family and student counseling provide for student and family needs.
- Independent audit of finances is reported to the board of directors annually.

ASTEC believes excellence is a habit. We strive to be transparent and to hold scholars, faculty and administrators accountable at the highest level. Our diverse governing board of directors is composed of local area businessmen and women volunteers who meet regularly to oversee the overall success of our organization.

Students in PreK-12th grade who live within Oklahoma City, city limits, may enroll at ASTEC. For more information visit www.astec-k12.com/enrollment or call (405) 947-6272.

Dream and Believe. Learn and Achieve.

ASTEC Charter Schools | 2401 NW 23rd Street, Ste. 39A, Oklahoma City, OK 73107 | 405-947-6272
POWER 2021
EDUCATION

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About The Journal Record’s Power 2021 Education List

When considering the top educators in Oklahoma, we felt it important to pause and consider the full scope of educational opportunities in our state. The menu is extensive: from K-12 settings to major universities, our CareerTechs and MetroTechs, Oklahoma offers a wide platform where learning takes place.

These centers of learning would not be what they are without their leaders, 26 of whom we honor in this publication. Representing the acme of the industry, our top educators have committed themselves to enlightening present and future generations by striving to be the very best that they can be in their industry.

In the past year, the pandemic has challenged education in ways that no one could have foreseen or imagined. It took innovation, perseverance, quick thinking, creativity, grit and passion from our teachers and education professionals to provide for students during such challenging times.

It has been said that education is not just a job or career, but rather, a way of life that carries over into every aspect of an educator’s life. Truly, education is a journey and our Power 2021 Education List members are the guides, the spirited and inspirational ones dedicated to shaping the future minds of our world.
Randy Beutler has overseen multiple projects and milestones during his 12-year tenure as president of Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford. He oversaw completion of Weatherford's 93,000-square-foot Pioneer Cellular Event Center, and the former member of the Oklahoma House of Representatives helped form the university’s President’s Leadership Class.

During his tenure, he increased degree offerings and created nationally accredited programs, ensured financial stability and helped the school produce graduates ready to enter Oklahoma’s workforce.

Beutler has positioned Southwestern as a valuable educational asset for Oklahoma, said Susan Winchester, chair of the Regional University System of Oklahoma.

“We appreciate his masterful leadership in higher education,” Winchester said after Beutler announced he was stepping down this spring, ending the third-longest tenure in school history.

Born in Elk City and graduated from Canute High School, Beutler went on to graduate from Southwestern, where he received both his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in education.

Prior to being named president, Beutler was elected to the Oklahoma House of Representatives and rose to the position of majority whip. He also served as an educator, teaching history and government for eight years at Weatherford High School, earning district recognition as “Teacher of the Year” twice.

In 1988, Beutler was selected as one of 15 history teachers across the country to receive a William Robertson Coe Fellowship to Stanford University. The next year, he was selected to attend the Woodrow Wilson Institute’s history seminars at Princeton University.

Southwestern Oklahoma State University has been in existence for 109 years, expanding from a two-year preparatory school for teachers to a university that offers more than 100 different majors and 1,000 different classes.

Nearly 5,000 students enroll each fall on the Weatherford campus and 500 students attend classes on the Sayre campus, located 60 miles west of Weatherford. Southwestern has a diverse selection of course options and the university is highly rated in affordability.
GUY BRAMBLE
HEADMASTER
HERITAGE HALL

BRAMBLE LEAVES LASTING LEGACY AT HERITAGE HALL

After 33 years as Heritage Hall’s headmaster, Guy Bramble is stepping down, leaving a legacy of accomplishment, memories and gratitude that will likely stand for generations.

With the typical term of a headmaster averaging six years, Bramble’s 33-year tenure at Heritage Hall has been remarkable on many levels. “The Bramble Years” have become synonymous with numerous National Merit Scholars, Presidential Scholars, nationally recognized academic and debate programs, an acclaimed performing arts program and many state athletic championships.

He oversaw innumerable capital improvements and campus beautification projects while spending many years cultivating an exceptional faculty that is dedicated to students’ success.

Under Bramble’s leadership, Heritage Hall has emerged as one of the leading independent schools in the Southwest, featuring 16 Advanced Placement courses, as well as electives in statistics, anatomy and physiology, forensic science, philosophy, art history, Mandarin Chinese, computer applications, web design, broadcast journalism, networking apprenticeship, instrumental music, stagecraft, digital photography, film studies and production, dance, several leadership courses, and a robust, challenging independent studies program.

Bramble was appointed Heritage Hall’s fourth headmaster in 1988. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Amherst College and a master’s degree in education from Harvard University, and has held several other positions at Heritage Hall during his tenure, teaching honors English and coaching boys’ soccer for many years. In 2020, Heritage Hall’s board of trustees appointed Bramble as the school’s first president.

Bramble’s tenure began as the school was entering its 20th year of operation. As the newly appointed headmaster of a relatively young independent school, Bramble brought the perspective of a leader whose experiences were entirely shaped and informed by his own independent school education and career.

Upon his arrival in 1988, Bramble addressed Heritage Hall’s faculty on his educational philosophy, which resonates as strongly today as it did then.

“Good schools do not have to choose between excellence in cognitive, affective, or physical education,” he said. “But if circumstances mandated a choice, I would unequivocally place my emphasis on programs and activities which touch the heart and elevate the human spirit. Everything in education and in life that has value and goodness will follow.”

In December 2019, Bramble announced his plan to retire at the conclusion of the 2020-21 academic year. In October 2020, following a thorough national search, the school’s board of trustees announced the appointment of Aaron Fetrow as Bramble’s successor, effective July 1, 2021.

Fetrow comes to Heritage Hall from Roanoke College in Salem, Virginia, where he has served as vice president for Resource Development, vice president for Student Affairs, and dean of students. He holds a law degree from the University of Tennessee College of Law in Knoxville, Tennessee, a Master of Arts in history from Truman State University in Kirksville, Missouri, and a Bachelor of Science in history from Manchester University in North Manchester, Indiana.

Founded in 1969, Heritage Hall is a co-educational college preparatory school, located on a 112-acre campus in northwest Oklahoma City. As one of few secular private schools in the state, Heritage Hall offers a challenging academic curriculum for students from preschool through grade 12, as well as unique leadership opportunities, a wide spectrum of athletics, a well-developed fine arts program, a nationally recognized debate program, and a 100% college acceptance rate among its seniors each year.

MARTHA BURGER
PRESIDENT
OKLAHOMA CITY UNIVERSITY

BURGER BRINGS CORPORATE FINANCE BACKGROUND TO OCU

In her brief tenure at Oklahoma City University, President Martha Burger has drawn from an accounting education and extensive corporate background to improve the school’s balance sheet.

The former Chesapeake Energy treasurer and human resources executive has recapitalized OCU’s debt structure, and she has added valuable assets to the school’s balance sheet, providing a solid base for long-term financial sustainability.

Burger also added the university’s first vice president for diversity and inclusion, setting into action dynamic plans for diversity, equity and inclusion.

After nearly three years as the university’s 18th president, Burger is stepping down from the post, but the OCU alumnus plans to continue her service to the university as a volunteer, helping to lead a strategic fundraising effort.

“President Burger’s financial acumen, tenacity and heart have strengthened Oklahoma City University and her legacy will continue to drive success for the university for decades to come,” said Paul McLaughlin, chairman of the OCU Board of Trustees.

At the time of her retirement announcement last year, Burger expressed her gratitude.

