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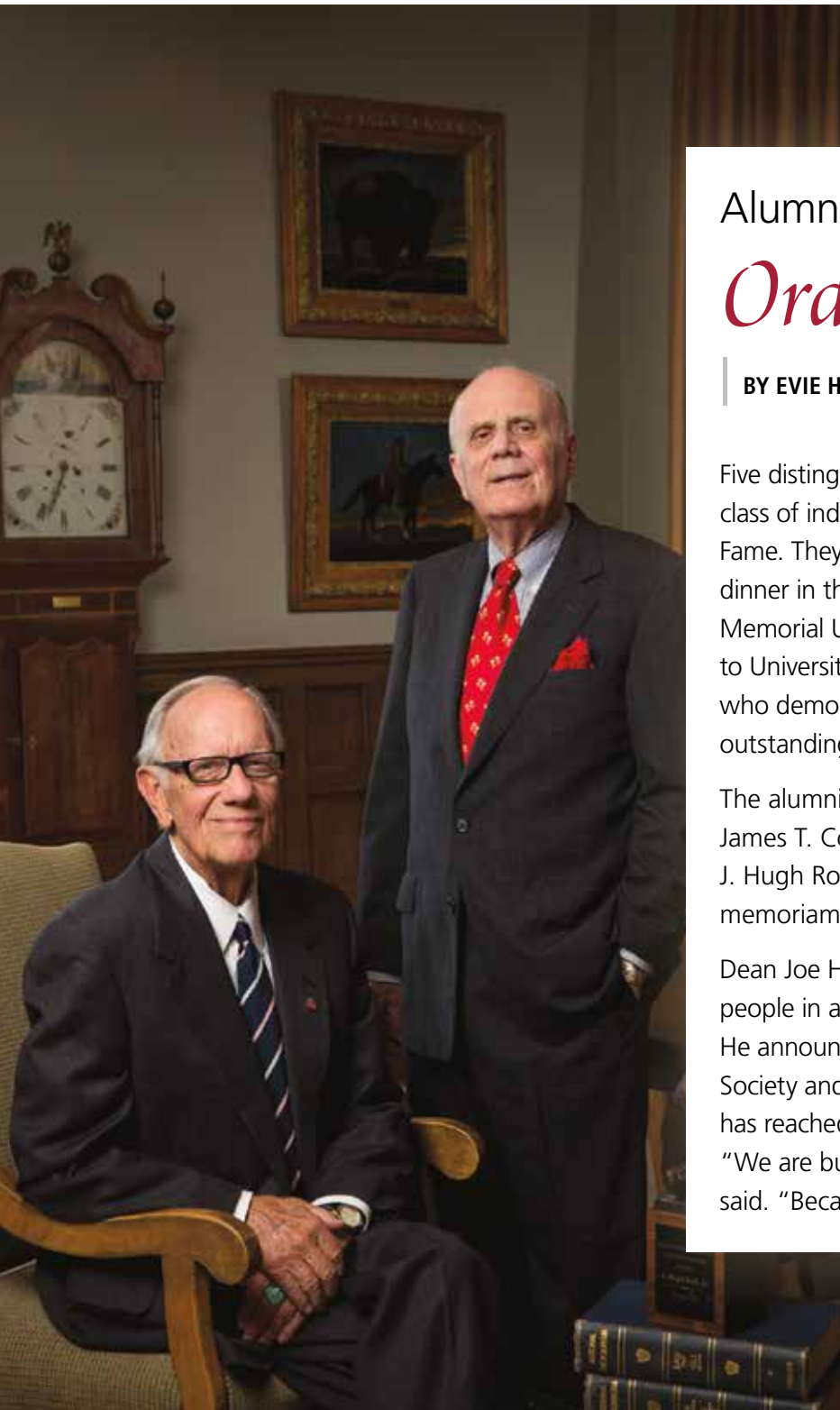


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Alumni inducted into

Order of the Owl

BY EVIE HOLZER AND JONELLA FRANK

Five distinguished OU Law alumni became the second class of inductees into the Order of the Owl Hall of Fame. They were honored November 1 at an induction dinner in the Molly Shi Boren Ballroom in Oklahoma Memorial Union. The Order of the Owl pays tribute to University of Oklahoma College of Law graduates who demonstrate leadership and service through outstanding accomplishments in their legal careers.

The alumni honored were Thomas R. Brett ('57), James T. Comfort ('57), William T. Comfort, Jr. ('61), J. Hugh Roff, Jr. ('55) and Alma Bell Wilson ('41), in memoriam.

Dean Joe Harroz welcomed the more than 400 people in attendance and recognized special guests. He announced membership in the Dean's Leadership Society and the Second Century Scholarship Society has reached a record level and continues to grow. "We are building on the traditions of the past," he said. "Because of you, our future is unlimited."



Top left: Tom Brett, Gennie Arvites Wood and Dean Joe Harroz; Top right: Sally Brown, Jim Comfort, Harroz, Katie and Jim Davis and Scott Delaney; Bottom left: Craig Brackeen, John Roff and Harroz; Bottom right: Gauri Nautiyal, Lee Anne Wilson and Harroz

Harroz introduced President David L. Boren ('68), referring to him as one of the best examples of an OU Law graduate.

