VOLUME 3 NUMBER 4 • JUNE / JULY 2013

CONNECTION

CONNORS STATE COLLEGE | BUILDING FUTURES ONE AT A TIME SINCE 1908

COMMENCEMENT FEATURE

ADMINISTRATION

PRESIDENT
Dr. Tim Faltyn

VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
Dr. Ron Ramming

VICE PRESIDENT FOR FISCAL SERVICES
Shirley Twilley

CONNORS CONNECTION

CONTRIBUTORS
Ryan Blanton
Katie Bullard
Wayne Bunch
Von Castor
Dare Chronister
Julie Dinger-Blanton
Heather Keith
Lynsey Meharg
Neil Myers
Robin O'Quinn
Stacy Pearce
Lyndsey Sullivan

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Stacy Pearce

EDITORS
Stacy Pearce
Cindy Anderson

ABOUT THE COVER
Created by Neil Myers, the cover composite image features all 140 students who participated in the 2013 Commencement Ceremony, by order of graduation.

CONTENTS

JUNE / JULY 2013

3 Tucker Link REGENT
Ogdon Provides Gift to Establish Museum

4 Regents Business Partner of Excellence

5 Meharg Joins *Angus Journal* Team STUDENT
Bogle Selected for N.E.W. Institute STUDENT

6 Pretty in Pink: Softball Team Supports Coach
Reunion Brings Alumni to Campus

7 Corley Presents at the Capitol STUDENT

8–9 Commencement Feature

10–11 Keith Leads Cowboys to World Series FACULTY

12 Leaders in Ag Barbecue Honors McPeak
Area Students Deemed "Cowboys for a Day"

13 Blanton an "Achiever Under 40" STAFF
Connors Awarded $50K Grant

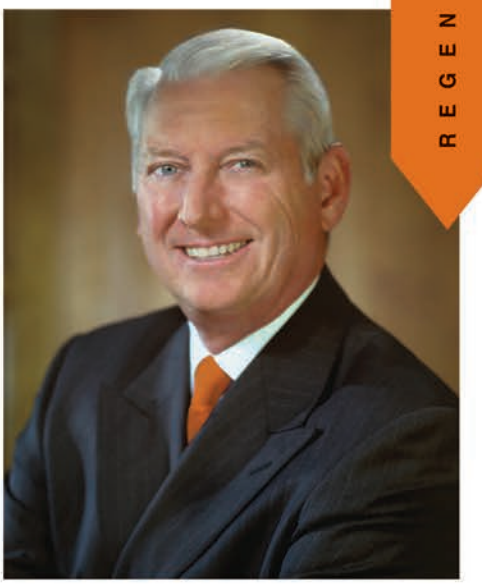
14 Cattle Grading Develops Critical Thinking
PTK Earns 4-Star Status

15 Students Attend NACA Leadership Retreat
Freewheel Rides into Warner Campus

16 Joe Gill ALUMNI

Connors State College, in compliance with Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 11246 as amended, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and other federal laws and regulations, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability, or status as a veteran in any of its policies, practices or procedures. This includes but is not limited to admissions, employment, financial aid, and educational services. This publication, printed and issued by Connors State College as authorized by the Director of College and Community Relations, has been prepared and distributed at no cost to Oklahoma taxpayers. The information given herein is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination or endorsement is intended by Connors State College.

MEET THE REGENT *Tucker Link*



Even though he holds a few very prestigious titles, using anything other than the word "humble" to describe Regent Tucker Link would be incorrect.

Regent Link has made quite a name for himself in several different areas of life. Aside from being the Vice Chairman of the OSU/A&M Board of Regents, Link and his family stay very busy with their family business. As the Chairman and Founder of Knightsbridge Resources, Link has evolved and expanded his company into a wide range of industries, such as chemicals, oil and gas, renewable energy, beef genetics and real estate.

Officially launched in 2007, KiamichiLink Ranch is a purebred Angus operation located in Finley, Oklahoma. Supporting more than 1,000 head of cattle and having state-of-the-art facilities, KLR strives to improve genetic engineering in beef cattle. Connors State College students have had the privilege of being able to work closely with KLR by traveling to the ranch and getting first-hand experience working in their facilities.

Needless to say, Regent Link is a very successful individual. One of his greatest achievements though, as he says, is his family. He and his wife of 43 years, Vickie, have two children and a total of five beautiful grandchildren.

When asked the question, "Who had the greatest influence on your career?" his answer was: "You can't do anything in life without a great partner, and Vickie has been a great influence on me and a great supporter."

It is very hard to describe anyone with one word, especially Regent Link, but if it had to be done, the word of his choice would be "improving". Link describes himself as always trying to be better, "giving 110 percent always, and more."

Link, also, is very modest.

"If we could be anonymous, we would," said Link. "We don't do anything for the attention."

Regent Tucker Link wanted to leave this advice for Connors students: "Work hard and try hard, enjoy whatever you decide to do."

