



NORTHERN
Oklahoma College
TOKAWA | ENID | STILLWATER

**July 2026
Edition 17**



Alumni Spotlights

Get to know NOC Alumni Advisory Board Member Josh Nichols

STORY ON PAGE 2.

Get to know NOC Alumnus, Chuck Lester, Dr. PH

STORY ON PAGE 3.



WELCOME

The NOC Alumni and Foundation department want to welcome you to our newsletter. We will share new information quarterly.



Daisy Award

**LERNA DEYIRMENCIAN
HONORED**

SEE PAGE 9

The Gathering

SEE PAGE 10



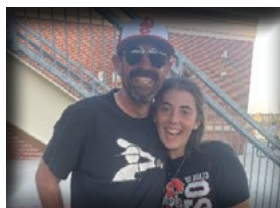
The goal of this newsletter is to nurture relationships with alumni, donors, and friends. We will keep you updated on exciting things happening within the Northern family.



Alumni Events

Catch up on events and new things happening at Northern as well as what to expect in the upcoming months.

Go to:
<https://www.noc.edu/development/alumni/>



A Walk Down Memory Lane

READ MORE ON PAGES 24-32



Life changing.

Alumni Spotlight



ALUMNI ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER

JOSH NICHOLS

NOC Tonkawa 2000 Alumnus

AA Social Science

Activities - Mens Basketball FCA

What makes NOC Lifechanging?

What truly makes Northern Oklahoma College a life-changing experience isn't just the education, but the deeply intentional community built within its walls. At NOC, you aren't just a name on a roster; you are part of a network of faculty, staff, and peers who are genuinely invested in your personal and academic evolution. There is a rare, driving culture of intentional care here—a collective commitment to ensuring you don't just get by, but truly succeed and grow. The relationships you forge with professors who mentor you and peers who challenge you create a powerful safety net and a launching pad all at once, fundamentally altering how you see your own potential and shaping who you become.

What advice would you give new alumni and/or students?

As you step into this next chapter, remember to take advantage of every opportunity to grow and connect. The education gets you started, but it's the relationships you build—and keep—that will truly change your life. Stay curious, keep pushing your boundaries, and stay linked to the mentors and peers who want to see you succeed.

In a few short sentences tell us about yourself.

After spending 23 incredible years coaching college basketball across the Midwest, I recently wrapped up my first year as the head girls basketball coach and assistant track coach at Tonkawa High School. Beyond the court

and the track, I have the privilege of shaping minds in the classroom by teaching U.S. History and Military History. I have 2 children Luke 22 Katie 19 and have been married to my wife DeAnn for 24 years.



How has NOC helped guide your career path?

When I look at my career path, it directly traces back to the coaches and professors I had at NOC. They were the ones who truly instilled in me the value of hard work, discipline, and education. Because they took the time to invest in my growth, they set a standard for what impactful leadership looks like. NOC didn't just guide my career path; it gave me the blueprint for how I wanted to show up for the next generation as a teacher and a coach.



Faces of NOC

Alumni Spotlight

CHUCK LESTER, DR.PH

NOC Tonkawa 2002 Alumnus
Associate of Arts in Social Sciences
Profession - Assistant Director of
Community Wellness Programs at OSU

In what ways did NOC offer you a life-changing experience?

I arrived at NOC without much hope that I'd ever get my academic career on track. For a variety of reasons, I'd never developed the skills and motivation to find success at the college level. At NOC, I finally found an environment, faculty, and staff that were invested in helping me develop those skills in addition to teaching academic content. This student-first approach restored my confidence as well as providing tangible evidence in the form of an associate's degree that I could succeed in academia.

How did NOC help guide your career path?

Especially given that I was feeling a little lost on my academic journey when I got to NOC, the Social Sciences degree track confirmed that I was headed in the right direction. Those foundational skills have applied directly to all of the jobs I've had.



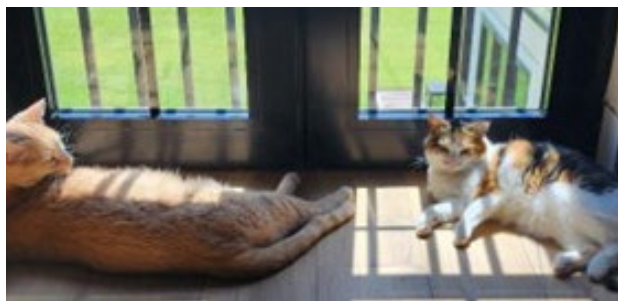
What advice would you give new alumni and/or students?

Keep going!

There's always a way forward, no matter how impossible a situation may seem. Have faith that if you continue to show up and do the work you'll find a way to reach your goal.

In a few short sentences tell us about yourself.

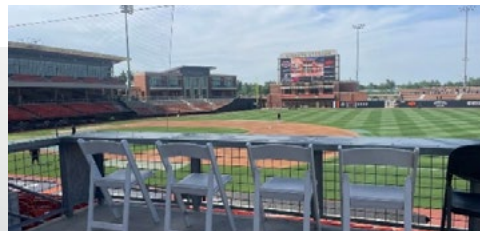
I live and work in Stillwater with my wife Jessica, who is the Marketing Director for The McKnight Center for the Performing Arts, and our two cats, who are currently unemployed. I recently graduated from Tulane University with a Doctor of Public Health degree. I also proudly serve as PA Announcer for the OSU Cowboy Marching Band.



Alumni & Friends Ball Park Social



We had such a great evening cheering on the Cowboys at the Alumni & Friends Ballpark Social! Thank you to everyone who was able to come out — we had such a fun time visiting, reconnecting, and enjoying the game together.



**NOC Alumni & Friends
BALLPARK SOCIAL**
Thursday | May 14, 2026

**SAVE THE DATE**

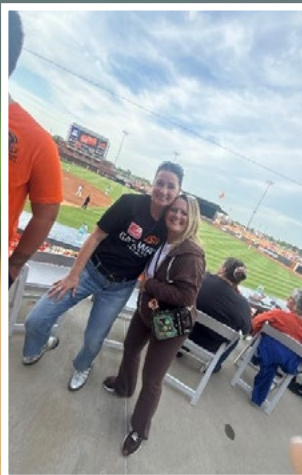
OSU COWBOYS vs. University of Arizona
6 pm | O'Brate Stadium
103 N. Bellis Street | Stillwater, OK

Stop by the NOC Alumni & Friends
Corral 29 during the game for fun, food
and drinks while they last!

SCAN TO
PURCHASE
TICKETS
\$12


NOC ALUMNI & FRIENDS
SPECIAL OFFER

<https://okstate.venue.net/promotions/NOC>
Questions? Contact Ciera Kirby
ciera.kirby@noc.edu | 580.628.6685



Three inducted into NOC Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame



Three NOC alumni were inducted into the Distinguished Hall of Fame last Thursday in Tonkawa. Pictured (L-R): NOC Vice President for Development & Community Relations Sheri Snyder, Adam Leaming (Class of 2001), Rick Scott (Class of 1983), NOC President Diana Morris. Wilma Harman (Class of 1973) was inducted posthumously. (photo by Caroline Hillock/NOC).

Rick Scott, Adam Leaming, and Wilma Harman were inducted into the Northern Oklahoma College Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame Thursday night at NOC Tonkawa inside the Renfro Center.

Scott (Class of 1983) is the President of Rick Scott Construction, Leaming (Class of 2001) is the Ponca City School Superintendent while Harman (Class of 1973) was a former Fine Arts Faculty Member who was inducted posthumously.

Also, the NOC Legacy Scholarship was awarded to Ashtyn Crowder, an incoming freshman from Tonkawa who will attend NOC Tonkawa in the Fall of 2026. She is the daughter of Kurt and Tawnya Crowder. Tawnya Crowder is a 1997 graduate of NOC Tonkawa earning an associate degree in Business Administration. The scholarship award is \$1,000.

Scott was introduced by Dr. Rick Edgington, Vice President for Enrollment Management. Leaming was introduced by NOC Emeritus Faculty Pat Hullett and Harman was introduced by former NOC Roustabout Kris DeYoe Vickery. Each distinguished alum was formally inducted by NOC President Diana Morris saying, "On behalf of the Northern Oklahoma College Board of Regents, it is my honor to

recognize and pay tribute to the late Wilma Harman, Adam Leaming, and Rick Scott into the Northern Oklahoma College Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame."

After Karen Harman McGowan spoke on behalf of Harman, Leaming, and Scott gave their acceptance remarks, President Morris closed the event.

"What a fabulous evening," Morris said. "I always enjoy this opportunity to gather and hear all the wonderful stories about your time on campus. We are proud of Northern and the impact that it has had on so many lives."

"Adam (Leaming) and Rick (Scott), Northern is honored to recognize you this evening. It was a pleasure to visit with you and meet your family and friends who are here tonight to support you. We are honored

that you chose NOC as the spot to begin your educational career, and we are proud of your many accomplishments since your graduation and the excellence you bring to your respective fields."

"To the family of the late Wilma Harman," Morris added, "Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to honor and celebrate Wilma's legacy."

Morris added her congratulations to Alumni Legacy Scholarship winner Ashtyn Crowder.

"Thank you, Ashtyn, for choosing Northern and continuing your family's legacy with us. We look forward to following your time here on campus and know we will be seeing wonderful things from you in your future endeavors."

