

MARCH 2021

Panhandle

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF OKLAHOMA PANHANDLE STATE UNIVERSITY

OPSU.edu



**EXCELLENCE IN
HIGHER LEARNING**

BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Dodgeball Winners

Back Row: K.C. Crandall, Xavier Starks, Clay Patterson, Antonio Vaughn, Chris Daley

Front Row: Tyrick Kimble, Waren Dillon, Justin Jordan, Ja'Quavion Daniels

/ CAMPUS /

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

In Celebration of Black History Month, Oklahoma Panhandle State University supports and stands with our Black Scholars of the World, who asked to share their voice through the statement below.

"Black History Month was designated to commemorate the ratification of the 15th Amendment to the United States Constitution. Passed by Congress February 26, 1869 and ratified the following February, the Amendment granted Black men the right to vote. Black Americans battled through the Jim Crow law era, violence, and discrimination for nearly a century in effort to exercise that right. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was signed into law and throughout history, Black voters have been a catalyst to change, progression, and civil rights liberties afforded to many minority groups and the LGBTQ+ community to present date.

Reflecting on the year 2020 and how Black History Month will be approached this year feels differently for many in the community here at OPSU. We have all been through an emotional period together. It has caused us to question if we are truly making changes. Are we helping people to realize the fear, anger, and hurt that has been felt in the Black community for so long? Do they realize the struggle?

We saw protests rise all over the country. Millions came out in support of ending systemic racism and demanding change. But we also saw many incidents across our nation and here in our own local community of those who stood in dark contrast to that progression. At times there were great feelings of a breakthrough, and other times it felt like we took steps backward. The feeling presently is one of worry, but also one of hope, and one of feeling blessed to still be here. To be with one another and to know that we have made it another day to see our family is something that we will not take for granted. We continue to push forward in our mission to achieve goals that some thought we may never achieve. Together we can make a difference, and for us, it begins right here at Oklahoma Panhandle State University."

University President, Dr. Tim Faltyn stated, "I stand with our students and have been inspired by their persistence to stand for the change they want to see in the world. I look forward to celebrating this month with our students and learning about what it means to them." **P**

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PANHANDLE MAGAZINE

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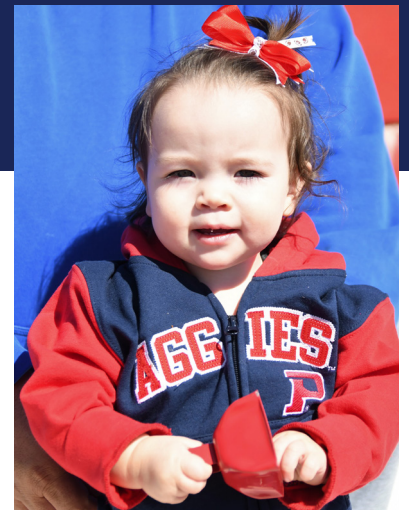
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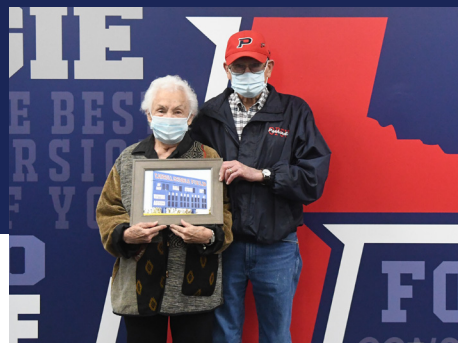
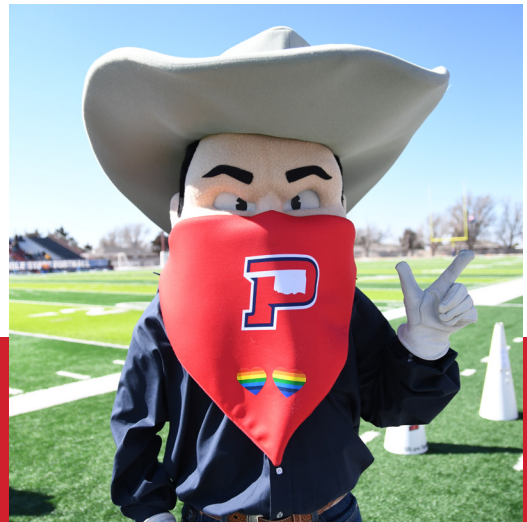
Natasha Eidson — Chyanna Black — Amanda Tidwell — Brittany

