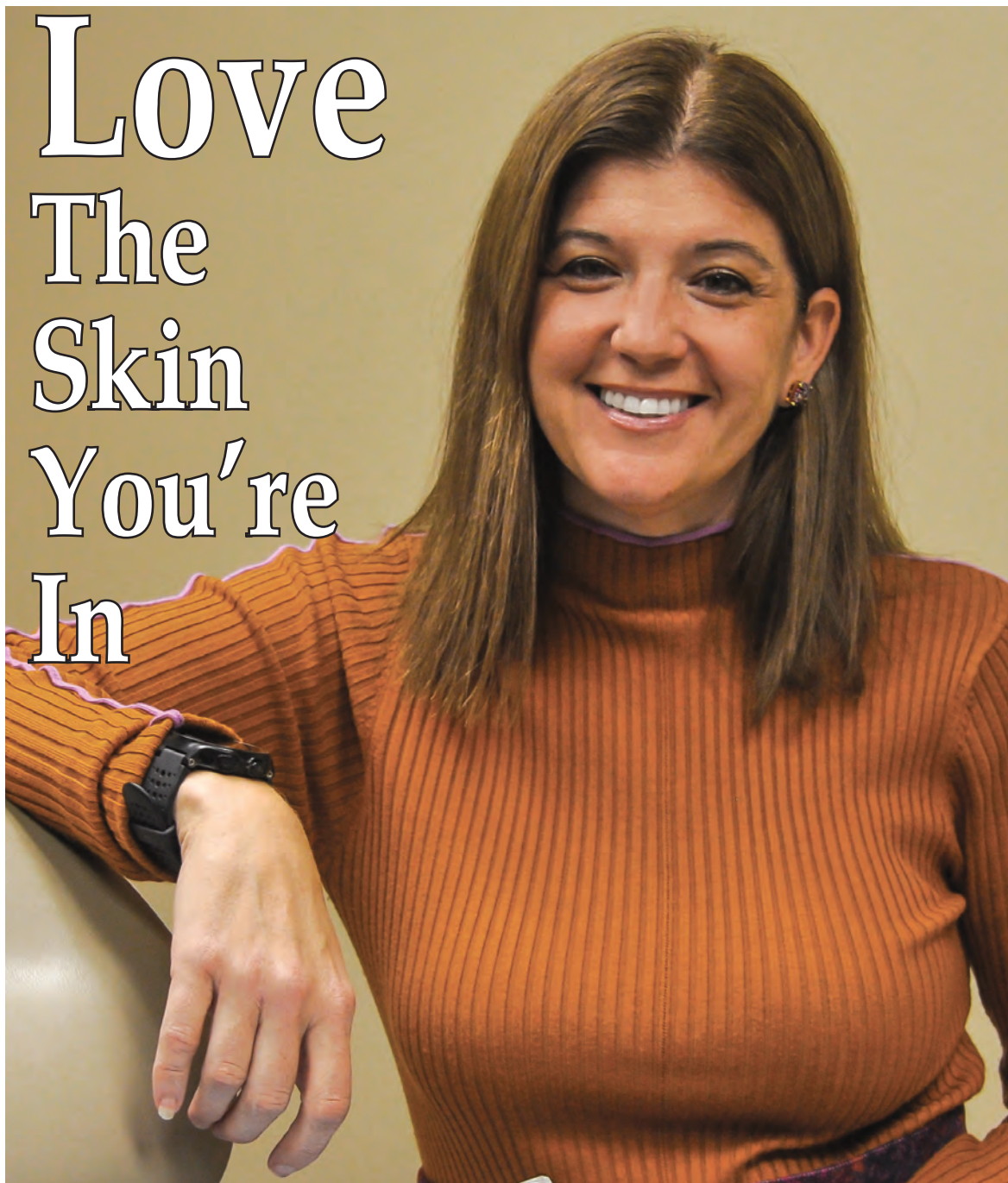


# Love The Skin You're In



Dr. Elise Brantley is a board-certified dermatologist who has been caring for Oklahomans for more than a decade.

story and photo by Bobby Anderson, RN, Staff Writer

Colder weather means more layers of clothing, but that doesn't mean you're off the hook when it comes to protecting your skin from the sun's damaging rays.

Dr. Elise Brantley is a board-certified dermatologist who has been practicing since 2009.

Her practice at Scissortail Dermatology focuses on protecting your skin year-round.

"Even though it's chilly, it doesn't really change the amount of UV light coming through," Brantley said. "Even if it's cloudy

See SKIN Page 2

  
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## A Dedicated Santa Claus



Santa Claus in his sleigh is created by Richard W. Amend at Saint Ann in northwest Oklahoma City in their 20th Christmas festivities.

Story by Darl Devault, Contributing Editor

At 74, Richard W. Amend, M.Ed., has always shown a passion for working with senior adults by dedicating his life to the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City and its elders for the past 40 years.

He was the Director of Senior Adult Ministry at Christ the King Catholic Church for 25 years. Then Archbishop Eusebius

See SANTA Page 5



## SKIN

Continued from Page 1

you're still getting UV light. People may not get as intense of a burn, but they're still accumulating sun damage. Even when you're not thinking about it you still need to be wearing your hats and sunscreen."

It's all fun in the sun when you're young.

But as you start to age all that exposure to the sun can begin to take its toll, resulting in blemishes and forms of skin cancer.

Brantley's practice focus is the evaluation and treatment of growths of the skin with an emphasis on detecting and treating skin cancer.

She is a native Oklahoman from Broken Arrow.

After graduating high school from the Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics she attended the University of Tulsa for undergraduate studies.

She received her medical degree from the University of Oklahoma and completed her residency training at the University of Cincinnati where she served as chief resident.

She has been serving the Oklahoma City metro area for nearly 10 years.

"Usually if there is any question

I say to come in and get a baseline and we can determine what your risk is based on different factors," Brantley said.

Risk factors include your skin cancer history, your family history, and your history of sun exposure as well as any burns that have occurred in the past.

"Little things like that can increase your risk so that will help decide when you need to come in for regular checks," Brantley said. "I have some people that have to come every three months, but some qualify for annual checks."

While most are aware of the harmful effects burns can have during the summer, winter presents its own set of challenges for your skin.

Brantley notes that skiing can be a time for increased sun absorption as you are exposed to the sun's rays twice, once from above and then again from UV light reflected back up from the snow.

"The other thing we like to remind people when they are skiing is to wear lip balm with SPF in it because (UV light) can cause sun damage and also herpes outbreaks (common cold sores)," Brantley said.

When it comes to sun exposure,

Brantley said most people often don't realize their lips need protection, too.

She says almost every month she catches a squamous cell cancer that has formed on a lip.

"Unfortunately, those are more aggressive, too. Those need to be diagnosed quickly with any lip changes. That's semi-emergent," she said.

Chronic chapping on one area of the lip or a noticeable bump or knot can be a sign that something abnormal is going on.

Even if you limit your sun exposure and take all the necessary precautions, sometimes the medications you take can increase your risk of skin cancer.

Immunosuppressives that treat organ transplant patients as well as Lupus, psoriasis, and multiple sclerosis drugs can be problematic.

"Your immune system is used to protect our bodies and repair DNA damage," Brantley said. "When that is suppressed skin cancers are able to grow."

Dopamine drugs used to prevent and treat Parkinson's disease can also promote the growth of melanomas.

Another risk factor Brantley sees frequently in her older patients

is those who underwent radiation therapy for the treatment of cystic acne.

She says that treatment history is popping up more and more in her skin cancer patients.

According to the non-profit Skin Foundation, skin cancer is the most common cancer in the world. In the U.S., more than 9,500 people are diagnosed with skin cancer every day and:

- 1 in 5 Americans will develop skin cancer by the age of 70.
- More than 2 people die of skin cancer in the U.S. every hour.
- Having 5 or more sunburns doubles your risk for melanoma.
- When detected early, the 5-year survival rate for melanoma is 99 percent.

The annual cost of treating skin cancers in the U.S. is estimated at \$8.1 billion: about \$4.8 billion for nonmelanoma skin cancers and \$3.3 billion for melanoma, according to the Foundation.

Thanks to increased education and screening by dermatologists like Brantley, the diagnosis and treatment of nonmelanoma skin cancers in the U.S. increased by 77 percent between 1994 and 2014.

For more information visit: <https://scissortaildermatology.com/>

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OPINION



Little Known  
Property-Tax  
Relief Programs  
Help Seniors Save

Dear Savvy Senior,

I recently learned about a property-tax relief program for seniors in the county where I live. Apparently, there are hundreds of these programs across the country that many retirees, like me, are eligible for but don't know about. What can you tell me about this?

-- Overtaxed Eddie

Dear Eddie,

Great question! Residential property-tax refund and credit programs exist in nearly every state, but unfortunately few people know about them. These programs can help retirees and many other Americans by reducing their property taxes. Here's what you should know.

Rising Property Taxes

Property taxes are a major source of income for local governments, but while they help fund key public services, they can be a financial drain for many homeowners, especially retirees, many of whom live on fixed incomes.

According to Attom Data Solutions, a property-data provider, the average American household paid \$3,785 in property taxes in 2021, but this amount varies widely depending on your state's tax rate and your home's estimated value. For example, New Jersey residents paid \$9,476 per year on average in 2021, while West Virginia residents paid \$901.