NOC has now inducted 63 distinguished alums into the Hall of Fame. Nominations for the Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame are accepted throughout the year.

NOC Fine Arts students, under the direction of Shannon Varner and Dr. Edward Dixon, sang NOC's Alma Mater. Alia Dust sang the National Anthem at the beginning of the event.

For more information, contact Ciera Kirby, Director of Alumni & Community Relations, at ciera.kirby@noc.edu.





NOC Legacy Scholarship



NOC Director of Development and Annual Giving Kayla Wooderson presents the 2026 Legacy Scholarship to Ashtyn Crowder (left) from Tonkawa High School. Crowder will attend NOC Tonkawa in Fall 2026. (photo by Caroline Hillock/NOC).

The NOC Legacy Scholarship was given to Ashtyn Crowder at the Alumni & Friends Reunion and Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame Ceremony on March 26, 2026. Ashtyn is an incoming Freshman on the Tonkawa campus. She will be working toward her goal as a speech pathologist. She is the daughter of Kurt and Tawnya Crowder. Tawnya is a 1997 graduate of NOC Tonkawa earning a Science associate degree in Business Administration.

NOC Student Art Exhibition Beyond the Frame



Northern Oklahoma College art students (from left) Delaney Fox, Wichita, Kansas; Neally Lantz, Stillwater; Macie Brophy, Ponca City; and Anna Jones, Medford, are featured in *Beyond the Frame*, the annual student art exhibition on view April 14-May 5 in the Eleanor Hays Art Gallery, NOC Tonkawa. A reception honoring all NOC student artists with work in the exhibit is set for 5 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Saturday, April 18 in the art gallery. The exhibition and reception with refreshments is free and open to the public. (Photo by Audrey Schmitz)

Beyond the Frame—the annual Northern Oklahoma College student art exhibition was on display through May 5 in the Eleanor Hays Art Gallery in the Kinzer Performing Arts Center at NOC Tonkawa.

Visual art students Macie Brophy, Delaney Fox, Anna Jones and Neally Lantz planned and organized the exhibit as part of the requirements for a credited Portfolio/Gallery Seminar at NOC. *Beyond the Frame* highlights the original art of these four artists along with works of other students enrolled in visual art and digital imaging classes during the 2025-2026 academic year.

Under the guidance of Audrey Schmitz, gallery director and art faculty, the art majors gained experience in developing the infrastructure of the exhibit, including choosing the show title and collaborating with NOC graphic designer Paige Larson on the poster design. The students created an original “skyscape” oil painting for the poster background. They also prepared their own work to be exhibition-ready, produced artist statements and title cards and installed dozens of additional curated works made by other students, all as part of their professional growth as working artists.

Concerning plans after graduating from NOC, Jones will transfer to UCO, Edmond, to complete a bachelors in Art, and Fox is pursuing internships in art and hopes to ultimately teach and produce work in her own studio setting. Brophy inspires to be a graphic designer after earning a

bachelors degree, and Lantz will complete her art degree at UCO or OSU with an emphasis on digital graphic design.

“Overall, there is great diversity of media, subject matter and style in the works on view in *Beyond the Frame*, and the student show is always the most popular event in the Eleanor Hays Gallery,” Schmitz added. “Again, this year we are offering a ‘gallery gift shop’ of affordable art (starting at \$10), making it a perfect opportunity to buy original work at great prices from talented artists early in their career.”

With over 200 works on display, visitors will find watercolor, acrylic and oil paintings; sculptures; pencil, charcoal and ink drawings; pottery and ceramic forms; digital media; masks; bas relief tiles and mixed media works. Select items are available for purchase.

A reception honoring all students is scheduled from 5 – 6:30 p.m. Saturday, April 18 in the art gallery. The exhibition and reception with refreshments is free and open to the public.

Regular gallery hours are 1 p.m. – 5 p.m. Monday – Friday and during events in the KPAC.

The exhibit will also be open following NOC commencement Saturday, May 2. For more information about *Beyond the Frame* contact Schmitz at 580.628.6670 or audrey.schmitz@noc.edu.

NOC Criminal Justice students hear from Industry Professionals at Enid Showcase



ENID, Okla. — Northern Oklahoma College criminal justice students heard from professionals across several areas of the field during a Criminal Justice Showcase held Wednesday at NOC Enid.

Guest speakers included Chad Mittelstet and Jessica Seigars of the Oklahoma Juvenile Authority, Casey Von Schrittz of the Enid Police Department, and Travis Ray Downey and Courtney Schlarb of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections Parole and Probation division.

Each speaker shared examples from their work in the field and discussed the day-to-day realities of careers in criminal justice, offering students practical insights into law enforcement, juvenile services, and community supervision.

“Our goal is to connect what students learn in the classroom with what actually happens in the field,” said NOC Criminal Justice Instructor Troy Cochran. “Bringing in working professionals gives students a real-world perspective that simply cannot be replicated through textbooks alone.”

All five speakers are Northern Oklahoma College alumni.

For more information about the NOC Criminal Justice program, contact Cochran at troy.cochran@noc.edu.



NOC welcomes new members into the American Criminal Justice Association



Seven NOC students were inducted into the American Criminal Justice Association on April 9. Pictured (L-R): Hayden Grell, Tonkawa; Lexi Merrill, Hominy; Angelina Rodriguez, Enid; Taryn Ellis, Enid; Riley Hoover, Hunter; Lucinda Foreman, Ponca City; Avry Nailon, Weatherford. (photo provided)

Northern Oklahoma College’s Criminal Justice Society proudly inducted new members into the American Criminal Justice Association during a ceremony held on April 9, 2026 on campus. The event marked an important milestone for students joining the organization and committing to the values of professionalism, leadership, and service within the criminal justice field. Students inducted included Hayden Grell, Lexi Merrill, Angelina

Rodriguez, Taryn Ellis, Riley Hoover, Lucinda Foreman, and Avry Nailon.

The Criminal Justice Society is a student led organization that provides members with opportunities to engage beyond the classroom through on campus activities, community service projects, field trips to criminal justice agencies, and participation in regional and national conferences and competitions.

The ceremony was attended by Troy Cochran, advisor and current national president, along with Ryan Paul, Dean of Students, and Stacey Frazier, Division Chair.

“Their presence underscored the significance of the occasion and the college’s continued support for student involvement and professional development,” said sponsor Troy Cochran.

New members were formally recognized and took part in the traditional oath and pinning ceremony, symbolizing their commitment to the principles of the organization and their future in the criminal justice profession.

The induction ceremony reflects the ongoing growth and strength of the Criminal Justice Society and its mission to prepare students for meaningful careers through leadership, service, and real-world experience.

NOC Mass Comm students earn awards at OKC event



NOC Mass Communication students attended a college broadcaster convention in Oklahoma City April 9. Pictured (L-R): Mass Communication instructor Dean Percy, Corban Burrell, Enid; Kadi Kienholz, Marland; Catie Blum, Ponca City; and Rowan Svob, Pond Creek. (photo provided)

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. – Northern Oklahoma College Mass Communication students attended the Oklahoma Broadcast Education Association/Oklahoma Association of Broadcasters annual convention.

The convention was held April 9 at the OKANA Resort in Oklahoma City.

Attendees were Corban Burrell, Enid; Kadi Kienholz, Marland; Catie Blum, Ponca City; and Rowan Svob, Pond Creek.

Earlier this year, students submitted digital work in the OBEA student competition going up against other students from across the state and attended the awards ceremony.

Only the top three submissions are recognized in each category. In the Public Service Announcement category, Kadi Kienholz place 2nd and Corban Burrell placed 3rd.

NOC plans DMI Student Showcase, Epic Shorts Film Festival



2026 DMI Student Showcase is set for Friday, May 1, from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Wilkin Hall 108/110. Pictured is scene from the 2025 student showcase.

The Northern Oklahoma College Digital Media Institute's Annual Student Showcase will be held on Friday, May 1, from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. in Wilkin Hall room 108/110.

DMI's graduating students will be showcasing their creative skills in Maya, After Effects, Photoshop, Premiere Pro, and much more.

Visitors are welcome to take a tour, watch demo reels, talk to the students, and enjoy traditional free ice cream floats.

DMI Director Brad Matson said, "The goal of DMI is to furnish students with an expertise skill set required to secure employment within the realm of cutting-edge computer graphics.

Over the span of two years, the program centers on artistic methods

utilizing contemporary technology. DMI students cultivate the capacity to translate their concepts and visions into various realms of digital media, encompassing 3D modeling, texturing, animation, motion capture, game environment and asset development, visual effects, motion graphics, graphic design, digital filmmaking, video editing, and audio refinement."

"This is a great opportunity to expand the awareness to potential employers as well as introducing companies to a talent pool of educated, creative, and driven artists, in addition to exposing talented prospective students to the DMI program and the local educational facilities," Matson added.

Epic Shorts Student Film Festival

The 18th Annual Epic Shorts Student Film Festival will take place on May 1 at 4 p.m. in the Wilkin Theatre, showcasing nine original short films produced entirely by Digital Media Institute students.

These filmmakers handled every aspect of the process, from initial writing and directing to lighting, sound, and final production phases. According to festival founder Brad Matson, this year's lineup represents the highest

quality of work in the event's history. Attendees can look forward to a fun and competitive screening where cash prizes will be awarded for first, second, and third place, along with a special Audience Choice award.