“Thank you to our students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends who have been such an encouragement to me during my presidency,” she said. “I am looking forward to building on the progress we have made and continuing to advance OCU and the chance for future Stars to have access to the remarkable educational opportunities at OCU.”

Burger earned a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting and a Master of Business Administration from Oklahoma City University. Prior to her tenure as OCU president, Burger served Chesapeake Energy for 17 years as senior vice president of human and corporate resources and 11 years as treasurer.

As a top liberal arts and sciences university, Oklahoma City University has been leading students to their creative edge for more than a century. OCU is a diverse community of academic achievers, big thinkers, independent spirits, and dedicated artists.

At OCU, students from across the globe follow their passions and excel in the sciences, as well as religion, business, nursing and the performing arts.
THE POWER LIST

DAVID N. “CHIP” CARTER JR.
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
CRISTO REY OKLAHOMA CITY CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

CARTER’S BROAD BACKGROUND SERVES CRISTO REY HIGH SCHOOL

Chip Carter is president and chief executive officer of Cristo Rey Oklahoma City Catholic High School, a rigorous college preparatory school for families of limited economic means.

Carter has had a varied professional career, spanning multiple industries over more than 25 years. A veteran of dozens of political campaigns, he served on Steve Forbes’ 1996 presidential campaign and was the campaign manager for Oklahoma’s successful Right to Work Campaign in 2001.

He later moved into real estate development and focused on the aerospace industry. He also has led investor relations for an Oklahoma City-based hedge fund, and he has served as vice president of a central Oklahoma public relations and public affairs agency.

Carter is a member of the Board of Trustees for the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence, a member of the Economic Club of Oklahoma and a member of the Board of Advisors for both the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber and the South Oklahoma City Chamber. He is also a past president of the Downtown Club of Oklahoma City.

He earned his bachelor’s degree in philosophy from Kenyon College in 1991.

Carter is married to Lori Carter, senior deputy attorney general, and they have a son in college and two daughters in high school. He is active at Christ the King Catholic Church, and he enjoys watching his children play sports, pheasant hunting and discussing politics.

Now in its third year, Cristo Rey OKC has 230 students in the ninth, 10th and 11th grades. The school integrates a Corporate Work Study Program with local businesses that prepare graduates to succeed in college and in life.

Cristo Rey OKC is the 33rd school in a national network of 37 schools and is located on the campus of OSU-OKC.

The Cristo Rey Network is the only network of high schools in the country that integrates four years of rigorous college preparatory college academics with four years of professional work experience through its Corporate Work Study Program.

AARON COLLINS
SUPERINTENDENT
METRO TECHNOLOGY CENTER

COLLINS COMES HOME TO LEADERSHIP ROLE AT METRO TECH

After two decades in leadership positions across the South, Aaron Collins returned to his Oklahoma roots in June 2020 to become superintendent of Metro Technology Center.

“Being here is like coming home,” Collins said after taking the position.

In the 20 years prior to his appointment, Collins held educational positions across Tennessee, Kentucky, Georgia and Arkansas. He coached basketball and softball and taught middle school math, high school history and college communication courses. Collins then served as assistant principal and principal before being named superintendent of schools in Fulton, Kentucky.

Collins’ journey in education began at Oklahoma Christian University, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in education. He completed his student teaching at Millwood Elementary School in northeast Oklahoma City and then received the university’s School of Education Distinguished Alumni Award in 2014.

Collins has a Master of Science degree from Tennessee Technological University, and he is completing his Ph.D. in educational leadership and administration at Tennessee State University.

Collins says Metro Tech offers distinct, lifelong learning opportunities for the Oklahoma City community.

“We gratefully serve in the city center of the state’s capital at one of the largest career techs in Oklahoma,” he said. “We work together to serve students, business clients, partners and our community. With such a wide variety of services, we demonstrate daily that we are invested in lifelong learning. From Head Start to middle and high school programs, to our adult programs, to leadership training at our downtown business campus, we are #MT4LIFE!”

Metro Tech staff have quickly embraced Collins’ enthusiastic leadership and regular visits to their campuses, where he hosts a YouTube show called “Weekly Wrap Up.”

He has not missed a week in his regular communications, and it has changed the culture dramatically. The 10-minute program features the work and passion of staff, students and businesses in Metro Tech’s service area. He often ends the show with, “It’s a great day at Metro Tech!”

Located in the center of our Oklahoma’s largest city, Metro Tech is fully engaged in a vibrant community that is home to Oklahoma’s largest business district and a dynamic urban population.

Diverse in staff and in student demographics, the school serves more than 94,000 customers each year and the district’s size is greater than 140 square miles.
DENEGRI RETURNS TO ALMA MATER, CARRIES MISSION FORWARD

A 1980 graduate of Mount St. Mary High School, Talita DeNegri returned to her alma mater in 2004 as the Catholic preparatory high school’s president and principal.

The lifelong educator says returning to lead her alma mater was never in her long-range career plans, but the call came a few years after she was recognized as Oklahoma’s teacher of the year in 2000. After 15 years at Mount St. Mary’s, DeNegri says she is proud of just about every facet of the school, from the faculty and students to the school’s academic programs and the surrounding community.

DeNegri said Mount St. Mary is distinguished by its commitment to community service, cultural diversity and academic opportunity for the gifted as well as those with special needs. All student organizations and grade levels are required to perform formalized community service programs together. For example, freshmen do service work at the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma and sophomores collaborate on service projects with the Latino Chamber of Commerce. Juniors and seniors work together on Habitat for Humanity projects. The goal is to encourage students getting involved, helping those in need in ways that teach the young people the systemic reasons society has the issues it has today. The only way to do that is through service, she says.

DeNegri also is proud of Mount St. Mary’s Cornerstone Inclusion Program, established to help maximize the academic, social and spiritual potential of students with special needs. Established only four years ago, the program supports students with a range of intellectual disabilities, and it graduated its first student this year. The young man, born with Down syndrome, plans to attend college this fall.

Prior to joining Mount St. Mary as top administrator, DeNegri taught in the Oklahoma City Public School District at Southeast High School and Northeast Academy. She spent her early teaching career as an educator at Mount St. Mary High School. She earned her undergraduate degree in English and her master’s in administration from the University of Oklahoma.

Located on S. Shartel Avenue in south Oklahoma City, Mount St. Mary has served families from diverse socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds throughout its 118-year history. That diversity continues to be a defining attribute of the school’s unique character and reflects the school’s commitment to providing an excellent faith-based education to families from all walks of life.

From the school’s rigorous academic courses to its nourishing theology program, students are immersed in activities that challenge them, invigorate them, prepare them and inspire them. The school lives by the mantra, “ROCKETS for Others,” serving the community and reaching out to the underprivileged, and students recognize the Mercy Values and the Catholic Social Teachings of the church. Once students graduate, the school hopes they will carry forward the Spirit of Mercy as Disciples.

CONGRATULATIONS

to Dr. John McArthur

for your recognition by The Journal Record as one of Oklahoma’s most powerful people in education.

Cameron University is proud to have you as our president.

YOUR SUCCESS IS OUR SUCCESS

Cameron University | www.cameron.edu | 1-888-454-7600
Advanced Science and Technology Education Charter School founder and Chief Executive Officer Freda Deskin is an award-winning educator with more than five decades of teaching experience in rural, suburban and inner-city schools throughout Oklahoma.

She has taught at the University of Oklahoma College of Education, where she was honored with the Career Achievement Award. Deskin was also the founding dean of STEM education at Oklahoma City University before moving on to establish ASTEC Charter Schools in 2000.