Regent Link also left a motivational quote by Abraham Lincoln for students to remember: "Whatever you are, be a good one."

By Katie Bullard

OGDON PROVIDES GIFT TO ESTABLISH *Museum*

Connors State College is pleased to announce that Ken Ogden, Class of 1955, has provided the Connors Development Foundation with $100,000 to develop an institutional museum on the Warner campus.

Ogden has long appreciated the fond memories he holds of his time at CSC and the life-long friends that he and his wife, Joyce, made on campus.

"We have been very fortunate in our lives, and it is important to us to give back to an institution that was so instrumental in our lives," said Ogden.

"The generosity of this gift allows us to provide a wonderful opportunity to our students and community," said Dr. Tim Faltyn, CSC president. "It exemplifies the impact Connors has had on our alumni."

Ogden graduated from Connors in 1955, and attended Northeastern State the following year. In 1956, he married his wife Joyce, and they moved to Wichita, Kansas, to begin their teaching careers. In 1970, Ogden began working for Columbian Securities Corporation, working with schools and school employees with benefits and investments. In 1992, Ogden bought out his partners and formed OFG Financial Services, Inc.

Ogden was inducted into the Connors State College Alumni & Friends Hall of Fame in April 2010.

"This gift affords the college an opportunity to advance that would not have been possible otherwise," said Ryan Blanton, Executive Director of the Foundation. "The generosity of Mr. Ogden is greatly appreciated."

REGENTS BUSINESS PARTNER OF *Excellence*

On April 29, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education recognized Connors State College and the City of Muskogee Foundation as its Regents Business Partner of Excellence. Chancellor Johnson and Lt. Governor Lamb presented Connors and the Foundation with the honor at an awards ceremony at the University of Central Oklahoma. The awards are presented annually for outstanding partnerships between Oklahoma colleges and universities and local businesses and intended to cultivate higher learning environment.

The City of Muskogee Foundation has provided Connors State College $300,000 in funding to develop the Muskogee Difference Healthcare Scholarship (MDHS), the largest scholarship gift in the history of the college. This program provides students who are studying nursing, pre-nursing, or allied health and residing within Muskogee County with full tuition, fees, and books.

"This program between the Foundation and Connors State College has been one of the most powerful initiatives in the history of the college. Everyone wins: students get a great education, the community gets a well-prepared professional workforce and both the Foundation and the college get to fulfill their mission of making a positive difference in people's lives," commented Connors State College President, Dr. Tim Faltyn. "The partnership between Connors State College and the City of Muskogee Foundation, through the Muskogee Difference Healthcare Scholarship provides the financial resources to develop a localized professional workforce infrastructure and a center for healthcare excellence in Eastern Oklahoma."

With several major healthcare facilities and hospitals employing more than 3,500 medical professionals, Muskogee is quickly becoming a hub of outstanding medical services. Connors State College's nursing program is one of the largest in the state, boasting a pass rate of the National Council Licensure Examination that exceeds state and national averages. The college also has several allied health programs through a partnership with Indian Capital Technology Center including Radiology Technician, Medical Lab Technician, and Physical Therapy Technician. These Associate Degree programs afford graduates excellent economic opportunities and encourage post-secondary education and employment of the local Muskogee workforce.

MDHS Scholarship recipients are required to sign a two-year work commitment in exchange for the receipt of the scholarship. This commitment ensures that all participants have access to quality educational and degree completion opportunities while also encouraging job growth and economic development in the regional healthcare sector.

"The Foundation is very proud of our partnership with Connors and the establishment of the Muskogee Difference Healthcare Scholarship. We feel like this grant is going to be one that shows some of the best outcomes and greatest long-term impact for Muskogee," said Foundation Grants Manager D.J. Thompson.

Connors will receive a $500 State Regents' Economic Development grant that will be matched by the college and will be used to further enhance the partnership.

"These are additional dollars coming to Muskogee and helping the citizens and community. We feel like our investment in the Muskogee Difference Healthcare Scholarship program leveraged an additional bonus for Muskogee," said Thompson.

For additional information about the Muskogee Difference Healthcare Scholarship visit connorsstate.edu/md or call 918.684-3421.

For additional information about the City of Muskogee Foundation visit cityofmuskogeefoundation.org.

MEHARG JOINS *ANGUS JOURNAL* EDITORIAL TEAM

Lynsey Meharg, Council Hill, Oklahoma, will join the Angus Journal staff, Saint Joseph, Missouri, this summer as editorial intern. She will be responsible for contributing to the Angus Journal, the Angus Beef Bulletin, the Angus Beef Bulletin EXTRA and the Angus Journal Daily electronic newsletter, as well as contributing to the organization's social media efforts. In doing so, she will attend a variety of industry events and conferences.

"I am looking forward to using this experience to better my communication skills," Meharg said. "I am also grateful for the opportunity to work with a group of people who are just as passionate about this industry as I am."

