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OPSU.edu



**AGGIE NATION
FOCUSES ON
STUDENT SUCCESS**



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CHAMPIONSHIP

OPSU SECURES AMERICAN CURED MEAT NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP



Student Elizabeth Ross and faculty members JD Fox and Kathryn Hearn secured first place at the American Cured Meat Championship in Charleston, South Carolina. They placed with a score of 997/1000. The team worked on formulating their product for a month before the contest.

As a result, their tri-tip pastrami won first place in the University Cured Specialty Product Category. University President, Dr. Julie Dinger said, "Congratulations to Elizabeth Ross and faculty mentors Ms. Hearn and Mr. Fox. OPSU is proud of our National Champion and our excellent program."

The OPSU Meat Lab and the Meat Judging team have had a consistent track record of placing Panhandle State at a national level. This last year, the team have competed at the American Association of Meat Processors Convention and American Cured Meat Championships, the Columbia Packing Company contest, and the Caviness Beef Packers contest. Additionally, the OPSU Meat Judging Team is gearing up for upcoming competitions through judging exercises, training sessions, and thorough study of meat quality standards and evaluation criteria.

Dean Tracy Kincannon stated, "I am proud of Ms. Hearn and Mr. Fox's work to develop a system that gives our students the best possible outcome for their education. We believe in high-quality education and hands-on learning for the highest impact on our students." He continued, "As they prepare for upcoming competitions, their commitment to excellence reflects the values of our institution."

Kathryn Hearn, OPSU Meat Judging Team Coach stated, "I am extremely proud of Elizabeth on her championship win, and I believe this victory serves as a powerful motivator as we prepare for the upcoming competitions." She continued, "With the team's dedication and a winning mindset, I'm confident we will continue to shine in the field of meat judging." Hearn also was newly elected to serve on the Intercollegiate Meat Coaches Committee Board. This leadership team is comprised of dedicated and experienced meat judging coaches and industry professionals that are passionate about growth and development through Intercollegiate Meat Judging. **P**



AGGIE NATION

FOCUSES ON STUDENT SUCCESS

Oklahoma Panhandle State University believes that student success encompasses all aspects of the University, uniting our dedication to academic excellence, personal growth, and support for our Aggie Nation. This fall, the Office of Academic and Student Affairs has set initiatives designed to empower students on their educational journey.

University President, Dr. Julie Dinger states, "Student success is at the core of our mission, driving every initiative and commitment we undertake. We are dedicated to fostering an environment where each student can thrive academically and personally."

OPSU's retention of students who attended Fall 2022 to Fall 2023 is 53%. This is an improvement of 5% from students who attended in Fall 2021 and returned in Fall 2022, which was 48%. The new student success initiatives encompass a wide range of programs and services aimed at enhancing the overall student experience. These include:

- **Academic Advising Enhancement:** OPSU has expanded its academic advising services with a focus on personalized guidance, career planning, and mentoring. Faculty and staff will work closely with students to ensure they are on the right academic path.
- **Expanded Academic Coaching Services:** The University has expanded its academic coaching services, providing students with additional resources to excel in their coursework. This includes peer mentors, online resources, and study groups.
- **Career Development Opportunities:** OPSU is dedicated to preparing students for life beyond graduation. New career development programs will provide career pathways, internship opportunities, resume-building workshops, and networking events.
- **Mental Health and Wellness Support:** The Aggie CARE Community supports mental health and well-being of students. Our Aggie CARE Community offers enhanced mental health resources, counseling services, and wellness programs to ensure students have the support they need.
- **HLC Student Success Academy:** OPSU began its two-year commitment to HLC's Student Success Academy in fall 23 to help identify barriers and discover opportunities to improve student success. This academy focuses on being data-driven, designing initiatives, building an infrastructure, and improving engagement. OPSU will be graduating from this academy in spring 2024.

Dr. Theresa Billiot, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, added, "At OPSU, we spark new ways of thinking and responding to challenges. These new initiatives and our collaboration with the HLC Student Success Academy reflect our unwavering commitment to empowering our students to reach their full potential." **P**



“Student success is at the core of our mission, driving every initiative and commitment we undertake. We are dedicated to fostering an environment where each student can thrive academically and personally.”