To help ease this tax burden, most states offer a number of property-tax

relief programs. But states aren't always proactive in letting people know. It's up to you, the homeowner, to find out what's available in your county or city that you may be eligible for, and to apply.

Relief Programs

Property tax relief programs, sometimes called exemptions, release eligible homeowners from paying some or all of their property tax obligation. How long the exemption lasts can vary depending on where you live, and the reason you're applying for the exemption.

The tax-relief process varies by county, city or state. In general, you'll have to meet certain eligibility requirements, submit an application and provide documents that support your request. Most programs will either reduce, waive or freeze property taxes for seniors, veterans, surviving spouses, disabled and low-income residents.

But there are some counties that also offer basic homestead exemptions to homeowners regardless of age or income, and others that may provide exemptions to homeowners that have recently made energy-efficient improvements to their home.

Where to Look

The best way to learn about local property-tax relief programs and their eligibility requirements is to visit your county, city or state website that collects your property tax. Most of these sites also provide applications and instructions, and will allow you to apply either online, by mail or at your local tax office.

Another good resource for locating programs in your area is the Lincoln Institute, which has a property-tax database that lets you to browse programs across the country. To access it go to [ResidentialPropertyTaxReliefPrograms.org](http://ResidentialPropertyTaxReliefPrograms.org).

AARP may also be able to help through their Property Tax-Aide service – see [PTAconsumers.aarpfoundation.org](http://PTAconsumers.aarpfoundation.org). This free program, which is available in 13 states (Arizona, Colorado, Florida–Miami Dade County, Illinois–Cook County, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New York and North Carolina) and the District of Columbia helps eligible homeowners and renters apply for relief.

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit [SavvySenior.org](http://SavvySenior.org). Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of "The Savvy Senior" book.

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## SANTA

Continued from Page 1

Beltran appointed him the mission and community relations director at Saint Ann Assisted and Independent Living Community 15 years ago.

"I truly felt called to this type of ministry after pursuing my master's degree in Gerontology," Amend said. "We just celebrated our 20th anniversary in this building in June. We have been blessed to help many seniors during those 20 years and are proud of our role in our community. They also bless us each day with their presence."

While serving at Christ the King as a member of the Knights of Columbus, Amend helped host an annual "Breakfast with Santa Claus." The unique feature of the breakfast was Santa Claus sitting in a real sleigh. The sleigh was donated by a generous parishioner who collected antique toys. All the children loved climbing up in the sleigh to tell Santa what they wanted for Christmas.

When Amend started working at Saint Ann, he transported the sleigh there after Breakfast with Santa. That began a new tradition. Every year residents marvel at the sleigh's vintage charm. It is in a special location where everyone can see and enjoy it.

As Christmas approaches, anticipation builds for the day Santa Claus will arrive. Residents have their picture taken with Santa while telling him about their Christmas wish list. For many, that photo becomes the resident's Christmas card.

Age never matters. Sometimes a centenarian will climb up in the sleigh or pose for their photo. They are just as excited as the children who come to whisper in Santa's ear.

Amend was so fascinated with 100-year-old seniors that he started the first Centenarian Club of Oklahoma in 1991 with the help of volunteers from Christ the King. Hundreds of centenarians have since been inducted into the club. The excitement of Christmas can continue at any age. Several centenarians have sat beside him in the sleigh, still exuding excitement about Christmas and never losing their child-like anticipation of talking with Santa in his sleigh. I always call them "Wisdom Walkers" because they exude wisdom daily.

All of Saint Ann's assisted and independent living residents are invited to participate in the annual Santa visit. There are 120 independent and 50 assisted living apartments in the lively community. They are joined by the attached convent for the Carmelite Sisters of Villa Teresa. Its nine nuns are an active part of the campus and enjoy Santa in his sleigh as much as everyone.

Many people have fond memories of seeing Santa Claus as a child and may even have photographs of



Richard W. Amend, 74, at Saint Ann in northwest Oklahoma City, has played Santa Claus in his sleigh many times.

themselves sitting on Santa's lap. During the interview with Amend, it was obvious he exudes the positivity and joy Santa Claus brings to others during the holiday season.

Amend says it is a privilege to don the Santa suit again this year. "Our residents are full of life," Amend said. "They invigorate me with their enthusiasm for the season. People say their time with Santa is special, but it is even more so for me. You are playing the role of one of the most oversized icons in our culture that conveys kindness and gifting of special things at Christmas, celebrating the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ."

Amend is not the only staff member who helps make the Christmas season cheerful. "Our life enrichment team, concierge, assisted living director, marketing, maintenance, dining service, housekeeping, and everyone helps in numerous ways. We also have those who dress up as Santa's helpers, elves, a reindeer, and a snowman to make Saint Ann's winter wonderland more festive," Amend said.

"Playing Santa Claus allows me to spread cheer with others and find personal enjoyment and satisfaction in my role," Amend said. "Making everyone happy that they are interacting with Santa can be an exciting treat. "This sense of magic and wonder during the holidays can spread joy and make everyone smile during our interactions."

Saint Ann is located at 7501 W. Britton Road in northwest Oklahoma City. The community is open to all faiths and has a beautiful St. Joachim Chapel and a Grand Theater. Guests are invited to call (405) 721-0747 #322 to schedule a picture in the sleigh. Kris Kringle might even be there to greet you.

# Social Security Announces 8.7 Percent Benefit Increase for 2023

## MASSIVE SOCIAL SECURITY INCREASE 2023



Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for approximately 70 million Americans will increase 8.7 percent in 2023, the Social Security Administration announced. On average, Social Security benefits will increase by more than \$140 per month starting in January.

The 8.7 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will begin with benefits payable to more than 65 million Social Security beneficiaries in January 2023. Increased payments to more than 7 million SSI beneficiaries will begin on December 30, 2022. (Note: some people receive both Social Security and SSI benefits). The Social Security Act ties the annual COLA to the increase in the Consumer Price Index as determined by the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Medicare premiums are going down and Social Security benefits are going up in 2023, which will give seniors more peace of mind and breathing room. This year's substantial Social Security cost-of-living adjustment is the first time in over a decade that Medicare premiums are not rising and shows that we can provide more support to older Americans who count on the benefits they have earned," Acting Commissioner Kilolo Kijakazi said.

To view a COLA message from Acting Commissioner Kijakazi, please visit [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vgm5q4YT1AM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vgm5q4YT1AM).

Some other adjustments that take effect in January of each year are based on the increase in average wages. Based on that increase, the maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security tax (taxable maximum) will increase to \$160,200 from \$147,000.

Social Security and SSI beneficiaries are normally notified by mail starting in early December about their new benefit amount. The fastest way to find out their new benefit amount is to access their personal my Social Security account to view the COLA notice online. It's secure, easy, and people find out before the mail arrives. People can also opt to receive a text or email alert when there is a new message from Social Security--such as their COLA notice--waiting for them, rather than receiving a letter in the mail. People may create or access their my Social Security account online at [www.ssa.gov/myaccount](https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount).

Information about Medicare changes for 2023 is available at [www.medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov). For Social Security beneficiaries enrolled in Medicare, their new higher 2023 benefit amount will be available in December through the mailed COLA notice and my Social Security's Message Center.

The Social Security Act provides for how the COLA is calculated. To read more, please visit [www.ssa.gov/cola](https://www.ssa.gov/cola).



# COMMUNITY

## Presidents Celebrate Oklahoma Statehood Day

Story and photos by Darl DeVault, Contributing Editor

Four presidential reenactors celebrated Oklahoma Statehood Day before a mostly senior capacity crowd of 300, where President Theodore Roosevelt gave an enthusiastic historical perspective 117 years to the day after he signed the Oklahoma Statehood Proclamation.

The senior historical reenactors portraying presidents who appear on the Mount Rushmore National Memorial in South Dakota gave speeches and answered questions in the free matinee on November 16 at the Oklahoma History Center. The audience listened intently to experienced actor-interpreters playing the "Rushmore Four." A 7 p.m. ticketed performance saw a more mixed-age crowd attend.

The events continue a long-standing initiative by the OHC to share world-class interpreters and their stories with the public.

Professional reenactors portrayed Presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and Roosevelt dressed in top hats and tails in period attire. The actors have worked together in many previous appearances around the country.

Each president stood as they offered remarks of historical perspective from their eras in the order of their time as president. They invited and answered wide-ranging questions. The men only spoke of modern politics a few times when it applied directly to a

significant point in their speeches. The actors stayed in character throughout their session and while posing for photos after the event.

Dan Shippey portrayed President George Washington in a full Revolutionary War uniform and three-cornered hat. The actor founded and directs The Breed's Hill Institute, an educational nonprofit teaching the history of American liberty. Shippey works as a writer, director and actor in commercial film and theater.

Washington expressed his admiration for the 260-270 brave Maryland soldiers who stood fast during the Battle of Long Island, allowing his main force to withdraw to fight another day. He mentioned several of the dozen survivors of that largest battle of the Revolutionary War by name, calling the men his Marylanders.

