

# CONNORS

# STATE COLLEGE

CONNECTION

SEPT  
2012



## **STAY & WE'LL PAY!**

**MUSKOGEE DIFFERENCE HEALTHCARE SCHOLARSHIP**

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Ryan Blanton

Wayne Bunch

Dare Chronister

Brandi Farris

Camry Hankins

Rachal Humphrey

Lyndsey Sullivan

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Dare Chronister

Camry Hankins

Neil Myers

Cathy Spaulding

Lyndsey Sullivan

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Stacy Pearce

EDITORS

Stacy Pearce

Lyndsey Sullivan

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# REGENT LESTER *visits* CONNORS

After a year of many campus improvements and hard work, it was time for Connors State College to show Andy Lester, OSU A&M Board of Regents Chairman, all that has been done and to share the vision for the future.

“Having a chairman on campus is a very exciting honor and one that I don’t believe we’ve been blessed with for some time. He will be touring all of our campuses and meeting with various groups of students, faculty, staff and community members,” commented Dr. Tim Faltyn, President of Connors State College.

Regent Lester was accompanied by Jason Ramsey, OSU A&M Board of Regents CEO, and Jessica Russell, Director of State Government Relations. During Lester’s time with the Strategic Planning Council he addressed issues on the new funding formula, as well as the purpose for the Board of Regents in relation to Connors and the other four OSU A&M institutions.

“I was very impressed with Regent Lester,” said Blake Nelson, Director of Farm Operations. “He understands Connors’ mission and where we fit within the OSU system. He not only supports us as an institution, but also he understands the importance of higher education. He is definitely someone I want governing our college.”

There are 16 Board of Regents in the State of Oklahoma and this particular one considers itself a working board.

“Each member spends approximately 20 hours a week with work related to the board,” said Regent Lester. “Board members are volunteers and have the honor of being appointed by the Governor of Oklahoma. Being a

working board probably has something to do with our agricultural backgrounds – we start our board meetings at 7 a.m.”

The board members meet eight times a year,



which gives the presidents many opportunities for discussion on college matters and to touch base on needs for each specific institution.

The Regent also had the opportunity to eat lunch with students from the Presidents Leadership Class and the Student Government Association.

Lynsey Meharg, SGA President, commented, “As a member of both student government and PLC, it was a great opportunity to meet some of the leadership of the OSU A&M Board and talk about the details of his life, position on the board and how he achieved the success he has had. It was awesome to have someone like Chairman Lester visit our school and its student leadership groups.”

Regent Lester told community leaders later that day, “Besides holding Max (Faltyn), visiting with the students was my favorite part of the day. After having short discussions with the students, it is evident why we work so hard each day – it is all for the students and having a hand in their success.”

Regent Lester’s last stop of the day was a community reception that included a welcome from Bob Coburn, Muskogee Mayor. The reception was attended by area school and tech center superintendents, mayors, councilmen and other key community leaders. Lester took the time to thank everyone for what they do to support Connors State College and reminded them of how vital each community role is to making the college successful.

Lester had great things to say about the college: “The Warner campus looks beautiful, the Port Campus looks beautiful, and this campus (Muskogee West) is remarkable. The joint partnership with NSU is something that is unique and great for the students.”

The entire OSU A&M Board of Regents will return to Connors State College in late October for a board meeting.



After addressing faculty and staff, Regent Lester greeted individuals on campus. Shown is Connors State College Registrar Kwanna King.



# Faltyn Joins Medical Center Board



**Muskogee Regional  
Medical Center**



Connors State College President Dr. Tim Faltyn recently was appointed a Muskogee Regional Medical Center Board of Trustees lay member. This becomes the third board to which Faltyn has been appointed since his arrival at CSC in July 2011.

The Board of Trustees has been in existence since the formation of the hospital. Its responsibilities include overseeing the medical center and, ultimately, ensuring a positive experience is provided to patients. The nine-member board, representing the community, medical staff and hospital administration, meets monthly to review myriad quality indicators and financial reports and assists in determining the strategic direction of the health system. Dr. Faltyn is the newest member of the MRMC Board.