"There is so much to celebrate tonight," Boren stated. "It is a privilege to honor graduates of the College of Law who have set such high standards of excellence in their careers, and who have lived lives of service with complete integrity."

Following dinner, Harroz announced the name of each person being honored, noted their accomplishments and read comments from friends and family. A law student, selected because he or she had a special connection to the honoree,

presented the award, an owl sculpture created by OU Art Professor Sohail Shehada.

A tribute video was shown prior to the induction of Alma Bell Wilson. Her daughter, Lee Anne Wilson ('76), accepted on behalf of her mother.

Unfortunately, two of the inductees were unable to attend the event. William T. Comfort, Jr. was unable to travel from New York due to weather conditions. His close friends, Katie and Jim Davis, accepted his award. Dr. John Roff accepted J. Hugh Roff, Jr.'s award in his father's absence.



Thomas R. Brett

CLASS OF 1957

For helping shape ethical standards in law

Thomas Brett served as U.S. district judge for the Northern District of Oklahoma from 1979 to 2003 and as chief judge from 1994 to 1996. A retired colonel with the U.S. Army Reserve, Judge Advocate General's Corps, he is a past

chairman of the OU Board of Regents and past president of the Oklahoma Bar Association. In the 1980s, Brett founded the first of three local chapters of the American Inns of Court, a group promoting professionalism, ethics, civility and legal skills and shaping a culture of excellence in law. He also has been honored with the 2002 American Inns of Court Professionalism Award, presented to a senior practicing judge or lawyer whose life and practice display sterling character and unquestioned integrity; the Oklahoma Bar Association's Ethics Award and Judicial Excellence Award; and the Tulsa County Bar Association's Golden Rule Award and Outstanding Senior Lawyer Award. Brett serves on the OU College of Law Board of Visitors.

Gennie Arvites Woods presented the Order of the Owl award. She is a third-year student and is serving in the Alaska National Guard. After graduation, she will join the JAG Corps for the National Guard.

"Tom Brett and I have been good friends since we were classmates at Classen High School. He was the president and most popular member of our class, a fine basketball player, a gifted country singer — and a terrible geometry student. He wisely decided to enter the law rather than teach mathematics. Throughout his distinguished career, he understood the rule of law far better than the Pythagorean theorem."

– *DeVier Pierson*

OU Law Class of 1957

"It is absolutely disgusting how Tom Brett makes everything look so easy, whether he is in court or on the golf course. He never gets ruffled and performs at an extremely high level as a lawyer, judge or mediator. Tom has always been very innovative and deserves much of the credit for the development of Alternative Dispute Resolution in the federal courts of Oklahoma and around the country. I know of no one who better exemplifies 'Judicial Temperament and Wisdom' than Tom Brett."

– *Judge Lee West*

OU Law Class of 1956



James T. Comfort

CLASS OF 1957

William T. Comfort, Jr.

CLASS OF 1961

For supporting the legal education of hundreds of OU students

James T. "Jim" Comfort and William T. "Bill" Comfort, who are brothers, in 1994 established and funded in the OU College of Law the Comfort Scholarship Program, which has been instrumental in allowing OU to attract exceptional students and record classes. Their gift also funds two other scholarships at the College of Law, one awarded based on merit, leadership and public service, and the other to the top 10 students in the second- and third-year classes. Since 1994, the three have provided more than \$5 million in scholarships to almost 1,000 OU law students. The brothers serve on the OU College of Law Board of Visitors and

provided effective leadership for the private fundraising campaign to expand the College of Law building.

James Comfort is a consultant in intellectual property and patent law. He is a former partner of Sharp, Comfort and Merrett in Dallas. He began his career with IBM and General Electric and also previously served on the group patent counsel of Texas Instruments. He is a lifetime member of the OU Alumni Association and a member of the Seed Sower Society.

William Comfort is the chairman of Citigroup Venture Capital Ltd. and a managing partner and chairman of Court Square Capital Partners. He also is chairman of Stirling Square Capital Partners in London, a trustee of American India Foundation and a member of the board of directors of Deutsche Annington in Germany, Nabors Industries in Bermuda and CX Partners in India. In 2001, William Comfort was presented with OU's highest honor, the Doctorate of Humane Letters.

Selby Brown presented the award to Jim Comfort. She is a second-year student who is the recipient of a Top Ten Comfort Scholarship, and is currently ranked first in her class. Brown has already enjoyed academic success at OU Law, motivated in large part, by the support of the Comforts.

Scott Delaney presented Bill Comfort's award. Delaney is a third-year student who, as an M.B.A. student was awarded a Comfort scholarship in the business school, and came to know Bill at that time. Delaney continues on the path of excellence as a Top Ten Comfort scholar at OU Law.

