News briefs

1950s

A. Carl Robinson ('50) retired as special judge of the Muskogee County District Court. During his more than six decades of practicing law, he also served as the first municipal court judge in Muskogee, Oklahoma.

John W. Raley, Jr. ('59) of Ponca City, Oklahoma, was awarded an honorary doctor of humanities degree by Oklahoma Baptist University. The former U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Oklahoma is of counsel with Northcutt Clark Gardner Hron & Brune. He is the author of Beyond the Gate: My Journey as an Oklahoma Boy.

1960s

Rex Travis ('62) received the John E. Shipp Award from the Oklahoma Bar Association. He practices in Oklahoma City at the Travis Law Office.

William E. Tucker ('62) was awarded the Order of the Orange-Nassau, a military and civil order of the Netherlands, at the Netherlands-America Foundation Awards Dinner in Washington, D.C.

Michael DeBerry ('69) was appointed district judge for the 17th Judicial District, which covers McCurtain, Choctaw and Pushmataha counties. He previously served as McCurtain County associate district judge.

1970s

Stephen P. Friot ('72) received the Oklahoma Bar Association Award of Judicial Excellence. He serves as judge of the U.S. District Court, Western District of Oklahoma.

Ron Burton ('74) was selected as the president-nominee for Rotary International and will be inducted as president of the organization at the 2013 Rotary International Convention to be held June 2013 in Lisbon, Portugal. He served as president of the University of Oklahoma Foundation Inc. for 29 years before retiring in 2007.

James A. Jennings ('74) published his first novel, The Light Most Favorable. It is the story of a disbarred Boston lawyer who relocates to Arizona and gets involved in a struggle with a small-time land grabber and a crooked judge.

James R. Gotwals ('75) of Tulsa, Oklahoma, is the 2012-13 president of the Tulsa County Bar Association. He practices with James R. Gotwals and Associates.

Michael C. Mayhall ('75) of Lawton, Oklahoma, was elected chairman of the board of Oklahoma Attorneys Mutual Insurance Company. He is a shareholder in Godlove Mayhall Dzialo & Dutcher PC.

Cathy Stocker ('75) of Enid, Oklahoma, was named to the Oklahoma Ethics Commission. She served for 28 years as the district attorney for Garfield, Blaine, Canadian, Grant and Kingfisher counties and also has served as chairwoman of the District Attorneys Council and president of the Oklahoma District Attorneys Association.

Silas Wolf ('75) of Norman, Oklahoma, was honored as Male Elder of the Year by the National Indian Education Association. He serves as a tutor and mentor in the Norman Public Schools.

Mart Tisdal ('76) of Clinton, Oklahoma, was elected vice chairman of the board of Oklahoma Attorneys Mutual Insurance Company. He is a partner in Tisdal & O’Hara PLLC.

Dan Allen ('77) retired in January 2013 as the Noble County associate district judge, a position he had held since 1990. He previously served Noble County as an assistant district attorney.

Thomas T. Rogers ('77) was listed in The Best Lawyers in America 2013. He is a partner in Jackson Walker LLP and works in the Austin, Texas, office. His practice focuses on litigation and insurance law.

Noma Gurich ('78) was honored by Indiana State University as one of four recipients of the 2012 Distinguished Alumni Award. She is a justice on the Oklahoma Supreme Court.

Scott Savage ('78) co-founded a new law firm, Savage Baum Glass & Hart PLLC, in Tulsa, Oklahoma.
T. Keith Wilson (’78) was named executive director of the Oklahoma Office of Juvenile Affairs. He previously served as a district judge in Kansas and worked for the Oklahoma Indigent Defense System.

Glen Johnson (’79) was elected vice chair of the Southern Regional Education Board. He has been the chancellor of the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education since 2007.

Edgar “Jed” C. Morrison (’79) was included in The Best Lawyers in America 2013. He is a partner in Jackson Walker LLP and works in the San Antonio office, specializing in the regulatory and transactional aspects of health care law.