All proceeds and donations benefit Diabetes Solutions of Oklahoma. These funds provide critical financial support for children in Oklahoma, helping them access insulin pumps, medical supplies, education, and scholarships for specialized diabetes camps.

Enid city attorney Melissa Blanton speaks at NOC Enid Speaker Series



NOC Enid Hispanic Heritage Club/Environmental Science Students attended the SGA Speaker Series event last Friday. Pictured (L-R): Dorothy Paulis (student), Ivan Aragon (student), Julian Enriquez-Gonzalez (club member), Guest Speaker Melissa Blanton, Nancy Real (club member), Mia Landin (student), and Jeremy Ejalu (student). (photo by Caroline Hillock/NOC)

Enid City Attorney Melissa Blanton spoke at Northern Oklahoma College Enid last Friday as part of the Student Government Association Speaker Series, sharing reflections on leadership, community collaboration and the influence of women in her life during Women's History Month.

Blanton said the opportunity allowed her to recognize the women who shaped her path.

"I haven't done anything amazing, but many who came before me have," she said. "This is a great opportunity to discuss ways that lead to better futures and how we can work together to make that happen."

Blanton said people in her life helped her see her potential.

"I have done a number of different things in my life because people have invested in me and showed me who I could be," she said.

She added that one of her passions is helping people connect with resources available in their communities.

"I love to find ways that people can plug into resources that are available," she said. "It's important for people to know what tools are available and how they can tap into those tools."

During the presentation, Blanton included interactive exercises designed to give attendees practical ideas they could take back to their communities.

She also shared personal items from women in her family to encourage participants to reflect on the women who influenced their own lives.

"I have placed some items on the tables from women in my family," she said. "While that won't mean anything to you, hopefully it will encourage you to examine the women in your life and how they have affected you. We all have so many people who have helped us on our paths in life."

Blanton encouraged attendees to record family stories and histories so they are not lost to future generations.

In discussing leadership, Blanton emphasized the importance of collaboration.

"One thing I want everyone to realize is that leaders make changes in the community through collaborations and partnerships," Blanton said. "You cannot do it alone. You need to see who is at the table and who you can connect with."

Blanton also spoke about recognizing individuals in the community for their contributions.

"So many people do amazing things that are never really noticed," she said. "It's a way of recognizing people for important work they do that many may not notice."

She encouraged attendees to write a note to a woman who influenced their life.

"We don't write notes anymore," she said. "But it is a great way to honor the women in your life. It will encourage and inspire them in so many ways."

Blanton also showed videos illustrating teamwork and leadership. One highlighted how geese fly in formation to increase the strength of the flock, with geese in the back honking to encourage those in front to maintain speed. Another showed how one person dancing in a park inspired others to join.

"One person following is sometimes all you need," Blanton said. Jeremy Hise, vice president for NOC Enid, thanked Blanton for her presentation and recognized the Student Government Association, led by Dean Ryan Paul and SGA sponsor Chance Blackdeer.

NOC President Diana Morris also thanked Blanton for speaking. "Melissa, thanks for your challenge today regarding family history," Morris said. "I have my great-grandmother's autobiography, and that is something special for me to have, so thank you for challenging our students. Thank you for challenging us to empower leaders in our communities."

Morris also praised Blanton's emphasis on followership.

"In all the talks I have heard about leadership, I've never heard the focus on being a gifted follower," Morris said. "I think that's genius and I'm so glad you shared that today."



NOC SGA Members pictured with guest speaker Melissa Blanton. (L-R): Deagan Jones, Kelden Payne, Speaker Melissa Blanton, Noah Morris, Oryne Stewart (photo by Caroline Hillock/NOC)

Lerna Deyirmencian earns NOC Nursing DAISY Award®



Northern Oklahoma College nursing faculty member Lerna Deyirmencian was honored with The DAISY Award® for Extraordinary Nurse Educators at the NOC 2025 Nurses' Pinning Ceremony Friday, May 1 at NOC Tonkawa.

The award is part of The DAISY Foundation's mission to express gratitude to nurses with programs that recognize them for the extraordinary, compassionate and skillful care they provide patients and families.

DAISY Award recognitions honor the super-human work nurses do for patients and families every day wherever they practice, in whatever role they serve, and throughout their careers – from Nursing Student through Lifetime Achievement in Nursing.

Deyirmencian received her Bachelor of Science in Neuroscience from UCLA and her Master of Science in Nursing from Johns Hopkins School of Nursing. She completed her nurse residency program at The Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Since joining NOC in August 2024, she has contributed to the Adult I and Adult II Theory teams and serves as a clinical instructor. Her diverse nursing background includes cardiac/telemetry, medical-surgical, post-operative, rehabilitation, post-critical care, and intermediate care. In addition to teaching, she currently works as a float pool RN at St. Mary's Regional Medical Center.

She enjoys connecting with patients on a personal level and



creating meaningful human connections at the bedside, and is committed to transforming nursing education into an approachable, engaging experience that builds both competence and confidence.

NOC Interim Nursing Division Chair Dr. Vickie Crouch said, "Lerna is an exceptional nurse who consistently models the core values of our program – excellence, integrity, resourcefulness, impactful relationships, and compassionate service. She goes above and beyond to ensure her students get the support they need both academically and emotionally. I can't think of a more deserving individual."

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurse Educators was established by The DAISY Foundation in memory of J. Patrick Barnes who died at age 33 from Immune thrombocytopenia (ITP), an auto-immune disease. The Barnes Family was awestruck by the clinical skills, caring and compassion of the nurses who cared for Patrick. They created this international award to demonstrate appreciation to faculty for their commitment and inspirational influence on their nursing students and to say thank you to nursing faculty everywhere.

Blind nominations for the award were submitted with a designated committee reviewing and ranking the nominees based on their commitment to student learning and success, utilizing personal interaction, providing rigorous instruction and innovative technologies, striving to provide high quality, accessible nursing education, and modeling the values of excellence, integrity, resourcefulness, impactful relationships, and compassionate service.

The winner was selected by the The DAISY Award® Selection Committee.

Semi-finalists included nursing faculty Deyirmencian, Wendy Spiva, Brian Baird, and Marie Head.

The winner in 2025 was NOC faculty member Rachel Kroemer.

More information is available at <http://DAISYfoundation.org>.

NOC holds nurse pinning ceremony in Tonkawa



Thirteen Northern Oklahoma College Nursing Students received their nurses' pins at a ceremony at NOC Tonkawa Friday evening in the 53rd Class of NOC Nursing.

Students receiving pins included Marissa Aase, Blackwell; Jacquelyn Collins, Enid; Ines Diaz-Lopez, Burbank; Grayce Downey, Perkins; Tiphani Rene Hull, Medford; Shelbie Raye Kelly, Gueda Springs, Kansas; Abigael Moyinoluwa Nightingale, Fairview; Arlene Oxley, Stillwater; Karlie Rose Parsons, Midwest City; Anahi Porras, Texhoma; Jesse Ryder, Ponca City; Ashlynn D. Slusser, Stillwater; and Kennedy Williams, Perry.

Nursing students from the Stillwater, Enid, and Tonkawa campuses received their pins and cited the Florence Nightingale Pledge.

The guest speaker was Dr. Nikole Hicks, former Nursing Division Chair at Northern Oklahoma College.

Dr. Hicks told the graduates, "Today, we celebrate your accomplishments and you've earned the title of nurse. But today is not the finish line, it's the starting point of your influence. Nursing is always evolving, so ask questions, seek evidence, challenge outdated practices. Be curious enough to learn and courageous enough to speak. You don't have to wait years to make a difference, your future is now."

Hicks added, "Use your power to improve the health of your communities. You'll care for people from all walks of life and not just in a hospital. Your role is not just to treat symptoms but to promote wellness."

Hicks challenged the graduates to grow in their careers and to give back to their communities.

"The degree you have earned is not a ceiling but a launch pad," she said.

"I encourage you to stay connected to NOC Nursing that helped shape you into the nurse you are becoming and be proud of where

you started," she said. "Take the opportunity to mentor students and offer your time and experiences to help others."

NOC Interim Nursing Division Chair Dr. Vickie Crouch congratulated each member of the graduating class saying, "Graduates, congratulations and we are very proud of you. You have succeeded despite the obstacles you have faced. Please don't stop here. Continue to pursue excellence and advance your career in education and represent the best of nursing."

"You are exceptional," Dr. Crouch added.

Nursing Awards

Spirit of Nursing Award (Student Vote) — Ines Diaz-Lopez

Spirit of Nursing Award (Faculty Vote) — Tiphani Hull

Alpha Delta Nu Nursing Honor Society – Ines Diaz-Lopez, Tiphani Hull, Shelby Raye Kell, Abigael Moyinoluwa Nightingale, Arlene Oxley, Anahi Porras

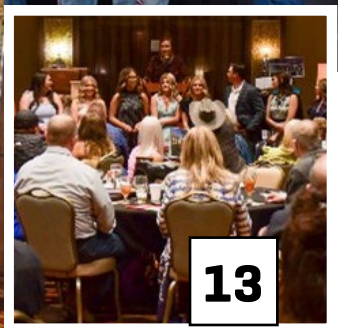
Student Nurses Association Members – Jacquelyn Collins (Officer), Grayce Downey (Officer), Abigael Moyinoluwa Nightingale (Officer), Karlie Rose Parsons (Officer), Ashlynn D. Slusser (Officer), Ines Diaz-Lopez, Anahi Porras, Kennedy Williams

Exceptional Preceptor Awards – Karla Batchelder, St. Mary's Regional Medical Center, Enid, Oklahoma

DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurse Educators – Lerna Deyirmencian



The Gathering was held on May 1 at the Osage Casino Hotel, bringing together more than 150 guests for an evening of fellowship and support for NOC Agriculture. Attendees enjoyed dinner, as well as live and silent auctions throughout the event. We are grateful to everyone who attended and helped make the evening a success while supporting the future of NOC Ag.