As an undergraduate, Deskin was recognized as a “Distinguished Scholar.” As a graduate student, she was honored as a National Collegiate Scholastic All-American Scholar.

Deskin earned a Bachelor of Science degree in education from the University of Central Oklahoma. She also earned a master’s degree in education and a Ph.D. in instructional leadership and academic curriculum from the University of Oklahoma. She holds a certificate in strategic school management from Harvard University, and she has done post-graduate work in international finance at Oklahoma City University. She also has more than 2,500 hours of training in the aerospace sciences.

While teaching in Pauls Valley, Deskin was selected from a field of more than 11,000 applicants to become a finalist in NASA’s “Teacher-in-Space” project. After returning to Oklahoma, Deskin founded the Oklahoma Aerospace Academy summer space camps, where tens of thousands of students were introduced to the STEM subjects for 26 summers. Her contributions earned her a place in the National Women in Aviation Hall of Fame.

The Advanced Science and Technology Education Charter (ASTEC) School is an inner-city, tuition free, public school in Oklahoma City, serving 1,300 students in grades Pre-K through 12. ASTEC has no admittance criteria and it has a 97% poverty rate among its students.

ASTEC is accredited by the Oklahoma Department of Education under the authorization of Oklahoma State University College of Education, and was Oklahoma’s first startup charter school.

ASTEC scholars have a 92% graduation rate and the majority go on to college or to specialized career training while most are the first in their families to attend high school or college.

ASTEC offers wraparound services from counseling, a food pantry, a clothing pantry, and a fund for family basic needs.

After years of fundraising, ASTEC secured additional funding through a loan to build a new, state-of-the-art elementary school that opened in the fall of 2020 on General Pershing Boulevard in Oklahoma City. The middle and high schools are on the east end of the former Shepherd Mall.

ASTEC sets high expectations for its scholars and staff. Both have dress codes; the students wear uniforms and the staff dresses professionally. ASTEC has built a culture of mutual respect among scholars and school staff.

All incoming students are required to take nine weeks of character education, manners and etiquette training. Those behaviors are valued, reinforced and rewarded. As a result, ASTEC students are typically well-behaved and courteous. All ASTEC students are required to perform community service.

ASTEC integrates science, technology, engineering, the arts and math. Students may also study film, journalism and a host of other electives.
JOHN DESTEIGUER
PRESIDENT
OKLAHOMA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

DESTEIGUER MAKES LASTING IMPACT AT OKLAHOMA CHRISTIAN

In less than a decade, Oklahoma Christian University President John deSteiguer’s transformative effect has included restructured academic programs, strong accreditation reviews and a $70 million fundraising campaign for capital projects.

“OC’s best years are ahead as we aggressively pursue innovative, missional programs to serve new student populations and remain committed to making the Christ-centered, traditional OC experience the best it can be,” deSteiguer said.

During deSteiguer’s tenure, the university has restructured its academic colleges and added high-demand programs.

OC boasted strong accreditation reviews from the Higher Learning Commission and implemented the Student Success Center, Student Advocacy Center and Ethos spiritual life programs to promote academic and experiential excellence.

Oklahoma Christian’s $70 million advancement and fundraising efforts have spearheaded new and improved campus facilities projects, including the award-winning dining facility, The Branch; athletic facility improvements; The Brew coffee shop; Hartman Place; and the purchase of a study-abroad facility, Das MillicanHaus, in Vienna, Austria.

Academic programs also have benefited from investments in technology and learning spaces, including the Ellis Clinical Skills Lab and Simulation Center, the Citizens Bank Finance Lab, three new labs dedicated to gaming and animation and extensive renovations in spaces throughout campus.

A native of Tahlequah, deSteiguer has spent two decades in higher education. He was appointed president of Oklahoma Christian University in 2012.

He attended Northeastern State University as a political science major, and he was active in the Model United Nations program, becoming NSU’s first Truman Scholar. He served as president of student government before graduating.

A Rotary International Scholarship recipient, deSteiguer attended the University of the West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica. He married Darla, his college sweetheart, and they both earned juris doctorate degrees, magna cum laude, from the Pepperdine University School of Law.

After practicing law in Dallas, the deSteiguers returned to Tahlequah when NSU hired deSteiguer as a senior development officer and as executive director of the NSU Foundation. He came to Oklahoma Christian in January 2003 to lead the university’s advancement efforts. A record $110 million was given to OC under his watch.

He is a member of several civic groups, including the Oklahoma State Fair Board and the Oklahoma Bar Association. He currently serves as chair of the Oklahoma Independent Colleges and Universities organization.

Oklahoma Christian’s Board of Trustees announced in February that it would grant an early five-year extension to deSteiguer’s term, demonstrating support for his vision and confidence in the university’s leadership.

More than 2,500 undergraduate, graduate and nontraditional students from across the country and around the world call OC home. Students choose from 70-plus degrees across three academic divisions. They learn alongside masterful teachers and world-class experts.

Leadership successfully navigated the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, maintaining in-person learning and community experiences with scientifically supported protocol and strong communication.

President John deSteiguer has made the advantages of a private, Christian education accessible to students of all incomes. His leadership is described as courageous and bold, but he says, “It’s just doing the right thing.” OC has implemented new programs that include work-based degrees, advanced online teaching, and scholarships to meet the financial needs of many students and their families.

The park-like campus in northwest Oklahoma City offers a vibrant Christian community for residential students. Online degrees are designed to meet industry needs and often include a meaningful job. Adult students pursue advanced degrees and specialized certificates to continue education in their chosen fields.

For all types of students, Oklahoma Christian University is home to extraordinary callings.
FRIEDEMANN PLACES EDUCATION AT CORE OF ECONOMIC SUCCESS

As executive officer of district strategy and economic development for Metro Technology Centers, Cindy Friedemann approaches all areas of life with creativity and love, believing that education is at the foundation of success.

In fact, Friedemann believes that an individual’s ability to attain literacy and achieve an education and a technical skill is the fastest and most direct route out of poverty.

In her role at Metro Technology Centers, the Florida native leads teams to design partnerships for economic growth, building lasting relationships between education, business and civic leaders. Through those relationships, career and technical educators play a vital role, she says.

“It is incumbent that career and technical educators partner with employers to develop great employees from diverse backgrounds,” she says. “We must create inclusive opportunities for individuals who want to improve their lives through meaningful careers.”

From working in a state agency think tank as a strategist, to leading Francis Tuttle’s growth into the Edmond market, Friedemann has held a variety of assignments since moving to Oklahoma. During her current tenure on the executive leadership team at Metro Tech, she leads the Economic and Workforce Development Team and the Marketing and Media Communications Team. She also has served as the district’s spokeswoman through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Friedemann has helped establish Metro Tech’s Downtown Business Campus and helped relocate it to downtown Oklahoma City’s Corporate Tower. She also has led Metro Tech’s comprehensive rebranding effort.

Prior to joining Metro Tech, Friedemann served in management, community development and design positions in St. Louis, Dallas, Atlanta and Washington, D.C. With a background in research-based product growth strategies, Friedemann has provided statistical market analysis for major corporate clients, such as CNN, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Time, Newsweek, NPR, Burger King, and Arby’s.

She graduated from William Woods University with a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration, and she earned a Master of Science degree in education administration from Oklahoma State University.