1980s

Jari Askins (’80) was named to the board of trustees of the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence. She is the associate provost for external relations of the Peggy and Charles Stephenson Cancer Center and was also named to the OKC Friday list of “Most Powerful Women” of Oklahoma City.

Donita Bourns Douglas (’81) received the Earl Sneed Continuing Education Award from the Oklahoma Bar Association. She is vice president of professional services for InReach, a provider of online CLE software and services, and is the president-elect of the Association of Continuing Legal Education.

Wes Lane (’81) was appointed chairman of the Department of Human Services Commission. He served for 21 years in the Oklahoma County District Attorney’s Office, including more than five years as district attorney.

Linda Lepak (’81) was appointed to the statewide advocacy team of Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma Inc. She works in the organization’s office in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where she is the managing attorney for the statewide application line.

Tom Colbert (’82) was elected chief justice of the Oklahoma Supreme Court and is the first African American to serve in that capacity. In addition, he received the Opio Toure Champion of Justice Award from the Oklahoma City Association of Black Lawyers.

D. Keith McFall (’82) became general counsel of Express Employment Professionals. He previously served as shareholder of McAfee & Taft and leader of the firm’s corporate and commercial transactions practice group.

Stephen W. Ray (’82) of Tulsa, Oklahoma, was elected to the executive committee of Hall Estill. He is a shareholder of the firm where he has worked for 20 years practicing in the corporate and commercial arenas.

Richard Stevens (’82) was elected to the Oklahoma Bar Association Board of Governors as a member-at-large. He serves as an assistant district attorney in Cleveland County, a position he has held since 1986.

Carolyn Cummins (’83) was named by The Journal Record as one of “50 Making a Difference” at the 2012 Woman of the Year event. She is vice president of compliance and corporate secretary for Sonic Corp.

Rob Hudson (’83) was selected as special judge of the Logan County District Court. He formerly served as first assistant in the Oklahoma Attorney General’s Office and as district attorney for Payne and Logan counties.

David B. Lewis (’83) was elected presiding judge of the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals, where he has served since 2005. He is the first African American to serve as presiding judge of that court.
Vincent Logan (’83) was nominated as the special trustee for American Indians, a position focused on improving the accountability and management of Indian funds held in trust by the federal government. He is the owner of The Nations Group LLC, which provides asset management advice to American Indian tribes.

Renee DeMoss (’84) was elected president-elect of the Oklahoma Bar Association and a member of the board of directors of Tulsa Lawyers for Children. She is a shareholder in GableGotwals, based in the Tulsa, Oklahoma, office.

Deirdre Dexter (’84) was elected president of the Tulsa County Bar Foundation. She is a shareholder of Barrow & Grimm PC in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Paul Foster (’84) of Norman, Oklahoma, was honored by the Community Bankers Association of Oklahoma with the Chairman’s Award recognizing his significant contribution to the community banking industry.

David W. Preston (’84) was named executive director of the Oklahoma Wesleyan University Foundation in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. He previously resided in Kansas City, Missouri, where he practiced corporate law for 25 years.

Teresa Meinders Burkett (’85) was named by The Journal Record as one of “50 Making a Difference” at the 2012 Woman of the Year event. She is a partner with Conner & Winters LLP in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Ginny Bass Carl (’86) was named one of “50 Making a Difference” by The Journal Record at its 2012 Woman of the Year event. She is the senior director of development at the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation.

Shon T. Erwin (’86) was sworn in as U.S. magistrate judge for the U.S. District Court, Western District of Oklahoma. In this full-time appointment, he will perform judicial duties in Oklahoma City and Lawton, Oklahoma.

David Rex (’86) was named general counsel of Prophet Equity LP of Southlake, Texas, and will be managing all legal matters for the company’s fund operations and investments. Prior to joining Prophet Equity, Rex was a partner at the Texas-based firm of Jackson Walker LLP.

Chris Warrener (’86) assumed the duties of special agent in charge of the Minneapolis division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. He has been with the FBI since 1988, and most recently headed the terrorist financing section of the counterterrorism division.