Lee Way — Myra Mccaskill — Camry Kane — Harlee Wiggins

/ CAMPUS /

EVENTS ON CAMPUS & IN THE COMMUNITY







/ CAMPUS /

THE HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION APPROVES PANHANDLE STATE'S REAFFIRMATION OF ACCREDITATION

Oklahoma Panhandle State University has been notified that the Higher Learning Commission has approved OPSU's Reaffirmation of Accreditation for the next ten years on the Open Pathway for Accreditation. The Higher Learning Commission is one of six regional accreditors of degree-granting institutions, covering 19 states.

One of three options to maintain accreditation, the Open Pathway, allows institutions to design and implement Quality Initiatives to develop strategies and processes for continued further improvement.

OPSU's comprehensive evaluation and self-study was completed in October, when peer evaluators from across the country representing HLC evaluated the university and affirmed that OPSU had met HLC's criteria for accreditation.

OPSU President Tim Faltyn stated, "This is the best possible outcome for our university. I am honored to work with the best faculty and staff, this reaccreditation and our success is due to the excellent work and dedication our people show every day."

In addition to the HLC evaluation, OPSU was involved in the HLC Persistence and Completion Academy from 2015-2020. This project included four detailed areas: data collection, community buy-in to data, data dissemination, and using data to further student success leading to them persisting and completing. OPSU successfully completed participation in the Academy, and was invited to continue participation for the next 5 years. **P**

"This is the best possible outcome for our university. I am honored to work with the best faculty and staff, this reaccreditation and our success is due to the excellent work and dedication our people show every day."

— Dr. Tim Faltyn,
University President

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

OPEN PATHWAYS AT OPSU



CREATING EXCELLENCE

AT PANHANDLE STATE

Oklahoma Panhandle State University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, a regional accreditation agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. The last comprehensive evaluation for accreditation occurred in 2010. As part of its reaccreditation, the university is on what the commission calls the Open Pathway. The Open Pathway program is one of three options that an institution has for maintaining its accreditation with HLC. The Open Pathway's 10-year cycle is focused on quality assurance and institutional improvement appropriate to the University Mission. In the final year of the cycle, the institution undergoes a comprehensive evaluation to ensure that it is meeting the Criteria for Accreditation, pursuing institutional improvement and complying with certain requirements set by the U.S. Department of Education. Rooted in "Progress through Knowledge," OPSU is committed to promoting excellence in the preparation of students for success in a global community. To learn more about the University, read our Strategic Plan on the website at <http://www.opsu.edu/About/Strategic-Plan/>

OPSU officially launched its Quality Initiative project in the fall of 2015 focusing on improving student retention and graduation. This initiative focused on building our institutional capacity to evaluate and analyze student data to improve the complement of student support programs and interventions for student success. This initiative helped the university make student success central to the Strategic Plan and Scorecard. The project also resulted in major gains in graduation rates, with total annual graduates up 51% since the start of the initiative. Another major area for growth in the initiative came through improved course pass rates in developmental education by 17% for English and 10% for Math. **P**





/ STAFF /

CALANDRA ROSE

A Springfield, Colorado native, Calandra Rose has worked for Panhandle State for over ten years. She spent most of her time at OPSU working as the Administrative Assistant to the Fiscal Affairs Office and the Comptroller. She stated, "I wore a lot of different hats while in that office."

In June of 2020, Calandra accepted a new position as the Administrative Assistant to the President. She never thought this new position would be possible for her to achieve, but she has loved every minute of it.

"Dr. Faltyn has taught me a lot about myself in the little time I have worked as his Assistant. I want to thank him for believing in me."

A few of her tasks in this role are scheduling meetings, arranging calendars, assisting with the President's class where it is needed, and organizing travel.

Dr. Faltyn stated, "Calandra is such a hard worker, and her dedication to Panhandle State is inspiring. Her willingness to always lend a hand and help where it is needed is something that has made her invaluable. She is a great lady from a great family and she sets a great example for all of us to follow."

Calandra has seen many things change over the last ten years but has enjoyed her time here. "My favorite part about Panhandle State is the family that you have here. Everyone helps out when needed and takes care of each other", she commented.