A Leadership Oklahoma graduate, Friedemann has served as chair of the Oklahoma Venture Forum and founding chair of the Center for Municipal Excellence. Additionally, she serves on the board of directors for Creative Oklahoma and as public relations chair for the Oklahoma City Boat Club. In 2015, Friedemann received the Legacy Award from the Single Parent Support Network and was twice recognized as one of The Journal Record’s 50 Making a Difference.

As Oklahoma’s most diverse technology center, Metro Tech is actively engaged in the Oklahoman City community with a diverse staff and a broad range of student demographics, serving more than 94,000 customers annually. The district sprawls over a 140-square-mile area, producing graduates who use their technical educations to bring ideas to life, serving businesses, providing solutions and creating jobs.

TULSA COMMUNITY COLLEGE BENEFITS FROM GOODSON’S LEADERSHIP

Tulsa Community College President Leigh Goodson has strong ties to education, serving many roles in the classroom and in higher education administration for most of her career.

A Tulsa native, Goodson took her post at Tulsa Community College in 2014 following service in numerous roles at Oklahoma State University.

Goodson’s career has been filled with various positions, such as a university faculty member, university administrator and school board member for Tulsa Public Schools. She is passionate about student success.

She earned a Ph.D. in Education Research and Evaluation from OSU, a Master of Science in Organizational Communication from Fort Hays State University in Hays, Kansas, and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from OSU.

She serves on the board of directors for the YMCA of Greater Tulsa and the Oklahoma Innovation Institute. She is a graduate of Leadership Oklahoma class XIX and Leadership Tulsa Class 35.

She also serves as chair of the Education Task Force for the Tulsa Regional Chamber One Voice initiative as well as on its board of directors. She has a special interest in creating a pipeline for students in science, technology, engineering and math education.

Goodson completed an Aspen Presidential Fellowship in 2016 and, under her leadership, Tulsa Community College was selected as one of 30 institutions nationwide to participate in the American Association of Community Colleges Pathways Project.

In 2020, The Journal Record recognized Goodson as Oklahoma’s Most Admired CEO in the public category and inducted her into the Circle of Excellence for being honored three times as a 50 Making a Difference honoree at its annual Women of the Year event.

Tulsa Community College has served Tulsa and northeastern Oklahoma since 1970.

Now Oklahoma’s largest, multi-campus community college, TCC serves about 23,000 students in college programs annually. Four fully equipped campuses — Metro, Northeast, Southeast and West — populate the Tulsa area, along with several community campuses in the suburban areas.

TCC consistently ranks among the elite of the nation’s 1,150 community college associate degree producers, serves more college students in northeastern Oklahoma than any other public college or university and reports one of the largest freshman classes in Oklahoma every year.

Creative, innovative learning environments on every campus keep pace with rising career areas. Students can choose from associate degree and certificate options ranging from bioscience to tomorrow’s technology.
HARGIS BRINGS NEW PLAN TO OU

After taking over as the University of Oklahoma’s interim president in 2019, it did not take long for Joseph Harroz Jr. to set a new plan into motion.

Through a collaborative effort involving voices from across the university, Harroz developed a comprehensive strategic plan for the university’s future, committing to position OU as a top-tier public research university that fosters a culture of inclusivity, innovation and excellence.

His work on the project was well underway when the OU Board of Regents named him the university’s 15th president in May 2020. His strategic plan, titled “Lead on University,” was approved about two months later.

If it seems like Harroz hit the ground running, there is good reason. Prior to his promotion to the president’s office, he had spent a quarter-century serving various executive roles at OU, including dean of the College of Law.

Through his nine-year tenure as dean of OU Law, the college earned national recognition, including the highest-ever U.S. News & World Report ranking by any Oklahoma law school. Meanwhile, Apple Inc. selected OU Law as the first law school in the nation to achieve Apple Distinguished School status.

Prior to becoming law school dean, Harroz served two years as president of a publicly traded health care company, growing its market capitalization to more than $80 million.

From 1994 to 2008, he held various executive roles at OU, serving first as vice president for executive affairs and then for 12 years as general counsel, the chief legal counsel to the president, the OU Board of Regents, Rogers State University and Cameron University.

Hargis began his legal career as a legislative director and legal counsel in the U.S. Senate.

A native Oklahoman, Hargis graduated from OU in 1989 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in economics and a minor in zoology. He earned his J.D. in 1992 from Georgetown University Law Center.

Established in 1890, the University of Oklahoma is committed to changing lives through the relentless pursuit of excellence in teaching, research and creative activity. The university is focused on providing educational opportunities that prepare students for success through quality teaching, improving the world through innovative research. Sharing knowledge across Oklahoma and beyond, OU is guided by its mission to make a college education more accessible.

OU has more than 35,000 students, 7,000 employees and campuses in Stillwater, Oklahoma City and Okmulgee as well as its medical school in Tulsa. The university provides degree opportunities in virtually every discipline, serving students from all 50 states and some 100 nations. Established in 1890, OU has graduated nearly 300,000 students.
JOY HOFMEISTER
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
OKLAHOMA

HOFMEISTER FIGHTS FOR EDUCATION ON MULTIPLE FRONTS

Whether she is advocating for change in Washington, fighting for teacher pay raises in Oklahoma City or weighing in on other issues across the state, Joy Hofmeister has been a champion for education at every level of government.

First elected Oklahoma’s state superintendent in 2015 and reelected in 2018, Hofmeister is a ubiquitous leader on the state’s educational landscape.

She has championed a host of education reforms, including a repeal of No Child Left Behind, arguing against a federal “one-size-fits-all” approach to public education. Those efforts were successful when Congress passed the Every Student Succeeds Act, returning much of the authority for developing education policy to states and local districts. Hofmeister testified before a U.S. House subcommittee, advocating for strengthened state accountability for academic performance.

Under Hofmeister’s leadership, Oklahoma teachers have won two long-overdue pay increases averaging $7,300, furthering her goal of combating the teacher shortage.

The former public-school teacher has been a strong advocate for schools, especially as districts navigated the COVID-19 pandemic, fighting for federal recovery funding while also addressing racism and the need for inclusive, positive change to school climate.

Hofmeister has led a successful effort to improve academic success.

In 2016, she piloted a plan to provide the ACT for every high school junior in Oklahoma, and she was a chief architect behind the passage of House Bill 3218, which strengthened the A-F school accountability system. She also repealed the seven End of Instruction tests, then advocated for high-value assessment tools and more pathways to college and career readiness.

Hofmeister’s strategic plan and state goals center on lowering remediation, raising graduation rates and lifting educational achievement for all students. Her focus includes those with unique learning struggles as well as those who need greater academic challenges, and she has a keen eye on closing opportunity and equity gaps.

She has championed laws that strengthen the Reading Sufficiency Act, reducing bureaucratic red tape and increasing transparency in state reporting.

Hofmeister helped introduce Individual Career and Academic Plans, which engage and prepare students for the challenges of college and high-skill industry certification through mentoring, internships and personalized student academic planning.

A former small business owner, Hofmeister spent 15 years operating Kumon Math & Reading Centers, a business that created parent partnerships to ensure high academic achievement for children. At Kumon, she personally worked with more than 4,000 students to improve their educational outcomes.

Hofmeister serves on dozens of commissions and state boards, chairing the State Board of Education, State Board of Career and Technology Education and the Oklahoma Educational Television Authority Board of Directors.

The Oklahoma State Department of Education is responsible for setting policies and supervision of the state’s public school system. The agency supports local districts in the areas of instruction, educator effectiveness, special education, child nutrition, counseling, assessment and accountability and school safety and support.

