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Paralympian, Alumna Keynotes
OSU/A&M Regent Dinner

The Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and
Mechanical Colleges (OSU/A&M) visited Connors State
College (CSC) for the first time since 2010. In addition to a
scheduled board meeting, a bevy of events was planned for the
regents, other institutional presidents and various community
leaders upon arrival to campus.

On Thursday, October 25, the visit began at the CSC
president’s home with a house dedication ceremony honoring
past CSC president, Dr. Carl O. Westbrook. Immediately
following, members of the President’s Leadership Class led
campus tours, showing the progress made in the two short
years since the regents’ last visit.

To conclude the evening, guests gathered in the Legacy
Hall for a reception complete with hors d’oeuvres and casual
conversation before proceeding through the newly completed
Athletic Hall of Fame for dinner in Melvin Self Field House.
Attendees were treated to a steak dinner prepared by Sodexo
and a moving keynote address by Warner native, CSC and
Oklahoma State University (OSU) alumna Cassie Mitchell.

All eyes were on Mitchell as she addressed the crowd of 80.
She easily could have spoken about her struggles with Devic’s
Neuromyelitis Optica (NMO), which left her a quadriplegic
with visual impairments. Instead, Mitchell discussed the
crucial roles the City of Warner, CSC and OSU had in her
success as an athlete and professional.

A small town girl from Warner, Oklahoma, Mitchell always
was active in athletics, community service and 4-H. As a teen,
she garnered four World Champion titles, two All-Around
World Champion titles and numerous other state and national
championships with her horse, Misty Jet, in Western speed
events like barrel racing and pole bending. It was Mitchell's
own ability in sprint events, however, that ultimately landed a
track and field scholarship to OSU. Not long after graduating
valedictorian from Warner High School in 1999, an auto-
immune reaction triggered the neurological condition that
eventually led to quadriplegia.

With concurrent credits from CSC, Mitchell persevered and
attended OSU on a full academic scholarship. She graduated
Summa Cum Laude with a B.S. in chemical engineering.

“When I went to Oklahoma State, I was trying to adjust
to a new life in a wheelchair and they had opportunities that
helped me thrive,” said Mitchell. “OSU was where I was first
introduced to wheelchair sports.”

As a student she not only excelled academically, but also,
she found a passion for and an ability as a wheelchair athlete.
To this degree, Mitchell earned an alternate spot on the USA
women’s wheelchair basketball team weeks before a 2006
NMO recurrence forced her to leave the sport.

Mitchell eventually found her way back to an early passion
— track. Recent accomplishments in track and field include
competing at the 2012 London Paralympics, where she placed
fourth in the women’s T51-52 100m and 200m sprints and
discus. In paracycling, Mitchell qualified for the H1-2 time
trial — approximately 10 miles, and the H1-3 combined road
race of 30 miles. In preparation for the games and in addition
to a full-time job, Mitchell trained six days a week, where it
was normal for her to sprint 10 miles on the track.

Mitchell graduated in 2009 from the Georgia Institute
of Technology and Emory University’s joint biomedical
engineering Ph.D. program, with an emphasis in neuroen-
genineering. Today, she is a research faculty member for the
program.

After reviewing what she already has accomplished in her
life thus far, she said, “I am proud of where I’m from, and I
thank Warner, Connors and OSU for providing me with the
strong foundation I needed to be successful.”

At the conclusion of her keynote address, the crowd rose
in praise of Dr. Mitchell for her determination, strength and
success.

The regent board meetings scheduled for Friday, October
26 were held on the CSC Muskogee West Campus. These
meetings give the board and college leaders an opportunity
to discuss agendas, audit services, board staff, executive and
administrative operations, legal services, policy manuals and
other significant business.

The OSU/A&M Board of Regents is made up of nine
members plus a chief executive officer and has the respon-
sibility to supervise, manage and govern five institutions
— Langston University, Northeastern Oklahoma A&M
College, Oklahoma Panhandle State University, CSC and
OSU, including OSU Center for Health Sciences, OSU
Institute for Technology, OSU–Oklahoma City, OSU–Tulsa,
and OSU Center for Veterinary Health Sciences.