Beyond working at OPSU, you can find Calandra at the golf course. A fun fact about Calandra is that she likes to watch vet shows like Dr. Pol or Secrets of the Zoo. She has been married to her best friend, Cory, for 21 years. They have two children, Makenna and Tyrun. Makenna is in Pharmacy School, and Tyrun is studying Agronomy here at Panhandle State. Calandra loves spending as much time with family as she can. **P**

/ STUDENT /

KELSEY HALLIN

Kelsey Hallin, a rodeo athlete from Harvard, Illinois, has already made a name for herself in the rodeo industry. Kelsey served as Miss Wisconsin High School Rodeo for two terms where she was able to attend hundreds of community events and rodeos across the country.

At the age of seventeen, Kelsey started Rafter H Ranch & Performance Horses where she trains horses, teach lessons, and puts on clinics of all skill levels and events/disciplines.

After High School, Kelsey attended McHenry County College where she earned an Associates in Arts and worked full time training horses. She went on in her pageant career to win Miss Illinois Horse Fair, where she promoted the horse industry across the state of Illinois.

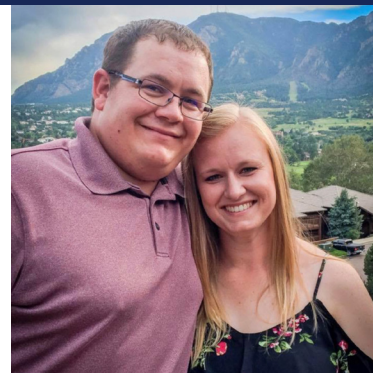
Kelsey is a first generation rodeo athlete majoring in Business Administration. She is on the rodeo team, a member of the Business Club PBL, and also a member of the PTK.

Kelsey stated, "Being from the Chicagoland area, as you can imagine, there's not much for rodeo so being down here and being on a team has been life changing for me. The support system down here is like no other; there is always someone cheering for you and always someone pushing you to be a better version of yourself. Shelbie and Robert have been incredibly helpful and supportive of my goals and helping me reach them in and out of the arena."

"First and foremost I'd like to thank my Lord and Savior for everything he has blessed me with and the strength he has given me to push through everything that has come my way. I owe a bigger thank you than I can ever give to my parents for allowing me to chase my dreams at full speed and all of the sacrifices they've made for me to live the life I do."

"OPSU has become my home and I truly credit my friends & coaches for that. It has been a journey full of the highest highs and the lowest of lows, but it is my support system stretching from all angles that is my fuel to keep going and work even harder than I did the day before."

After graduating in 2022, Kelsey plans to continue to train horses and rodeo. **P**



/ FACULTY /

STACY NORDQUIST

Stacy Nordquist, originally from Hoffman, Minnesota, is a proud Alumni and Faculty Member at all OPSU games and events. He has made Panhandle State his home and is currently the Assistant Professor and Chair of Health and Physical Education.

Nordquist graduated from OPSU in 1994 with a degree in Health, Physical Education, and Recreation. He then received his Master's in Administrative Leadership in Adult Education in 1998 from the University of Wisconsin and further graduate studies in Kinesiology at Southwestern Oklahoma State University.

He came to Panhandle State after receiving a call from Jerry Olson, former Head Women's Basketball coach, to help at a summer camp. "He told me that about his team for the next year and said, 'We are also going to play in Hawaii!' As a joke, I said, 'Do you need an assistant?' After a pause, Jerry said, 'As a matter of fact, I do,'" said Nordquist.

The opportunity to finish his degree and start his college coaching career made Panhandle State an easy choice. While being on campus, Panhandle State became home, and he met his wife, Audrey, in 2007 in the Aggie Grill.

Panhandle State holds many special memories, but the most memorable is the 1993-1994 team winning the region and making it into the Elite Eight of the national tournament. Nordquist said, "The students and seeing them graduate is my favorite thing."

Nordquist and his wife, Audrey, became grandparents this past year and enjoy getting to spend time together. When he's not in a classroom, you can catch him watching any activity happening on campus or the golf course playing a round or two with the athletic coaches. He commented, "Victor Esparza enjoys beating me, but for the record, I let him win, and I get to play many rounds of golf with OPSU Hall of Famer and legend, Roger McKinnon." **P**

/ ALUMNI /

BRANDON TRIPP

Brandon Tripp, a Texline, Texas native, has represented Panhandle State great as an alumni while working in the Agriculture industry. He graduated in 2013 with a Bachelor's degree in Agronomy.