A recent graduate of Connors State College, Meharg was involved in many campus organizations, including CSC Student Government Association, President's Leadership Class and the CSC livestock judging team. In addition, Meharg was selected as a Ranch House Designs Scholar and interned for the CSC Office of College and Community Relations.

Her experience in the agriculture industry includes raising and showing livestock on her family's northwest Florida farm, as well as serving as the 2010-2011 Florida FFA Area One State Vice President, for which she traveled to Argentina for the 2011 International Leadership Seminar for State Officers.

"I am extremely impressed with the initiative Ms. Meharg showed during her tenure at Connors," said Dr. Tim Faltyn, CSC president. "I am confident that there are great things in store in her future, and look forward to hearing of her accomplishments throughout her next endeavors."

In the fall, Meharg will begin her junior year as an agricultural communications major at Texas Tech University. Upon graduation, she hopes to pursue a career in agriculture.

"I am confident that my summer with the Angus Journal will show me how to better represent this industry so that I can portray real-world agriculture to the public," Meharg said.

By Lynsey Meharg

BOGLE SELECTED FOR N.E.W. LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Ada Bogle, a Connors State education major, was selected to participate in the National Education for Women (N.E.W.) Leadership Institute, May 17-21 in Norman, Oklahoma.

N.E.W. Leadership draws students from a variety of colleges and universities. Bogle was among 36 women who represent outstanding undergraduate leadership across the state of Oklahoma.

"We are proud of the pursuits Ms. Bogle has undertaken to immerse herself in leadership activities," said Dr. Tim Faltyn, CSC president. "I know she will use what she's learned to make an impact on campus."

Bogle with former Lt. Governor Jari Askins.

At the institute, she had the opportunity to network with Oklahoma's top political, business, and nonprofit leaders. During the week, participants engaged in panel discussions, action projects, and examined current issues affecting Oklahoma women.

"The Women's Leadership Initiative has single handedly opened a whole new range of possibilities for my future. N.E.W. is most certainly a once in a lifetime opportunity," said Bogle.

Oklahoma has long ranked 49th in the nation for women serving in the state Legislature and are historically underrepresented in all levels of public service and elective office. N.E.W. Leadership seeks to change this by educating, encouraging and inspiring young women to consider careers in public service. N.E.W. Leadership Institute has graduated over 330 young women leaders over 12 years. Graduates of the program gain a powerful new network by spending time one-on-one with Oklahoma's top women leaders in both the public and private sectors.

"Our graduates are working in congressional offices, serving on boards and commissions, managing political campaigns, teaching and much more," N.E.W. Leadership's Assistant Director, Lauren Schueler, noted.

For more information, visit the Women's Leadership Initiative website: www.ou.edu/wli.

Pretty in Pink

SOFTBALL TEAM SUPPORTS THE CARBONES

It was a year of ups and downs for the Connors State Cowgirls softball program and head coach Rick Carbone.

Carbone's club entered the year with high expectations, but injuries took their toll on his predominately freshman ball club as they finished the season with a 27-35 overall record.

The Cowgirls, with a last season push, reached the NJCAA Region II Softball tournament as the No. 4 seed and advanced to the semifinals before losing to Western Oklahoma State College.

It also was a very difficult time for Carbone and his squad as his wife, Karen, was diagnosed with cancer just before entering the Region II Tournament in Oklahoma City. In a move of solidarity for Carbone and his family, the girls wore pink ribbons in their hair, with "Kathy" written on the bows, throughout the tournament.

"The softball team showed a lot of character in their support of Coach and Mrs. Carbone," said Dr. Tim Faltyn, CSC president. "I commend all of them for playing with such class through this difficult time."

According to Carbone, wife Kathy underwent successful surgery and is recovering at home.

"The girls have been keeping in touch with me by texting about her condition and that's been nice," said Carbone.

One of the more bright spots of the season was the play of Ashley Dunigan, who was an Oklahoma Collegiate Athletic Conference and Region II first team selection. Dunigan hit .335 for the season and stole 56 bases to eclipse her school record she established her freshman year of 55 stolen bases. The sophomore will be attending Southwestern Oklahoma State University next fall on a softball scholarship.

Named to the Region II second team for the Cowgirls were freshman Sammy Perry, who hit .292 and Kali Romine, who finished with a .292 batting average.

Carbone will be losing five sophomores off his 2013 squad, but has signed eight players to NJCAA national letters-of-intent for the 2014 softball season.

"We are losing some pretty good players, but I feel the incoming recruits and our freshman, who gained a lot of experience last season give us a very good foundation for next season," said Carbone.

By Wayne Bunch

REUNION BRINGS ALUMNI TO CAMPUS

On April 27, Connors State College hosted the annual Alumni & Friends Banquet and Reunion. More than 100 alumni, friends, staff and students attended the event at the Melvin Self Fieldhouse on the Warner campus. Organized by the CSC Alumni & Friends Association Board and Ryan Blanton, Executive Director of the Connors Development Foundation, the reunion was a time to share memories, see new developments on campus, and to honor exceptional alumni.