To learn more about Mitchell, visit www.cassie-mitchell.com.
Information on the OSU/A&M Board of Regents can be found at
regents.okstate.edu.
Connors Inaugural Show Team Paves Path for Success

As founding members of the cattle show team, a select group of students has made quite an impact on Connors State College history. Eight members of the team, from Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Texas, attended the 113th American Royal Livestock Show in Kansas City, Missouri, held October 24-28, and continued a tradition of success they have become known for at a national level. Featuring breeders from the U.S. and Canada, as well as more than 170 head of elite cattle in the Simmental breed, alone, the national show was certainly a learning experience for CSC students.

During the purebred Simmental show, Connors exhibited Moonshiner U71, who was named the National Reserve Champion/Senior Bull Calf Champion. In the Percentage Simmental show, heifers exhibited by the team were highly competitive, while the bull CRN Steelforce was named the National Reserve Senior Calf Percentage Bull Champion.

In addition to successfully showing Simmental cattle, CSC show team members prepared and exhibited five Angus heifers for KiamichiLink Ranch of Finley, Oklahoma. Not only were these Angus females competitive in class, but also they were considered sale highlights in the American Royal Angus Sale.

Freshman animal science major Hannah Allen thoroughly enjoyed her time at the Royal, explaining that exhibiting animals at such a prestigious show was “an eye-opening experience.”

While the show team may be done traveling for the fall, they are by no means done working. In addition to gearing up for spring shows at the National Western in Denver, the Dixie National in Jackson, Mississippi, and the Houston Stock Show, the team is being exposed to and assisting with a full schedule of cattle sales. Sales at Langford Herefords of Okmulgee, Oklahoma, Griswold Cattle Company of Stillwater, Oklahoma, JAC’s Angus Ranch of Bentonville, Arkansas, and KiamichiLink Ranch have all been valuable learning experiences for students.

When asked why the team has been so busy helping with production sales this fall, Blake Nelson, Director of Farm Operations, stated, “Our show team focuses on the purebred cattle business as a whole. During sales, our students are exposed to the marketing and preparation of cattle outside of the show ring.”

Show team members will also have the opportunity to help prepare bulls for the CSC Bull Test Sales, with the fall sale November 29, and the spring sale to be held in April. As if all of these events weren’t enough, show team members will also donate their time to helping local 4-H and FFA students with livestock projects this spring.

These young men and women obviously are bettering themselves while participating in an activity they love, but the question remains as to whether they realize the impact they are having on the Division of Agriculture and Connors as a whole.

Cecile Harris, of Thida, Arkansas, may have said it best when she described her experience as a show team member: “Being on the show team has been a fun, educational experience that has allowed me to meet new people in the cattle industry,” said Harris, a sophomore agriculture business and agricultural education major. “I am making memories with my teammates that will last a lifetime.”

And so it appears that the show team, coached by Dale Pitchford, is making the most of their time at Connors State College.
Andras named National Hereford Queen

Ask any little girl and she'll tell you that having a fairy godmother is the only way a girl will be a queen. It's a good thing Whitney Andras, a freshman at Connors State College, doesn't subscribe to that line of thinking, or she wouldn't be wearing a sparkling tiara for the next year.

During the American Royal National Hereford Show, held in Kansas City, November 2-4, Andras was crowned the National Hereford Queen.

"Words cannot express how happy and blessed I am to be the 2013 National Hereford Queen – it's a dream come true," said Andras. "I am so excited to represent the association, my state, juniors and breeders across the nation … It will be a great year!"

At a show that drew purebred cattle breeders, future business leaders, agriculturalists and livestock enthusiasts from across the country, Andras was in good company during the qualifying events leading up to her coronation ceremony at the Royal.

One of four ladies-in-waiting and the reigning Oklahoma Hereford Queen, the Checotah native maintained a loaded schedule at the Royal, participating in interviews, social activities, the National Hereford Women's (NHW) annual meeting, the Ladies of the American Royal Hereford Sale, the sale's reception, and finally, the Hereford show, where she led in classes and handed out awards.

"It is an honor for a young woman to be the National Hereford Queen because she is a representative of the future of the Hereford industry," said Jill Bielema, NHW board member and queen committee chair. "She also represents the Hereford breed across the country and serves as an ambassador for the youth, the breeders, and the Hereford enthusiasts."

As queen, Andras will travel extensively throughout the next year to attend more than 30 shows and sales, traveling over 40,000 miles.

The National Hereford Queen program is sponsored by the NHW and is funded in part by the NHW and contributing donors.

"It is a very expensive endeavor for a young woman to represent our breed as National Queen," said Bielema. "But it is also a wonderful and incredible opportunity."