"Jim Comfort became a law student, a very successful lawyer and a great friend to the College of Law in a most unusual way. During his undergraduate days, Jim was studying for and planning to go to medical school. His very good friend and roommate at the Sigma Nu house was L.K. Smith, who had always planned to go to law school. One lovely day toward the end of their undergraduate days, L.K. was starting to leave the room and Jim asked him 'Where are you going?' L.K. said he was going over to Monnet Hall to enroll in law school. Jim said, 'It's a nice day. I'll go with you.' To L.K.'s great surprise, not only did Jim walk over to Monnet Hall with him, Jim also enrolled in law school. And, as they say, the rest is history."

– Dean Emeritus Andy Coats
OU Law Class of 1963

"Bill and I have known each other for many years, mainly because we were dating the same girl – at the same time – who made the mistake of marrying me, and not Bill. A big mistake.... Bill credits my wife, Katie, with getting him through undergraduate school."

– Jim Davis
OU Law Class of 1957



J. Hugh Roff, Jr.

CLASS OF 1955

For his leadership and vision in building alumni support of OU, especially the College of Law

Since 1998, Hugh Roff has led the investment firm as CEO and chairman of Roff Resources LLC and Roff Oil & Gas. He began his energy career in 1974 as president, chairman of the board and CEO of United Gas Pipe Line Co., subsequently renamed United Energy Resources, Inc. In 1985, he completed the sale of UER to an interstate pipeline company. He then led a leveraged buyout of PetroUnited Terminals Inc., a company that owned and operated two marine bulk liquid storage facilities on the U.S. Gulf Coast. Roff served as chairman of the board and CEO of PetroUnited until its sale in 1998. Roff has served OU and the OU College of Law in a number of capacities. In addition to assuming a leading role in the creation of two professorships, he currently shares his vision and leadership as a member of the OU College of Law Board of Visitors, and is a life member of the OU Alumni Association and a member of the OU Alumni Club of Houston. Roff also has given of his time and service to a myriad of service and philanthropic organizations, including as a trustee of Inasmuch Foundation and Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation.

Craig Brackeen presented Roff's Order of the Owl award. As a third-year student in the top 5 percent of his class, Brackeen is pursuing a career in oil and gas law, interning during the summer of 2012 with Chesapeake Energy.

"When Hugh Roff was a freshman in our fraternity, the choice of room and various other privileges were determined by one's grade average. As I recall, Hugh was carrying 21 hours and at the end of the semester, had straight A's. It so happened, that a pledge brother, Jim Snow, was also carrying 21 hours with straight A's. This created a quandary whereby a flip of the coin determined which was first in their pledge class. Jim Snow won the toss. This is the only time I remember Hugh Roff coming in second in anything."

– *Bill Ross*

OU Law Class of 1954

"'A scholar and a gentleman' is a description rightly reserved for a distinguished few. Admiringly knowing him from our undergraduate and law school days, and the many years thereafter, I know of no one who has more richly earned that accolade than J. Hugh Roff, Jr. Brilliant student, brilliant lawyer and business leader of enormous achievements, this kind, modest and loyal man has brought great credit and generous benefits to his beloved University and its College of Law.

– *Judge Ralph Thompson*

OU Law Class of 1961



Alma Bell Wilson

CLASS OF 1941

*For blazing a trail for women pursuing
the legal profession*

Alma Bell Wilson became the first female to serve on the Oklahoma Supreme Court when she was appointed in 1982. She was one of only six women in her graduating law

school class in 1941, and entered a workforce in which only 2.4 percent of the nation's lawyers were women. Despite the added challenge of working in a male-dominated field during her early years, her skills and professionalism quickly made her a standout among her peers. Wilson worked in private practice in Pauls Valley before serving on the bench. In 1969, she became special district judge for Garvin and McClain counties. In 1975, then-Gov. David Boren named her district judge for Cleveland County. After being appointed as the first female to serve on the Oklahoma Supreme Court, Wilson made history again when she was named the first female Oklahoma Supreme Court chief justice, a position she held from 1995 to 1997. Her achievements have been recognized through many awards. She was inducted into the Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame in 1983 and the Oklahoma Hall of Fame in 1996. A year prior to her death in 1999, a room in Oklahoma Memorial Union was named in her honor.

Gauri Nautiyal presented Wilson's award to her daughter, Lee Anne Wilson. Nautiyal is a third-year student who serves as president of the Organization for the Advancement of Women in Law, was a winner of the Oklahoma Bar Foundation Chapman Rogers Award and argued her amicus brief before the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces.

The video tribute to Justice Alma Wilson is posted on the OU Law website at www.law.ou.edu.

"With the appointment of Sandra Day O'Connor on the U.S. Supreme Court and the appointment of Justice Wilson on the Oklahoma Supreme Court, which took place within about a year of each other, I think everything changed for women in the judiciary in Oklahoma. It was really an exciting time because it didn't matter that you were female any more. Everything was possible in her life. There was never anything that wasn't possible and that was the message she gave to all of us."

– *Oklahoma Supreme Court Justice
Noma Gurich*

OU Law Class of 1978

"There were no professional opportunities or careers for ladies at that time. I think what she did cut a path for women to know that 'hey, you can accomplish what you set out and seek.' She was outgoing, engaging and totally confident of herself and what she could accomplish. She was a special lady."

– *Barry Switzer*

Former OU Football Coach