Each year at the Banquet and Reunion, an exceptional alumni is inducted into the Alumni Hall of Fame. This year, Joe Gill was honored for his service and dedication to education in

CORLEY PRESENTS AT CAPITOL RESEARCH DAY

STUDENT TAYLOR CORLEY SHOWCASES UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

Connors State College was well represented at the 18th Annual EPSCoR Research Day at the Capitol, a statewide competition sponsored by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and the National Science Foundation Oklahoma Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (OK EPSCoR). The Annual Research Day at the Capitol showcases the best undergraduate research taking place across Oklahoma college campuses with student projects hand-selected by their home colleges and universities.

Representing Connors this year was freshman Taylor Corley with her research project entitled, "Effect of Yeast Culture on Water Consumption in Working Horses." Corley's project was chosen because of her superior efforts and the industry impact of her work. Corley received special commendations from Rep. Jerry McPeak and Sen. Bill Brown, recognizing her outstanding achievement.

"Undergraduate research is important for our institution, and Taylor's work is no exception," said Dr. Tim Faltyn, CSC president. "She offerred great representation for Connors during her presentation at the Capitol."

Horse owners are acutely aware of the dangers of dehydration; the Diamond V Corporation approached the Connors Equine Program with the opportunity to test their yeast supplement on working horses to assess whether horses receiving the nutritional supplement would consume more water. Under the supervision of Equine Instructor Jake Lawson, Corley conducted the experiment and collected the results. After the treatment, horses that received the top dressed yeast culture consumed more water than their nontreatment counterparts.

The work was not easy for Corley, as measuring horse water-consumption has its challenges. Aside from the 35 buckets to haul and measure twice daily, two horses regularly dumped their water buckets, forcing their results out of the final calculations. After the data were collected, with assistance from Sociology Instructor Julie Dinger-Blanton, Corley learned to assess the statistical significance of her results

and compiled her data into a poster to present at the EPSCoR competition.

"I found it to be a very enlightening experience and came away with a better understanding of the research world," said Corley. "I hope I get the chance to participate again and with new research."

By Julie Dinger-Blanton

Oklahoma.

This year, the President's Leadership Class and Leadership Connors attended the reunion, to the delight of many alumni. The students provided tours of campus, and reminded the alumni of one of the most important reasons for their organization: to raise money for the Alumni & Friends Scholarship.

"Our supportive alumni base is important to the continued success of the college," said Dr. Tim Faltyn, CSC president. "We look forward to having them back on campus each year and welcome their support in all of our events and campaigns."

The Alumni & Friends scholarship is awarded annually to five to seven students through the Connors Development Foundation, and is the pride of the Alumni & Friends Association.

"Each year we get the opportunity to help others experience all the good things about Connors that we experienced," said outgoing Alumni & Friends Association President Leonard Wood.

Blanton agreed, saying: "It's a great way to leave a legacy, and to ensure the college continues to provide the same opportunities to students that it did when our alumni attended."

KEEP CALM AND... WATCH ME WALK
2013

CONNORS STATE COLLEGE

R.N
2013

SUCCESS IS NOT FINAL, FAILURE IS NOT FATAL: IT IS THE COURAGE TO CONTINUE THAT COUNTS.

CONNORS
ALUMNI
2013

COMMENCEMENT

HISTORIC NUMBER OF DEGREES CONFERRED

It's fitting for commencement exercises to be one of the most anticipated events at a institution of higher education. This year was no exception at Connors State College, as on Friday, May 10, 2013, Connors honored 140 candidates for graduation.

"Not only did we see an overall increase in student participation during the 2013 Connors State College commencement exercises, but also, as an institution we are on track to confer more than 300 associate degrees for the 2012-2013 academic year," said Kwanna King, CSC Registrar and Commencement Committee Chair. "Historically speaking, this ranks as one of the highest degree-conferring years in Connors' history."

"We've been encouraging students to participate in this memory-making event, and this year we absolutely saw that number grow," King continued.

During the commencement exercise, held at the Muskogee Civic Center, Dr. Tim Faltyn, CSC president, congratulated the graduates on their accomplishments and reminded them that they will always be a part of the Connors State College family.

The honorable Oklahoma Lt. Gov. Todd Lamb delivered this year's commencement address. Lamb stressed to graduates the importance of staying in Oklahoma to begin their careers or to further their education, stating that the state of Oklahoma is on the move and doing big things.

Other speakers included: OSU A&M Regent Tucker Link, CSC Student Government President Lynsey Meharg, and CSC Vice-President Dr. Ron Ramming. Additional distinguished platform guests included OSU A&M CEO Jason Ramsey and BCM Director Rowdy Morris. A special feature of the ceremony was the Tulsa Pipes and Drums, while the National Anthem was sung in true cowboy style by freshman rodeo team member Ryan Mileham, accompanied by Chance Billups on guitar.