To learn more about the American Hereford Association or the Hereford cattle industry, visit www.hereford.org.
Learning Extends Beyond the Classroom

Members of Mike Jackson’s sociology class are learning valuable things beyond the classroom. Four times during the fall semester, students have prepared Sunday meals for the homeless at Gospel Rescue Mission, Inc., in Muskogee, Oklahoma. Although it is not a mandatory class activity, more than half of the class shows up each time to participate in this community project.

“This has been a very successful venture, with many students getting their own churches and families involved or donating clothes or toys to the homeless,” said Jackson, Connors State College West Campus Administrator. “Some students bring their family members, including spouses or children, to assist in serving.

“All of the students have said that through this endeavor, they are more grateful for what they have and how they can help others,” said Jackson.

With the holiday season in full swing, students gathered once more on November 18 to bring a warm meal to more than 38 individuals and toys for underprivileged children.

“Some students who have assisted have formerly been homeless and they seem to bring the most to these meals,” said Jackson.

The students prepare their own meals to serve, thus offering a wide variety of choices. Those partaking in the meal seem to enjoy the variety, while the students certainly enjoy the mission.

The Gospel Rescue Mission, Inc., is a full service homeless shelter dedicated to meeting the needs of the poor and homeless of Muskogee since 1931. For more information, visit www.gospelrescue-mission.com.
When Connors State College President, Dr. Tim Faltyn, challenged campus organizations and teams to give back this holiday season, the response was overwhelming. Read on to learn more about the ongoing service activities at CSC.

Cowgirl Reading Buddies Bring Joy to Hilldale First Grade Students

As the first of several upcoming service-learning projects, nine members of the Connors State College Cowgirl softball team and head coach Rick Carbone visited first grade classrooms at Muskogee’s Hilldale Elementary School on Thursday, November 15.

In an effort to give back to the community, the Cowgirls read a series of books to an audience of intently listening first grade students. Three of the team members who took advantage of this opportunity are former Hilldale students, themselves — Erin Isham, Kali Romine and Caitlyn Craig. Others taking part in the reading buddies’ project were Sammy Perry, Blaine Matheson, Ashley Dunigan, Lindsay Chudate, Marceda Panky and Jerelyn Long.

“IT’s a good feeling knowing we were role models for these kids,” said Sammy Perry, a freshman from Pryor, Oklahoma. “I am glad the elementary staff gave us this opportunity — it was very rewarding!”

Carbone said that the Cowgirls plan to do other philanthropic work during the spring semester.

“I know the girls really enjoyed working with the young students,” said Carbone. “It was a great experience for them.”

Diamond Cowboys Spread Happiness Worldwide

The Connors State College baseball team rallied behind the challenge of Operation Christmas Child®, filling 19 boxes with toys, candy, living essentials, Connors gear and a team Christmas card for children worldwide.

“I saw the video for Operation Christmas Child and it just stole my heart,” said head coach Perry Keith. “I pulled in a couple sophomores from the team and showed them the same video, and they were instantly hooked.”

The players were split into groups of three and each selected the age group and gender of the child they wanted to reach. The groups then went shopping in search of appropriate gifts and purchased the items with money from their own pockets.

“It was really neat seeing the pride each group took in purchasing and packaging their gifts,” said Keith. “While most include items like toothbrushes and school supplies, one of our players bought a pair of Nike shoes for his gift box.”

Operation Christmas Child® (OCC) is part of the Samaritan’s Purse International Relief organization. OCC, which in 2011 sent 8,643,354 shoe box gifts worldwide, has served more than 94 million boys and girls since 1993. Individuals become involved by filling a “shoe box” with items like school supplies, clothing and toys, and include $7 for the cost of shipping.

This season the Connors State College baseball team learned a valuable tool, one that is much greater than strikeouts and home runs — that the impact of receiving one shoe box from a person who cares is literally priceless to those in need.

For more information about Samaritan’s Purse or OCC, visit www.samaritanspurse.org/OCC.