NOC Foundation establishes the Evelyn Coyle Horticulture Student Scholarship



Evelyn Coyle finalizes the Horticulture Student Scholarship agreement with NOC President Diana Morris.

The Northern Oklahoma College Foundation, Inc. is pleased to announce the establishment of the Evelyn Coyle Horticulture Student Scholarship Fund.

Through the generous support of Evelyn Scoles Coyle, a 1951 Alumna from Northern Oklahoma Junior College, the establishment of this permanently restricted endowed scholarship fund will provide Horticulture students an opportunity to complete their educational goals at Northern Oklahoma College Tonkawa.

NOC Distinguished Alumna 2021 and long-time Tonkawa, Oklahoma resident, Evelyn Coyle, values higher education and it is her desire to help students pursue their higher educational goals. Ms. Coyle wishes to assist deserving students to be successful in reaching their educational degrees and professional goals.

The scholarship recipient(s) will be selected from candidates submitted by the NOC Horticulture instructor and approved by the NOC Tonkawa Scholarship Committee.

A maximum of \$2,000 will be awarded annually to the scholarship recipient(s). This scholarship will be applied

toward Northern Oklahoma College program expenses for tuition, fees, books, etc.

Those wishing to make a gift to this NOC Foundation fund or others can contact the Foundation office at 580.628.6292 or online at or www.noc.edu/development/foundation/give-online/.

Northern Oklahoma College, the state's first public two-year community college, is a multi-campus, land-grant institution that provides high quality, accessible, and affordable educational opportunities and services.

NOC serves nearly 3,100 students through the home campus in Tonkawa, branch in Enid, and NOC/OSU Gateway Program in Stillwater. Of these students about 80% receive financial aid and/or scholarships. 75% of NOC students complete their degree with zero debt.

The college is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and offers associate degrees in three general areas: Arts, Science and Applied Science; the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs; and the Accreditation Commission for Education and Nursing.

NOC holds ribbon cutting for greenhouse



The Tonkawa Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting ceremony Wednesday afternoon commemorating the opening of the NOC Greenhouse at the Tonkawa Ag Complex. (photo by Caroline Hillock/NOC).

Northern Oklahoma College held a ribbon cutting ceremony Wednesday, April 22, 2026 for the new greenhouse at the NOC Tonkawa Ag Complex.

The ribbon cutting was sponsored by the Tonkawa Chamber of Commerce.

NOC President Diana Morris welcomed the audience to the event.

It is my honor to welcome you as we celebrate this milestone for Northern Oklahoma College," she said. "Adding new high-demand academic programming is a central goal to NOC's strategic plan and today's event marks significant progress toward preparing more students for entry into well-paying and secure career fields and/or transfer to a four-year institution for advanced studies."

Morris provided the background for the project.

"In 2020, a Team of staff and faculty Northern worked together to apply for a U.S. Department of Education grant that would afford us the opportunity to strengthen the institution. Through this grant and the support of many others, this greenhouse was created to support hands-on learning experiences, collaborative projects and in-depth research."

"The NASNTI program, funded through the U.S. Department of Education, supports institutions like NOC in expanding capacity to better serve Native American and low-income students," she added. "Through this five-year, \$2.2 million project, NOC has focused on three key initiatives: expanding STEM programs, strengthening student services, and increasing support for remote learners."

"This greenhouse is a direct result of those efforts and represents

a significant investment in hands-on learning and workforce-aligned education."

The NASNTI project is led by project director LeeAnna Bowling. Tricia Moore, Division Chair for Biology and Agriculture added, "This idea actually began back around 2012 when Bart Cardwell, our Sheep Herd Manager was pursuing an Oklahoma Work Force Grant. In 2019, when I was approached about a potential STEM initiative for NASNTI funding, we were able to pick discussion up again to develop this program, and secure two, beautiful teaching classrooms, by remodeling an existing space and by constructing a greenhouse facility, in addition to securing the necessary equipment to provide a state-of-the-art program and experience for our students."

"This was truly a collaborative effort," Moore added, We had input from NOC administration, NASNTI grant consultant, agriculture industry partners, Jeremy Johns and P & K Equipment, Kramer Simpson, Mike Meeker, Todd Woods, and others who meet with us bi-weekly on a Zoom feed to help us with the beginning planning stages, and all members of the Ag & Biological Sciences Division."

NASNTI Precision Agriculture Specialist Dr. Kyle Parmley gave specifics about how NOC will use a new spray rig and drone technology for the precision ag program while NOC instructor Scott Harmon followed up with his plans to work to utilize the greenhouse and incorporate his work with students to provide business internships and community involvement.

Moore also announced a recently established Horticulture Scholarship that will assist NOC students starting Fall 2026. The scholarship was established by NOC alum Evelyn Coyle.

NOC holds Commencement exercises in Tonkawa, Enid



Northern Oklahoma College Students at the Tonkawa and Stillwater campuses went through graduation exercises at the 120th Annual Commencement Saturday at Foster-Piper Fieldhouse.

Enid NOC graduates went through exercises at the Briggs Auditorium in Enid.

A total of 589 students earned degrees at the two ceremonies for Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, and Associate in Applied Science.

NOC Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Shelly Mencacci opened the ceremony, congratulating the students on reaching their goals for the academic year.

Dr. Mencacci also announced students that maintained a 4.0 GPA and those that earned two associate degrees.

She also introduced the Flag Bearers for each academic division. They include the following at NOC Tonkawa: Institutional-Jackson Rhodes; Agriculture and Biological Science-McKenna Sobasky; Business-Kaidince Calvert; Engineering, Physical Science and Process Technology-Julie Henning; Fine Arts-Delaney Fox; Health, Physical Education, and Recreation-Heath Howell; Language Arts-Christa Solpietro; Mathematics-Jose Martinez; Nursing-Arlene Oxley; Social Science-Carla West.

They include the following at NOC Enid: Institutional-Morgan Hayes; Agriculture and Biological Science-Chandler Meacham; Business-Joey Wyrick; Engineering, Physical Science and Process Technology-Egla Gomez Ochoa; Health, Physical Education, and Recreation-Gloria Baker; Language Arts-Nicholas Barker; Mathematics-Carlos De La Torre; Nursing-Anahi Poras; and Social Science-Jacob Winn.

Mencacci then presented the class with President Diana Morris Watkins conferring the degrees.

The speaker for the commencement ceremony was NOC Distinguished Alumni and famed broadcaster Jeff Medders.

Medders told graduates that NOC was not on his college radar but through a random visit to campus he said, "From the moment I stepped on campus, I really loved the place. I was a small-town kid and NOC and Tonkawa really appealed to me. It was one of the best decisions I ever made."

Medders gave some fatherly advice to graduates.

"Pick good friends," he said. "Pick the friends who make you better."

"Decide what you want to be and go be it," he added. "It takes hard work but you can do it, if you put your mind to it."

"Figure out what you're good at and what you're not good at it," Medders said. "It's important to know the difference."

Medders then added in closing, "On every tombstone there is a date of birth and date of death and in between is the dash. That dash is everything, every hardship, every success, every life touched. In the end, it's your whole story."

"Choose good friends, choose purpose, choose character, choose kindness," he concluded. "Go live your dash."

The NOC Concert Band also performed the Armed Forces Salute and the college choir performed "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

After the candidates for graduation were announced and their tassels turned, the college choir performed NOC's Alma Mater. At the Tonkawa exercises, Miranda Nax'ce Myer of the Tonkawa Tribe provided the land acknowledgement for NOC.

Three NOC employees earn OACC awards



Physical Plant Manager Stacy Burns (left), NOC Enid IT Coordinator Adrian Ibarra (middle) and Criminal Justice Instructor Troy Cochran (right), were recognized as Oklahoma Association of Community Colleges award winners for NOC. (photo by Caroline/Hillock/NOC)

Three Northern Oklahoma College Staculty members received Oklahoma Association of Community Colleges (OACC) recognized outstanding individuals in three areas: professional staff, support staff, and faculty.

Stacy Burns, Adrian Ibarra, and Troy Cochran were recognized by President Diana Morris.

The recipient of the OACC Outstanding Professional Staff award was Physical Plant Director Stacy Burns.

“We all benefit from the work Stacy and his team do here at the college,” said President Morris. “His positive attitude when faced with some challenging tasks is very much appreciated as are his eye for detail and his forward-thinking approach to campus projects.”

This year’s recipient of the OACC Outstanding Support Staff Award is Adrian Ibarra, IT Coordinator on the NOC Enid Campus.

“Whether assisting Staculty in the classroom, in our offices, or working on internal and external campus events, Adrian approaches each individual with a smile (and doesn’t make those of us who are at times technologically challenged feel inept),” Morris said.

The OACC Outstanding Faculty Award this year went to Troy Cochran, Criminal Justice instructor.