— Dr. Julie Dinger, University President



THE SPIRIT OF TRADITION AT THE 2023 HOMECOMING

The magic of OPSU Homecoming has become a Panhandle tradition. With students returning to campus, planning is in full swing for our 2023 Homecoming weekend. Homecoming weekend will connect students, alumni, and the local community in more ways than one. Homecoming celebrates the past and embraces the future of Aggie Nation. This year's Homecoming weekend will be September 22-24.

The OPSU Student Activities Department, the Student Government Association, and the Alumni Association promise this Homecoming weekend to be greater than ever, designed to foster the sense of camaraderie and pride that defines the OPSU family. "Homecoming at OPSU is a celebration of who we are as a University family. It is a joyous occasion to see generations of students and alums come together, united by their shared love for our University and this community," stated University President, Dr. Julie Dinger. "Each year, as we celebrate Homecoming, we reaffirm the values that make us who we are – resilience, unity, and excellence."

The 2023 Homecoming event will feature the crowning of the Homecoming King and Queen after the Volleyball game in Anchor D Arena on September 22. On September 23, the parade will bring everyone to the tailgate area to enjoy the tree dedication of the 2023 Alumni Honored family, the Oblander Family. The Alumni Association will also host a BBQ meal. The OPSU Aggie Football team will end the evening paired up against Arkansas Baptist College with kickoff at 6 PM at Anchor D Stadium.

Shawn Joy, Alumni Director, stated, "OPSU alumni hold a special place in the heart of our university. Their achievements are a testament to the transformative education they received here, and they continue to inspire us with their passion and dedication. Homecoming is an occasion for us to extend our gratitude to our alumni and remind them that they are forever a crucial part of the Aggie family."

The Alumni Association plans to end the weekend with the first-ever Panhandle Trap and Skeet Shootout on September 24 at 9 AM. All shootout proceeds will go to the OPSU Alumni Association and the OPSU Shooting Sports Team. As we gear up for the 2023 Homecoming, OPSU invites all students, alumni, and community members to join us in celebrating the spirit of tradition and unity. Together, let us create memories that will last a lifetime and strengthen the bonds that tie us together as members of the Panhandle State family. **P**



THE OBLANDER FAMILY NAMED 2023 ALUMNI HONORED FAMILY

The Panhandle State Association of Alumni and Friends announced the selection of the 2023 Honored family as the Oblander family. OPSU Alumni recognize the remarkable achievements of the Oblander family, spanning three generations, and their unwavering commitment to education and the Panhandle State community. The induction ceremony will take place during the much-anticipated Homecoming Weekend on September 23rd, which holds deep significance for the family and the entire university.

University President, Dr. Julie Dinger stated, "The Oblander family is a prime example of what it means to be an Aggie. They have served on several different boards across campus and are true advocates for Panhandle State. I am proud to honor them this year."

The Oblander brothers, Jim, Gary, and Steven started their family legacy at OPSU when Jim moved to Goodwell from the family farm in Woodward, graduating with the class of 1967 with a Bachelor of Science in Agronomy. Jim married Charlsye in the fall of that same year. Jim was in the ROTC program at the school and was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant after graduating. After serving in Vietnam, Jim returned to OPSU for his teacher's certificate, and he taught science for Guymon Public Schools, eventually transitioning to farming Oblander Farms in Goodwell. Jim and Charlsye have been life members of the Panhandle State Association of Alumni and Friends since 1997. They have three children: Susan, Michael, and Chet. Both Susan and Chet attended OPSU.

Gary graduated in 1971 with a Bachelor of Science in Animal Husbandry. Like his older brother, Gary was also in the ROTC program and was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army. Gary is now engaged in farming and ranching in Woodward County, where he also resides. Gary and his wife Betty have four children: Stacy, Chad, Carl, and Becky.

Steven graduated in 1972 with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting. Steven and his wife Melinda are still active in their family business, Oblander Bookkeeping and Tax Preparation, in Woodward and have two children: Mark and Tim.

Chet Oblander, son of Jim and Charlsye, completed his pre-pharmacy requirements at OPSU in 2000. Chet married Robin (Wescoatt) in 1994, and Robin graduated from OPSU in 2000 with a Bachelor of Arts in English Education. Chet and Robin now live in Guymon, where Chet is a pharmacist and co-owner of Clinic Pharmacy. Robin teaches 6th-grade Language Arts in Guymon. Chet and Robin have four children: Elizabeth, Mary, Ella, and Sam, all of whom have attended OPSU at some point. Sam is taking concurrent classes while attending Guymon High School and will graduate with an Associate in Business from OPSU in the spring.