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<td>Womens Basketball Team: Canned food drive through December 6 to benefit Gospel Rescue Mission</td>
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<td>Cheerleading: After school program</td>
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<td>Social Services Class: Hosted canned food drive benefiting the local Salvation Army Food Bank</td>
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<td>Social Sciences Club: Donated “Cowboys for a Cure” bra to local breast cancer awareness fundraiser</td>
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<td>Phi Beta Lambda: Through a program called HuGS, collected hats, gloves and scarves</td>
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THIS COULD BE THE YEAR THE COWBOYS RETURN TO THE NJCAA NATIONAL TOURNAMENT IN HUTCHINSON, KANSAS, IN MARCH, WHILE THE COWGIRLS HAVE THE MAKINGS OF A SQUAD THAT COULD MAKE A RUN IN THE WOMEN’S TOURNAMENT IN SALINA, KANSAS.

COWBOYS

Cowboys' head coach Bill Muse said the key to an outstanding season is in each player's ability to stay healthy and reach their individual potential.

"It's a long season – injuries, academics and, sometimes, off-court problems play into it," said Muse.

“We have players who have power, are strong and can shoot,” Muse continued. “We look good shooting in practice, but a game is different. We have guys that are capable of making outside shots.”

Muse’s 2012-13 version won't be any different than his previous teams: a club that pounds the ball inside, plays excellent defense, runs the floor and drives to the basket.

"Defense and rebounding will, of course, be critical and you have to do both well to win in our conference and region," said Muse. “Those are two areas we are working hard at.”

Despite the loss of five sophomores from Muse’s 22-7 squad, Muse returns three very talented players who saw plenty of action, and brings into the fold a sophomore transfer and eight freshmen.

Returning sophomore Josh Cameron, a 6-1 guard from Racine, Wisconsin, averaged 14.8 points to lead the Cowboys in scoring. Cameron is joined by the inside power play of 6-8 forward Denell Henderson from Damascus, Arkansas, who averaged 9.2 points and pulled down 6.7 rebounds.

Devante Moore, 6-2 guard from El Reno, also returns. Moore averaged 7.4 points coming off the bench.

“We feel like we are very solid with the returning players from last year," said Muse. “In addition to those returnees, we picked up Hakeem Harris, a transfer from Broward (Florida) Community College. Hakeem originally signed with Brown University out of high school, but took a medical red-shirt and then transferred to Broward.”

Harris averaged 15 points per game at Broward last season.

Muse coached his older brother Frank Harris, who played for the Cowboys in Muse’s first season as head coach. Frank Harris played one season for Connors before transferring to play at Stanford University.

“To get his younger brother here 20 years later is a pretty interesting story,” said Muse.

“With those four players, we have a pretty good sophomore class,” said Muse. “I really like the freshmen class that’s coming in, too. We signed good players, who are going to be young and inexperienced and haven’t played a college game. But, they have good size and can shoot and handle the basketball.”

Joining the fold is Willie Atwood, 6-8 forward from West Memphis, who will play inside, along with Troy Jones, 6-7 forward from Alexandria, Louisiana, and Craig Hill, 6-7 forward from Memphis, Tennessee.

A fourth inside player for the Cowboys is local product Erick Broadnax, 6-9 from Porter High School, who may be red-shirted, according to Muse.

Muse said the Cowboys have added talented players to the perimeter for the upcoming season, which includes Jamarcus
Weatherspoon, 6-5 guard from Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Larry Spicer, 6-5 guard from Memphis; a southpaw wing player in Quan Jones, 6-3, guard from Little Rock, Arkansas.

During a Connors State tryout session, Muse added walk-on Tony Cabrera, 6-0 guard from Hilldale High School, who Muse believes can give the Cowboys some good minutes and good competition in practice.

**COWGIRLS**

A year ago the Cowgirls were hit by injuries and players leaving the squad for personal reasons, leaving the Cowgirls only eight players for the year. Despite that, head coach Eddie Kite’s squad reached the Region II Tournament quarterfinals.

Kite has reloaded for the upcoming season and expects to improve on last year’s 18-13 record and a trip to the NJCAA National Tournament in Salina, Kansas, in March.

Why so much optimism in the Cowgirls’ camp? Three returning players from last season’s team, which includes top returning scorer (12.2 points per game) and Region II second team selection Tiara Hall, 6-foot sophomore forward; Dakota Garrett, 5-9, sophomore guard; and Tonisha Dean, 5-11, sophomore guard.

Also back is red-shirt sophomore Shakayla Love, a 6-2 forward.

“We are going to be a young team, but the sophomores that we have are stepping up to be leaders,” said Kite. “We have a chance to be pretty solid.”

Kite has brought in nine freshmen to reload for the upcoming season, six from the state of Oklahoma, and three Texans.