“Connors is known for its dedication to providing high-quality education to our community,” said Health Systems CEO Kevin Fowler. “Through the employment of their students and being a host to their clinical programs, we are a direct benefactor of their commitment to excellence. We look forward to our continued partnership.”

“Dr. Faltyn has been a critical addition to our hospital Board of Trustees, tying clinical education directly to the workplace,”

Fowler continued. “He provides great insight to the health-care process, relying on his many years as a leader in higher education.”

On July 1, 2012, Muskogee Regional Medical Center and Muskogee Community Hospital combined operations into one comprehensive health system. By merging the strengths of both facilities, the goal is to allow both operations to be in a better position to better serve the communities for generations to come. In addition to his commitment to the MRMC Board of Trustees, Dr. Faltyn also joined community and hospital leaders on the Transition Team. The purpose of the Transition Team is to provide leadership and planning experts to ensure a smooth and successful transition with the merging of facilities.

Dr. Faltyn believes both Muskogee and the Healthcare Community are headed in the right direction.

“The leadership, the facilities and the education are all present right here in Muskogee,” Faltyn said. “We are already a regional leader in healthcare, so if we continue to combine our resources, ideas and efforts, moving forward we will only build on the success that has been created.”

“It is a great honor to be appointed to the MRMC Board of Trustees,” Faltyn said. “I look forward to having the opportunity to serve with other healthcare and community leaders.”



Week of Welcome (WOW) was full of exciting activities for students to participate in during the first week at school. Activities were designed to help students connect to each other, faculty and staff.

“Statistics confirm that students who are involved on campus are more likely to graduate and enjoy their collegiate experience,” said Dare Chronister, Coordinator of Student Activities.

WOW kicked off with the Cowboy Cookout at the Warner campus where parents were invited after a long day of moving into the residence halls. Students enjoyed inflatables, giveaways, music, and free food. This year, there were Cowboy Cookouts at the Port and West campuses in Muskogee, as well.

Connors State College basketball alumni and comedian David Graham from St. Louis, Missouri, performed in the

Fine Arts Auditorium.

Events offered in the Muskogee area for all students, faculty and staff included a discounted swim night at River Country Family Water Park, free bowling at Green Country Lanes, and free skating at the Muskogee Skate Center.

The Message & Ice Cream Social, Grocery Bingo, Cowboy Up! Late: Movie and Swim Nights, and a Back to School Blood Drive were available for students on the Warner campus.

Pictures can be viewed online at: [www.connorsstate.edu/sa](http://www.connorsstate.edu/sa) and [www.facebook.com/ConnorsSA](http://www.facebook.com/ConnorsSA).



# student support services EXCEED objectives

Connors State College strives to surround its students with services needed to be successful. One of the programs on campus that helps to meet this goal is Student Support Services. Alica Sloat, SSS Career and Transfer Advisor, is vital to the success of the program. Sloat has been employed with the grant-funded program for two and half years.

“My favorite thing about working in Student Support Services is watching our students achieve their goals,” said Sloat. “We assist our students with the academic, financial and social aspects of becoming future leaders in their community.”

SSS is a federally-funded grant program that can assist qualified students with free tutoring and transferring assistance that they need to succeed. This is a 5-year grant cycle offered to students who meet one of the following criteria: (1) first generation college student whose parents did not graduate with a four-year degree; (2) students with any kind of disability; or (3) students who meet a certain financial need.

SSS’s goal is to help students persist, graduate, and transfer to a 4-year college, serving 175 students a year.

The program not only serves as a tutoring and transferring center, but also provides students with personal counseling, academic advisement, social and

cultural events and financial planning.

Each year the Oklahoma Department of Education reviews each program and ensures it meets necessary objectives. In the latest review, Connors State College exceeded all of the objectives and goals set forth – one of only a few programs to do so.

More than 70 percent of all SSS participants projected from the end of one academic year to the beginning of the next, graduated and/or transferred from a two-year college to a four-year university. Second, more than 80 percent of all enrolled participants served by SSS maintained good academic standing, and, finally, Connors State College SSS exceeded the objective to graduate at least 30 percent of its’ participants. All of these objectives were met with more than 200 active students.