Joe R. Watkins (’86) was named managing attorney for Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma Inc. in the Hugo, McAlester and Poteau offices. He has been a staff attorney at the Poteau, Oklahoma, office since 2009.

Shawn E. Arnold (’87) became a shareholder with the Oklahoma City firm of Lytle, Soulé & Curlee, where he previously served of counsel. His practice includes insurance defense and coverage, personal injury and premises liability.

Larry G. Ball (’87) of Oklahoma City was elected to the board of directors of Hall Estill. He has worked at the firm since 2003 with a practice focused on bankruptcy, litigation and commercial law.

Sandee Coogan (’87) was elected to the Oklahoma Bar Association Board of Governors representing judicial district five. She is a sole practitioner in Norman, Oklahoma, focusing primarily on family law.

Patrice Douglas (’87) was named to the board of trustees of the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence. She serves as the chairman of the Oklahoma Corporation Commission.

Daniel J. Glover (’87), a shareholder of Hall Estill, was elected to the board of directors of the firm. He joined the firm in 1992 and works in the Oklahoma City office, where he practices primarily in the areas of banking and commercial finance.
LeAnne Burnett (’89) was elected to the American College of Environmental Lawyers as a 2012 fellow. She is a director of Crowe & Dunlevy, based in the Oklahoma City office.

1990s

Polly Goodin (’90) was appointed statewide consumer advocacy coordinator of Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma Inc. She joined Legal Aid Services in 1991 and is a staff attorney in the Ardmore, Oklahoma, office.

Tim Rhodes (’90) was elected Oklahoma County court clerk. He previously served as chief deputy in the office for 15 years.

Robert F. Dougherty (’91) of Tulsa, Oklahoma, is a shareholder of Hall Estill and was elected to the firm’s board of directors. He has worked at the firm since 1996. His areas of practice include real estate, telecommunications and oil and gas law.

Sharon Voorhees (’92) was reappointed as a special municipal judge for Oklahoma City. She is a partner in Shelton Voorhees Law Group, where her practice includes estate planning, general civil litigation and appellate work.

Glenn Coffee (’92) resigned as Oklahoma secretary of state to work in the private sector. He previously served 12 years in the Oklahoma Senate.

Michael P. Royal (’92) was included in The Best Lawyers in America 2013. He was honored for his labor and employment work. He is a partner with Fisher & Phillips LLP, based in the Dallas office.

Paul E. Vrana (’92) was included in The Best Lawyers in America 2013. He is a partner in Jackson Walker LLP and practices energy law in the firm’s Fort Worth, Texas, office.

Cindy Sooter Goble (’93) was named the interim managing attorney for the Oklahoma City office of Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma Inc. She has been the pro bono coordinator in that office since 2004 and the statewide pro bono coordinator since 2008.

C. Steven Hager (’87) was named chief judge of the Tribal District Court for the Kansas Kickapoo Tribe. He is the director of litigation at Oklahoma Indian Legal Services Inc. and serves on the Supreme Court of the Kaw Nation of Oklahoma.

Susie Lees (’87) was named executive vice president and general counsel of The Allstate Corporation. She has held a variety of legal positions within the company for 24 years, most recently serving as senior vice president of Allstate Financial.

Steven L. Rahhal (’87), a shareholder with Littler Mendelson PC in Dallas, was selected for inclusion in The Best Lawyers in America 2013. He was also named to The 2012 BTI Client Service All-Stars list for the second time.

Elizabeth Scott (’87) joined Crowe & Dunlevy in the Oklahoma City office as a director in the litigation department and a member of the healthcare practice group. She previously served as an assistant attorney general assigned full-time to the Oklahoma State Board of Medical Licensure and Supervision.

Timothy D. DeGiusti (’88) was inducted into the Foundation for Oklahoma City Public Schools Wall of Fame. He serves as a judge of the U.S. District Court, Western District of Oklahoma.

Ken Bellmard II (’89) of Ponca City, Oklahoma, was named to the Supreme Court of the Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma.