GARY KASTL
PRESIDENT
BISHOP KELLEY HIGH SCHOOL

BISHOP KELLEY PRESIDENT BRINGS LONG BACKGROUND IN MINISTRY

The Rev. Gary Kastl is the president of Bishop Kelley High School and the rector of Holy Family Cathedral in Tulsa.

Ordained a priest for the Diocese of Tulsa in 2007, Kastl has served as the associate pastor at the Church of St. Mary, pastor at St. Pius X, pastor of St. Anne Catholic Church and has served in several leadership capacities for the Diocese of Tulsa.

For two years, Kastl ministered in a full-time capacity with Catholic Leadership Institute based in Wayne, Pennsylvania. While there, he served as manager of ministry development and oversaw a national program that provided leadership training and formation for Catholic leaders in the United States and Canada.

He graduated from Conception Seminary College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in liberal arts and continued his theological studies and formation at St. Meinrad School of Theology in southern Indiana, where he graduated with a master’s degree in divinity.

Kastl is a member of the Priest Personnel Board, a member of the College of Consultants for the Diocese of Tulsa, a member of the Vocation Board, chaplain to the Legatus Chapter in Tulsa, board member of Saint Francis Healthcare System in Tulsa and the pastor of Holy Family Cathedral Classical School.

Founded in 1960, Bishop Kelley High School is the diocesan Catholic high school for the Diocese of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma, serving roughly 900 students in grades 9 through 12.

Bishop Kelley’s mission is to carry on the teaching ministry of Jesus Christ by providing a Catholic, Lasallian education that develops students whose hearts and minds are prepared for a purposeful life. The school’s academic rigor pushes every student to their highest potential by offering more than 190 courses that meet students where they are and pushes them toward excellence.

From campus ministry opportunities, innovative academic curriculum and programs, numerous co-curricular offerings and its 5A athletic program, Bishop Kelley High School is a vibrant community rooted in 300 years of Lasallian education that is inspired by the teachings of Jesus Christ and St. John Baptist de La Salle.
At the University of Oklahoma, our purpose is simple, yet profound – **We Change Lives.** We’re intent on providing affordable academic excellence that prepares our students for a life of meaning, service, and success so that they are equipped to change lives too. As Oklahoma’s flagship research university, we serve and improve society through our discovery, creativity, and innovation, positively impacting Oklahoma, the nation, and the world.

**Live on, University.**
GAYLA LUTTS
SUPERINTENDENT
CANADIAN VALLEY TECHNOLOGY CENTER

Gayla Lutts became the Canadian Valley Technology Center’s first female superintendent in August 2018, but the exceptional leadership role she has played as an educator began three decades earlier.

Her career is highlighted with multiple accolades and accomplishments, including First-Year Teacher of the Year, Teacher of the Year and Professional of the Year. Her considerable professional experience includes bringing Canadian Valley Technology Center’s El Reno Campus back from ruins following an EF5 tornado that tore through the region on May 31, 2013.

Lutts was named director of the El Reno Campus one day after the storm blew through with 350-mph winds rendering the campus unusable.

Within three months of the storm, Lutts was able to relocate students, faculty and staff to facilities formerly occupied by a car dealership. Drawing input from faculty and staff, she guided the El Reno campus reconstruction process, further proving her leadership skills. Lutts was named deputy superintendent of Canadian Valley Technology Center in January 2016 and, a year later, Canadian Valley Tech’s El Reno Campus reopened.

Lutts began her educational career as a family and consumer sciences teacher at Del City High School in 1991, earning honors as Outstanding First-Year Teacher at Del City and was the recipient of the National Sallie Mae First-Year Teacher Award.

In 1997, she moved to Yukon Schools and, two years later, Lutts began working at Canadian Valley Technology Center’s El Reno Campus as the hospitality and retail services instructor. She was named Teacher of the Year at Canadian Valley in 2003.

In her early years at Canadian Valley, Lutts served as an Academic Center instructor while earning her master’s degree in administration and obtaining her Oklahoma Superintendent Certification. In 2009, she was promoted to the administration and, in 2011, she was named the Canadian Valley Professional of the Year.

As Canadian Valley Tech’s superintendent, Lutts focuses on a healthy culture of continuous improvement. Her philosophy focuses on support for faculty, helping them feel included and appreciated. The result is improved opportunities for student achievement and success.

Lutts serves on the Integris Canadian Valley Hospital Board, the Yukon Chamber Board and she was a 2019 Journal Record Woman of the Year. Making a Difference honoree.

For 50 years, the Canadian Valley Technology Center has been providing technical education to high school students and adults through an unwavering mission to prepare students for success in the workplace. The school offers dozens of short-term courses for career-minded adults, and tuition is free for full-time programs and short-term courses for those under age 24 living in the district with a diploma or equivalent. The school’s Business and Industry Services division contributes significantly to the area economy by providing affordable, customized industry training for small businesses and large corporations.

THE POWER LIST
MICHELLE KEYLON
SUPERINTENDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
FRANCIS TUTTLE TECHNOLOGY CENTER

FRANCIS TUTTLE SUPERINTENDENT LOOKING TO FUTURE OF WORKFORCE

As superintendent and chief executive of Francis Tuttle Technology Center in Oklahoma City, Michelle Keylon wants to predict future needs of Oklahoma’s workforce and build an educational solution to help it prepare.

Fuelled by technology and the removal of barriers between traditional careers, the rapidly changing workforce is creating new challenges almost faster than new solutions can be found, but Keylon says she is up to task.

“I know we have the right environment, the right culture and the right people,” she said. “We’re going to continue to do new and innovative things in education, simply because that’s just how we do it.”

Keylon has been superintendent of Oklahoma’s flagship CareerTech district since 2019. Prior to that she served in various administrative roles, including assistant, associate and, eventually, deputy superintendent. These positions have included responsibility for assessment, curriculum and instruction. She also has been responsible for innovative practices, educational trends and initiatives, as well as operations and facility management. Meanwhile, Keylon has implemented a district-wide strategic plan and has supervised instructional and support staff.

She received both a Master of Science degree in occupational and adult education and a Bachelor of Science degree in secondary education — business professions from Oklahoma State University. She later earned a doctoral degree in education from Northcentral University in La Jolla, California.

Keylon funded her postsecondary education by opening her own dance studio and quickly recognized that this was more than teaching.

Though it was a simple business, it still required attention to detail and business skills she would later teach in CareerTech classrooms.

When she became superintendent, Keylon chose to focus on a few goals for Francis Tuttle. One of those is helping the workforce overcome the skills gap.

“Several industries are becoming cloud-based, technology driven and automated. All those new skills are lost on current employees,” she said. “So, there’s a gap for current workers when their companies change.”

She also is helping to foster the new economy, or the fourth industrial revolution, that is tech-centered and data driven. This revolution was already taking shape before the COVID-19 pandemic hit but since that time it has entered overdrive.

Keylon is a member of Rotary Club 29 in Oklahoma City, the Edmond Chamber of Commerce board of directors, Edmond Sister Cities Committee, Leadership Edmond Steering Committee, Leadership Oklahoma City Class 37 and the Oklahoma City Chamber Education Policy Committee.

Francis Tuttle Technology Center serves high school juniors and seniors as well as adults with the career-specific training needed to maintain a quality workforce while closing the skills gap.

The school offers more than 40 career training programs, each using curriculum developed in collaboration with an advisory board of industry professionals. Training also includes professionalism and leadership skills, taught by industry experts who deliver insight on topics not always found in an academic setting.