“In addition to teaching criminal justice courses and serving as an academic advisor, Troy developed the first micro credentials NOC offers and sponsors an active Criminal Justice Club and currently serves as the National President for the American Criminal Justice Society,” Morris said.



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Anita Simpson among eight NOC retirees honored



NOC Vice President for Financial Affairs Anita Simpson was honored with seven other retirees at the end of the year faculty and staff meeting. Simpson retires after 31 years at the college. (Pictured (L-R): Dr. Rick Edgington, Diana Morris, Anita Simpson, Sheri Snyder (photo by Caroline Hillock/NOC).

Northern Oklahoma College honored eight retirees at the May 8 In-Service meeting in Tonkawa.

Retiring employees include Teresa Reich, Mary Ann Moody, Brenda Pennington, Terri Percy, Fred Heath, Shannon Cranford, Gene Long, and Anita Simpson.

The eight retiring employees totaled over 156 years of experience. "These individuals will be leaving a legacy of progress in their higher education profession," said NOC President Diana Morris. "They will be remembered for their many accomplishments and contributions during their tenure here at Northern. For that, we wish to congratulate each of them on their retirement."

Reich served NOC two years as the Staff Assistant for Financial Aid; Moody served 10 years as a Resident Life Director; Pennington taught Social Science 20 years; Percy worked as a Bookstore Assistant 20 years; Heath worked as a custodian 22 years; Cranford was the Human Resources Director for 25 years; Gene Long was Maintenance Assistant Director at NOC Enid 26 years; and Vice President for Financial Affairs Anita Simpson worked at NOC 31 years.

Each retiree's supervisor said a few words about each retiree listing not only their NOC accomplishments but their personal attributes as well.

Vice President for Enrollment Management Dr. Rick Edgington, Vice President for Community Relations & Development Sheri Snyder, and President Morris spoke regarding Simpson.

"A hallmark of her tenure was the consistent Clean Unmodified External Audits for many years. During her time as Financial VP, she was responsible for oversight of an Educational & General Budget that increased from \$7.4 million in FY 1999 to \$26.1 million in FY2026 and she increased the Educational & General

Fund Reserve Balance from \$680 thousand in FY1999 to \$5 million in FY2026.

She sustained an operating budget over many years with significant decreases in state appropriation funding and maintained budgeting 70% of the operating budget to personnel services by making strives to increase compensation for all employees.

As part of her overall job duties, she serves as treasurer of the NOC Foundation. During her time the Foundation experienced growth in financial net assets and scholarship awards in the Northern Oklahoma College Foundation. Net assets grew from approximately \$1.1 million in FY1999 to \$38.6 million in FY2026. Annual private scholarships grew from \$28 thousand in FY1999 to \$392 thousand in FY2026.

She will be leaving the College with the highest Composite Financial Indicator Score (CFI) that we've had as an institution and is projecting that the FY2026 calculation at June 30, 2026 will be even higher due to the donation of the McKenzie Scott gift to the NOC Foundation."

Morris, Snyder, and Edgington read quotes from NOC President Emeritus Dr. Joe Kinzer, President Emeritus Tom Poole, and President Emeritus Dr. Cheryl Evans.

"Anita's official retirement from NOC begins on July 2nd," Morris said. "I, for one, am extremely grateful she chose to get us completely through "budget season" first. We're going to miss her tremendously, but we're excited for all the family moments ahead as she gets to focus on being Nina to those twelve amazing grandchildren. On behalf of the NOC Board of Regents, the Foundation Board of Trustees, the Executive Council, and all NOC Staculty, congratulations and thank you."

Audra Biggs, Rachel Love named NOC Assistant Vice Presidents



Audra Biggs



Rachel Love

Northern Oklahoma College has named Audra Biggs as the new Assistant Vice President for Business Financial Affairs and Rachel Love as the Assistant Vice President for Student Financial Affairs. The combination of Biggs and Love replace Anita Simpson, who is retiring as the Vice President for Financial Affairs in July.

Biggs is currently the Controller in the NOC Business Office while Love is the NOC Foundation Accountant.

“I am excited to take on this new role as Assistant Vice President for Business Financial Affairs and I want to thank President Diana Morris for the incredible opportunity,” Biggs said. “I owe a huge thank you to Anita Simpson, Vice President for Financial Affairs, for hiring me just over 12 years ago and allowing me the opportunity to work under her leadership. I’m proud of what our team has been able to accomplish and eager to accomplish more.” Love began her career at NOC as a Foundation Accountant, a role she held for nearly eight years before taking time to focus on raising her family. She later returned to the college, resuming her work as Foundation Accountant for more than four additional years.

“I’m honored to step into this role and grateful for the trust placed in me,” Love said. “After years of working behind the scenes with the Foundation, I look forward to expanding my knowledge of the college, especially on the student side, and seeing more firsthand the impact we make in students’ lives every day.”

NOC President Diana Morris thanked Simpson for years of service and welcomed Biggs and Love to their new roles.

“I am incredibly grateful to Vice President Anita Simpson for her 31 years of dedicated service to Northern,” Morris said. “Her leadership and stewardship have positioned us incredibly well for the future. Those who have worked closely alongside her are not at all surprised that her departure from this institution has us expanding from one vice president for finance to two assistant

vice presidents to take on all her roles.”

“I believe this change will allow us to build on the legacy she has created while also making room for continued growth, collaboration, and long-term stability,” Morris added. “These two individuals bring complementary strengths that will support NOC’s life changing mission as we seek to meet the goals outlined in our 2025-2030 strategic plan.”

“I am very proud and happy for Audra and Rachel to begin these new phases in their careers,” Simpson said. “Over the past 12 years Audra and Rachel have illustrated their due diligence and commitment to the College in their previous roles. I appreciate them for stepping into leadership roles for the College and wish them the best.”

Biggs is a Blackwell High School graduate, attending NOC from 1994-1996. She earned an Associate of Arts in Legal Assisting from Rogers State University in 2006, and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with an option in Accounting from Rogers State University in 2011.

Biggs and husband Patrick together have five adult children and a two-year old granddaughter.

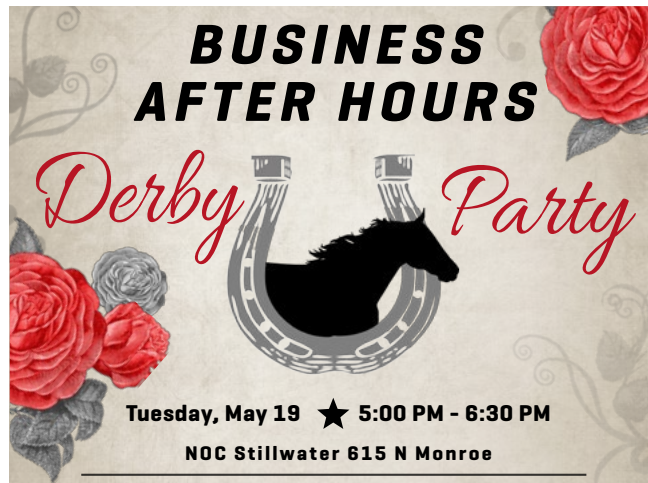
Love is a graduate of Northern Oklahoma College and Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Rachel holds an Associate degree and a Bachelor of Science in Accounting. She graduated with honors and received the Outstanding Accounting Student Award from Northwestern Oklahoma State University.

A lifelong resident of Ponca City, she has been married to her husband, Sean, for nearly 24 years. Together, they have three children, ages 16, 15, and 11.

NOC Stillwater After Hours



Tuesday May 19th, the Stillwater Chamber of Commerce held their Business After Hours event at NOC Stillwater. It was a fun evening of networking with members of the Stillwater community. This year's theme was "Run for the Roses."



NOC holds girls' basketball camp



Twelve girls attended the Northern Oklahoma College Girls' Basketball Camp for Grades K-3 June 8-10.

Camp director Greg Krause along with assistants Dev-Ann Geary and Avery Strickland worked the three-day event.

Campers included Cassidy Williams, Medford; Hadley Loesch, Medford; Spencer Warwick, Oklahoma City; Baylor Bowling, Tonkawa; Caroline Dice, Tonkawa; Blakely Moore, Tonkawa;



Coach Krause, Sutton Simpson, Tonkawa; Tylee Wright, Blackwell; Keslie Stokesberry, Tonkawa; Addison Betzen, South Haven, Kansas; Evanjeline DeNoya, Ponca City; and Henley Atkinson, Perry.

According to Krause, the focus was on introducing basic skills such as dribbling, passing, defensive and varied offensive skills. Lowered goals were used to teach offensive skills.

On the final day, campers demonstrated their skills for their parents. Each girl received a T-shirt, a regulation size basketball and a certificate of completion.

Two more camps are scheduled including Grades 3-6 camp June 21-25 and the Grades 7-12 camp from July 5-9.

NOC Nurse Camp 2026



Northern Oklahoma College Tonkawa is hosting the 2nd Annual Nurse Camp June 18 at the Renfro Center.

Grades 3-5 will attend from 9 a.m. – noon while Grades 6-8 will attend from 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

The cost is \$25 which includes a t-shirt, goodie bag, snacks, and one-on-one instruction from registered nurses.

Campers attending will learn a variety of skills from current NOC nursing students. Campers will learn how to use crutches, perform rescue measures such as rescue breathing and CPR, how to stop a bleed, choking prevention and much more. Special appearance by the AirEvac flight team planned between sessions.