Alumni attending an October 11 reception in Washington, D.C., included William E. “Bill” Tucker (’62) and David Busby (’51), pictured here with Dean Joe Harroz (center).
Joi Mathlin Gordon ('93) was honored as a Distinguished Alumni of the OU Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication. She is CEO of Dress for Success Worldwide in New York City.

Jeffrey C. Baum ('95) co-founded a new law firm, Savage Baum Glass & Hart PLLC, in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Michael D. Beaver ('95) was named president of St. Anthony Hospital in Oklahoma City. He previously served as chief operating officer for Methodist Healthcare System in San Antonio.

Debbie L. Self ('95) was named as one of “50 Making a Difference“ by The Journal Record at its 2012 Woman of the Year event. She is the managing attorney with Self, Morey & Associates PLLC in Oklahoma City.

Robert Donald Gifford II ('96) was elected to the Oklahoma Bar Association Board of Governors representing judicial district three. He is an assistant U.S. attorney in Oklahoma City and serves on the Supreme Court of the Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma.

D. Michael Haggerty, II ('96) was elected president of the Oklahoma Criminal Defense Lawyers Association. He has practiced in Durant, Oklahoma, since 1996.

Ryan J. Johannes ('96) was appointed administrative law judge for the Social Security Administration Office of Disability Adjudication and Review in Toledo, Ohio. He previously served as a senior attorney advisor in the San Diego office.

Aaron D. Gwartney ('97) joined The Bethany Law Center LLP in Bethany, Oklahoma. His areas of practice include health care, employment law, probates and guardianships. He previously worked for Integris Health Inc.

Eric S. Smith ('98) joined Conner & Winters LLP as a partner in the Tulsa, Oklahoma, office. Prior to joining the firm, he was a shareholder of Blackwell Smith PC of Tulsa. He advises clients regarding the design and implementation of all types of retirement plans.

Tina L. Izadi ('99) was named assistant general counsel of the Oklahoma Bar Association. She previously served as assistant general counsel for the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

2000s

Sandra Benischek Harrison ('00) was promoted to chief operating officer for the Oklahoma Department of Human Services. She was also named Oklahoma Public Employees Association Administrator of the Year.

R. Greg Andrews ('01) has become of counsel to Pignato, Cooper, Kolker & Roberson PC of Oklahoma City. His practice includes commercial litigation, product liability claims and construction disputes.

Bryan Evans ('01) was named to the okcBiz magazine “Forty Under 40" award list highlighting central Oklahoma’s young professionals. He practices estate planning and corporate law at Evans & Davis in Edmond, Oklahoma.

Michael H. Smith ('01) became a shareholder of Hall Estill. He works in the firm’s Oklahoma City office, where his practice focuses on all areas of intellectual property law.

Curt Dewberry ('02) was named partner in the Sweet Law Firm and is based in the Oklahoma City office. He represents healthcare professionals in medical malpractice cases in state and federal courts.

Matt Paque ('03) was named assistant general counsel of Tronox, where he has worked since 2008. He will continue to focus on global environmental, legal and regulatory matters and will provide general corporate and commercial support to the company, working out of Oklahoma City and Stamford, Connecticut.

Kaleb Hennigh ('04) was elected chairperson-elect of the Oklahoma Bar Association Young Lawyers Division. He practices with Ewbank, Hennigh and McVay PLLC, a regional law firm with offices in Enid, Fairview and Laverne, Oklahoma.

Lane O. Krieger ('04) was named partner in the Oklahoma City firm of Wiggins Sewell & Ogletree PC.
**W. Joseph Pickard** ('04) became a partner in the Sweet Law Firm, based in the firm’s Tulsa, Oklahoma, office. His areas of practice include products liability, environmental law and auto negligence.

**Jarrod Heath Stevenson** ('04) was presented the Clarence Darrow Award as attorney of the year by the Oklahoma Criminal Defense Lawyers Association. His firm, the Stevenson Law Firm, has offices in Oklahoma City and Newkirk, Oklahoma.