Francis Tuttle also offers complete business and industry training and consulting services as well as short-term training for career enhancement or leisure activities. All programs and services maintain high standards for the benefit of the individuals, the businesses and the community.

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As director of the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology, Marcie Mack has implemented many advancements to meet the changing needs of Oklahoma businesses and industries.

In addition to creating statewide advisory committees composed of business leaders, students, educators and military personnel, Mack has built new partnerships with business and industry to help close the skills gap facing many employers.

Mack became state director of Oklahoma CareerTech in 2015, but her contributions to education have been ongoing for more than 25 years.

Before taking on her current role, Mack served as the agency’s deputy state director/chief operations officer and interim state director. Mack oversees all CareerTech operations and programs.

Prior to joining the agency, Mack served as assistant superintendent at Autry Technology Center in Enid. Before becoming assistant superintendent, Mack served in various roles within the organization.

She was honored by the career tech advocate Advance CTE with the 2017 Star of Education Rising Star Award. This award is presented to a state CareerTech director who displays unequivocal commitment to the goals and overall mission of Advance CTE. Mack currently serves as vice president of Advance CTE and will become president for the next term.

Mack earned a doctorate in educational administration and leadership from Oklahoma State University, where she also completed her master’s degree in telecommunications management. She also earned a Bachelor of Science degree in education at OSU.

Oklahoma CareerTech is often used as a model for programs across the United States and around the world. The Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education provides leadership and resources for a comprehensive statewide system of career and technology education and assures standards of excellence. The system offers programs and services in 29 technology center districts operating on 58 campuses in addition to hundreds of programs in school districts and other state educational institutions. Each technology center works closely with advisers from local industries to ensure students learn the skills needed to be valued members of Oklahoma’s workforce.

Annually, enrollments in CareerTech classes exceed 455,000. CareerTech provides competency-based curriculum and training for customized courses and training opportunities. This curriculum is developed with the input of industry professionals. Competency-based education enables CareerTech to provide students with the skills employers are seeking in the workplace.

In addition, Oklahoma CareerTech has developed the OK Career Guide – an easy online tool for all Oklahoma students, adults, veterans, parents, educators and employers to explore and guide their future.

The agency is governed by the State Board of Career and Technology Education and works closely with the State Department of Education and the State Regents for Higher Education to provide a seamless educational system for all Oklahomans.

CAREERTECH CHIEF KEEPS STATEWIDE SYSTEM HUMMING

Congratulations

Dr. Michelle Keylon

THANK YOU FOR YOUR VISIONARY LEADERSHIP.

francistuttle.edu | 405.717.7799
President Leigh B. Goodson

Your guidance and vision led the College and the community through the pandemic, kept our students on track, and set TCC on a course for greater success. As always, you kept us pointed toward building success through education, and creating an educated, employed, and thriving community.

Congratulations on being recognized for your leadership!
MCARTHUR, CAMERON WIELD ECONOMIC IMPACT

Under John McArthur's leadership, Cameron University is fulfilling a critical role within the Lawton community, providing local access to higher education and meeting industry demands for an educated workforce for a growing regional economy.

As Cameron's president, McArthur has increased university participation and impact on regional economic development through the State Chamber of Oklahoma, the Duncan Area Economic Development Foundation and the Lawton Economic Development Corp.

The university's graduates in education, business, health care fields and STEM disciplines contribute significantly to the regional and state economy while maintaining strong support for the U.S. Army and Fort Sill.

At the state level, McArthur chairs the Council of Presidents, an advisory group to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, and he is a member of the State Chamber of Commerce.

He also is involved in a statewide effort to promote cooperative research among the state's public and private universities, and to encourage private-sector involvement in university research and technology transfer.

McArthur joined Cameron as dean of its School of Science and Technology in 2004, and he was promoted to vice president for Academic Affairs in 2006 before becoming provost in 2011.

He was named the institution's 17th president in 2013.

McArthur earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in mathematical sciences from Rice University, followed by master’s and doctoral degrees in mathematics from the University of Colorado at Boulder.

He was a member of Southeastern Oklahoma State University's physics faculty from 1993-1999 and later chaired the institution’s Department of Computer Science and Technology. McArthur was a member of the mathematics faculty at Colorado State University-Pueblo from 2001-2004 before joining the Cameron community.

Cameron University's roots are deep. A year after statehood, the university was founded as an agricultural high school, serving rural families in the region. Since then, Cameron has grown into a public higher education institution that offers two-year, four-year and graduate degrees in nearly 50 program areas. The school continues to serve southwest Oklahoma, but also provides higher education to students from across the nation and around the world.

Cameron provides outstanding student-centered learning opportunities with highly qualified faculty and staff at an exceptional value. Small class sizes facilitate an environment that yields learning and student success, whether online, in-person or in hybrid formats that give students flexibility. Governed by the Board of Regents for the University of Oklahoma, Cameron University is dedicated to serving the educational and cultural needs of the region. In addition to its main campus in Lawton, it maintains a branch campus in Duncan.

SEAN MCDANIEL
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
OKLAHOMA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MCDANIEL BRINGS BIG CHANGES TO OKLAHOMA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Shortly after being named superintendent of Oklahoma City Public Schools in July 2018, Sean McDaniel was recognized as the Oklahoma Superintendent of the Year by his peers.

Over the past three years, McDaniel has led the state’s largest urban district through Pathway to Greatness, a reinvention initiative to align district facilities and resources with instructional needs. The goal was to provide equitable access to a world-class education for nearly 40,000 students who speak more than 60 languages.

With stable leadership in place and a new brand to rally around the for the first time in 20 years, McDaniel and his staff of 5,000 are working toward equity, providing innovative academic and mental health programming for the district’s diverse population.

An example of this initiative includes the launch of EmbraceOKC, which focuses on social, emotional and mental health supports, additional seats inside the district's application schools and the creation of eight Innovative Transformation Schools.

Thanks to recent investments by the district’s Board of Education, Oklahoma City Public Schools have the highest average teacher salary in the state. That distinction is enhanced by an innovative partnership with the Foundation for OKCPS, which helps bilingual and diverse paraprofessionals acquire their teaching degrees, then lead classrooms of their own.

Though the past year has brought an unprecedented number of challenges, the district has navigated COVID-19 under McDaniel’s leadership, having quickly taken steps to leverage technology to ensure all students can learn from anywhere while also providing millions of meals via new curbside meal service that continues to operate on days when students learn from home.

Oklahoma City Public Schools is a multicultural district serving students through 33 neighborhood elementary schools, 13 middle schools, nine high schools, two alternative schools and nine charter schools located within 135 square miles.

The district’s population is composed of a diverse population made up of 2% Asian, 3% Native American, 14% Caucasian, 22% African American and 54% Hispanic individuals. About 18,000 students within the district are bilingual and 13,000 are English Language Learners. Students and their families represent many different languages, but the top two languages spoken in the district are English with 59% and Spanish with 39%.

The district offers special education programs to serve 12% of the student population with disabilities or special needs. OKCPS is a CEP district, which means every student eats free breakfast and lunch every day. The district serves about 45,000 meals daily and transports an average of 12,000 students daily to and from school.
NEUHOLD-RAVIKUMAR LEADS UCO’S GROWTH IN TECHNOLOGY

As the University of Central Oklahoma’s 21st president, Patti Neuhold-Ravikumar is a champion for progress and improvement, leading the university’s pursuit of innovation in shaping the future of higher education. This includes educating for tomorrow’s skills, growing online programs that are designed and taught by UCO faculty.