The camp this year is sponsored by the NOC Division of Nursing, Integris Health Ponca City, AirEvac, Autry Tech, Respiratory Department, Peak Oilfield, Whiterock Resources, LLC, BAMA Foods, and James & Jennifer Brinkley.

For more information, contact Rachel Kroemer, MSN, RN, at 580.628.6212 or rachel.kroemer@noc.edu.

NOC Nursing.
Just Exceptional.

Arts Adventure Camp at NOC July 13-16



Northern Oklahoma College Tonkawa is hosting the 35th Arts Adventure Summer Camp July 13-16.

The camp runs from 12:45 p.m. – 5:15 p.m. and is open for incoming 6th graders through those who have just completed high school.

The camp offers students the opportunity to learn a variety of art forms from professional artists from NOC and from across the state. An end-of-camp Showcase will be presented where students' works will be displayed and performed.

Classes offered this year include: Board Game Design, Cartooning, Contemporary Choreography and Creative Dance, Digital Escape Room, Dragon Eyes Sculpture, Drawing Fundamentals, Figure Drawing, Jewelry and Ornament Making, Music Theatre Dance, Musical Theatre, Song Cover and Recording, Stage Makeup, Tinfoil Sculpting & Blacklight Desert Painting, Video Production/Computer Graphics, and Vocal Exploration.

The camp has been held at NOC since 2000, it was formerly held at the Marland Mansion in Ponca City.

The total cost of the camp is \$150. Call 580.628.4710 for additional information.

Students may register online at

<https://www.noc.edu/about-noc/community/summer-camps/arts-adventure/>

Arts Adventure is a 501(c)3 non-profit supported by the Oklahoma Arts Council, National Endowment for the Arts, North Central Oklahoma Arts Council, and numerous businesses, organizations, and individuals. Scholarships are available including one specifically for Blackwell students.



CLASSES OFFERED:

- Blacklight Desert Painting
- Board Game Design
- Cartooning
- Contemporary Choreography and Creative Dance
- Dragon Eyes Sculptures
- Digital Escape Room
- Drawing Fundamentals
- Figure Drawing
- Jewelry and Ornament Making
- Music Theatre
- Music Theatre Dance
- Song Cover and Recording
- Stage Makeup
- Vocal Exploration
- Video Production and Computer Graphics



In Loving Memory

The Northern Oklahoma College Foundation and Alumni Office is saddened to share the passing of three distinguished NOC alumni: Dineo Heilmann, William W. “Bill” Phelps, and Dr. Patricia Sargent, as well as former State Regent, Carl Renfro. Their dedication and service left a lasting impact on Northern Oklahoma College. We extend our heartfelt thoughts and prayers to their families, friends, and loved ones during this difficult time. The legacies, contributions, and connections these individuals shared with NOC will be remembered and cherished by our college community for generations to come.



Dineo Heilmann



William W. “Bill” Phelps



Dr. Patricia Sargent



Carl Renfro

Dineo Heilmann: [Berna “Dineo” Heilmann Obituary April 25, 2026](#)

William W. “Bill” Phelps: [William W Phelps Obituary \(2026\)](#)

Dr. Patricia Sargent: [Patricia Sargent Obituary \(1933 - 2026\)](#)

Carl Renfro: [Obituary information for Carl Renfro](#)

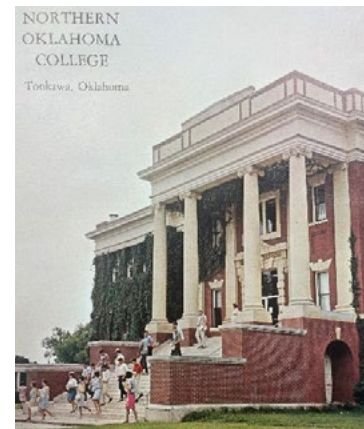
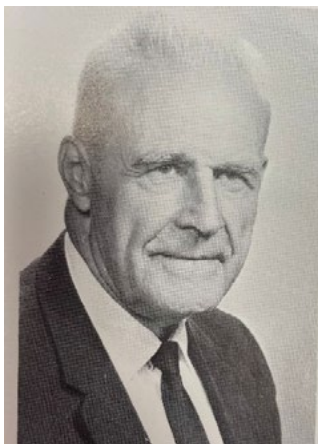


A Walk Down Memory Lane

As we prepare to celebrate 125 years of life-changing experiences in 2026, we're pausing to look back at the moments, people, and stories that built the NOC we know today. Our history is rich, our traditions run deep, and every decade has shaped who we've become. Here's some pieces of NOC history to reminisce on as we begin this milestone celebration.



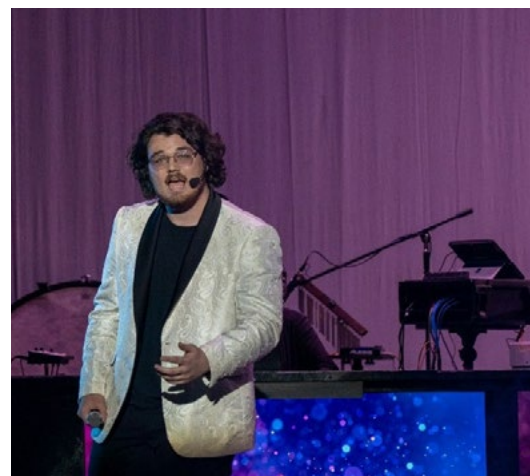
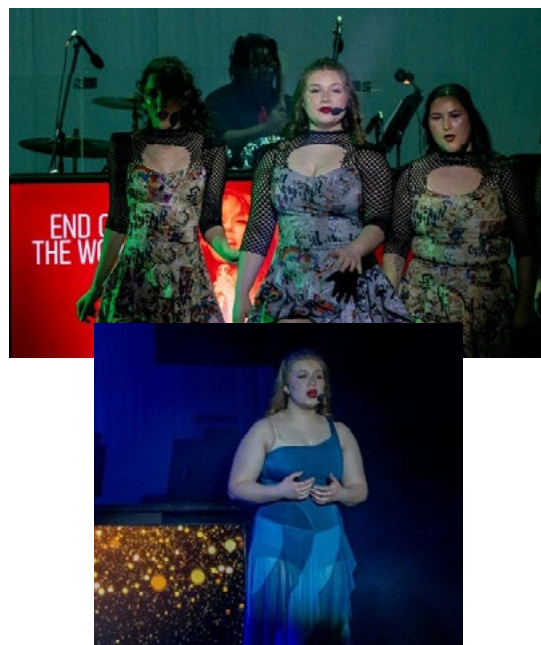
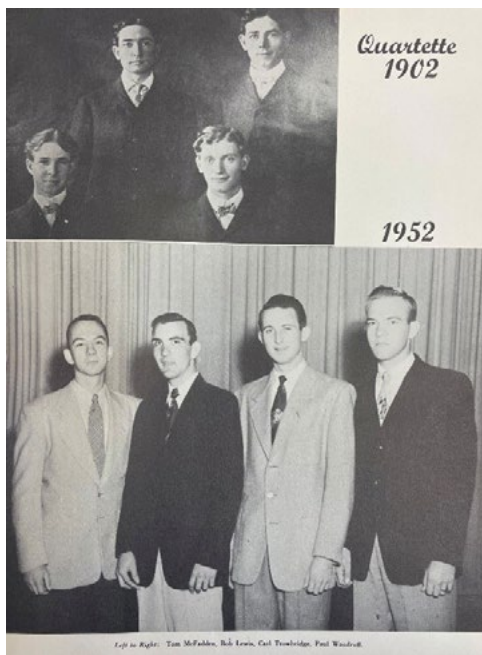
Left to right: Ron McCleary, Proctor; Mrs. Naomi Foreman, House mother; and Bobby Wilson, President Dorm Council.

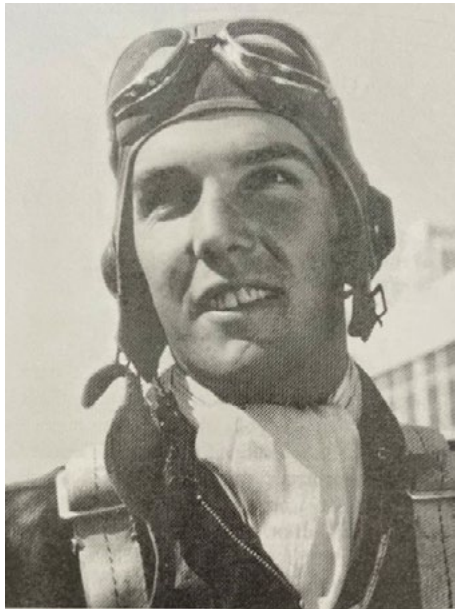


Think you know NOC history? In 1966, a new men's dormitory was built and named in honor of longtime grounds superintendent George Boehme. George first arrived on campus as a student in 1916, and he never really left—he spent decades serving the college, played violin in campus music groups, and even signed more than 3,000 diplomas in Old English script.

Then came 1967, a year of big transitions. Football was eliminated from campus, construction began on the science building, the band got new uniforms and two NOC legends retired: Dean Howard Harold—namesake of Harold Hall—and A.D. Buck, for whom the museum is named. Dean Harold summed up his long career with a smile: "I have served as everything around here except janitor."