The general and commander in chief of the Continental Army spoke the most about how courageous men from all the colonies fought for others' rights to be free throughout the Revolutionary War. He said he took great pride in how those men grasped the need for unity in fighting for our new democracy.

After answering several questions, the historical interpreter was asked if Washington liked to speak before crowds. He paused for effect, empathically answered "No," and sat down as the audience reacted with laughter.

President Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, stressed in his speech the importance of the first words of the preamble to the Constitution, "We the people." The actor explained that this marked the first time those words were expressed worldwide in a formal government document.

Portraying Jefferson since 1983, professional actor and theater director Bill Barker depicts Jefferson on television, in film and many historical locations. His main reenactment venue as Jefferson is the Thomas Jefferson Foundation at Monticello.

Asked about his devotion to science as president, Jefferson spoke at length about founding a university and the patent office in support of citizens receiving credit for their scientific inventions. Before election to the presidency, he was the first examiner of American patents. An inventor, he said a president's primary role is to celebrate others' achievements.

President Abraham Lincoln provided the audience with an overview of America in the years before running for the presidency. Fritz Klein, 74, bears a strikingly uncanny physical resemblance to

Lincoln. He spoke at length about the Missouri Compromise of 1820's failure to stop the spread of slavery.

Klein portrays Lincoln as an actor and speaker since being recruited to do so for a small, local celebration during the bicentennial year. One of the nation's best-known Lincoln reenactors, he has appeared in 43 states and a variety of films since 1981. He is a member of the National Speakers Association as a full-time actor traveling internationally to portray Lincoln on stage, in feature films, documentaries and speaking engagements.

Klein convinced the actor playing President Theodore Roosevelt to become a professional interpreter in 2003 after watching him perform and noting his physical resemblance to a circa 1915 version of the president.

Roosevelt, retired Huntington, Indiana businessman Gib Young, was the most energetic speaker of the four presidents. He wove many mentions of his associations with Oklahomans and his visit to Comanche peacetime leader Quanah Parker at his Star House in Cache into his speech. He delighted the audience with his "bully" rendition of Roosevelt's personality, intellect, and zest for life. He said it was proper to speak at length because Roosevelt visited Oklahoma before and after signing the proclamation making Oklahoma a state.

Roosevelt gave a reverent accounting of Oklahomans who had volunteered to charge up San Juan Hill with him in the Spanish-American War.

Not noted in the actors' speeches is the distinction that Roosevelt is the only president ever awarded the Medal of Honor. In 2001 he was posthumously honored for courage under fire described as "acts of bravery on 1 July 1898, near Santiago de Cuba, Republic of Cuba, while leading a daring charge up San Juan Hill."

Roosevelt cited the important dates leading up to Oklahoma's Statehood Day and engaged members of the audience by asking them questions about American history during his question session.

His zest for the president's job rose to a zeal of patriotism as he discussed Roosevelt's role in setting aside large parts of America for its citizens as national parks. In citing his authority as president to protect wildlife and public lands by creating the United States Forest Service, he reeled off a litany of accomplishments for the audience. Starting in 1901, Roosevelt established 150 national forests, 51 federal bird reserves, 4 national

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**STATEHOOD**  
Continued from Page 6

game preserves, 5 national parks, and 18 national monuments. Roosevelt's enabling of the 1906 American Antiquities Act protected approximately 230 million acres of public land.

Although the National Park Service was established 106 years ago with just 35 sites, the actor listed those five parks he had helped include long before the more formal act of Congress created the service. He finished his speech by pointing out how proud Roosevelt would be that America now has more than 400 parks and monuments under what he termed the amazing National Park Service.

The Inasmuch Foundation sponsored the program, coinciding with the OHC's 17th anniversary and Oklahoma's 117th Statehood Day in 1907.

The OHC is a division of the Oklahoma Historical Society, seeking public engagement through its affiliation with the Smithsonian Institution and National Archives. It is an accredited member of the American Alliance of Museums. The OHS's mission is to collect, preserve and share the State's history and culture of its people. The Territorial Press Association founded the OHS in 1893 to maintain museums,



Left to right, actors portraying George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln in their Mount Rushmore pose at the Oklahoma History Center.

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COMMUNITY

# Colin Robertson Celebrates Oklahoma Tennis

Story and photos by Darl DeVault, Contributing Editor

Few in Oklahoma have been more immersed in Oklahoma tennis than Australian ex-patriate Colin Robertson, 77, who came to Oklahoma City on a tennis scholarship in 1966. Seniors can now read about his five decades as a player, instructor, and coach entertainingly told in his heavily illustrated new book, "Sydney to Oklahoma: Tennis, Stories, Travels and More." (Total Publishing & Media, 2022)

Robertson richly details his playing days at Oklahoma City University in the new book. Seniors who joined the national tennis boom in the 1970s will remember him serving as the first tennis director

at the newly opened Oklahoma City Tennis Center. He provided the spark in teaching many players who went on to serve the community as instructors and club managers. His move to instructing and managing at local private tennis clubs paralleled indoor tennis's dynamic growth in the 1980s and 1990s.

"I was in position over those decades to see tennis really take off in Oklahoma," Robertson said. "My hiring as the first director of the Oklahoma City Tennis Center in 1966 put me into contact with all the movers and shakers in tennis at that time in central Oklahoma. Many are still close friends to this day."

See TENNIS Page 9



United States Tennis Association, Missouri Valley, Oklahoma Hall of Famer Rob Braver (left) holds an oversized book cover while standing with his former coach Colin Robertson at a November book signing Braver hosted.

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## TENNIS

Continued from Page 8

The author dedicates two chapters of his book to his years coaching tennis at Oklahoma City University (1987-2002). His insider's view of the ups and downs of coaching at a college level is revealing and heartwarming. Stories about the parade of international players he coached at OCU are at times hilarious and often inspiring. His teams' five national championships at OCU testify to the lessons he learned and put to use while guiding the program's success.

"Coaching at OCU was something I just fell into," he says, "but those turned into some of the most memorable years of my life. I'm proud of the success of many of those teams, but I cherish more the bond I developed with most of those players—many who had come from outside the United States."

The second part of "Sydney to Oklahoma" conveys the author's assessment of the current state of Oklahoma tennis from his court developer and tennis business owner viewpoint. The reader will be surprised and gratified at the progress the Sooner state has made

in the last two decades at the public and collegiate levels. The magnificent new facilities at the state's major colleges are described and shown in striking photographs. Just as notable, the new public facilities in Tulsa and the Oklahoma City metro are detailed. Importantly, Robertson tells how interest and funds were generated to transform collegiate and public facilities.

"The extraordinary new tennis facilities at several colleges and city parks in Oklahoma is a great untold story in the state," Robertson says. "The national tennis community now sees Oklahoma as a leader in tennis facilities. Surprisingly, many Oklahomans are unaware of just how far the state has come over the last few decades with these new developments."

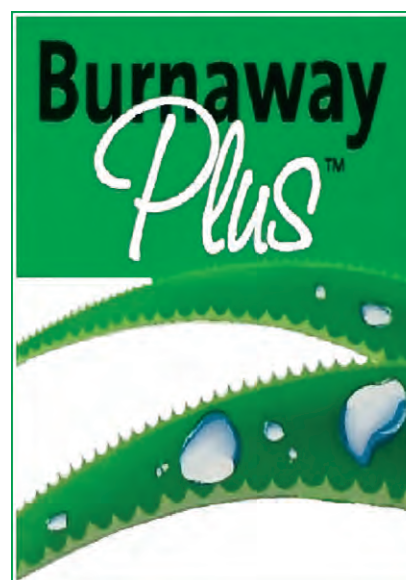
Robertson points out Edmond Center Court, the public facility in Edmond, is one facility gaining national prominence. Several tennis notables have called this indoor-outdoor facility the finest public facility in the world. "Edmond has done a remarkable job with their new public facility," Robertson says. "To be getting praise internationally really speaks well of this tennis center. Again, a part of the great untold tennis story in Oklahoma."

Over his decades in Oklahoma, the author personally met most of the key players and organizers in Oklahoma tennis—and many renowned players who came to Oklahoma for exhibition matches. His story of Bobby Riggs's visit to Oklahoma City in the 1980s is unforgettable. He pays tribute to many of these often-quirky tennis personalities in a revealing chapter on Oklahoma's tennis characters.

Now a tennis consultant at the Buccaneer Beach and Golf Resort in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, Robertson concludes the book with thoughts about the sport and tennis

enthusiasts in Oklahoma. He held several book signings in Oklahoma City and Tulsa in late November. He will return to Oklahoma in February for a series of talks and book signings throughout the state.

This book is a must-read for seniors who have played or followed tennis closely in Oklahoma since the 1960s. It richly details the decades Robertson spent inspiring players and developing the sport in the state. Online purchases of this autographed book are available at [www.OklahomaBooksOnline.com/colin-robertson](http://www.OklahomaBooksOnline.com/colin-robertson).



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# HEALTH

## OMRF experts urge caution as RSV cases rise

A seasonal virus that takes a toll on young children and older adults has returned this fall with a vengeance.

Surges in respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV, typically parallels flu season, running from late fall into the spring, but this year's outbreak started earlier than normal. This month, the Oklahoma State Department of Health reported rising case numbers and hospitalizations for RSV in many parts of the state. The figures mirror national trends.

Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation physician-scientist Hal Scofield, M.D., said the current deluge in cases could be traced to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"We saw a dramatic reduction in RSV during the pandemic due to the precautions we took to curb the spread of the coronavirus," said

Scofield, an immunologist. "Infants and young children whose immune systems had never been exposed to the virus were in a protective bubble. Now that bubble has burst."

RSV typically causes a mild cold. But among children younger than 5, RSV is responsible annually for 100-300 deaths and up to 80,000 hospitalizations in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The virus is even deadlier among older adults. A 2022 National Institutes of Health study estimated more than 6,000 people 65 years and older die each year from RSV complications.

OMRF scientist Susan Kovats, Ph.D., studies RSV. She noted that before the pandemic, almost all children contracted the virus by age 2. Kovats said that because so many children avoided exposure to it in



Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation physician-scientist Hal Scofield, M.D.

2020 and 2021, the virus appears to be "playing catch-up" in pediatric populations.

Kovats is working to understand why RSV impacts children more frequently than adults and why it hits some infants so hard. The work is setting the stage for better

treatments and will aid in vaccine design for the condition.

"Our early indications are that neonatal cells are less likely to make the proteins that stop a virus from replicating in the body,"

Continued next page



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## RSV

Continued from Page 10

Kovats said. "In essence, it appears to confirm previous evidence that babies' immune systems are not quite developed enough to fight off RSV."

Research teams worldwide are working on RSV vaccines. Pfizer plans to submit its vaccine, which protects infants from RSV by inoculating pregnant women, for Food and Drug Administration approval by year's end. The results of the FDA review of British drugmaker GSK's vaccine for older adults are expected in spring 2023.

Until a vaccine is available, Scofield said the best ways to avoid — and avoid spreading — RSV mirror those for the flu and Covid-19. "Wash your hands, wear a mask in crowded places and stay home if you're sick," he said. And if, despite your best efforts, you or a loved one has a run-in with a respiratory virus this holiday season, monitor symptoms closely.

"RSV can usually be managed at home. But when someone is having difficulty breathing or is exhibiting symptoms of dehydration, it's important to get an evaluation from a health care professional."



Dr. Elise Brantley



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## TRAVEL / ENTERTAINMENT

## The Gift of History



From Terry "Travels with Terry" Zinn [t4z@aol.com](mailto:t4z@aol.com)  
text and photo provided by the Oklahoma Historical Society

The gift of travel is common at this time of year and is never more welcomed when you can travel to experiences close to home.

The Oklahoma History Center and Historical Society offers several holiday events. Thank you to the Oklahoma Historical Society for the press release below.

Honey Springs Battlefield announces its Civil War Christmas Event to be held on Saturday, December 10 from 1 to 3 p.m. The event will be steeped in the history of Christmases past, and full of fun for adults and children alike. Children will have the opportunity to see the visitor centers new exhibits and to take photographs with Santa.

Civil War soldiers dressed in period attire will add to the festive event along with crafts and refreshments. The program is free to the public.

Honey Springs Battlefield is also celebrating the opening of all permanent exhibits inside its visitor center near Checotah.

Visitors will have the opportunity to experience an immersive, 3-D theatrical video performance bringing to life the Battle of Honey Springs. Additionally, guests can explore the new east gallery exhibit hall featuring 14 audio players with recordings from firsthand, written accounts of soldiers who fought at the Battle of Honey Springs, as well as exhibits highlighting firearms, ammunition, and artillery used in the battle. There may be outdoor education stations surrounding the visitor center with living history demonstrations of Civil War military drills, artillery practices, and civilian life throughout the day.

This new, interactive exhibit at the Honey Springs Visitor Center will bring the battle to life in a way that is not only educational, but impactful," said Trait Thompson, executive director of the Oklahoma Historical Society. "This battle was the most important of the Civil War in Indian Territory and it deserves the compelling rendition we now have in place. I'm thankful for our incredible Oklahoma Historical Society staff members from Honey Springs and other sites who contributed their talents to this incredible new exhibit."

The project to build and install exhibits at the Honey Springs Battlefield site is the long range vision of the Oklahoma Historical Society

Board and staff who began making plans for this military site dating back to the 1960s. Several stages of interpretation have unfolded over the years, including the trail signage and the slow installation of interactive exhibits that has now been completed.

Ask site director Adam Lynn and he will tell you that countless individuals, communities, donors, organizations, scholars, archaeologists, curators, volunteers, construction teams, maintenance workers, and staff members have contributed greatly to making the long range plans a reality.

"The battlefield and new state-of-the-art exhibits located inside the visitor center started with a vision that will soon come full circle," said Lynn. "We are beyond thankful and excited to offer visitors, schools, and groups of all ages a complete experience equal to the size and importance of one of the most important chapters in all of Oklahoma history!"

The exhibits will include a new 3-D theater that will show the documentary film The Battle of Honey Springs on a regular basis for visitors to immerse themselves in the story of the historic site. Honey Springs Battlefield is located east of US Highway 69 between Oktaha and Rentiesville. The site is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Contact the center at 918-617-7125 or [honeysprings@history.ok.gov](mailto:honeysprings@history.ok.gov).

OTHER Oklahoma Holiday events include; December 10 discussion at the Oklahoma History Center of the excavation and transportation of the steamboat Heroine from the Red River; A Christmas Tea, December 11, at the Cherokee Strip Museum and Rose Hill School from 1:30 to 4 p.m.; Christmas at the Fort Towson Historic Site December 11 from 1 to 3pm; or the Fort Gibson Holiday Bake Day on December 17 at 11 am.

### Mr. Terry Zinn - Travel Editor

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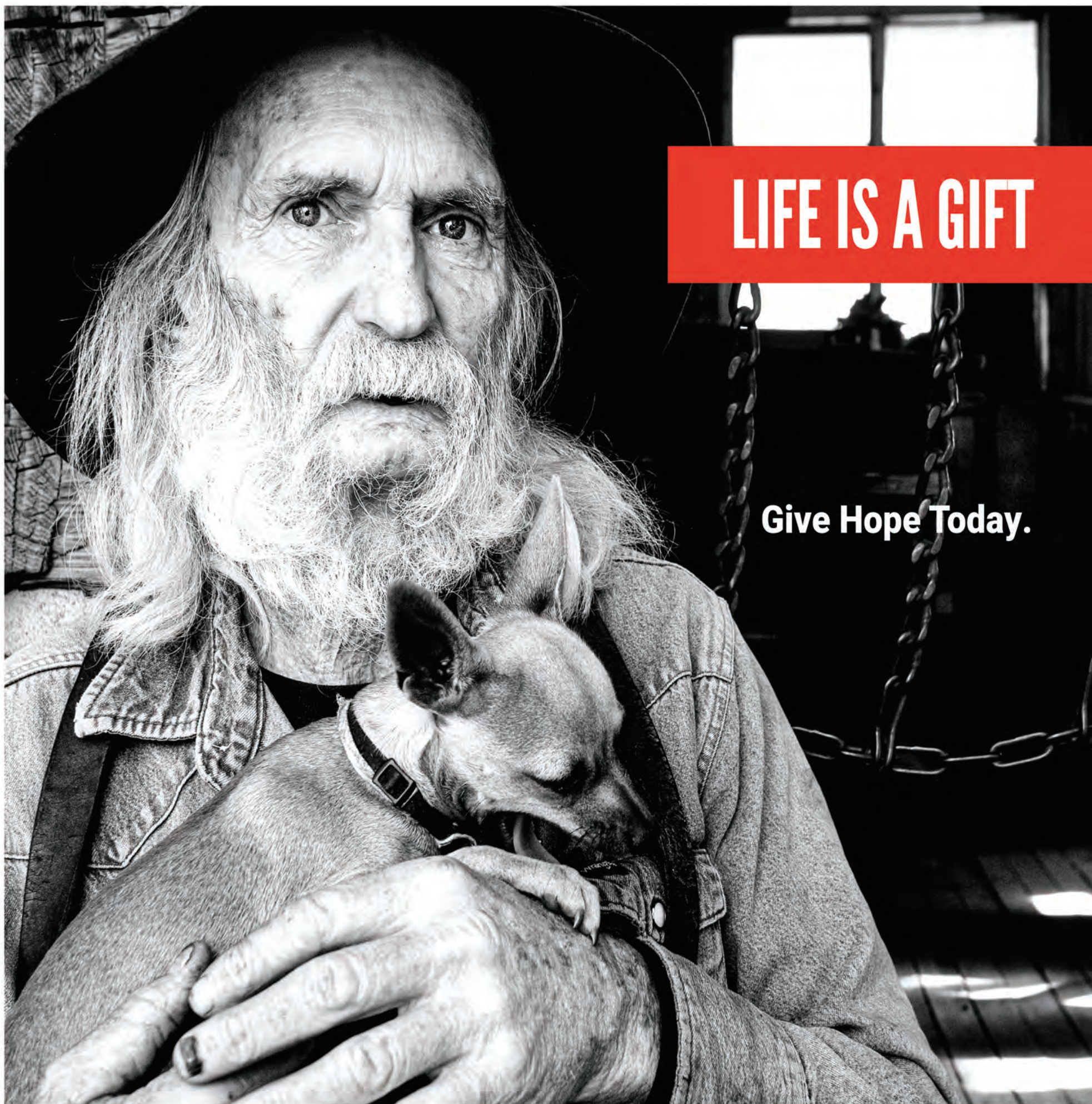
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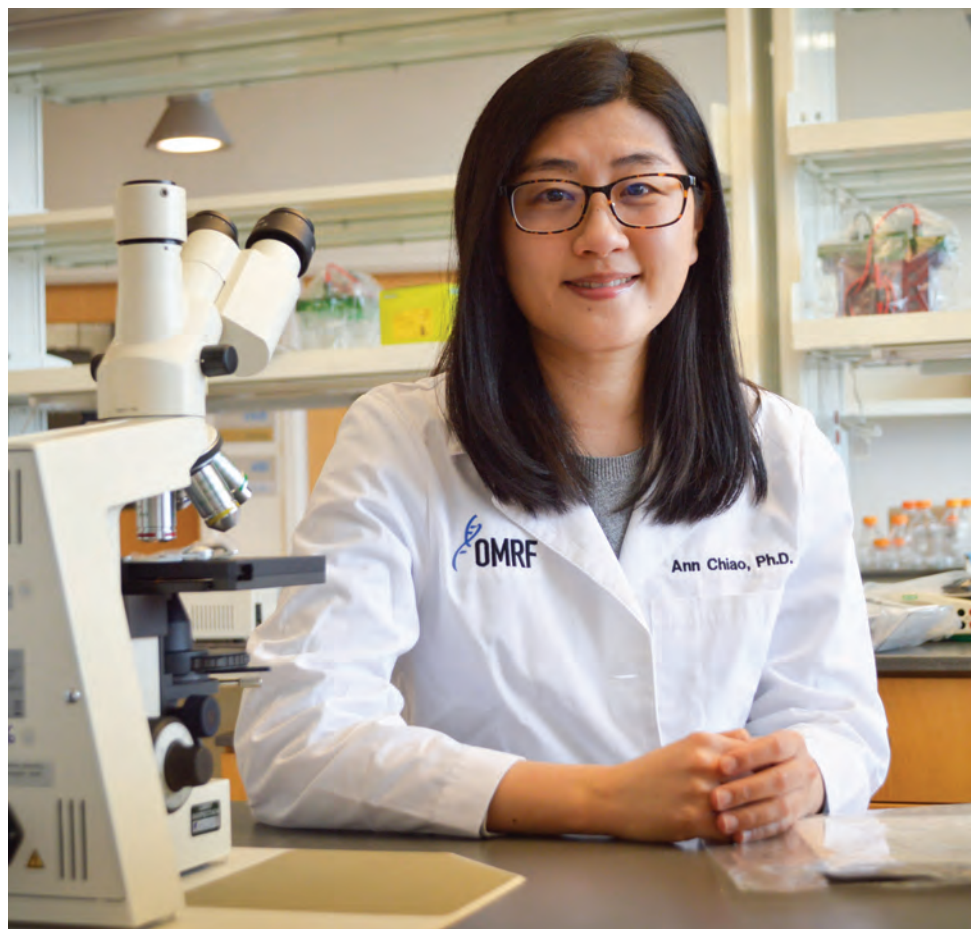
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# OMRF receives pair of grants to study aging



Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation scientist Ann Chiao, Ph.D.

Two scientists at the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation have been awarded grants for research aimed at extending the period of good health as we age.

The American Federation for Aging Research and the Glenn Foundation for Medical Research awarded grants to OMRF's Ann Chiao, Ph.D., and Matt Bubak, Ph.D. The organizations work together to support junior researchers focused on the basic biology of aging.

Chiao received a two-year, \$125,000 grant from AFAR to better understand a molecule inside each cell that is crucial for generating energy. As we age, levels of that molecule, NAD+, slowly diminish within the heart. Chiao will study how this occurs, and the role it plays in fatigue, shortness of breath and other symptoms of decreased heart function in older people.

"There is a lot of research looking at NAD+ in aging-related diseases," said Chiao, who joined OMRF in 2019 from the University of Washington. "What's different about this study is that we are looking at it only within the mitochondria, the powerhouse of

the cell."

Chiao's lab will focus on how and why the molecule dwindles in mitochondria and, in future research, whether medication could prevent it from happening.

Bubak is among nine scientists nationally to receive a one-year, \$60,000 postdoctoral fellowship from the Glenn Foundation. He will explore the decline of skeletal muscle mass and function that begins around middle age.

His research will test whether muscles in older mice become more youthful following a plasma transfer from younger mice, and whether that benefit is enhanced if the donor mice exercise.

"The idea is that we can create a more youthful environment in old mice so that the muscles can respond to stress, such as exercise, like young mice," said Bubak, who is a postdoctoral researcher in the lab of Benjamin Miller, Ph.D. "If we're correct, then potentially the application for humans would be both simple and cost effective."

Future studies will explore how long the youthful effects last following a plasma infusion, he said.

See AGING 19

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# Artists Create Largest Puzzle in State, Holiday Gift with Purpose



Denise Duong and Gabriel Friedman and art therapist Brittany Dray have been working with Oklahoma Children's Hospital OU Health patients for the past several months, helping them develop skills to reduce and manage anxiety and fear and to develop self-expression through art.

Local professional artists Denise Duong and Gabriel Friedman and art therapist Brittany Dray have been working with Oklahoma Children's Hospital OU Health patients for the

past several months, helping them develop skills to reduce and manage anxiety and fear and to develop self-expression through art.

Dray explained that art therapy

offers tools to aid relaxation and pain management, boost self-esteem and resilience and grow a sense of community at the hospital.

Friedman designed and built a giant puzzle as a foundation and Dray helped more than 90 patients create large puzzle pieces representing their stories. The pieces were gathered by Duong and Friedman who connected the experiences together and created a wall-sized mural of the puzzle. Themes of connection, strength and comfort were noticed by the artists, which inspired the story of Duong's painted mural which scrolls atop the work of the children.

"I see the puzzle as a reminder that we are all connected," Friedman said. "If one piece is missing, the puzzle doesn't really function anymore. I wanted kids to hopefully absorb the idea that they might be doing just one little section of the puzzle, but without that section, you wouldn't want to do the puzzle. I hope it seeps in that they are all a piece of the puzzle."

The finished artwork is now a permanent feature in Oklahoma Children's Hospital, hopefully inspiring other pediatric patients. The project was funded by grants and gifts from Bob Moore, Kirkpatrick Family Fund, CrossFirst Bank, Oklahoma City Community Foundation, Dunkin' and others.

Just in time for holiday gift-giving, replica tabletop-sized boxed puzzles are available to purchase for \$39 each at this link:

<https://www.plentymercantile.com/puzzle-756pc-art-helps-kids-heal.html>

Following Thanksgiving, the puzzles will also be available for purchase at Red Shelf Gift Shop at Oklahoma Children's Hospital OU Health, and Oklahoma City retail stores including Plenty Mercantile, Little D Gallery, DNA Galleries, JRB Art at the Elms, The Learning Tree, and Omni Hotel OKC. All proceeds will fund future art programs for children.

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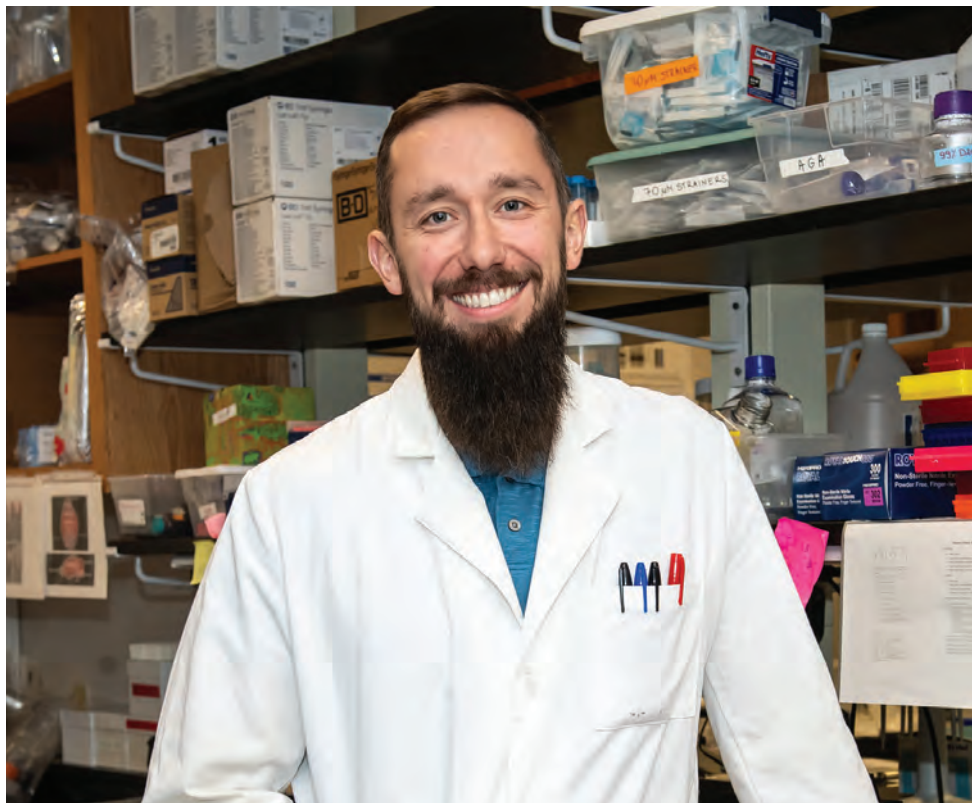
## STRANGE BUT TRUE SO THEY SAY...