Tripp is currently the Branch Manager for Nutrien Ag Solutions in Guymon. Panhandle State was an easy choice after seeing the up-and-coming Ag program, real one on one interaction with professors, and that it was close to his hometown.

During his time at Panhandle State, he played golf and was a member of the Crops Judging team. Through the education, experience, and guidance of Dr. Bensch, Tripp became a Certified Crop Advisor in 2014 and passed his test on the first attempt.

"Brandon was a leader on the OPSU campus and a tremendous student. He was an important member of the nationally ranked OPSU Crops Judging team, and continues to support the crops judging team each year by providing jackets for the team members. I am very proud of Brandon and his success," said Dr. Bensch.

"My favorite thing from OPSU was NACTA crops judging competition. The details and info that we practiced and learned for the competition were priceless. I still use and build on the foundation of learning that Dr. Bensch etched in our brains every day in the career path I have chosen in agriculture," said Tripp.

"I also help pretty extensively at the school farm helping with Agronomic inputs and gathering data with Cameron Murley with OPREC. OPSU and OPREC let me and my company do a lot of research trials and gather data for local farmers, I really appreciate getting to work with him and being on the farm where started my career as agronomist."

Tripp lives in Stratford, Texas, with his wife of five years, Kirsten. They have made their home with five spoiled puppies that keep them busy. **P**



/ CAMPUS /

OPSU'S HISPANIC STUDENT CENTER UNDERWAY

As Oklahoma's first and only Hispanic Serving Institution, we pride ourselves in promoting diverse experiences and empowering individual and collective identities. Panhandle State received a \$2.8 million Title V Grant, Developing Hispanic Serving Institutions in the fall, and a portion of this money has been designated to building a Hispanic Student Center.


University President Dr. Tim Faltyn stated, "Our students deserve the best experience while at Oklahoma's first and only Hispanic Serving Institution. Our goal is to make OPSU the campus of choice for Hispanic students throughout the region. The Hispanic Student Center is going to be one of the many highlights here at OPSU, and I look forward to seeing what it will do to help our current and incoming students."

Provost Dr. Julie Dinger stated, "The Hispanic Student Center is a big step in the right direction to bring world class academic experiences and student support to a group of students who represent the best of our university and our region. The vision of leaders like Ms. Allen, will help OPSU create and provide student-centered services to increase Hispanic student recruitment, retention, and graduation rates."

The HSC will serve as a community hub on campus for Hispanic students to gather, network, develop their leadership skills, and access services that support their academic success at Oklahoma Panhandle State University. It will be a center consisting of state-of-the-art technology, a lounge area, and staff in an environment that captures the Hispanic culture. Through the HSC, students will receive specialized academic advising, specific financial literacy and resources, tutoring, and events culturally familiar for the students.

Director of Hispanic Student Center, Valentina Allen, stated, "There is so much that can be done to truly guide our Hispanic students to academic success and graduation." She continued, "Like me, many of them may be the first in their family to graduate from college. That brings such a sense of pride, but also an immeasurable amount of pressure. The HSC will be that hub where they can get answers to many of their questions, access the brightest tutors, and find a place to connect with others. I am absolutely excited to open our doors and see the impact that the HSC will have on OPSU."

Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dr. Brad Duren, commented, "The purpose of the grant is to expand services and resources to our Hispanic students and the surrounding communities. The grant gives us the financial ability to better meet Hispanic students' needs through increased funding of campus services, technological tools, and networking initiatives tailored to the specific personal and educational demands these students face."

The Hispanic Student Center is underway and will be located in the McKee Library 106B. Be sure to follow them on Twitter @CenterOPSU. For more information, go to hsc.opsu.edu. 

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



MARCH 1ST - 31ST

/CAMPUS/

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH AT PANHANDLE STATE

During March, Panhandle State looks forward to celebrating Women's History Month with students, faculty, staff, and community members.

In 1981, Congress authorized and requested the first week of March 1982 be recognized as Women's History Week. During the next five years, members working on the National Women's History Project petitioned to have it designated for the month's entirety. March 1st-31st, 1987 was the first year to be observed as Women's History Month in the United States. March now celebrates women's contributions to history, culture, and society.