*Alica Sloat serves as the academic advisor for Student Support Services.*

## CONNORS DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

### 2012 FACULTY & STAFF GIVING CAMPAIGN

In August, CSC faculty and staff were challenged to show support of the college and students by participating in a Faculty and Staff Giving Campaign. According to Ryan Blanton, Executive Director of the Connors Development Foundation, by September 1, faculty and staff pledged more than \$10,000 for the next year, representing a 370 percent increase in donations from 2011-2012.

CSC students benefit directly from these donations, which help fund student groups such as the Social Sciences Club and Phi Beta Lamda, athletic teams, student scholarships, as well as the Cowboy Legacy fund. Participants in the campaign will be recognized with a plaque on a pillar at the Port and Warner campuses. The department of agriculture deserves special recognition for being the first to reach 100 percent employee participation.

“I would like to extend a whole-hearted thank you to all who participated,” said Blanton. “Your support exemplifies the dedication of CSC employees in our mission of “building futures one at a time.”

*A pillar on both the Port and Warner campuses will be dedicated to contributing donors.*





# Muskogee Difference Healthcare Scholarship

A year of hard work and a historic partnership have resulted in the establishment of a scholarship that could change the lives of many Muskogee residents.

Connors State College and the Muskogee Foundation made an announcement on August 6 that brought many students to tears. The college and foundation have combined resources to develop the Muskogee Difference Healthcare Scholarship. This program will provide students residing within the City of Muskogee who are studying nursing or allied health with full tuition, fees and books (as funds are available).

The \$300,000 funded by the foundation is the largest scholarship in the college's history.

"Muskogee is becoming a hub of outstanding medical services in this region of the state and outstanding nursing

care is critical for our advancement in this industry segment," said Bob Coburn, Muskogee mayor.

"The outstanding nursing program at Connors State is an ideal source of talented nurses and we want to keep them in Muskogee and the surrounding area to stimulate more job growth in the healthcare industry," Coburn continued. "The Muskogee Difference Scholarship supports a viable pipeline of quality nurses for the diverse healthcare environment we are building in this part of the state."

The first graduating nursing class in 1986 was the beginning of what has become one of the most successful programs in the state.

"The nursing program at Connors State College is one of the largest in the state," said Dr. Tim Faltyn, Connors State College president. "Our students distinguish themselves with a pass rate that exceeds state and national averages on the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX), and are the cornerstone of our emerging healthcare education program on campus."

"We are grateful to the City of Muskogee Foundation for providing this funding and partnering with us in creating a center of healthcare education excellence right here in eastern Oklahoma," Faltyn said.

With over 3,500 medical professionals in the city of Muskogee, it is optimal to educate the residents and also employ them. Connors State College currently offers degrees in pre-nursing, pre-med, allied health careers, nursing, LPN-RN Ladder program, Medical Lab Technician, Radiology Technician. Spring 2013 will see the addition of programming for Physical Therapy Assistant, Occupational Therapy and Medical Records.



Nursing students greeted Roger Barton, Muskogee Foundation Chairman (right), and Muskogee Mayor Bob Coburn.



*Dr. Faltyn explains the Muskogee service area and congratulates students when addresses qualify.*



Scholarship recipients must be enrolled in the Connors pre-nursing, nursing or allied health programs and be residents of Muskogee to be selected for the program. In addition, students who receive the Muskogee Difference Scholarship will be required to sign a commitment to work in Muskogee County for two years following graduation, if employment is available.

Connors State College has been providing exceptional education to students for more than 100 years. The college's second century is off to a promising start as its' staff

continues to build programs to meet the ever-changing needs of a diverse population.

Connors State College prides itself on becoming partners with the community and other educational leaders to provide the best opportunities for current and future students. Connors State College is a college of hundreds that serves thousands. It is a college that serves its community while developing a national reputation as one of the top colleges in the country.



*The Muskogee Difference Healthcare Scholarship announcement was met with astonishment, group hugs and tears of joy from qualifying students.*

## CONNORS ANNOUNCES INAUGURAL CLASS TO ATHLETIC

# HALL OF FAME



Connors State College has a long history of athletic achievements and to honor those athletes CSC Athletic Director and Cowboys head basketball coach Bill Muse has announced the first Connors State College Athletic Hall of Fame members.