Under Neuhold-Ravikumar’s leadership, UCO is partnering with businesses in the metropolitan area to expand noncredit offerings to capture opportunities to grow programs and respond to student demand and economic need. UCO has grown its online programs from two to 12, and the university has expanded its ability to award prior learning credits, expanded technology instruction and is planning for a more inclusive campus community.

Neuhold-Ravikumar earned her bachelor’s degree in psychology with an emphasis in management from Oklahoma Christian University. She earned her master’s degree in industrial/organizational psychology from the University of Tulsa. She is a doctoral candidate in organizational leadership at Concordia University in Chicago.

Neuhold-Ravikumar serves on the board of directors for the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology, the Greater Oklahoma City Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Riversport Foundation and the Oklahoma State Chamber.

She is the vice chair of the Economic and Community Development Committee of the Oklahoma State Regents of Higher Education Council of Presidents for fiscal year 2021, and she serves as an ex-officio member of the Edmond Chamber of Commerce Board of Advisors. She is also a member of the Oklahoma Business Roundtable and on the advisory board for The Oklahoma Academy.

With strong connections throughout the Oklahoma City metro, the University of Central Oklahoma is dedicated to helping students develop the confidence to succeed through transformative learning experiences. UCO prides itself on being a smart educational investment, preparing future leaders in an opportunity-rich environment with access to more than 200 student organizations.

Founded in 1890, UCO connects about 14,000 students to unmatched value found in 118 undergraduate areas of study and 77 graduate majors from its main campus in Edmond and from facilities throughout the metro area. The university is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

PATTI NEUHOLD-RAVIKUMAR
PRESIDENT
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA

connect to Central

2020-2021 Highlights

Ranked among the top institutions in the nation for social mobility
Ranked as the best public institution in Oklahoma for getting a job
Ranked No. 1 in the nation for Forensic Science
NCAA National Champions in Wrestling and Rowing
Ranked among the top institutions in the nation for response to the COVID-19 pandemic and social justice issues
Students received national awards and recognition in public health, graphic design, broadcasting and professional selling

Now Enrolling for Fall 2021
on campus or online
Byron Quinn is chair of Langston University’s Biology Department, and he also serves as the founding director of Langston’s Science Research Institute.

In 2015, Quinn was awarded $4.9 million to conduct immunology research for NASA focusing on the identification of natural medicinal plant extracts to treat immune dysregulation in astronauts during spaceflight conditions. Quinn also has received funding from the U.S. Department of Defense for human performance research and student training. In addition, Quinn and Langston were awarded a National Institutes of Health Cancer Center Partnership for research with the University of North Texas Health Science Center.

Quinn received his bachelor’s degree in chemistry from Langston, and he earned master’s and doctoral degrees in biochemistry and molecular biology from Oklahoma State University.

Langston is a public, land-grant university located in the city of Langston and the only historically black college in Oklahoma. Though located in a rural setting 10 miles east of Guthrie, Langston serves an urban mission with university centers in Tulsa and Oklahoma City, and has a nursing program planned in Ardmore. The university is a member school of the Thurgood Marshall College Fund.

The school was founded in 1897 as the Oklahoma Colored Agricultural and Normal University. It was created through the second Morrill Act in 1890, which required states with land-grant colleges to either admit African Americans or provide an alternative school for them to attend as a condition of receiving federal funds.

The university was renamed as Langston University in 1941 in honor of John Mercer Langston, civil rights pioneer, first African American member of Congress from Virginia, founder of the Howard University Law School and American consul-general to Haiti.
SHeldon finds passion for education at Casady

Trained as a corporate accountant, it did not take long for Nathan Sheldon to discover his love for education after joining Casady School. He arrived in 2003 as associate head of school and chief financial officer and ascended to head of school in 2014.

"While my educational background is not in education, I knew this was where I was meant to be from the time I set foot on this extraordinary campus," Sheldon said. "I have loved coaching, advising and teaching, and will never tire of that moment in a student’s journey when the “light bulb” goes off, and you know, they understand."

Sheldon was born and raised in Brazil and moved to the United States when he was 17. He earned a bachelor’s degree from John Brown University, where he studied accounting, and he earned a Master of Accountancy from the University of Oklahoma.

“It’s funny how life takes you places you never thought you would go,” said Sheldon. “I didn’t know where Oklahoma was until I was in college…. where I met a wonderful woman, Staci, who was from Norman.” Sheldon ultimately married Staci and moved to Oklahoma, where they raised their two children.

As Casady’s chief financial officer and operations director, Sheldon helped create a long-term master campus plan, overseeing completion of the school’s $43 million Forward Focus campaign. Sheldon also oversaw construction of the first silver LEED-certified K-12 building in Oklahoma, the W.R. Johnston Mathematics Building.

Sheldon’s most recent accomplishment has been directing in-person educational operations over the entire 2020-2021 school year. “We continue to recognize the importance of wellness for our students and have significantly boosted our psychological services and added a new learning specialist for all four divisions of the school.”

“Our teachers stepped up in amazing ways to allow for some of our students to engage remotely until they felt comfortable returning to school for in-person learning,” Sheldon said.

Before joining Casady, Sheldon held various finance and accounting positions at the Fleming Companies, Candid Color and Deloitte & Touche LLP.

Casady School is a Pre-K-12, independent, college preparatory Episcopal day school. Since it was established in 1947, Casady has developed excellence, confidence and integrity in students, preparing them with the skills and knowledge that serve as foundations for success. Casady is accredited by the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest, and it is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools, the Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools and the Malone Schools Online Network through the Malone Family Foundation. Casady is also a member of the Southwest Preparatory Conference.

SEMINOLE STATE PRESIDENT’S INFLUENCE EXTENDS BEYOND COLLEGE

In 1991, Reynolds was selected as Seminole’s “Citizen of the Year” and, in 2008, the Oklahoma College Public Relations Association named her “Communicator of the Year.” She was also named as one of The Journal Record’s “50 Women Making a Difference” in the state of Oklahoma in 2000, 2012 and 2013 – bringing her into the “Circle of Excellence” for her three-time selection.

In November 2017, she received a Distinguished Alumni Award from Oklahoma Christian University, where she graduated from with a bachelor’s degree in English. She also holds a Master of Arts in Journalism from the University of Oklahoma.

Seminole State College is a comprehensive, state-supported community college dedicated to student success and committed to educational excellence. An open-door institution located in Seminole, the college has served the educational needs of the community and surrounding counties since it was founded in 1931. Throughout its history, the community has played an integral role in the dynamic growth and progress of the institution. Administrators, faculty and staff are at the forefront of the college’s commitment to excellence and student advancement. Continuing an 80-year legacy, students represent the institution with academic distinction, a strong competitive spirit and school pride.

With more than 30 years in education, Lana Reynolds is president of Seminole State College, where she has been serving as the institution’s first female president since 2017.

Reynolds has a lengthy background of leadership in her profession and in her community. She is a past president of the Seminole Chamber of Commerce and the Seminole Rotary Club. She also has served as chair of the Oklahoma State Regents Communicators Council and is a past president of the Oklahoma College Public Relations Association.

A founding board member of the Jasmine Moran Children’s Museum, Reynolds has served as president of the Museum’s governing board. She is currently chair of the Seminole Tourism Council.

Reynolds is a graduate of Leadership Oklahoma – Class XVII – and she serves as chair of Leadership Oklahoma’s statewide Board of Directors. She also serves on the Board of Advocates for the Oklahoma Children’s Hospital Foundation, the Board of Directors for the Oklahoma Academy for State Goals and the Board of Directors for the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence. Reynolds is a member of the Governing Board of Oklahoma Christian University.