The Texans are Sha’Georgia Williams from Mesquite, a 5-4 guard; Raven Massey, Commerce, 5-6 guard; and Shakemia Franklin, 5-7 guard from Paris.

Local products are Kami Bunch, 5-6 guard from Tulsa; Booker T. Washington; Courtney Medcalf, 6-1 post from Wilburton; Hayley Keys, 5-4 from Oaks Mission High School; Hayli Miller, 5-7 guard from Comanche; Marissa Wright, 5-7 guard, and Shanques Gibson, 6-2 post, both from Webster High School.

“This is going to be a shooting team,” said Kite. “Our national tournament team didn’t fare well from the 3-point line, but this group has athleticism and a good set of shooters.

“From top-to-bottom, I like everything about this team. If we can work like college athletes are supposed to work, we have a chance to be pretty special.”

Kite believes he will put a squad on the court that possesses both inside power and speed to move the ball up-and-down the floor. “I think we can do a little bit of everything with this group,” said Kite.
Former Connors President Honored in House Dedication

More than 50 regents, employees, students, community members, family and friends gathered to honor former Connors State College (CSC) president, Dr. Carl O. Westbrook, by dedicating the president’s home in his name.

The 13th president, Dr. Westbrook contributed 16 years of leadership to the college, marking the second-longest presidential term in the institution’s history.

Current president, Dr. Tim Faltyn, opened the ceremony by expressing the value of Westbrook’s time at the college and touched on the similarities of raising a family in the home. The dedication day, October 23, had other significance for the two administrators: a shared birthday for Westbrook and Faltyn.

Andy Lester, chairman of the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges (OSU/A&M), took the podium next to introduce distinguished guests.

The ceremony was concluded with words from Westbrook. He spoke about accomplishments he and his team achieved during his tenure and the progress that continues today. During Westbrook’s time at Connors, many projects, programs and ideas were brought to life. Among them, enrollment grew from 900 to more than 2,500; a top-notch nursing program was launched; an official Muskogee branch campus came to fruition; the Cowboy and Cowgirl basketball teams won national championships; the livestock judging team garnered national attention; and a 1,300-acre ranch was acquired south of Warner. These accomplishments are only a briefing of the success Dr. Westbrook realized during his presidency.

A bronze plaque will now become a part of the brick facade for all to see when visiting the president’s home – newly dubbed the Westbrook House.

As each president relayed, the home historically has served as a place to build relationships. With its new, distinguished medallion, Westbrook House will continue this course for years to come.

Alumni & Friends Compete at Inaugural Horse Show & Rodeo

After more than 10 months in planning, the inaugural Connors State College Alumni & Friends Versatility Ranch Horse Show and Timed Event Rodeo proved to be a successful endeavor, Saturday, November 17, at the Warner Rodeo Arena.

The event, held in partnership with Nutrena, drew more than 130 participants for a horse show and rodeo, which featured breakaway roping, calf roping, steer wrestling, barrel racing and team roping. According to rodeo coach Jake Lawson, the day also drew approximately 200 spectators.

“This was the first time we had this event,” said Lawson. “This was the first time we had this event,” said Lawson. “We wanted to increase the visibility of our program on campus and reconnect with alumni, to get them involved in our program again,” Lawson continued. “We do a big fundraiser in the spring and our other goal was to get those donors involved in a fun atmosphere and, ultimately, back on campus.”

Lawson said he was happy with the response to the event. “Everybody had a great time and we feel it was very successful,” said Lawson. “This is an event which should be able to grow – we are now starting to get ready for next year’s event.”

Saturday morning, show judge Maryann Willoughby conducted a clinic for all those registered for the horse show competition. The show was made up of two classes, ranch riding/trail and working ranch horse.

Prizes for the show included monogrammed winter blankets and hay bags, while winners in the timed event competition received tooled rope cans, monogrammed rope bags and saddle blankets.

Alumni Lucas Spears participated in the inaugural CSC Alumni & Friends Timed Event Rodeo, November 17.
Fall Festivities “Dare” to Entertain at all Connors Campuses

Fall semester activities abounded successfully at all three Connors State College campuses — a result that can be attributed to July-nurse Dare Chronister, Coordinator of Student Activities and newly-appointed Director of Campus Life.

With a bachelor of science in kinesiology from East Central University, Chronister will walk with her graduate degree in higher education from the University of Arkansas in December.