"The 2012-2013 commencement committee, diverse in its experience and representatives, made it a point to incorporate Connors traditions, while implementing innovative ideas the institution can build upon for future ceremonies," said King.

"Overall, I think Commencement was a success," said Dr. Faltyn. "It would not have been possible, however, without the 33 individuals who devoted their time and talents to the committee."

Find photos of graduation on Facebook at facebook.com/connorsstate.

COACH KEITH LEADS COWBOYS TO WORLD SERIES

The 2013 NJCAA College World Series for the Connors State Cowboys baseball team, fans and alumni who traveled to Grand Junction, Colorado, in May was an experience they will never forget.

It was a week-long trip that was much more than competing on the diamond at Suplizio Field. It involved a Cowboy team that played for the city of Moore following the deadly tornados back home, by inscribing Moore on the side of their ball caps to honor the victims.

"Traveling to Grand Junction and gaining the support of the community there was a great experience for myself, our team, fans and supporters," said Dr. Tim Faltyn, CSC president. "Although we didn't bring home the championship, the memories made and the class our boys showed throughout the tournament were impressive – something to strive for again in the years to come."

The Cowboys also took part in a youth clinic for area baseball players before the tournament and then attended the annual CWS banquet, with keynote speaker Rob Mich, author of "The Last Natural."

During the Cowboys stay in Grand Junction, Randy Krause served as the team sponsor while the team host was Palisade Sunrise Rotary Club led by John Sabal and Mark Liff. The Palisade Club set up a luncheon for the team and its fans at Allen Unique Cars hosted by owner Tammy Allen.

The World Series did not end the way the Cowboys and head coach Perry Keith, who was making his fifth appearance, would have liked.

"I thought we played well," said Keith. "In the second game we just didn't pitch as well as we're capable and that's just part of the game. The third game we had every chance in the world to win but couldn't drive-in anybody.

"I was pleased with the way the kids played and represented Connors, and the state of Oklahoma."

The Cowboys, who entered the double-elimination tournament ranked No. 3 in the nation, drew No. 2 ranked Navarro College in the opening round.

Connors dropped Navarro 10-9 in its opening game playing before a crowd of 8,991.

The Cowboys' starting pitcher Kelvin Rivas worked out of several jams to get the win. Rivas worked 6 2/3 innings before being relieved by Justin Ferrell in the seventh. Rivas scattered eight base hits, struck out five and walked just two batters. Ferrell pitched the final innings to pick up his 12th save of the year as he scattered three base hits while striking out one in facing 10 batters.

Connors pounded out 12 base hits with Kory Keith going 3-for-3 with an RBI, Yariel Gonzalez getting two hits with four RBIs and Dalton Daniels was 3-for-4 at the plate.

The second game Connors drew the top team in the nation, Spartanburg, South Carolina. It wasn't the Cowboys day as the Pioneers lived up to their advanced fantastic billing.

Pioneers' left hander Jimmy Lindberg handcuffed the Connors batters, holding the Cowboys to just three base hits in the game.

Up next for the Cowboys was Cochise (Arizona) College in an elimination game and despite pounding out eight base hits, the Apaches took a 3-1 victory over the Cowboys.

The Cowboys ended the season with a 53-11 record, along with an Oklahoma Collegiate Athletic Conference title and a South Central District championship.

Perry Keith has amassed a record of 1,375 wins and just 399 losses (.775) in 28 years as CSC head baseball coach.

Keith has guided the Cowboys to 13 Bi-State East Conference championships, seven Region II titles, five NJCAA South Central District crowns and five appearances at the Division I JUCO World Series.

The Cowboys have been ranked in the top 10 of the NJCAA Division I Baseball Poll every season since he took over the program in 1985.

Keith has coached 30 NJCAA All-Americans, 32 NJCAA Academic All-Americans and his program boasts a graduation percentage of 95 percent.

Keith has also had eleven former players make it to the Major Leagues.

Keith, a Pryor native, played at Connors State in 1980-81. Keith graduated from Missouri State with a Bachelors Degree in Business Marketing and received his Masters Degree from Northeastern State University.

By Wayne Bunch

ALL AMERICANS

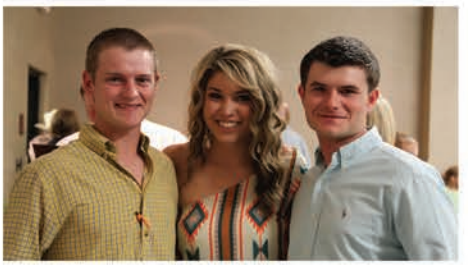
Connors State College's Yariel Gonzalez and Korey Keith were named NJCAA Division I Baseball All-Americans. Gonzalez, a freshman infielder from San Sebastian, Puerto Rico, is a second team selection and Keith an honorable mention selection.

Gonzalez, who played third base for the Cowboys, was Connors State's second leading hitter with a .420 batting average. The freshman knocked out 17 doubles, two triples and 12 home runs, while collecting 75 runs-batted-in to lead the Cowboys.