Flipping through the 1952 yearbook, we found something pretty special — “Now & Then” snapshots of NOC’s quartets and trios, pairing their 1952 groups with their counterparts all the way back in 1902. A 50-year throwback inside a throwback. To bring it full circle, here are some present-day pics of our Roustabouts keeping the tradition alive in 2026! Timeless faces. Timeless music. Timeless Maverick spirit.





*Second Lieutenant Robert Markley,
1940 graduate—the first Oklahoma college
World War II casualty.*

Northern Oklahoma Junior College's first World War II casualty was 1940 graduate Robert Markley—a distinction no one should ever have had to bear. Markley was killed during the attack on Pearl Harbor, making him not only NOJC's first loss of the war, but tragically the first Oklahoma college graduate to be killed in WWII. It's a sobering reminder of how quickly and painfully the war touched our community.

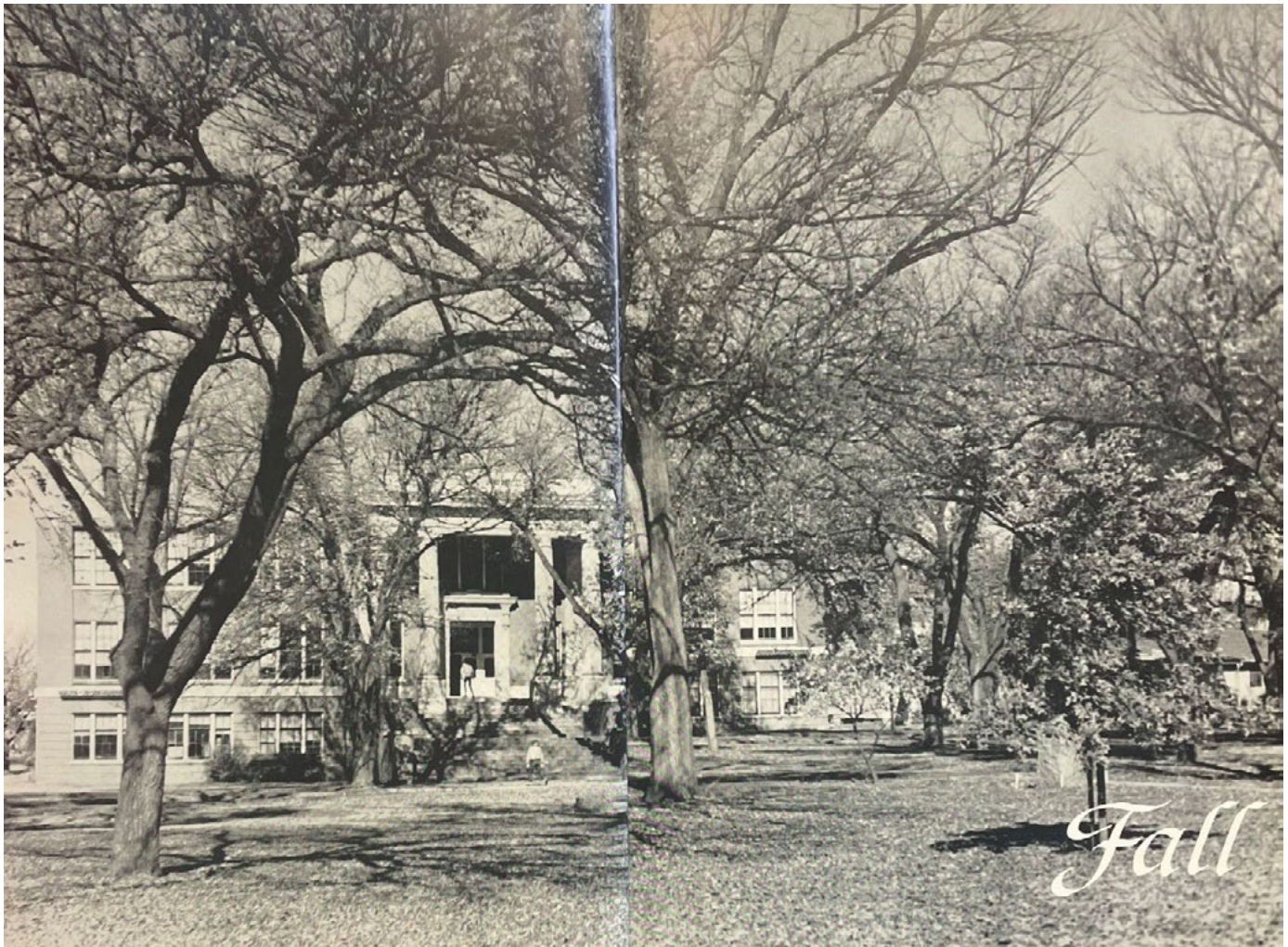
To honor his sacrifice, the men's dormitory completed in 1939 was later renamed Markley Hall—a small gesture for a loss that still shouldn't have happened so soon.



The first men's dormitory—Markley Hall—completed in 1939.



A beautiful glimpse of Harold from the 1958 yearbook



We're celebrating the remarkable Ruth Margaret Muskrat, a standout UPS student from 1912–1916. During her time here, she was deeply involved in campus life and even served as associate editor of the *Crimson Rambler*.

While still a student, Ruth published poetry and short articles—early signs of the powerful voice she would become. She later graduated from Mount Holyoke College as their first Indigenous graduate, breaking barriers and paving the way for so many who followed.

Ruth went on to gain national recognition as a leading Indigenous advocate and feminist, and her writings are still studied in classrooms across the United States today.

A legacy worth remembering.

To honor her legacy, here is one of her poems, “If You Knew”.

“If You Knew”.

*If you could know the empty ache of loneliness,
Masked well behind the calm indifferent face
Of us who pass you by in studied hurriedness,
Intent upon our way, lest in the little space
Of one forgetful moment hungry eyes implore
You to be kind, to open up your heart a little more,
I'm sure you'd smile a little kindlier, sometimes,
To those of us you've never seen before.
If you could know the eagerness we'd grasp
The hand you'd give to us in friendliness;
What vast, potential friendship in that clasp
We'd press, and love you for your gentleness;
If you could know the wide, wide reach
Of love that simple friendliness could teach,
I'm sure you'd say “Hello, my friend,” sometimes,
And now and then extend a hand in friendliness to each.*



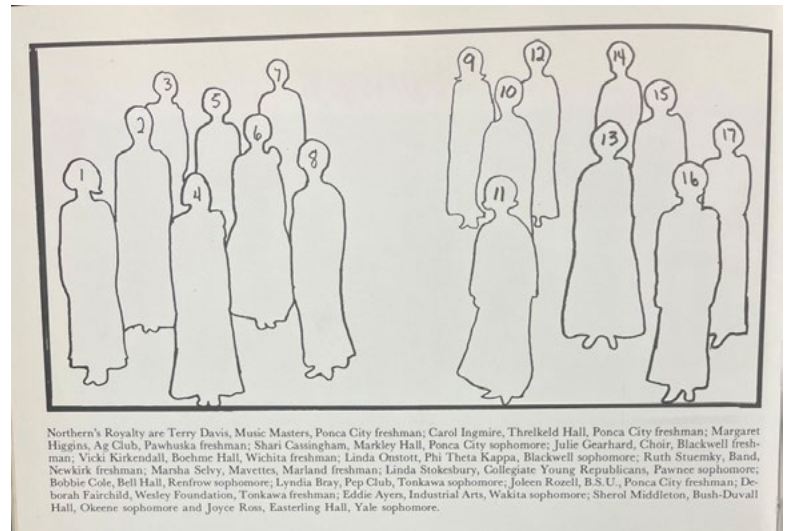
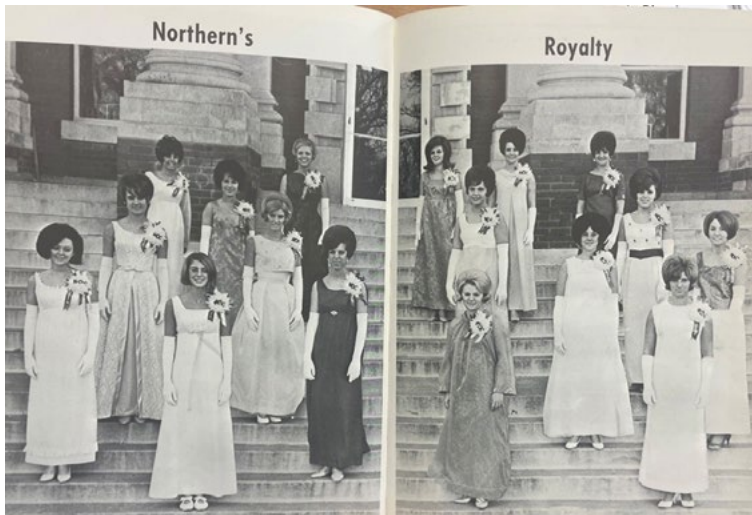
In December 1934, the dean of the Business College at the University of Chicago visited campus and awarded U.J.C. (University Junior College, the school's name at that time) a high junior college rating. He singled out the commerce, science, and library programs for exceptional praise.

A major reason for that strong reputation? Instructor Vira Cass Smith, who had been shaping the commercial department since 1902. She taught two generations of students and stayed ahead of every new trend in business education.

Pictured below is Vira Cass-Smith's Stenographic class



We're traveling back to 1968 to spotlight Northern's basketball royalty. It's fun to see which faces you might recognize—but even better when you can put a name to them!