Panhandle State has scheduled several events throughout the month for women on campus and the community. At the start of the month, alumni and guest speaker, Becky Lauridsen, will join campus virtually to talk about burnout prevention and stress management. Historical women will be showcased across campus, and current leaders were featured to recognize the trailblazers, both past and present, during the month.

Women's History Month has grown awareness over the decades among both men and women. Panhandle State will embrace this with students by hosting events throughout the month for both the men and women on campus. Each week will have an event that students can join together and encourage each other to be their best selves.

Panhandle State encourages everyone to celebrate the success of women in our country and support the next generation during Women's History Month. **P**



HUGHES-STRONG HALL
EST. 1926

/ALUMNI/

2021 CENTURY CLUB KICKS OFF

In 2019, OPSU celebrated the 110th anniversary with the restoration of the iconic feature of campus, the Sower. The Century Club was developed to recognize OPSU supporters who gave \$100 or more annually. The restoration of the Sower statue was the first project of the Century Club.

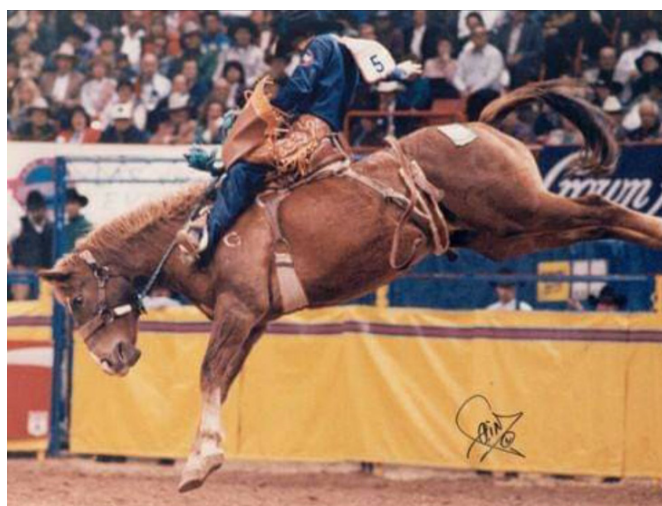
University President, Dr. Tim Faltyn stated, "This project was a great way to inspire a new generation of supporters who could invest in one of the most historical and iconic features of our campus."

The statue was taken down for much needed repairs and a bronze casting was made. The bronze statue was placed back on campus in early June even through the COVID-19 pandemic. In remembrance of donors for the first year, names are being engraved on plaques to be placed at the base of the statue.

Vice President of Operation, Dr. Ryan Blanton said, "This has been an inspiring campaign, and I am so thankful for the work of our Alumni in helping make the new Sower a reality."

As we move into the new year, the Century Club committee wanted to continue with recognizing historic areas on campus. The new project that Century Club money will help fund, will be the renovation of the Hughes-Strong Lobby. The Century Club campaign kicked off on January 15 and has raised over \$8,550 so far.

The Hughes-Strong remodel will feature the original Sower being placed in a glass case in the lobby of Hughes-Strong Auditorium. This display will be the centerpiece to the updated lobby as a reminder of the history of Oklahoma Panhandle State University. **P**



/ALUMNI/

LATHAM FAMILY TO BE RECOGNIZED AS THE 2020 ALUMNI HONORED FAMILY

The Panhandle State Association of Alumni and Friends is proud to announce that the 2020 Honored Family is the Latham family. Although the honoring ceremony was postponed due to COVID-19, we are pleased to continue our tradition. The Latham family will be recognized in April at the OPSU College Rodeo.

The Lathams have been a vital part of the Oklahoma Panhandle State University family for several years. Their story begins with three people that would set up the Latham family to carry on a legacy, Deke Latham, "Doc" Lynn Gardner, and Robert Etbauer. "Doc" recruited Deke to rodeo for him at Panhandle State where he met Robert, and the rest was history.

Deke went on to win the CNFR Bull Riding, CNFR Reserve Saddle Bronc, and CNFR All-Around titles in 1986. This was the same year that he qualified for his first National Finals Rodeo while traveling with Robert. Deke finished 5th in the world standings in the Saddle Bronc Riding. Unfortunately, that year of so many great accomplishments ended with a tragedy when Deke was killed in a car accident just a few miles from home in Wyoming.