The first class, which will be inducted on October 6 at the Muskogee Country Club includes former men's basketball players Lou Henson and Horatio Webster, women's basketball players Kim Davis-Barton and Rhonda Smith, baseball players Clint Sodowsky and Jeff Turtle, softball players Cassie Tipton and Michel Taylor, women's 1985 NJCAA National Championship basketball team and V. David Miller of Cross Communication, who is to be awarded the Outstanding Leadership Award.

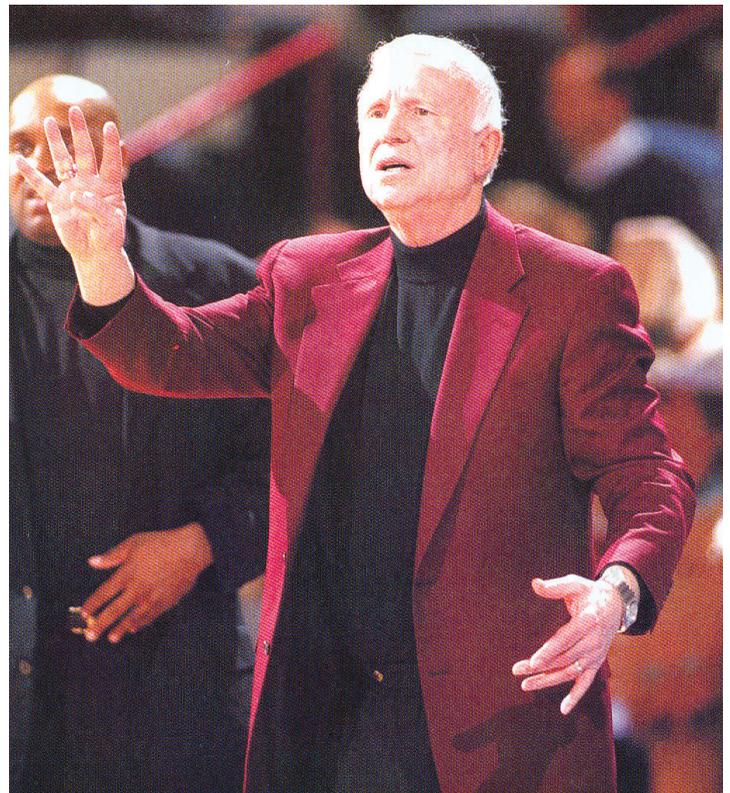
"We are very excited about establishing our Athletic Hall of Fame with athletes who have excelled both on and off the athletic courts and playing fields at Connors State College," said Muse. "This is an exciting time for Connors State and we are looking forward to our first induction in October.

"The Connors State Athletic Hall of Fame is the highest athletic honor that can be bestowed on a Cowboy and Cowgirl that participated in athletics," said Muse.

Bryndon Manzer, studio basketball analyst for ESPN and former basketball player at Oklahoma State University, will emcee the banquet, which will begin at 5 p.m. with a reception, followed by dinner at 6 p.m. Tickets for the event can be obtained from Muse at Connors State by calling (918) 463-6231.



Above: Pictured is Connors Athletic Hall of Famer Kim Davis, a 1982 All-American basketball player. Right: Lou Henson.





## FORMER NFL STAR SPEAKS TO CONNORS ATHLETES

Jerry Ostriski, former University of Tulsa All-American and eight-year pro with the National Football League's Buffalo Bills addressed 125 athletes August 22 at the Connors State College Westbrook

Library Auditorium, telling the athletes to "take advantage of your opportunity."

Ostriski, started 108 games for the Bills as an offensive lineman, after being cut three times by Kansas City and Atlanta amid several knee injury setbacks.

"It's a grind, but you have to embrace the grind to become the best that you can be," he said. "You have to put in the time. It's not easy. It's what you do at home and in the classroom that you bring to athletics that makes you a better athlete, by putting in the time."

"You don't need to be out on the weekend, drinking,

smoking or driving around with friends when you can be working on your game. You don't need to be blowing five days a week of hard work on two days of weekend trouble and getting right back where you started."