**Jeremy M. Black** ('05) joined McAfee & Taft as an associate. He is based in the Oklahoma City office and is a member of the firm’s tax and family wealth group.

**Brent Dishman** ('05) has separated from Air Force active duty and opened Dishman Military Advocates PLLC, in Edmond, Oklahoma. He defends military members worldwide in courts-martial and other military proceedings.

**Jodi Warmbrod Dishman** ('05) joined McAfee & Taft in the firm’s Oklahoma City office. Her litigation and arbitration practice is focused on complex business litigation, class actions, insurance litigation, securities litigation and appeals. She previously worked in the San Antonio office of Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld.

**Evan Taylor** ('05) was recognized by okcBIZ magazine as one of the “Forty Under 40” outstanding young professionals in central Oklahoma. He practices family and divorce law at Evan Taylor Law Office PLLC in Norman, Oklahoma.

**Ryan Fulda** ('06) joined the Tulsa, Oklahoma, law firm of Barber & Bartz as an associate. His practice focuses on commercial litigation, with an emphasis on real estate, construction and insurance disputes.

**Deborah Hubbs** ('06) was named general counsel to GeoSouthern Energy Corporation, an independent oil and gas production company based in The Woodlands, Texas. She previously worked at Anadarko Petroleum Corporation.

**Faith M. Phillips** ('06) published *Ezekiel’s Wheels*, a novel available on Kindle Direct. The story is inspired by the historical account of the Trail of Tears and the Native American legend surrounding the Hornet Spooklight.

**Joe Vorndran** ('06) was elected chairperson of the Oklahoma Bar Association Young Lawyers Division and will sit on the OBA Board of Governors. He practices law in Shawnee, Oklahoma, as a partner in the firm of Stuart, Clover, Duran, Thomas & Vorndran LLP.

**Richard Vreeland** ('06) was appointed by Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma Inc. as the family law advocacy coordinator. He is the managing attorney of the Norman and Shawnee, Oklahoma, offices and previously served as the coordinating staff attorney in the Oklahoma City office.

**Scott Biggs** ('07) was elected to the Oklahoma House of Representatives from District 51, which includes Grady, McClain and Stephens counties. He practices law in Chickasha, Oklahoma.

**Quincy Leigh Jaeger** ('07) was named general counsel of Greenway Technology based in Las Vegas.

**Heather Lehman** ('07) joined Fellers Snider as an associate in the firm’s Oklahoma City office. Her practice includes workers’ compensation cases, civil litigation and bad faith cases, as well as Social Security disability claims.

**Rebecca Williams von Groote** ('07) joined the staff of the University of Arkansas School of Law as office coordinator of the Legal Clinic and coordinator of Pro Bono and Community Service Programming after receiving a master of education degree in higher education from the University of Arkansas.
Andre Caldwell (’08) joined Crowe & Dunlevy as an associate in the litigation and trial practice group in the firm’s Oklahoma City office. He previously worked as an assistant U.S. attorney assigned to the Violent Crimes/Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force.

Vanessa A. Hicks (’08) became a partner in the Sweet Law Firm. She works in the firm’s Oklahoma City office representing health care professionals in medical malpractice cases and state board actions.

Tyler R. Christians (’09) joined Farzaneh Law Firm in Norman, Oklahoma, as an associate. Prior to joining the firm, he practiced law in Virginia.

Nicholas M. Jones (’09) joined Barrow & Grimm PC in Tulsa, Oklahoma. His areas of practice include business and estate planning, banking and probate.

Erin Means (’09) joined the OU College of Law as an assistant professor of legal research and writing. In addition, she was elected to the board of directors of the Oklahoma Bar Association Young Lawyers Division.

Noah Zuhdi (’09) won the World Boxing Union Lightweight Championship in September, defeating Panama native German Jurado by unanimous decision.

2010s

Michael J. Davis (’10) published The Copper Creek Killer, a mystery novel set in a small Oklahoma town disrupted by a fisherman’s discovery of a body part snagged on a trotline.