**BBT** Most Canadians live south of Seattle

Wait. What? Canada and the United States are both large countries which can make understanding the relative

geography difficult. But the contiguous United States goes farther north than you think and the majority of Canadians live near the southern border. The result? At 45 degrees latitude, Seattle is farther north than Toronto and Montreal, meaning that 64 percent of Canadians live south of Seattle.





Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation scientist Matt Bubak, Ph.D.

## AGING

Continued from Page 17

OMRF Aging and Metabolism Research Program Chair Holly Van Remmen, Ph.D., said the two grants ultimately could help reverse two key aspects of aging. "These two scientists are trying

to figure out how to make an older person's heart and skeletal muscles work like those of a younger person," Van Remmen said. "We know an active lifestyle prolongs the healthiest period of our lives, but for those who can't or won't exercise, this work could someday make a big difference."

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# Local Woman Shares Personal Lung Cancer Story to Raise Awareness

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death for both men and women. Each year, more people die of lung cancer than colon, breast and prostate cancer combined.

Barbara Stroud (62) of Midwest City, was first diagnosed with lung cancer in 2013. "Most people don't know it, but each lung is divided into lobes. Two on the left and three on the right. Luckily, my cancer was in a lobe in my right lung that I could live without - so it was removed."

Stroud was cancer free for several years, until it returned with a vengeance. This time it was stage four, extending from her brain to her groin. She underwent two rounds of radiation before Bilal Ahmad, M.D., a board-certified hematologist/oncologist with the INTEGRIS Health Cancer Institute at Southwest Medical Center, mentioned Keytruda. "I discussed a personalized tailor-made treatment plan for Barbara. I requested molecular testing on her cancer tissue," says Ahmad. "I started her on Keytruda which is targeted immunotherapy and helps the immune system to fight cancer in a strong and precise manner."

"That was in 2019," remembers Stroud. "I thought it would give me a few extra months. Here it is almost four years later and I'm still kicking." She credits the Lord, Dr. Ahmad and Keytruda for giving her more time with her three grown children and her five grand-daughters. "I'm thankful every day, not just on Thanksgiving or Christmas. If I wake up, it's a great day!" Ahmad says Barbara refuses to give up. "She is a person of will power who is consistent with all treatment sessions and thankfully we are seeing great results."

Although smoking is the main cause of lung cancer, lung cancer risk also is increased by exposure to secondhand smoke; environmental exposures, such as radon, workplace toxins (e.g., asbestos, arsenic), and air pollution. The risk of lung cancer can be reduced by quitting smoking and by eliminating or reducing exposure to secondhand smoke and environmental and workplace risk factors. Stroud hopes by sharing her story, she can help raise awareness of lung cancer and empower those impacted by the disease.

# OHA Presents Excellence in Quality awards

The Oklahoma Hospital Association (OHA) presented Excellence in Quality awards to five hospitals during its recent annual convention. This award recognizes exceptional efforts to improve outcomes in clinical quality performance practices, capabilities, and results and represents the highest level of professional acknowledgement from the OHA Council on Quality & Patient Safety.

Submissions were scored based on their story of identification of a project specific to identified needs within the hospital, creating innovative interventions that incorporate evidence-based best practices, demonstrating measurable and quantifiable results, sustaining/spreading the success within the hospital, and stimulating learning for others.

Five award categories were recognized, four based on number of beds, and one for innovation.

2022 awardees for Excellence in Quality are:

**Critical Access Hospital and Under 25 beds:** Fairview Regional Medical Center, Project Title: Patient Fall Reduction for Med/Surg Unit Submitted by: Sarah-Marie Gerard, RN, BSN

**26-100 beds:** Jackson County Memorial Hospital, Altus Project Title: Clostridioides Difficile: Appropriate Testing, Treatment, and Teaching Submitted by: Shelley Simmons, chief nursing officer

**101-300 beds:** Oklahoma Children's Hospital at OU Health, Oklahoma City Project Title: Pressure Injury Awareness: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Tracking, Treatment, and Reduction Submitted by: Kristi Booker, director of quality

**More than 300 beds:** OU Health University of Oklahoma Medical Center, Oklahoma City Project Title: VTE Reduction in an Academic Level 1 Trauma Center Submitted by: Todd Roberts, vice president of quality & patient safety

**Innovation in Demonstrating Clinical Quality and Patient Outcomes:** Norman Regional Health System Project Title: Reducing Delirium Complications in the Hip Fracture Population Utilizing ED Pain Blocks Submitted by: Cathy Snapp, orthopedic program administrator

## CROSSWORD CORNER

- Across
- 1 #1 Toto song that mentions the Serengeti

7 Whittling, for one

12 Wavy patterns in some op art

13 Cool one's feet at streamside, say

14 Attempted coup participants

17 Stretching muscles

18 Iowa State city

20 Many an 18th-century painter

24 Low-quality

26 CFO's degree

27 Intelligence org.

28 Form close ties (with)

29 "Let's have at it!"

32 Point

33 Circle segment

34 Palm fruit ... or what the creator of this puzzle's theme apparently is?

35 \_\_\_ dog

36 Classic Pontiac

37 Not moving

38 Desires

39 Bellows of "The Agency"

40 Dessert order

41 Flower holders

42 Environmentally

concerned

47 Old Venetian judge

48 Catching a glimpse of

51 Source of an organic fiber

56 Most cunning

57 When Rome wasn't built?

58 Weighty reading

59 Guiding principles

Down

1 Film lover's TV option

2 Pay, as a bill

3 It may be fried or puffed

4 Piece of rebar, essentially

5 Suppress, in a way

6 Part of NAACP: Abbr.

7 Jaguar, e.g.

8 Genetic molecule

9 Actor's rep.

10 Parade staple

11 Closed

13 Data storage medium

15 Country club employee

16 Stretches on a couch? Abbr.

19 Some can be used forever--but only once

21 Signs

22 In the neighborhood of

23 Overblown critique

24 Elaborate entryways

25 Physician wearing a pink ribbon, perhaps

28 Like potato chips, often

29 Showed up

30 Farm measures

31 Curly slapper

34 Crime boss

38 "That's well within my abilities"

41 How to receive a freebie, perhaps

43 Yo-Yo strings?

44 Official doc.

45 Belief system

46 In the previously mentioned work, briefly

49 Connection point

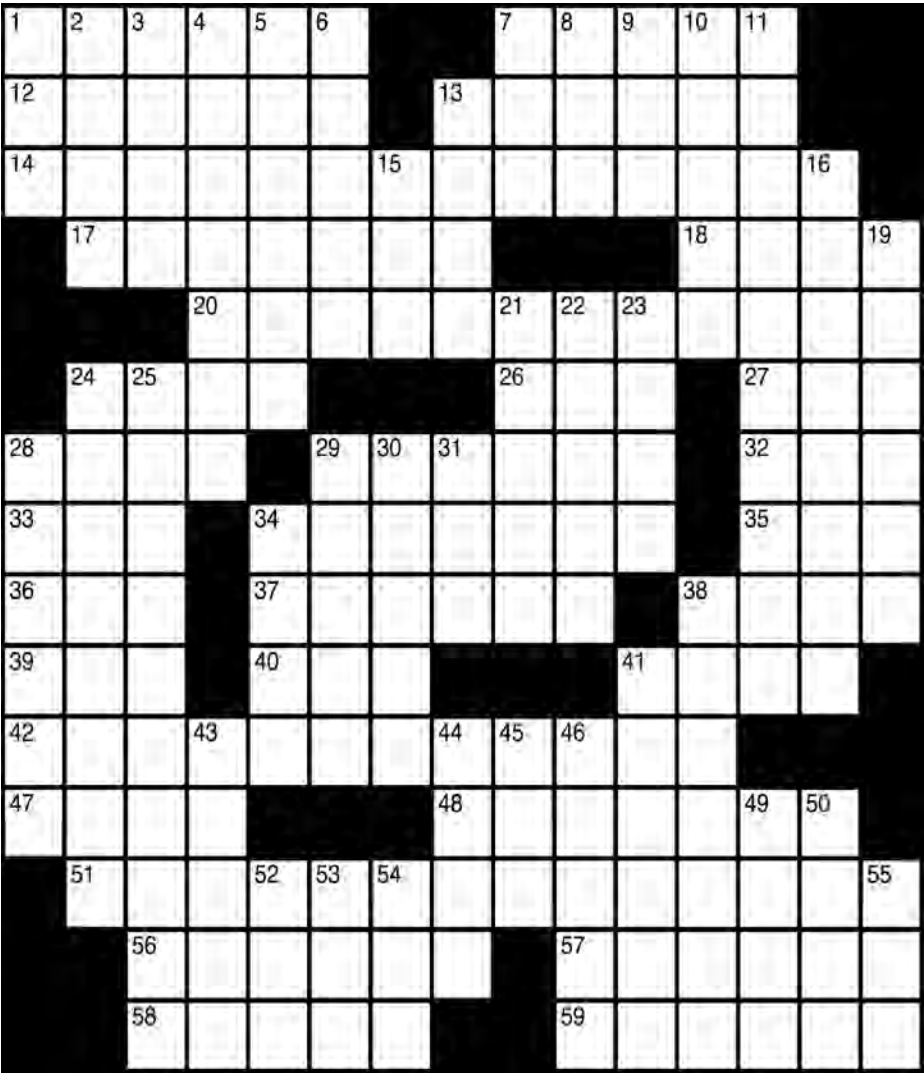
50 Initialism for Tom Brady, according to most