Alumni Association President Katie Quebedeaux stated, "The Oblander family have served OPSU and the Alumni Association for years. Their unwavering dedication to OPSU is shown in all that they do. We are excited to honor them and their legacy."

Director of Alumni Relations, Shawn Joy, stated, "The Oblander Family have been a staple of OPSU for many years. We are grateful for their contributions and look forward to honoring them." **P**



OKLAHOMA

PHOTO BY KAYLEE WOOLMAN

Photograph courtesy of: Aaron Witt Photography

THRIVING THROUGH ADVERSITY: PANHANDLE STATE STUDENTS FIRST-GENERATION FARMING FAMILY

A remarkable story of resilience and determination emerges from a first-generation farm and ranching family in the heart of the Oklahoma Panhandle. Kaylee Woolman, a junior at Oklahoma Panhandle State University double majoring in Agriculture Business and Animal Science, is a proud native of Boise City and has been an integral part of her family's longstanding involvement in agriculture. Despite enduring years of devastating drought, the Woolman family have persevered and seen their agricultural ventures flourish with the unprecedented rainfall in the region this year.

Growing up, Kaylee and her two brothers, Wyatt and Peyton, all worked with their father and mother on the farm and through their various businesses. Wyatt helps the family as much as possible and serves his agriculture area as a salesman for Western Equipment.

"You have to love what you do to get up every day and go work in the dirt and the wind. The people out here in the Panhandle have grit and a love for this area unlike any other," Kaylee reflected on their journey. "I am proud to live in the Panhandle."

The Woolman's and many farmers in the Oklahoma Panhandle have encountered various challenges, battling harsh droughts that tested their commitment to agriculture. However, their unyielding dedication to the land and shared passion for farming allowed them to face each obstacle with unwavering perseverance.

Despite the adversities, Kaylee and her family managed to sustain their farm by adopting innovative water conservation practices and soil preservation techniques. They witnessed their land suffer under the relentless sun,

but their deeps in agricultural knowledge proved their greatest assets.

"Kaylee is a leader in the agriculture department at OPSU. She is distinguished among her peers and has a 'get in there and get it done' attitude. She brings a collaborative spirit, innovative ideas, and youthful enthusiasm," said College of Agriculture, Science, and Nursing Dean, Tracy Kincannon. "Panhandle State is very fortunate to have her and wish her much success in her future career in agriculture."

As the sun sets over the plains of Boise City, the Kaylee and her family continue to work diligently, knowing they are part of a storied tradition of agricultural excellence in the Oklahoma Panhandle. Their unwavering spirit as first-generation farmers is a testament to the remarkable power of human determination and the resilience of nature. **P**



Kaylee and brothers Wyatt and Peyton



**Panhandle State Foundation, Executive Director,
Chyanna Black**



**Panhandle State Foundation Board President,
Jim Quimby and wife, Sherry**

FOUNDATION

SEES GROWTH IN THE NEW ACADEMIC YEAR

The Panhandle State Foundation has seen rapid success in the new academic year with multiple new scholarship endowments and increased fundraising efforts and results. The Foundation Board of Directors, led by Jim Quimby, have been hard at work to embrace their roles as advocates for OPSU and the Foundation. Foundation Executive Director Chyanna Black and Administrative Assistant Stephanie LeGrange have refined day-to-day operations and expanded donor relations to complement the new energy brought forward through the board's increased advocacy.

Black commented, "The Foundation has been blessed by those who believe in our mission and our people. As we head into the new academic year, I'm excited to see the hard work of this past year pay off. It has been our Board of Directors, Stephanie, donors, and many others that have made it possible, and for that, I'm beyond grateful." As the Foundation begins the new academic year, four new scholarship endowments are established to be awarded this year. These endowments together total \$94,000 and are set to be awarded between \$1,000 and \$1,250 each this academic year. These donors not only established endowments, but there was an additional \$1,000 for three of the four that were awarded out of pocket in the 2022-2023 academic year while their fund built interest.