She is a member of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Council of Presidents and serves as chair of that group’s Economic and Community Development Committee. She is chair-elect of the Council of Two-Year College Presidents.
Dr. Kayse Shrum's résumé speaks for itself, which is why the Coweta native was appointed the 19th president of Oklahoma State University effective July 2021.

Shrum has led a career of firsts, with the OSU appointment making her the first female president of a land-grant institution in the state. She will be leaving her post at the OSU Center for Health Sciences, where she has been the president since 2013. Her appointment to head OSU-CHS made her the first woman to be a president and dean of a medical school in state history.

She earned that appointment after two years as the provost of OSU-CHS and dean of the OSU College of Osteopathic Medicine. She started work at OSU-CHS in 2002, quickly moving up to serve as the chair of the Department of Pediatrics for seven years.

Shrum currently holds the George Kaiser Family Foundation Chair in Medical Excellence and Service and the Saint Francis Health System Endowed Chair of Pediatrics.

Prior to moving into the realm of academics, Shrum worked on her residency in pediatrics at Tulsa Regional Medical Center for three years. She earned her osteopathic medical degree in 1998 from the OSU College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Shrum worked with Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Bill John Baker and his administration to establish the nation's first tribally affiliated medical school, the OSU College of Osteopathic Medicine at the Cherokee Nation, in Tahlequah. It opened in the fall of 2020.

Her accomplishments include securing landmark funding in 2019 from Purdue Pharma for $197.5 million to create the National Center for Wellness and Recovery for addiction treatment and research to address the national opioid addiction epidemic.

In March 2019, Gov. Kevin Stitt appointed Shrum to his Cabinet as Oklahoma's first secretary of science and innovation. In that role, she played a role in the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Oklahoma State University Center for Health Sciences was founded in 1972 as the Oklahoma College of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery. In 1988, Oklahoma College of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery merged into the OSU System and embraced a new name – the OSU College of Osteopathic Medicine.

In 1997, OSU-CHS was established as an academic health center to extend OSU's reach and capabilities in the health sciences. Today, OSU-CHS is a premier academic health center comprising the College of Osteopathic Medicine, the School of Biomedical Sciences, the School of Forensic Sciences, the School of Health Care Administration and the School of Allied Health.

The OSU College of Osteopathic Medicine has graduated over 3,000 physicians. More than half of graduates remain in Oklahoma to practice medicine, with nearly 1 in 4 practicing in a community of 10,000 or less. Two-thirds of the graduates practice in primary care (family practice, pediatrics, internal medicine and obstetrics and gynecology) and one-third practice in specialty areas such as dermatology, neurology, surgery, obstetrics, gynecology, ophthalmology, psychiatry, anesthesiology and gastroenterology.

Mount St. Mary Catholic High School

Congratulations, Mrs. DeNegri!

Continuing the legacy of educating our state's finest students, first led by the Sisters of Mercy in 1903!
As head of school at Victory Family School in Norman, Ed Taylor believes a school culture infused with Christian role models, the Word of God and best practices from both education and business will result in exceptional student achievement.

Taylor, who likes building new relationships and opening his door to visitors, sums up his approach in five words, “Love God and Love People.”

With more than 20 years in education, Taylor took on the role of head of school in 2020, continuing Victory’s journey of rapid growth that began in 2017. The Christian school has been adding students, faculty, staff and grade levels ever since. The school finished the academic year with 149 students, offering classes from Pre-K through grade 6. This fall, Victory will welcome its first class of seventh graders, and the school expects enrollment to reach 160 students.

Taylor began his career as a teacher and coach in the Oklahoma City Public School District. He quickly became an administrator, launching an executive career that has included positions in urban, suburban and rural school settings.

He was an innovative contributor while serving as director of technical career education at Moore Norman Technology Center in the mid-2000s. He implemented programs to facilitate emerging career paths in pre-engineering and information technology, allowing Moore Norman Technology to provide national-class technology training to college-bound high school students. These courses offered up to 40 hours of college concurrent mathematics enrollment and lab resources that rivaled the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University.

In addition to his career in school administration, Taylor has spent many years as a diversity coach and educational consultant to districts around the country. He also has an extensive background in corporate sales and church administration.

Taylor earned his bachelor’s degree in biology and physical education from East Central University and his master’s degree in secondary administration from the University of Central Oklahoma.

Victory Family School is a preparatory school that strives to be Christ-centered in all aspects of the learning environment, teaching and leading from a biblical perspective. The school’s motto, “Terras Irradientis” is Latin for “Let them give light to the world.”

Victory’s mascot is the ram, which symbolizes Christ as both leader of the herd and as a sacrificed animal, referencing Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. The school’s vision is to equip its students with skills to communicate and demonstrate the love of God to every race, culture and generation.
CARRIE WILLIAMS
FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CURRENT BOARD MEMBER
RAINBOW FLEET

WILLIAMS REVIVED, REBUILT 45-YEAR-OLD RAINBOW FLEET AGENCY

Carrie Williams became executive director of Rainbow Fleet Child Care Resource and Referral in 2014, inheriting an organization at a crossroads. Financial and operational struggles had shaken the organization to its core, causing the public and donors to question the agency’s viability. Undaunted by the enormity of her task, Williams forged ahead and, within months, stabilized the agency’s programs and re-earned the trust of the agency’s donors and those it serves.

Once back on solid ground, Williams transformed the agency, reshaping the 45-year-old nonprofit into a modern organization with expanded services to make a greater community impact.

As part of her work, Williams brought in additional grant funding as well as contracts, and she successfully raised Rainbow Fleet’s community profile, enabling the agency to serve more child-care professionals and families. Her efforts culminated in a partnership with Oklahoma City Public Schools to create the Rainbow Fleet Early Education Center.

Williams’ passion for early childhood education stretches beyond her work at Rainbow Fleet. She also volunteers with many education-focused organizations, serving as co-chair of the Implementation Committee with the Oklahoma Clearinghouse for Early Childhood Success and on the leadership team at Smart Start Central Oklahoma. She is a member of Oklahoma City Public Schools’ Early Childhood Taskforce, OSU-OKC’s Early Care Advisory Committee and the Family Services and Child Development Advisory Committee at Rose State College.

A graduate of the University of Central Oklahoma, Williams was recently named chief operating officer at the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness. However, she will remain active with Rainbow Fleet as a member of the agency’s board of directors.

For more than 45 years, Rainbow Fleet has provided innovative child development programs to families and child-care service providers. Rainbow Fleet helps families locate quality child-care options and assists child-care providers with a multitude of services, including licensing and technical assistance as well as age-appropriate activities and curriculum.

Rainbow Fleet Early Education Center provides high-quality early childhood educational experiences to children, ages 6 weeks to 4 years old, and after school programming for pre-kindergarten children who attend Horace Mann Elementary.

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Looking to the Future

As we acknowledge the lasting impact of Burns and Ann Hargis, we welcome Dr. Kayse Shrum and her vision for the university and the bright orange future ahead. The first female president and dean of a medical school in the state of Oklahoma, she will now be the first woman to lead the OSU system. Hailing from Coweta, Oklahoma, Dr. Shrum is a proven rural and public health champion who embodies the land-grant mission of education and service.

Building on the Past

OSU President Burns Hargis' transformative leadership changed OSU forever. His 13-year presidency saw record-setting fundraising, enrollment growth, new and enhanced facilities and the elevation of the university’s reputation for academic excellence and groundbreaking research.