The Latham family was left with a huge void that could not be filled, but Craig continued with his education at Eastern Wyoming College where he met Lori. "Doc" recruited Craig to come to Goodwell to rodeo for Panhandle State. Lori reminisced by saying, "It was July, a 100 plus degrees, and the wind was blowing just as hard, you know a typical day in the Panhandle Summer. I thought he was crazy to come here" Although her first thought was crazy, Lori followed the next year, and they have lived in Goodwell ever since.

Craig began traveling the rodeo trail with Robert, Billy, and Dan Etbauer which led to a family bond, unlike any others. The Lathams commented with a giggle, "Sue was trying to raise everybody at that point in time. We are all super thankful for her." The family created so many great memories, although they weren't always easy ones.

Craig and Lori married on Valentine's Day in 1990 which happened to be a Wednesday in between rodeos, in proper rodeo fashion. Lori supported Craig in his decision to put college on hold to pursue rodeo full time, and he went on to qualify for 9 NFR trips accompanied by many titles and stories to tell.

Lori stayed at Panhandle State where she finished her degree, and they started their family. They had their first daughter Chaney in 1991, and Lori graduated in the fall of 1992. She began teaching at Goodwell Public School where she still teaches today. The Lathams welcomed their second daughter, Sadie, in 1997. They went on to build their home and raise the girls south of town with a few horses and cattle.

Latham's story with Panhandle State doesn't end there. As Craig's rodeo career was closing due to several injuries, he went back and completed his degree in Agribusiness in 2000. It was during this time, that Dr. John Townsend approached him about being the Head Rodeo Coach at OPSU.

Craig spent more than a decade working to build and expand to have the best rodeo program he could for the kids that came to rodeo for him. The new practice arena and the Doug Wirtz building were completed. The stalls were expanded, the Top Hand Auction started, increases in scholarships, the McCloy's were brought in to help with jackpots, and several National Team and Individual titles were won.

Both the girls, Chaney and Sadie, grew up in the practice arena and at college rodeos which made Panhandle State an easy choice. Chaney graduated in 2013, and Sadie received her degree in 2018. One recruit from Craig's team, ended up his son-in-law, Tyrel Larsen from Canada. Tyrel graduated in 2011 from OPSU, and was later on crowned the CNFR Saddle Bronc Champion and qualified for the NFR in 2015. His time on Craig's team led two brothers to attend and rodeo for Craig as well. Tyrel and Chaney married, and now have two sons, Charlie and Waylon.

In 2011, Craig was diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma Cancer which forced him to cut his coaching career short in 2014. Fortunately, he was able to turn the reins over to ones that had been here since the beginning with Deke, Robert and Sue Etbauer.

The Latham family, with a grateful heart, stated, "We are all forever thankful for the students, the faculty and administration, for the friends and family that we have been blessed with through our affiliation with Oklahoma Panhandle State University. We wouldn't trade it for the world." **P**



/ATHLETICS/

OPSU BASEBALL FIELD TO BE NAMED AFTER COACH AND ADMINSTRATOR CARROLL GRIBBLE

Panhandle State University baseball field will be named in honor of former player, coach and administrator Carroll Gribble, it has been announced by University President Dr. Tim Faltyn. For decades, the current facility has simply been designated as Aggie Field.

"Now that we have passed a significant milestone in fundraising, I plan to request approval from the Oklahoma A&M Board of Regents to name our baseball field "Carroll Gribble Field," said Faltyn. "Today I am very pleased to announce that, from this day forward, the OPSU Baseball Field will be known as "The Grib."

Concurrent with the renaming of the field after Gribble, OPSU Baseball Head Coach Shawn Joy announced a comprehensive campaign for baseball facility upgrades. The project has already reached over half its goal for Phase 1. Anyone who would like to honor Coach Gribble and contribute, should contact Joy at: shawn.joy@opsu.edu or by calling (580) 349-1361.

"I know there are many, many individuals with fond memories of Coach Gribble," Joy said. "Whether it was as a player under him in football and baseball, or as a student going to see him in the Dean's Office, this is a way to say 'Thank You' to a tremendous individual. And any donation amount is welcome; we just want has many people who have been impacted by him to be involved and a part of the field renaming."