Having planned at least one major event per month, October was delightfully busy for Chronister and participating students with basketball intramurals, Spirit Week, a “Monster Bash” Halloween dance, pumpkin carving contests and a fall festival, among others.

The Fall Festival at the Muskogee Port Campus took place October 30 and entertained more than 250 families. The event included inflatables and field games, featuring a Justice League obstacle course bounce house, a bounce house with a giant slide and Nerf® gun hot shot and tee-off games.

Representatives from various student organizations arrived with decorated vehicles for a Trunk-or-Treat, distributing candy to costumed children. Campus life participants included Phi Theta Kappa, Student Government Association, Social Sciences, Phi Beta Lambda and the Ecology Club.

During the festival, Leslie Davis of the Port Campus and Cameron Kaiser from the West Campus were declared the winners of a pumpkin carving contest.

November and December have Chronister busy, as well, as she gears up for a season of home basketball game promotions, building floats for holiday parades, and planning homecoming celebrations.

A self-proclaimed over-achiever, Chronister embodies a phrase she preaches to students: go big or go home.

“Nothing in this life is worth doing unless you do it with your whole heart, giving 110 percent,” said Chronister.

She continued with advice to students, saying, “Be bold, be original, be spontaneous, be a star, be young, be loving, be crazy, be loud, be random, be unique, be daring, be YOU...YOURSELF. Push the limits; shake things up; flirt with disaster; color outside the lines; get carried away; but most of all – live life!”

Martindale Elected to ONA Committee

Connors State College (CSC) nursing instructor Angela Martindale (BSN, MSN, RN) was elected to a nominating committee for the Oklahoma Nurses Association (ONA) during the annual convention, held October 24-25. Martindale was one of five nominees, of which three were voted in to office by ONA members.

In addition to her CSC faculty appointment, Martindale is a Clinical Nurse II and a staff nurse for the Medical/Surgical/Telemetry Unit at Saint Francis Hospital–South in Tulsa.

Martindale is actively involved in numerous other professional nursing associations, including the American Nurses Association, and maintains a presence within her community, as well. She is involved with Ladies Auxiliary for Monarch, Inc. – a drug/alcohol recovery center; serves on the advisory board for the Christian Women’s Job Corp., and on the resource team for Circles of Muskogee – a Bridges Out of Poverty Initiative. Nursing is not just a job to me. It’s a passion and a career,” said Martindale. “I believe that belonging to the Oklahoma Nurses Association and the American Nurses Association is one of my many responsibilities as a nurse.

“Nurses should serve their state by being involved in their state’s nursing association,” Martindale continued. “ONA provides an avenue for our voice to be heard and now, more than ever, our voices must be heard so that we can take advantage of the changes in health care and better serve Oklahomans as health care providers.”
IN MEMORY OF DR. MAURICE W. PAYNE

On September 29, Connors State College lost one of its beloved family members, Dr. Maurice W. Payne. Dr. Payne served as the Campus Physician in the CSC Health Services department from 1991 until his passing.

Dr. Payne graduated from Northeast Missouri State College and earned his Doctorate of Osteopathic Medicine from Kirksville College of Medicine. In 1960, Dr. Payne started practicing medicine in Checotah at the Parman and Payne Clinic. He served as Chief of Staff at Muskogee Regional Medical Center, as a member and President of the Oklahoma State Board of Medical Examiners and Director of the McIntosh County Health Department. Dr. Payne's talents were recognized through the Osteopathic Association who awarded him the Distinguished Physician Award in 2000, and by the State Board of Osteopathic Examiners who awarded him the Outstanding and Distinguished Service Award in 2001.

Aside from his medical practice, Dr. Payne was a truly remarkable citizen of Checotah and the surrounding area. Dr. Payne was prolific in his service to the community, serving as Chairman for the Construction of the Jim Lucas Checotah Public Library, President of the Eastern Oklahoma District Library System, Checotah City Council Member, and twenty-five year member and past President of the Checotah School Board. Dr. Payne was recognized as the 1998 McIntosh County Democrat Citizen of the Year and the 2009 Old Settler’s Day Parade Grand Marshall. He was a member of the First Baptist Church and the Singing Churchmen of Oklahoma.

In his twenty-one years of service to Connors State College, Dr. Payne made a lasting impression on students, faculty, and staff, leaving a legacy of excellence, service, and compassion. Dr. Payne will always be remembered as a Connors State College Cowboy.