Imelda Maynard (’10) joined Alvarez de Bennett Law Firm PC in Oklahoma City as an associate. Her practice focuses on family law and immigration law.

Aaron Pembleton (’10) was elected to the board of directors of the Oklahoma Bar Association Young Lawyers Division. He is an assistant district attorney in Washington County.

Matthew C. Russell (’10) joined Pierce Couch Hendrickson Baysinger & Green LLP as an associate in the Oklahoma City office. His practice includes insurance defense and family law.

Grant Sheperd (’10) was elected to the board of directors of the Oklahoma Bar Association Young Lawyers Division. He practices in Lawton, Oklahoma, with the firm of Goza, Washington & Company PLLC.

Cullen D. Sweeney (’10) is a law clerk to Judge William J. Holloway, Jr. of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit.

Brittany J. Byers (’11) joined Shelton Voorhees Law Group in Oklahoma City as an associate. Her practice areas include general civil litigation, real estate law and estate planning.

Christa Evans (’11) was elected to the board of directors of the Oklahoma Bar Association Young Lawyers Division. She works at Continental Resources Inc. in Oklahoma City.

Sean S. Hunt (’11) joined McAfee & Taft as an associate in the Oklahoma City office. He is a corporate attorney, devoting a significant portion of his time representing energy companies.

J. Blake Patton (’11) was named by ion Oklahoma Online as a recipient of the 30/30 Next Gen 2012 award for his professional achievement, community involvement and commitment to Oklahoma’s future. He is an associate at Fellers Snider in Oklahoma City.
Patrick L. Stein ('11) joined McAfee & Taft as an associate in the litigation group of the firm. He previously served as a law clerk in the U.S. District Court, Western District of Oklahoma.

Matthew K. Brown ('12) joined McAfee & Taft as an associate. His practice encompasses commercial and business matters, including mergers and acquisitions, corporate governance, real estate and securities.

Jeffrey Cartmell ('12) was named deputy general counsel in the office of Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin.

Cody J. Cooper ('12) joined Phillips Murrah PC in Oklahoma City as an associate. His practice encompasses commercial and business matters, including mergers and acquisitions, corporate governance, real estate and securities.

Matthew K. Brown ('12) joined McAfee & Taft as an associate in the litigation group of the firm. He previously served as a law clerk in the U.S. District Court, Western District of Oklahoma.

We remember

Joe Nan Allen ('97)  Linda Kay McCasland ('82)
Johnnie Victor Arnie, Sr. ('49)  William W. “Bill” Metcalf ('53)
Danny Ray Beltz ('66)  Eric Alan Overby ('82)
Helen Frances Besly ('51)  Richard K. “Dick” Race ('62)
Donald Birchfield ('75)  Patricia “Tricia” Dickson Rider ('78)
Peter Lewis Boatright ('60)  William Robert Saied ('49)
Johnny Jay “John” Breathwit ('81)  Robert C. “Bob” Schacher, Jr. ('65)
Charles Wendell Casey ('59)  Robert J. Scott ('53)
Donald Lew Cooper ('59)  Edwin Jennings Shapard ('65)
Jessie Don “Jess” Green ('77)  John David Slack ('61)
David Hudson ('60)  Gene Stipe ('50)
Michael Edward Kelly ('63)  Hardy Summers ('57)
C. Wayne Litchfield ('60)  Gene Womble ('50)
James Wilson McCall ('77)

Erin J. Rooney ('12) became an associate of Pignato, Cooper, Kolker & Roberson PC in Oklahoma City. His areas of practice include insurance law, trucking law and professional liability.

Sierra Salton ('12) joined Doerner, Saunders, Daniel & Anderson in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Her practice includes family law and environmental law.

Alexander Sisemore ('12) became an associate at Franden, Woodard, Farris, Quillin & Goodnight in Tulsa, Oklahoma. His areas of practice include civil litigation, subrogation and real property law.

Grant Spencer ('12) became an associate of Walker, Ferguson & Ferguson PC of Oklahoma City. He will practice workers’ compensation defense.

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