52 2000s toon heroine \_\_\_ Possible

53 Tiny

54 CIA predecessor

55 Finger Lakes locale: Abbr.





# OK HISTORY & MORE

## December 2022 Events

For a full list of events/details visit: [www.okhistory.org/calendar/ohs](http://www.okhistory.org/calendar/ohs)

***Society of Urban Poets Inc. Holds Annual Poetry Recital*** The annual recital will be held on Sunday, December 18 at 6 pm at the Myriad Botanical Gardens, 301 West Reno. This is a free event and the public is invited to attend. Guests may also participate by reading 2 selections of your original poetry. Please register by calling 405-339-4844 or by email to [soupokc@yahoo.com](mailto:soupokc@yahoo.com) or [afwash2@cox.net](mailto:afwash2@cox.net). Registration deadline is December 11. The evening will include music by Garcia Tarver and a brief reception.

***Will's Country Christmas*** December 2, 5 p.m.-9 p.m. Will Rogers Birthplace Ranch, 9501 East 380 Road Oologah, OK 74053. Visit Will Rogers Birthplace Ranch in Oologah for Will's Country Christmas on Friday, December 2, and Saturday, December 3, from 5 to 9 p.m. The ranch house will be decorated for an Indian Territory Christmas. The evening will include storytelling, Wild West shootouts, children's crafts, 19th-century games, carriage rides, a shooting gallery, music, vendors, and food trucks.

***Barney P. Enright, Photographer exhibit closes*** December 3. Cherokee Strip Museum and Rose Hill School, 2617 West Fir Street Perry, OK 73077. The Cherokee Strip Museum and Rose Hill School's exhibit about the life and work of Perry photographer Barney P. Enright will remain open through Saturday, December 3.

***Guthrie's Distinctive Homes Tour and Wassail at the Carnegie Library*** December 3, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Oklahoma Territorial Museum and Carnegie Library, 406 East Oklahoma Avenue Guthrie, OK 73044. The Oklahoma Territorial Museum and Carnegie Library will be part of Guthrie's Distinctive Homes Tour on Saturday, December 3, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. which gives an exclusive look inside some of Guthrie's most distinctive homes and historic buildings, decorated for the holiday season. The Carnegie Library—a stop on the tour—is the place for tour participants to hear tales of the early days of Oklahoma's first capital while having a warming cup of wassail.

***"Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act" webinar*** On Monday, December 5, from 10 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. (Central Time), the State Historic Preservation Office will provide an introduction to, (or a refresher on), relevant and useful aspects of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and explain the review process. In this free online training, SHPO staff will convey the importance of the Section 106 process and assist anyone and everyone who might be involved in that process in Oklahoma.

***Holiday Market at the Museum*** Museum of the Western Prairie, 1100 Memorial Drive Altus, OK 73521. The Museum of the Western Prairie will host its eighth annual Holiday Market at the Museum on Tuesday, December 6, at 6 p.m. This event showcases the talents of 12 area artists and provides a terrific holiday shopping opportunity for the general public.

***Oklahoma Tall Tales Uncovered presentation and book signing with author Joe M. Cummings*** Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center, 507 South 4th Street Enid, OK 73701. On Friday, December 9th at 3 p.m., author Joe M. Cummings will be signing copies of his new book, *Oklahoma Tall Tales Uncovered*, (2022, Arcadia Publishing) at the Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center (CSRHC). Cummings will give a short program where he talks about his book and the research that went into writing it.

***Steamboat Heroine film screening and discussion*** December 10. Oklahoma History Center, 800 Nazih Zuhdi Drive Oklahoma City, OK 73105. On Saturday, December 10, the Oklahoma History Center will feature a film screening that follows the excavation of the steamboat Heroine from the Red River and how it was transported to the Oklahoma History Center. In 1990, the sunken steamboat, Heroine, was discovered in Oklahoma's Red River. It provided evidence of the role steamboats played in Oklahoma and how they transformed the region.

***Quilting workshop with Martha Ray*** December 10, 9 a.m.-11 a.m. [Recurring Event] Sod House Museum, 4628 State Highway 8 near Aline, OK 73716. Visit the Sod House Museum southeast of Aline for a quilting workshop on Saturday. The workshop will take place from 9 to 11 a.m. with instructor Martha Ray, and the cost is \$5 per person. For more information, please contact Director Renee Trindle at 580-463-2441 or [sodhouse@history.ok.gov](mailto:sodhouse@history.ok.gov).

***Breakfast with Santa*** December 10, 9 a.m.-11 a.m. Henry and Anna Overholser Mansion, 405 NW 15th Street Oklahoma City, OK 73103. Preservation Oklahoma is excited to present Breakfast with Santa at the Henry and Anna Overholser Mansion on Saturday, December 10 from 9 to 11 a.m. Attendees

will enjoy a delicious breakfast, a craft, and of course—meeting Santa! All families are invited to join in the holiday fun. Admission to the event is \$25 per person. Please note that tickets are available by breakfast time, however, attendees are welcome to participate in the other activities at any time. Tickets are nonrefundable.

***Christmas Open House*** December 10, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Sod House Museum, 4628 State Highway 8 near Aline, OK 73716. The Sod House Museum's Christmas Open House will be held on Saturday, December 10, from 1-3 p.m. Enjoy the holidays in Oklahoma's only remaining sod house that will be decorated for the season in the style of a traditional 1890s Pioneer Christmas.

***Photos with Santa at the Will Rogers Memorial Museum*** December 10, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. [Recurring Event] Will Rogers Memorial Museum, 1720 West Will Rogers Boulevard Claremore, OK 74017. The Heritage Gallery at Will Rogers Memorial Museum will be the perfect backdrop for Photos with Santa on Saturday, December 3, and Saturday, December 10, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Bring your family and your camera to take beautiful family pictures with Santa. Admission is free to take photos. For more information, please visit [willrogers.com](http://willrogers.com) or call 918-341-0719.

***Christmas Open House*** Hunter's Home, 19479 East Murrell Home Road Park Hill, OK 74451. On Sunday, December 11, from 1 to 4 p.m., Hunter's Home will host its annual Christmas Open House. Visitors will see the home and general store decorated for the holiday season and will enjoy cider and snacks while sitting around a roaring fire. For more information, please call 918-456-2751.

***Holiday Candlelight Tours*** December 15, 4 p.m.-8 p.m. [Recurring Event] Hunter's Home, 19479 East Murrell Home Road Park Hill, OK 74451. Oklahoma's only remaining pre-Civil War plantation home will host five nights of candlelight tours in December. The tours of Hunter's Home will take place from Tuesday, December 13, through Saturday, December 17, from 4-8 p.m. each day. The 177-year-old home will be decorated in a Victorian holiday style. Period Christmas decorations and candlelight will adorn the home's lavish parlor, sitting room, and dining room. Costumed reenactors will share the history of the home. For more information please call 918-456-2751.

***December Bake Day and Gingerbread Decorations*** Fort Gibson Historic Site, 907 North Garrison Avenue Fort Gibson, OK 74434. Visit Fort Gibson Historic Site for a special holiday-themed bake day on Saturday, December 17, at 10 a.m. Fresh bread and batches of giant gingerbread men will be baked in the historic Fort Gibson ovens just in time for the holidays! Fresh batches of each will be ready at noon and again at 3 p.m. Gingerbread men will be ready for decorations throughout the day starting at 11 a.m.

***History Alive! on the Cherokee Strip*** December 17, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. [Recurring Event] Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center, 507 South 4th Street Enid, OK 73701. Step back in time and experience life in the Cherokee Outlet during History Alive! on the Cherokee Strip at the Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center in Enid. On the first and third Saturday of each month, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., the historic buildings in the Humphrey Heritage Village come alive with reenactors who are tending their shops, working their trades, or socializing at the Village Church.

***"Shut the Door! Barns in Oklahoma: The Significance of Barns in the Oklahoma Cultural Landscape" webinar*** December 27, 6 p.m. The State Historic Preservation Office is hosting a webinar series entitled "Shut the Door! Barns in Oklahoma," featuring presenters who specialize in barn history, construction, and restoration. On Tuesday, December 27, the topic will be "The Significance of Barns in the Oklahoma Cultural Landscape." This December webinar will be the last of the 2022 series. These presentations will be held on the last Tuesday of every other month, beginning at 6 p.m.