Ostriski told the student-athletes he wanted to attend Penn State, but the opportunity wasn't there. He was recruited by TU's George Henshaw, who left before he enrolled his freshman season and played four years under Dave Rader, where he played in two bowl games.

"It was my dream to play by Penn State, but wasn't given the opportunity, and I embraced TU. That's what I'm telling these student athletes — take advantage of the opportunity they have and make the most of it. I thought of returning home to Pennsylvania but I wanted to make my parents proud and that's what you should want."

"There is no magic formula for success. You just have to grind it out. Only one percent of college athletes go pro. But this time (college) is the best time of our life. Embrace the grind and take advantage of the opportunity."

## Maly Named



Connors State College business professor John Maly was recently recognized as the Muskogee Phoenix Hot 100 Best Teacher. The Hot 100 is an advertisement supplement put out once a year that polls readers on various topics, allowing them to vote for their favorite restaurant, lawyer, doctor, etc.

"I would like to thank those who voted for me as favorite teacher," Maly said. "It truly is an honor."

Maly has worked at Connors for five years, full-time, and as an adjunct for one semester prior. He said he enjoys his job because of the unique personalities he sees

every day, whether it be from his co-workers or his students – all of which make his day more vibrant and fun.

Maly has a busy week driving to Muskogee and Warner. Twice a week he teaches a class at each of the prisons. After, he heads to the Muskogee campus for course prep and office hours. He also travels to the Warner campus once a week to allow students a live instructor and a chance to visit during office hours.

Like everyone else, Maly has hobbies that do not relate to work. He enjoys playing golf, card games, and cooking on the grill. Working outside of work is something he is accustomed to as well, whether it be working on his ranch or checking oil wells after school and on weekends.

Maly's favorite story to tell is of one of his business class students. Maly said the student "had a look in his eye and was very intelligent when it came to the stock market." That student is now a multimillionaire living in Phoenix, who continues improving his net worth as a day trader.

# I AM CONNORS

## *I am Connors* . . .

By Brandi Farris



**JAKE NEIGHBORS**

**J**ake Neighbors, eighteen years old, went to Muldrow High school. He chose Connors State College because it was his best choice to pursue cheering at Oklahoma State University. He hopes to be a speech coach, in order to give back to a program that changed his life completely.

In his spare time, Jake likes to hang out with his friends, work out, and sleep, which is always vital to any college student.

What makes Jake unique is that he is a “speech major in an aggie school.” In three words, Jake describes himself as outgoing, trustworthy, and ambitious. He says he is talented at doing impressions, but as he would not display this talent, sadly, this reporter cannot agree. His favorite thing about Connors is that it is a small school environment and that everyone is friendly thus far.

Jake lives by the quote: “Everything is possible through passion and strength.” – translated Irish Proverb

**S**hy-Ann Blossom, eighteen years old, is a graduate of Oakes High school. She chose Connors because it was a small school with a lot of friendly people. Shy-Ann aspires to be a nurse and is pursuing a nursing degree. Her favorite class thus far is English Comp, and she spends her downtime with friends and hanging out at the pool on campus.

In three words, after much thought, Shy-Ann chose to describe herself as outgoing, small, and funny, all of which I found to be true. She says that what makes her unique is that she doesn’t judge anyone.

Shy-Ann has participated in beauty pageants in the past, which is what she would consider her hidden talent. Her favorite thing about Connors is that she has her own room in the dorms.

Shy-Ann lives by the Bible verse: “For I know I have plans for you,” declares the Lord, “Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all of your heart.” – Jeremiah 29:11-13



**SHY-ANN BLOSSOM**

## *I am Connors* . . .

# RED CROSS

## Sticks it to Connors

On Tuesday, August 14, Connors State College hosted an American Red Cross blood drive, allowing students and faculty to donate to the local blood bank.

The last three blood drives had total donations of nine units, three units, and seven units, respectively. This year Connors students flooded the Student Union to get involved and set a record for participation.

“The response has been very positive this year with a total of 16 units,” said Red Cross Southwest drive organizer April Inman. “We are looking forward to partnering with Connors State in the coming months.”