Gonzalez had 8 stolen bases and had an on-base-percentage of .449 and a slugging percentage of .680. He also scored 52 runs.

Keith, a sophomore from Warner, was an honorable mention selection at the designated hitter position. Keith, who played first base for the Cowboys, hit .for a .435 average to lead the Cowboys, which included 11 doubles, 7 home runs with 57 RBIs for an on-base-percentage of .545 and .609 slugging percentage. He had 5 stolen bases for the year and led the team in walks with 42.

At the NJCAA College World Series in Grand Junction, Colorado, Gonzalez was 4-for-10 at the plate which included a home run, double and triple and 5 RBIs in the three games. Keith went 5-for-10 with an RBI in the tournament.



REP. MCPEAK HONORED DURING GATOR GIVEAWAY

LEADERS IN AGRICULTURE FUNDRAISER A SUCCESS

The Connors State College Leaders in Agriculture annual fundraising banquet and Gator Giveaway, held on May 11 at the Muskogee Civic Center, was a huge success, according to Brandon Gunn, head coach of the Connors State livestock judging team.

This year drew a larger than normal crowd. "This was the largest-attended event in the history of the fundraiser, with approximately 300," Gunn stated.

Held to raise funds for the Agriculture Department, the proceeds directly aid students through scholarships and travel dollars to send competitive teams to contests and shows. Gunn estimated that they raised approximately $20,000 this year.

Aside from being a fundraiser, the purpose of the event was to showcase both the livestock judging team and beef show team's successful 2012-2013 year.

"The fundraiser is unique in that it doesn't feature a speaker, but is usually more about having a good time and celebrating our successes," Gunn said. "We even bring in a local band for entertainment."

Rep. Jerry McPeak, former CSC livestock judging coach and agriculture instructor, gave an impromptu thank you speech after it was announced that a scholarship fund would be endowed in his honor.

A silent auction and a raffle saw competitive bidding up until the very end, while the ultimate prize – the John Deere Gator – went home with the last man standing out of 300 raffle ticket purchasers – Dr. Ron Ramming, CSC Vice President for Academic Affairs.

"This year's event had a great turnout from people on campus, friends, family, alums and the community – all who support Connors State College," said Gunn. "Every year it gets bigger and better."

By Wayne Bunch

WARNER STUDENTS DEEMED *Cowboys for a Day*

On May 9, 2013, Warner Public School's Gifted and Talented program students and yearbook staff members attended Connors State College and were deemed "Cowboys for a Day."

First graders and seniors, alike, enjoyed ice cream and coke floats as a reward for their hard work and exemplary performance during the 2012-2013 school year.

On hand to greet the students were Connor the Cowboy, the CSC mascot; Dr. Ron Ramming, Vice President for Academic Affairs; and event organizer Robin O'Quinn, Division Chair of Developmental Education.

"As a higher learning institution, we owe a great deal to the efforts of those involved in gifted and talented educational programming," said Dr. Tim Faltyn, CSC president. "We hope that these outstanding students will become familiar with our campus and one day become "Cowboys for Life!"

Before presenting them with "Cowboy For a Day" certificates, Dr. Ramming spoke to the students about the importance of education and why they should begin thinking about college as early as elementary school. Dr. Ramming also acknowledged their accomplishments thus far and invited them to attend more activities at Connors.

"The students had a wonderful time on campus," said O'Quinn. "It was such a suceess that we plan to continue throughout the years."

BLANTON RECOGNIZED AS "ACHIEVER UNDER 40"

THE JOURNAL RECORD HONORS CONNORS FOUNDATION DIRECTOR

On May 23, Ryan Blanton, Executive Director of the Connors Development Foundation, and 38 others from around the state were recognized as an "Achiever Under 40" by *The Journal Record* during the 10th annual event in Tulsa.

"The mission of *The Journal Record's* "Achievers Under 40" is to honor and recognize the accomplishments of Oklahoma's talented young professionals who have chosen to make Oklahoma their home," said Mary Mélon, publisher of *The Journal Record*.

After serving as an artilleryman in the U.S. Army, Blanton earned a bachelor of science and master's degree in anthropology from the University of Oklahoma, working on various medical research grants as well as teaching. He worked at the American Indian Diabetes Prevention Center at the OU Health Sciences Center as a research assistant before beginning a public service career at the Oklahoma Health Care Authority.

"I found in that job that I had a strong skill set for building public and private partnerships, social networks, and promoting synergy between various organizations," Blanton said. "I realized that I could make a bigger impact and be of more service in this type of position, but I wanted to build my career in higher education."

When he was offered his current position as executive director of the Connors State College Development Foundation, he jumped at the chance.

Since November of 2011, Blanton has helped secure additional scholarships, resources, and services for students and faculty, including increasing the Foundation's holdings by more than 10 percent to $1.03 million.

"Mr. Blanton has the skill and ability to be a game changer in virtually every situation he finds himself in professionally," said Tim Faltyn, CSC president. "This statewide recognition is certainly well-deserved."