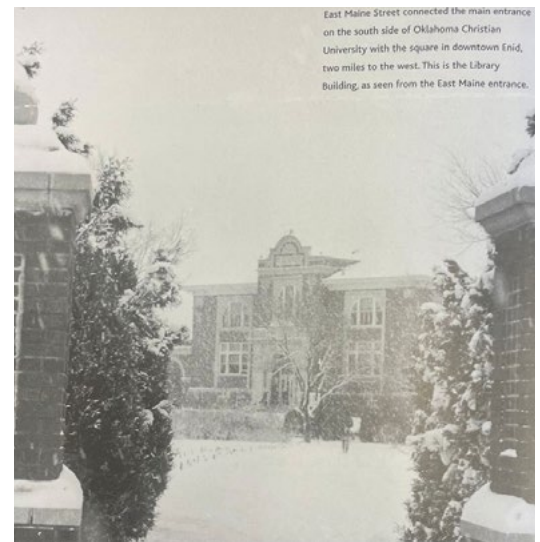


Let's rewind to 1999, when the NOC Enid campus first came to life.

Built through a partnership with the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and the City of Enid, this campus quickly became a cornerstone for higher education in northwest Oklahoma.

What started as a new opportunity for local students has grown into a thriving community of nearly 1,000 learners each semester. Nursing, Business Administration, Education, Social Science, and Pre Medicine remain among the most sought after programs, alongside cooperative offerings with Autry Technology Center.

With athletics, dorms, cultural events, and an ever expanding lineup of clubs and academic programs, NOC Enid continues to shape futures and strengthen the region.



Old Main, right, and the Fine Arts Building, left, as they appeared in February of 1908. Note the boards laid across the ground in the right foreground. They were necessary to keep the students out of the mud when it rained. The brick and stone colonnade archway connecting the two buildings had yet to be built.

Did you know NOC Enid's story stretches back more than a century? It all began in 1907 as Oklahoma Christian University. After longtime supporter Thomas W. Phillips passed away in 1912, the school was renamed Phillips University in his honor. And piggybacking off yesterday's Way Back Wednesday throwback to 1999—that's when the NOC Enid campus officially came to life! History runs deep around here.

Taking it back to 1969!

Flipping through NOC's 1969 yearbook, you can really see the spirit of Pride and Progress shining through!

It's amazing how much has changed—and how much has stayed the same. The traditions, the friendships, the drive to move forward... the foundation was built here.

Progress . . .



Progress... Looking at aerial view of campus, you can see the spirit of progress shining through. The traditions, the friendships, the drive to move forward... the foundation was built here.

Pride . . .



Pride... Basketball game in progress. The spirit of pride is shining through. The traditions, the friendships, the drive to move forward... the foundation was built here.



Progress . . .



Pride . . .



Mavericks contribute sparkle and beauty to NOC campus



Flying Mavericks develop spirited interest in aviation



Spirited Cheerleaders promote athletic events



O'Club sponsors invitational track basketball tournament



A'g club hosts annual rodeo; gains new \$4,000 barn



Journalists use newspaper to try new techniques



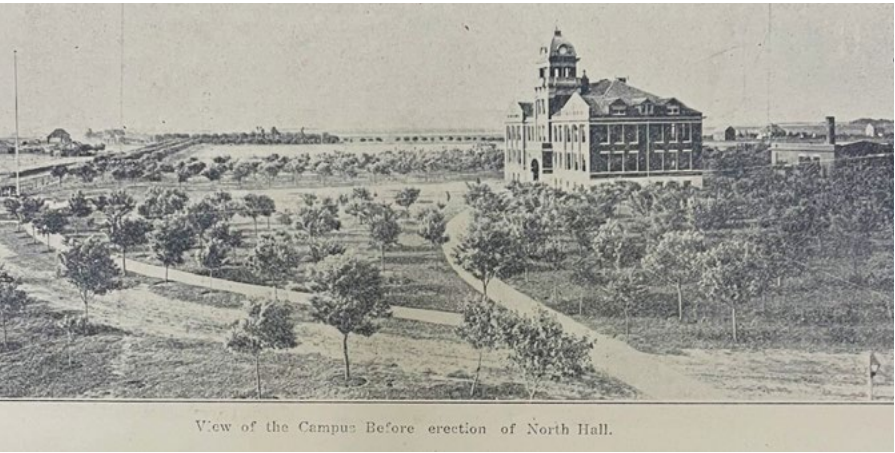
Here's a glimpse back at the members of The Maverick Staff from years 1950-1953

As of 1951, The Maverick had won four first place awards and two Medalist awards from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association and four All-American Honor Ratings from Associated Collegiate Press of the University of Minnesota.



Check out this unique photo of Central—look how clearly the school name shows up on the building! I'm not sure of the exact year, but it's likely from before the 1930s, when major name changes began. Included is the original photo along with an enhanced version using today's technology.

One more historic gem!



Did you know Northern Oklahoma College was once nicknamed the “Little Harvard of the Plains”? The name traces back to its second president, John Alley, a graduate of Harvard University. He also led the Oklahoma Harvard Club and brought in three faculty members who were Harvard alumni. Even James Herbert Kelley, the first president of UPS, returned to earn his Harvard degree.

Here's Central before Harold Hall (then North Hall) was built. A perfect snapshot of the campus when it was known as the “Little Harvard of the Plains”.

1910–1913 May Day celebrations on campus.

The May Day carnival began in 1909 and quickly became a beloved tradition. Festivities were held in front of Central Hall every year through 1927, featuring a traditional maypole dance and the crowning of a May Queen as part of the day's "fun and frolic." Each campus organization contributed a performance—either "artistic or grotesque"—adding to the lively spirit of the event. The first known May Queens in a long line of U.P.S. royalty were Lucille Ellis and Marguerite Sebitts.



A May Pole procession with area spectators (around 1910).



The May Pole celebration around 1913.



The Coronation of the May Queen with Professor Samuel Quigley addressing the crowd.

When UPS President Kelley studied at Harvard, he sent some of the ivy that was first taken from England to the Harvard campus at Cambridge, back to UPS. That ivy was later transplanted around Wilkin Hall, giving the building a touch of Ivy League history right here on campus. Here are a few photos where you can spot the ivy on Wilkin Hall!



NORTHEAST CORNER WILKIN HALL, SHOWING TENNIS COURT IN THE DISTANCE



BEAUTIFUL WILKIN HALL



NORTHWEST CORNER WILKIN HALL



SENIORS STUDYING THE LITERARY DIGEST

In honor of graduation season, we're taking it back to some of the earliest graduate photos in NOC history.

The earliest labeled graduate picture we've found so far dates back to 1906, along with a Graduation Program from the year before in 1905. The next photo shows the senior class of 1914, and the last is the earliest photo we've found of a graduating class wearing caps and gowns, taken in 1929.

It's amazing to see how graduation traditions have evolved through the years while the pride and accomplishment have remained the same.



CLASS OF '06



This photo was discovered in a 1912 NOC catalog and features the Executive Committee from more than a century ago. To see how things have changed, and stayed the same, included is a couple of photos of the NOC Executive Council from 2025 for comparison.

From 1912 to 2025, generations of leaders have helped shape the legacy and future of NOC. Which era do you think had the best group photo?



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE





Legacy Birth Announcements

Parks Austin Alexander

Born June 10, 2025
in Oklahoma City, OK

Siblings: Loudyn, Maddex, and Falynn

Parents: Jason & Ashlyn Alexander
(Ashlyn 2012 Alumna)



"One of my favorite memories from my time at NOC was playing in intramural flag football. It helped me build friendships, stay active, and feel connected to the campus. The energy and the laughs made it unforgettable." - Ashlyn Alexander

8 lbs. 7 oz.
21" Long

If you are an NOC Alum and would like to share the news of your new bundle of joy, simply send the birth announcement form located on the NOC Alumni website and all photos to Ciera Kirby, Director of Alumni and Community Relations. Once form is complete and submitted, an NOC Alumni Legacy onesie will be sent to your address. Please take a picture of your precious bundle of joy in the onesie to include in the announcement.

Email: alumni@noc.edu

NOC Alumni Association

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

- \$25 Individual
- \$35 Joint

LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP

- \$200 Individual
- \$300 Joint

By joining the NOC Alumni Association as a Lifetime Member, you will receive an NOC Customized Swag Box.

A portion of your dues will go to an Alumni Legacy Scholarship which will be available to those children and grandchildren of NOC graduates who are current members of the Association. The other portion of the money will go to fund our alumni events.

For more information on Membership Benefits or Online Payment click on the following link:

<https://www.noc.edu/development/alumni/noc-alumni-and-friends-membership/>

How to Get Involved

The Northern Oklahoma College Foundation is a non-profit corporation organized under IRS 501(c) (3), and receives and manages private gifts on behalf of the College. There are a wide range of gift opportunities at Northern.

Wherever your interests lie, there is a place for you to contribute and make a difference. We encourage you to check out our website at <https://www.noc.edu/development/foundation/> to view the donor wish list. Development staff are available to assist you with information.

We look forward to another exciting year of being part of Northern's family as well as working together with you to promote NOC, its programs and students. We encourage you to get involved!

To Give: Go To <https://www.noc.edu/development/foundation/give-online/>

Subscribe Now

To Unsubscribe: Email alumni@noc.edu



Life changing.