The Jim & Sherry Quimby Softball Scholarship, Harold S. & B. Joan Kachel Memorial Scholarship, Ray Depuy Business Scholarship, and the Delta Dental of Oklahoma Pre-Dentistry Scholarship have all been set up to help the students of OPSU through their major and activities. Additionally, on National Non-Profit Day, they announced the second annual Giving Challenge, bringing in over \$13,000. Black stated, "We are excited to have Dr. Gieck continue his matching challenge. Our office has been working on opportunities to build off the momentum he has given us, the Giving Challenge, and to grow the challenge in ways it can benefit even more at OPSU."

"I am impressed by the dedication and hard work that Ms. Black and our Foundation Board Members display every day to advocate on behalf of our students and our University," said OPSU President Dr. Julie Dinger. "Their work ensures that every student at OPSU has access to affordable high-quality education." Panhandle State Foundation stays focused on maintaining the legacy that has been built and striving to pursue an even brighter future for OPSU and its students. **P**



RODEO COACH

ALUMNA BRIDGET COLEMAN NAMED 2023 NIRA COACH OF THE YEAR

In the rodeo world, success is not just about individual achievements in the arena but also about the dedication and guidance of coaches who mold aspiring cowboys and cowgirls into champions. Bridget Coleman, a proud native of Savannah, Missouri, was named 2023 National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association Coach of the Year at a ceremony in Casper, Wyoming, at the College National Finals Rodeo. Coleman's journey from a small town in Montana to becoming a celebrated rodeo coach is an inspiring tale of determination, passion, and unwavering support.

Coleman's path to becoming a respected rodeo coach began at Oklahoma Panhandle State University, where she pursued a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture Business. Coleman's education laid the foundation for her future career. Reflecting on her college years, Coleman mentioned, "Panhandle State has a piece of my heart. I would not be the person I am or where I would be today if it weren't for Panhandle State and college rodeo."

After completing her undergraduate studies, Coleman followed her passion for rodeo and coaching. She took the first step towards her dream by becoming a graduate assistant for the rodeo team at Missouri Valley College. Little did she know that this opportunity would eventually lead her to a prestigious coaching career. Sharing her journey, Coleman stated, "I came to Iowa Central Community College to apply for the assistant coaching job. While interviewing me, they informed me the head coach job was the only position available. Fate had intervened, and the rest is history."

Coleman's dedication and commitment to her role as a rodeo coach did not go unnoticed. Her years of hard work and passion for the sport culminated in her being named National Rodeo Coach of the Year. However, Coleman remains humble, emphasizing the importance of her support system. She said, "Being voted coach of the nation has always been one of my top goals. While I am the face of Iowa Central rodeo, it is the amazing support of the staff and faculty, assistant coach, and family that make this all possible. I have one of the best support systems of anyone out there."

Coleman continues to make her mark in the world of rodeo coaching; her journey inspires aspiring coaches and rodeo enthusiasts alike. Her passion, dedication, and love for the sport have helped her achieve success and positively influenced the lives of countless young rodeo athletes under her guidance. Coleman's husband, Tommy, and two kids Stetson and Kodiak are all very proud. **P**



DUO TO LEAD OPSU WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL TEAM

The OPSU Athletics Department is excited to have the Serowski brothers lead the Women's Volleyball team into a new season. Nicholas Serowski, Head Coach, and Tanner Serowski, Assistant Coach, are poised to bring a fresh perspective, years of experience, and a strong commitment to the team's growth.

Athletic Director Victor Esparza stated, "We are thrilled to have Nicholas and Tanner Serowski as part of the Aggie Athletics Department. Their shared passion for the sport and deep understanding of the game makes them an exciting addition to our coaching staff. We believe their collaborative approach and innovative coaching methods will help elevate our Women's Volleyball program to new heights."

Nicholas Serowski and Tanner Serowski, both highly accomplished individuals in the realm of volleyball, are not only brothers but also long-time partners in coaching. With years of coaching experience at various levels, they bring a wealth of knowledge and a proven track record of developing successful athletes. "Nicholas and Tanner Serowski's coaching aligns with our commitment to providing our student-athletes with the best possible resources for success," said University President Dr. Julie Dinger. "It will be an exciting year for volleyball."