No matter the time or the endless nerves, students continually waited patiently to help save another’s life.

American Red Cross brought a special prize this year, as well. Every student that successfully donated at the



Sophomore school mascot “Connor” Hunter Hume gives blood effortlessly to support the American Red Cross.

drive received a free t-shirt and has been entered into a national drawing to receive a football autographed by University of Oklahoma Heisman trophy winners Jason White, Billy Sims, and Steve Owens. The drawing will take place in mid-October. Winners will be contacted by the American Red Cross.

By Camry Hankins

# COLTON CARLTON -

## Keeper of the Plains

Freshman, Colton Carlton from Warner, Oklahoma, was presented the *Keeper of the Plains Scholarship* from Janet and Roy Camp for demonstrating excellence in his education over an extended period of time. Carlton maintained terrific grades, demonstrated pride in his tribal traditions, and showed a vital interest in continuing his academic excellence.

The scholarship is annually granted to an outstanding individual Native American student. The recipient must have maintained a 2.5 grade point average and have presented proof of grades and enrollment to the Keeper of the Plains Scholarship Committee before the start of the next semester. Recipients must prove to be an outstanding applicant to receive this scholarship, as well.

“This year we received a record amount of applicants and it was the most competitive pool of students we have seen in the history of this scholarship,” said Roy Camp. “We are proud to be here presenting it to the student who



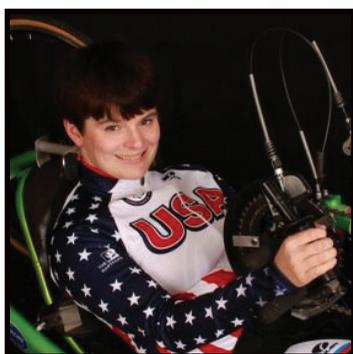
Roy and Janet Camp pictured with scholarship recipient Colton Carlton and college President Dr. Tim Faltyn.

exemplified all the qualities we want.

“It is a pleasure for the Keeper of the Plains Committee to present this year’s scholarship to Colton Carlton,” Camp continued.

Likewise, Carlton is excited to be the 2012 scholarship recipient.

“I grew up here and am proud to be attending Connors,” Carlton said. “I am very grateful and honored to receive this great scholarship.”



# *Cassie Mitchell* **HOMETOWN HERO**

**D**r. Cassie Mitchell has accomplished a great deal since graduating as class valedictorian from Warner High School in 1999. Having taken classes concurrently at Connors State, she was ready to go to college full-time on a track scholarship when she unexpectedly suffered from several autoimmune reactions caused by Devics Neuromyelitis Optica, leaving her paralyzed from the chest down.

Dr. Mitchell attended Oklahoma State University on a full academic scholarship, completing a bachelor of science in Chemical Engineering, and earning national recognition academically. During this time, Dr. Mitchell began her new life as a Para athlete.

Dr. Mitchell continued her academic career at the Georgia Institute of Technology/ Emory University Biomedical Engineering Ph.D. program where she was a highly prestigious National Science Foundation

Graduate Research Fellow, earning her Ph.D. in 2009.

As a post-doctoral fellow, Dr. Mitchell began Para cycling, and won several national and world championships. Now a research faculty member at Georgia Institute of Technology/Emory University, Dr. Mitchell is currently a member of the U.S. Paralympic Team, competing at the 2012 Paralympics in London. Her events include the T52 100m, the T52 200m, and the F51-52-53 Discus.

The Connors State College and Warner communities are proud of Dr. Mitchell for her successes on the track and in academia, as she exemplifies the power of determination, hard work, and the pursuit of greatness.

For sources or more information, visit: [www.cassie-mitchell.com](http://www.cassie-mitchell.com), or search for Cassie Mitchell on Facebook.

WARNER  
MAIN CAMPUS  
Rt. 1 Box 1000  
Warner, OK 74469  
(918) 463-2931

MUSKOGEE  
WEST CAMPUS  
2404 W. Shawnee Ave.  
Muskogee, OK 74401  
(918) 684-6747

MUSKOGEE  
PORT CAMPUS  
2501 N. 41st St. East  
Muskogee, OK 74403  
(918) 684-5471