Upon completion of Phase 1, continuation of the four-phase project will be Phase 2 of the plan, which will include a shared-use Complex between the current baseball and softball areas, with indoor cages, offices, concession area, locker rooms, umpire rooms and restroom facilities. Phase 3 involves the installation of turf on both fields, with Phase 4 providing stadium lights.

"This is a very significant day for OPSU baseball and all of our Athletics Department," Interim Director of Athletics Victor Esparza surmised. "We are paying homage to Coach Gribble for all he has done and embarking on the plan to upgrade our baseball – and softball – facilities in the process. Seeing the support pour in already has been so encouraging; there are even more opportunities ahead for individuals and businesses to get behind the mission of OPSU Athletics, as we push forward in the other Phases of this project."

Gribble was elected to OPSU's Athletics Hall of Fame in 2019. Gribble – a four-year letterman in both football and baseball from 1950-54 – also served the Aggies as an assistant football (1968-79) and head baseball coach (1972-79). Even after stepping away from coaching, Gribble became the school's Dean of Students.

Gribble grew up in nearby Straight, Oklahoma, attending a one-room schoolhouse to begin his education. He came to what was then Panhandle A&M College, thanks to the assistance of a scholarship, majoring in Agriculture to start (since that was what he was around the most growing up), under football coach Kenneth Hoyt. But Gribble had another educational love. Buoyed by a high school teacher he really enjoyed, Gribble eventually changed his major to history. But after his freshman year, PAMC brought in a new coach named Oscar Williams. Williams – an Aggie Hall of Fame member himself – brought in a whole new coaching style and vision for the Aggies.

After graduation, Gribble went to Texhoma and embarked on a coaching and teaching career, eventually venturing to South Dakota where he spent three years. Perhaps it was the string of 20 days of sub-zero temperatures in South Dakota or the invitation from Coach Williams to return to PAMC on staff – or a combination of both – that brought Gribble back home to Texas County and Panhandle.

Initially coaching football in 1968, Gribble ascended to the baseball head coach position in 1972 after the passing of Williams before the season. Under his guidance, OPSU baseball would go on to have some of the most productive seasons in school history. With 11 seasons as a football assistant and eight more guiding the Aggies' baseball program, one can only imagine the thousands of young lives Gribble touched as a part of the PAMC staff.

Dr. Faltyn added, "This honor is more than earned for all that Coach Gribble has given to our University over the years. Whether it was during his own time as a player, while serving as our Head Baseball Coach and an Assistant Football Coach, or later as the Dean of Students. Congratulations to Coach Gribble!" **P**



/ATHLETICS/

OPSU'S CRANDALL EARNS SAC FOOTBALL OFFENSIVE "PLAYER OF THE WEEK"

Oklahoma Panhandle State University freshman quarterback KC Crandall (Winfield, Kan.) has earned the Sooner Athletic Conference Football Offensive "Player of the Week" award, it was announced by the league office. It is the first SAC honor for Crandall, who led the Aggies to a 25-18 win over Wayland Baptist University last Saturday.

"We are extremely excited for KC to receive this award, OPSU Head Coach Bob Majeski said. "He is a very good football player and even a better young man. We are happy for him and proud of him."

Crandall shredded the WBU secondary for 308 yards, completing 12-of-22 passing attempts, and tallied three aerial touchdowns. Crandall's big day was the first 300-yard passing game for an Aggie signal caller since November 12, 2016 when Shane Truelove went for 325 yards versus Texas A&M-Kingsville.

Crandall had touchdown tosses of 81, 61 and 84 yards. **P**



/ATHLETICS/

AGGIE VOLLEYBALL STARTS SAC SEASON

OPSU's red-hot volleyball team picked up in the spring, where it left off in the fall, earning two shutout wins and extending its win skein to seven matches to open Sooner Athletic Conference play. The Aggies – under the tutelage of first-year Head Coach Julie Allen – have rolled out to the best start in the modern era of the program's history, going 7-1 out of the blocks for 2020-21.

"Our '21 season has been full of whole-hearted commitment from our student-athletes," Allen explained. "We (coaches) know it has been a long and adverse year due to Covid. But the team comes to practice every day ready to learn, to get better at their craft and grow as a team. It has been just a blast to get the opportunity to coach these young women.