The Serowski brothers have expressed their excitement about the opportunity to lead the OPSU Women's Volleyball team together. In a joint statement, they said, "We are honored to have been chosen to lead the Women's Volleyball team at OPSU. We share a deep passion for the sport and a strong belief in each athlete's potential. Our coaching philosophy centers around fostering a collaborative and supportive team culture while pushing the boundaries of performance. We are eager to contribute to the growth of these talented athletes both on and off the court." As the upcoming season approaches, the OPSU Women's Volleyball team can look forward to a new era marked by the dynamic coaching leadership of Nicholas Serowski and Tanner Serowski. The OPSU Volleyball team schedule can be found online. **P**



1949 TRACK TEAM



CHARLEY NORTH



JOHN WARD



PETE LOFTIS

ATHLETICS

2023 HALL OF FAME INDUCTION

The Panhandle State Athletics Department proudly announced the 2023 induction of four exceptional athletes into the Athletics Hall of Fame. John Ward, Charley North, Pete Loftis, and the 1949 track team will forever be enshrined in the university's storied athletic history.

John Ward, a standout baseball player, left an indelible mark on the Panhandle State baseball program. As a freshman in 1969, Ward was named the Most Valuable Freshman. He consistently excelled, earning All-Conference honors in his sophomore, junior, and senior years. In his senior season, Ward was not only named the team's Most Valuable Player but also holds the second-highest career batting average in Panhandle State history, .369. Ward's remarkable achievements include three appearances in the top ten for season batting average, culminating in a phenomenal .435 average in 1971.

Charley North was a multi-sport athlete excelling in football as the center and baseball. North carved himself a successful career beyond his time at Panhandle State. His coaching odyssey began at his alma mater, Wagoner High School, reaching the state semifinals twice in three years. North's coaching prowess caught the attention of legendary coach Barry Switzer, leading him to join the University of Oklahoma's coaching staff. Over 18 years, he played a pivotal role in the Sooners' triumphs, including a National Championship victory in 1985. North's successful coaching journey continued at various prestigious institutions, earning him numerous accolades and honors along the way.

Pete Loftis, a football phenom, quickly established himself as a special talent upon joining the Panhandle State team as a freshman in 1966. Loftis' impressive performances earned him the title of Aggie Football Freshman of the Year. Throughout his collegiate career, Loftis continued to impress, amassing accolades such as the team's Most Valuable Player, All-Conference Honorable Mention honors, and the esteemed Texhoma Fighting Heart Award. Beyond his on-field contributions, Loftis also dedicated himself to coaching, serving as a student-assistant coach for defensive backs and scouting in his final year at Panhandle State. His dedication to the sport of football and coaching will forever be valued.

The 1949 track team etched their names into the records of Panhandle State athletics history. Truman Medders, secured his place in history as the National Champion in the 400-meter hurdles, clocking an impressive time of 53.4 seconds. The team's triumph in the 4x400-meter relay earned them the conference championship title. Comprising of Kenneth Fowler, Johnnie Davis, Dan Hobbs, and AB Steen, the relay team exemplified the spirit of teamwork and determination. The contributions of Wilbur Turner, Richard Davis, Floyd Garrett, Tom Cross, Mervin Haub, Kenneth Kelly, and Kenneth Fowler were instrumental in securing the Outlaw Conference Championship for the team. **P**

EVENT SCHEDULE



SEPTEMBER

22

6 PM - VOLLEYBALL GAME VS MID-AMERICA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

@ANCHOR D ARENA

8 PM - HOMECOMING CORONATION CEREMONY

• FOLLOWING THE VOLLEYBALL GAME

SEPTEMBER

23

1 PM - VOLLEYBALL GAME VS UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND ARTS

@ANCHOR D ARENA

3 PM - HOMECOMING PARADE

3:30 PM - TAILGATE/ALUMNI LUNCH

6 PM - FOOTBALL GAME VS ARKANSAS BAPTIST COLLEGE

@ANCHOR D STADIUM AT CARL WOOTEN FIELD

SEPTEMBER

24

9AM - PANHANDLE SHOOTOUT - TRAP/SKEET SHOOT- REGISTRATION

@PANHANDLE STATE SHOOTING SPORTS COMPLEX

10AM - SHOOTOUT STARTS

@wearepanhandle