Blanton also serves his community by volunteering at his children's school and church, as well as serving on the board of directors for the Stigler Health and Wellness Clinics.

Blanton and wife Julie during The Journal Record's 10th Annual "Achievers Under 40" banquet.

As for his future, Blanton says, "I envision a career in higher education that allows me to provide world class educational opportunities for all Oklahomans, to provide economic opportunities to build our economy and to lead the next generation of Oklahoma leaders to develop smarter, more efficient infrastructure that allows Oklahoma to prosper."

CONNORS AWARDED $50,000 GRANT

Connors State College recently was awarded a $50,000 "School and Student Services Capacity Grant" from USA Funds.

The grant is designed to support institutions in promoting financial literacy, helping students minimize and manage student loan debt, and, ultimately, implementing a multifaceted default prevention/debt management program that will reduce the institutions cohort default rate.

"The USA Funds grant gives Connors the opportunity to actively prepare more students to enroll and succeed in college-level courses, while also educating them on financial responsibility," said Dr. Tim Faltyn, CSC president.

The three focus areas of USA Funds grants for postsecondary education are:

• Readiness — to make students ready for postsecondary education.

• Enrollment — to advance or promote a broad approach to increasing postsecondary education enrollment levels.

• Success — to improve students' retention, progression and completion of a postsecondary education with manageable debt.

"Students who are ill-equipped to manage their debt after graduation may not be able to reap the full rewards of their higher education," said Jennifer Watkins, Director of Financial Aid. "We're excited about the opportunity to better educate our students on their financial responsibilities and student loan debt management."

For more information on USA Funds, visit www.usafunds.org.

CATTLE GRADING BENEFITS 4-H & FFA MEMBERS

CONTEST ENCOURAGES REAL WORLD SCENARIOS AND CRITICAL THINKING

The sixth annual Connors State College 4-H and FFA Cattle Grading Contest was held at the Warner, Oklahoma, campus Bull Test Facility June 4. This year's contest saw 94 student participants, ranging from sixth grade to recent high school graduates.

CSC provided team plaques and individual medals, as well as scholarships – valued at $800 – to the top individual in each 4-H or FFA division.

Cattle Grading is the evaluation of the carcass quality and projected growth pattern of beef cattle. To excel in the contest, participants must employ their knowledge of high-quality cattle traits to choose animals that will be profitable in real-life production situations.

"The Agriculture Division at Connors is excited to provide these opportunities for FFA and 4-H," said Debby Golden, chair of the CSC Division of Agriculture and event organizer. "We believe that it is important to cultivate an interest in agriculture among our youth, if our industry is to remain strong in the future."

At the beginning of the event, the youth participants listened and learned from a one-hour educational seminar on commercial cattle grading presented by Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry (ODAFF) representatives Gary Bledsoe and Jason Harvey.

"The cattle grading contests are extremely applicable to real world production," said Blake Nelson, director of CSC Ranch Operations. "Each student learns the types of feeder and slaughter cattle that are desirable and, in turn, how to identify important traits currently of value. If you can identify market demands, you can be successful in any business venture."

During the contest, four-person teams practiced their skills by grading 15 head of commercial cattle. Awards were earned by the top three teams and the top five individuals in three divisions. *By Stacy Pearce*

PHI THETA KAPPA REACHES 4-STAR LEVEL

The Connors State College chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society received special commendation during the Oklahoma/Arkansas Regional Convention for fulfilling all requirements to be named a "4 Star Chapter".

The Five Star Chapter Development Plan serves as a blueprint for developing a strong chapter, improves student engagement on campus, and recognizes progress in the attainment of goals set by the chapter.

"Using the Five Star Plan as a guide, chapters enhance their strategies to recognize eligible students, provide significant personal and professional development opportunities for members through Honors in Action, and build a working relationship with the college administration by becoming active on campus and in the community," said Dr. Rod Risley, Executive Director and CEO of Phi Theta Kappa. "As chapters reach these milestones they progress through each level of the Five Star Plan, ultimately reaching the pinnacle Five Star Level."

Phi Theta Kappa had 80 students join in the 2013 spring semester, more than doubling membership from the previous year.

"Our PTK chapter is always on the move," said Dr. Tim Faltyn, CSC president. "Under the advisement of Kim Phillips and Colleen Noble, the chapter is involved in community events, leads efforts across the board to inspire others to be engaged on campus, and excels both inside and outside of the classroom. This 4 Star Chapter commendation is definitely well-deserved!"

The chapter will kick off Community College Completion Corps, or C4, this fall with the goal of getting as many students as possible to commit to graduate with a degree from CSC.

KEEP CALM AND LEAD ON

STUDENTS DEVELOP LEADERSHIP AT NACA RETREAT

Six Connors State College students represented the Office of Student Life at a national institute May 30-June 2 in New Braunfels, Texas. The National Association for Campus Activities (NACA) hosted its annual Huge Leadership Weekend (HLW) for more than 100 college students and student affairs professionals.