Panhandle began SAC action in late February by blanking Central Christian College at home, before taming rival Langston University in three-sets on the Lions' home floor.

"The Sooner Athletic conference is full of competitive programs," Allen added. "There are no easy matches; it's a fight every night. The Aggie Volleyball team has not only grown in experience on the court, but become stronger in our mental preparation and determination to play our best."

Your Aggies have three dates at Anchor D Arena over the coming weeks. Check opsuaggies.com and make plans to come out and support the team! **P**



/ATHLETICS/

AGGIE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL SEND SENIORS OUT BY SECURING A SAC TOURNAMENT SPOT

The final home game for the Oklahoma Panhandle State University women's basketball seniors – Naomi Rodriguez, Samantha Davis and Laura Moya Demures – proved to be an eventful one, as the team secured a spot in the Sooner Athletic Conference post-season tournament by virtue of its 70-54 win over Central Christian College. The Aggies (5-7, 5-7 SAC) will be making their second trip to the SAC tourney in the past three seasons with Victor Esparza at the team's helm.

"I am so proud of how hard our entire team played this evening, Esparza said. "I'm especially proud of our three seniors who have given so much to this program. Tonight we secured a spot in the conference tournament and are looking forward to our matchup on Tuesday."

The outcome was never much in doubt as OPSU took the lead for good with 6:46 left in the first quarter on a Rodriguez three-ball, 6-3. Panhandle led 15-9 after the first stanza and held a 30-18 cushion at the half. Both teams scored 36 points in the second half.

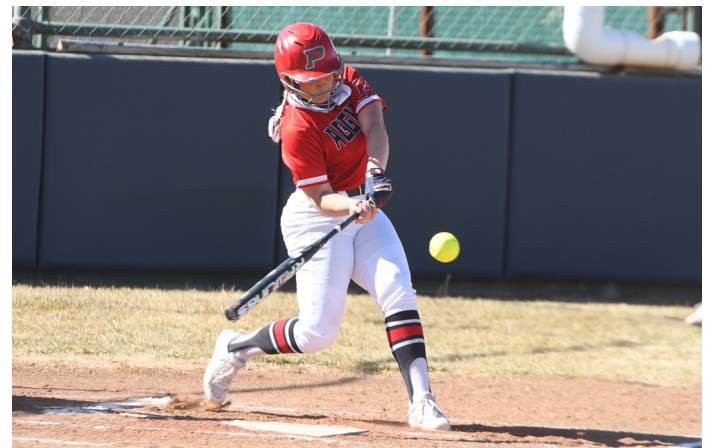
The biggest factor in the win may well have been the OPSU defense, which forced the Tigers into 22 turnovers. Panhandle had 11 steals – led by Moya Demures' three thefts – and converted the CCC miscues into 20 points.

OPSU guard Tateum Jones flirted with a triple-double in the game. Jones scored 11 points, hauled in 12 rebounds and dished off for eight assists.

Cassia McCaskill topped the OPSU scoring with 16 points. McCaskill converted 7-of-8 free throws, while also grabbing four rebounds and making a pair of steals.

Rodriguez finished the night with 14 points, including four treys, rounding out the team's trio of double-figure scorers.

The guard tandem of Myra McCaskill and Jo Quintero added eight and seven points, respectively. Davis and Morgan Williamson each tallied five points, while four from Moya Demures accounted for the OPSU point total. **P**



/ATHLETICS/

AGGIE SOFTBALL STARTS 2021 SEASON

The OPSU softball team and its fans have certainly learned that patience is a virtue heading into the 2021 season. In a year already beset by pandemic adjustments to its schedule, the Aggies also battled weather-related schedule changes in attempting to get the season started.

When Panhandle's ladies were able to lift the lid on 2021, they began with series' versus NCAA Division II power West Texas A&M University and then a Sooner Athletic Conference set versus USAO, ranked No. 2 in the NAIA. While those initial results did not go in the Aggies' favor, taking the first steps into a new and exciting season - as well as the OPSU debut of Head Coach Marc Benjamin tenure at the Panhandle State helm – highlight what should be a memorable year in the program's history.

Aggie Nation will have no less than 16 more home contests to enjoy. The team has a total of seven seniors closing out their OPSU careers, as well as a crop of talented newcomers to bolster the roster. **P**



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