HLW provides students with continued development and growth in areas of citizenship and service, effective programming, ethics and character, interpersonal skills, organizational development and personal development.

"This is a great opportunity for students around the nation to learn from others while developing leadership skills they can take back to their campuses," said Kelsey Bratcher, HLW coordinator.

NACA promotes active student development and HLW is just one of the opportunities where team-building activities lay a solid foundation among students and staff.

"Having the opportunity to spend time with students from all over helped me gain a different perspective of students, organizations and even cultures," said Isaac Blankenship, CSC Student Government Association (SGA) president.

HLW staff is made up of selected volunteers through a NACA application process. Dare Chronister, CSC director of student life, was selected to serve as a staff member.

"It's an exciting institute for both the students and the staff," Chronister said. "We have the opportunity to work with professionals from other campuses and to learn from them as well. The bonds

developed during leadership activities between staff and students are priceless."

CSC student participants included: Blankenship from Brockwell, Arkansas; Katie Rogers, SGA Secretary from Braggs, Oklahoma; Jalyn Willis, President's Leadership Class (PLC) from Keys, Oklahoma; Jake Neighbors, past SGA Treasurer from Muldrow, Oklahoma; Alex Keener, PLC from Hulbert, Oklahoma; and Hunter Bradley, SGA from Sand Springs, Oklahoma. *By Stacy Pearce*

OK Freewheel RIDES INTO WARNER CAMPUS

Freewheel is Oklahoma's premier bicycle touring event. This year's ride, held June 9-15, 2013, included an overnight stop in Warner, Oklahoma, with riders staying on the campus of Connors State College.

The route changes each year, but typically begins near the Red River, Oklahoma's southern border with Texas, and travels north to end just across the Kansas state line.

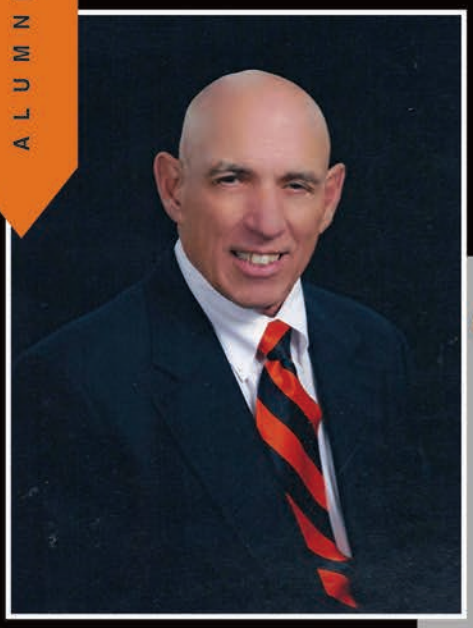
Freewheel participants traveled 50-75 miles per day, and camped in rural communities each night.

"We knew that Warner and Connors State College would be great hosts from previous experiences," said Joy Handcock, Freewheel director. "And the campus is absolutely beautiful."

Participants rolled into Warner June 11-12. While in town, the more than 500 weary bicyclists enjoyed a talent show, free food offered by local churches, cooling off in Miller's Crossings pool, and lots of rest and relaxation before hitting the road again the next morning.

"You've got to admire the individuals who dedicate a week to touring Oklahoma by bicycle," said Dr. Tim Faltyn, CSC president. "It was a diverse group of athletes to whom we were able to showcase the Warner community and our campus."

For more information, visit okfreewheel.com.



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

Joe Gill

Joe Gill, a native of Bixby, Oklahoma, attended Bixby High School and graduated with the class of 1963. He obtained sports letters for football, basketball, and track. He was honorable mention all-state football and Athlete of the Year while also qualifying for the state track meet in four competitions.

Joe enrolled at Connors on a football scholarship in 1963 and played football and track for two years. He won Conference All American and was voted "Mr. Connors State College" in 1965. He attended Tulsa University on a football scholarship and played in the 1965 Blue Bonnet Bowl.

He coached various sports at Tulsa at Valley Center, Kansas, and Bixby, Oklahoma. He was selected Administrator of the Year for Oklahoma Plant Managers of Schools and Oklahoma Association for Public Transportation. He presently serves as executive director of the Oklahoma Schools Advisory Council.

Joe has always represented Connors State College with honesty, integrity and loyalty while being a staunch supporter and advocate of public education and athletics. Joe lives in Bixby with his wife, Ann, with whom he has six children.

CONNORSSTATE.EDU

WARNER CAMPUS | RT 1 BOX 1000 • WARNER OK 74469 / 918.463.2931
MUSKOGEE PORT CAMPUS | 2501 N 41ST ST E • MUSKOGEE OK 74403 / 918.684.5471
MUSKOGEE WEST CAMPUS | 2404 W SHAWNEE AVE • MUSKOGEE OK 74401 / 918.684.6747