***Movie Night featuring Meet Me in St. Louis (1944)*** December 30, 6 p.m.-9 p.m. Will Rogers Memorial Museum, 1720 West Will Rogers Boulevard Claremore, OK 74017. Will Rogers Memorial Museum in Claremore will host a Movie Night featuring the film *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944) in its theater on Friday, December 30, at 7 p.m. "Horsing Around with Will" will take place from 6 to 7 p.m., during which families can enjoy activities and crafts relating to the movie's theme. Guests can enjoy free admission, popcorn, and drinks while watching the film. Seating is limited, so early arrival is suggested.

***Observing with NASA Smithsonian exhibit kiosk closes*** December 31. Oklahoma History Center, 800 Nazih Zuhdi Drive Oklahoma City, OK 73105. Observing With NASA, an authentic data experience with astronomical imaging will be on display at the Oklahoma History Center (OHC) until December 31, 2022. This exhibit kiosk from the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory engages visitors in the art and science of NASA imagery. Observing With NASA offers an introduction to the tools, data, and skills that NASA space scientists and data visualization experts use to create the images of deep space objects that we all know and love.



# TINSELTOWN TALKS:

## Christmas with Ilene Graff

By Nick Thomas



Perhaps you remember her as TV mom Marsha Owens in ABC's popular 80s sitcom "Mr. Belvedere" starring alongside baseball-turned-actor Bob Uecker and British actor Christopher Hewett in the title role. But Ilene Graff is also an established singer whose career began in musical theater. In recent years her live festive Christmas special, "The Ilene

Graff Holiday Show," has delighted audiences at 54 Below, a supper club in the basement of New York's famed Studio 54 theater.

"We couldn't do it because of COVID for a couple of years, but I'm thrilled to be back on stage December 28 with a new show," said Graff from Los Angeles. "I loved the holiday specials of the 60s and 70s



Cast of Mr. Belvedere including Ilene Graff with Bob Uecker at right and Christopher Hewett at left - ABC publicity photo.

on programs like 'The Andy Williams Show,' so that's the mood I've always tried to bring to my shows. I have special guests, we chat, sing holiday songs, and just try to keep it warm and friendly with a family feeling including some light-hearted moments of reflection and love."

A native of Queens, New York, Graff lives in Los Angeles but always enjoys returning "home" to the East Coast where she and her husband, composer Ben Lanzacone, maintain an apartment.

"I love celebrations and hosting parties, and I do love the holidays," she said. "So a few years ago I pitched this idea to my family and we put together the first holiday show which was a huge success. It just became something I wanted to continue."

That first show was a real family affair also featuring brother Todd, an actor, writer, and director, her Tony Award-winning cousin Randy, actress/dancer daughter Nikka, as well as Ben. But with their busy schedules, only her husband could regularly join her in subsequent December holiday presentations.

"I love working with him so that's another reason I wanted to continue doing them," she said.

Ilene says she still encounters people unaware of her musical background.

"Most know me from television but don't realize that I started on Broadway, so they are kind of surprised that I'm a real singer!" she said, laughing (see [www.ilenegraff.com](http://www.ilenegraff.com)). "I also sang a little on maybe three episodes of 'Mr. Belvedere' so that was always a surprise for the audience."

One of those episodes first aired in December 1989. In "A Happy Guy's Christmas" the Owens family is cast in a local production of a Charles Dickens classic.

"We did a silly take-off of 'A Christmas Carol,'" she recalled. "They dressed me up with this beautiful long blonde wig and Christopher was attached with wires so he could fly. It was exactly what you wanted from a Christmas episode - goofy and yet heartfelt and sincere."

Graff remembers her years on the "Mr. Belvedere" set with fondness. "It was an amazing cast and crew who worked so well together. You know how some people are just funny? Well, that was Bob, completely natural and comfortable on camera and one of the smartest people I've ever known - and he still broadcasts baseball (at 88, for the Milwaukee Brewers)! Both he and Christopher were such great guys and insisted that everybody in the cast and crew be treated equally on the set. How lucky I am to have those memories in my career."

Graff hopes to create new memories for herself and the audience when she returns for this year's holiday show.

"I've always thought of myself as a singer who got into acting and the acting really took over for many years," she says. "But I never stopped singing because that's just who I am. Music, singing, and of course family are everything to me."

Nick Thomas teaches at Auburn University at Montgomery, Ala, and has written features, columns, and interviews for numerous magazines and newspapers. See [www.getnickt.org](http://www.getnickt.org).

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# IN RECOGNITION

# Oklahoma City Native

Courtesy Megan Brown,  
Navy Office of Community Outreach

Lt. Drew Wofford, right, from Oklahoma City, and Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Equipment) Airman Dylan Lekniskas, from Vero Beach, Florida, launch a C-2A Greyhound, attached to the Fleet Logistics Squadron (VRC) 30 Det. 5, on the flight deck of the U.S. Navy's only forward-deployed aircraft carrier, USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76), in the Philippine Sea, Nov. 18. VRC 30 is one of only two carrier-qualified logistics support squadrons, providing supplies, personnel, and logistics support to Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 5. Ronald Reagan, the flagship of CSG 5, provides a combat-ready force that protects and defends the United States, and supports alliances, partnerships and collective maritime interests in the Indo-Pacific region. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Dallas A. Snider)

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# Saint Ann Holiday Market Best Ever

Story by Darl DeVault, Contributing Editor

Organizers of Saint Ann Retirement Center’s November 12th Holiday Market and Health Fair were pleased with the crowd of 1,500 shoppers and visitors seeking Christmas items and info from the 90 event vendors.

Campus Director Joyce Clark was especially appreciative of the volunteer residents and staff who made the first-after-Covid combination event the largest ever staged in the 20-year history of the northwest Oklahoma City independent and assisted living community.

“The event was an immense success, and we appreciate everyone involved,” Clark said in an interview. “Dozens of resident volunteers and employees hosted the considerable

crowd, welcoming them into their home. The day was fun. It easily demonstrated the camaraderie and rapport among Saint Ann residents and employees.”

Archbishop Emeritus of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City Eusebius J. Beltran, 88, was one of the VIPs at the Holiday Market. His vision of a senior living ministry motivated the archdiocese to develop the 170-unit assisted and independent living home 20 years ago.

Clark said people clearly love him as much as he loves them and Saint Ann. “Archbishop Beltran came to support us for a while. He soon became a highlight of the day. A line kept forming of people who wanted to visit with him. Many



Kimberly Haddock (Saint Ann Life Enrichment Director) and Ms. Senior Oklahoma America 2022 Roxanne Parks.

thanked the retired archbishop for the ways he blessed their lives.”

The Eagle 96.9 radio station broadcasted live right before the

Holiday Market started. Radio host and Director of the Villages OKC,

Continued next page



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Archbishop Emeritus Beltran (seated) was one of the guest speakers at the live radio broadcast from Saint Ann Assisted & Independent Living’s Holiday Market. He was joined by Kimberly Haddock (Life Enrichment Director), LaTrona Fulbright (Assisted Living Administrator), Richard Amend (Mission & Community Relations Director), Joyce Clark (Campus Director), and Marilyn Olson (Executive Director of VillagesOKC).

MARKET

Continued from Page 24

Marilyn Olsen, was joined by Clark. Management members Latrona Fulbright, Kimberly Haddock, and Richard W. Amend also spoke on the radio in support of the event. Organizers said the radio show added a spark to the event as another highlight of the fun-filled day.

This year’s retail and health exhibitor lineup featured the largest number of vendors ever. Showcases of crafts, food, senior services, healthcare, art, and vintage items offered an extensive array of goodies. Food vendors provided tasty treats. “One of the rewarding outcomes of the Holiday Market was support and promotion of small businesses and entrepreneurs across the region,” Clark said.

An example of a vendor selling out fast was the Sweet Stingers Honey & Apiary, selling jars of honey and 100 percent beeswax candles, lip balm, hand lotion bars, pollen and more. They were set up in the south wing just left of the main doors and saw so much traffic and sales that they were soon sold out of their large selection. They spent the rest of the day taking 100 percent beeswax candle orders for free statewide delivery.

“Our hard-working dining services staff made more than 300 lunches for residents and exhibitors,” Clark said. “Chef Lori Williams and our food service professionals ensured beverages and snacks were always at hand for



Carrie Fagan, resident of Saint Ann Independent Living, was a door prize winner at the home’s Holiday Market.

vendors. We appreciated exhibitors commenting on the great food and service. But, to be honest, that level of hospitality is just the way we roll.”

The neighbor next door, Zion Lutheran Church, provided overflow parking. Two shuttles circled to make sure people quickly got back and forth.

With 90 booths of such diverse items, there was something for everyone. “I was particularly awed by many of the handmade linens, food, barn quilts, clothes, jewelry, wood crafts, and engravings offered,” Clark said. “We plan to do this again next year.”



Crystal Self, owner of Right At Home In Home Care & Assistance, sold beautiful handmade items at her booth.

“It was a little like Christmas as the door prize winners from the Holiday Market were announced,” Clark said. “Vendors were very generous in donating those items and they blessed many people.”

Saint Ann Assisted and Independent Living is a ministry of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. People of all faiths are welcome and enjoy the home’s active lifestyle and caring atmosphere.



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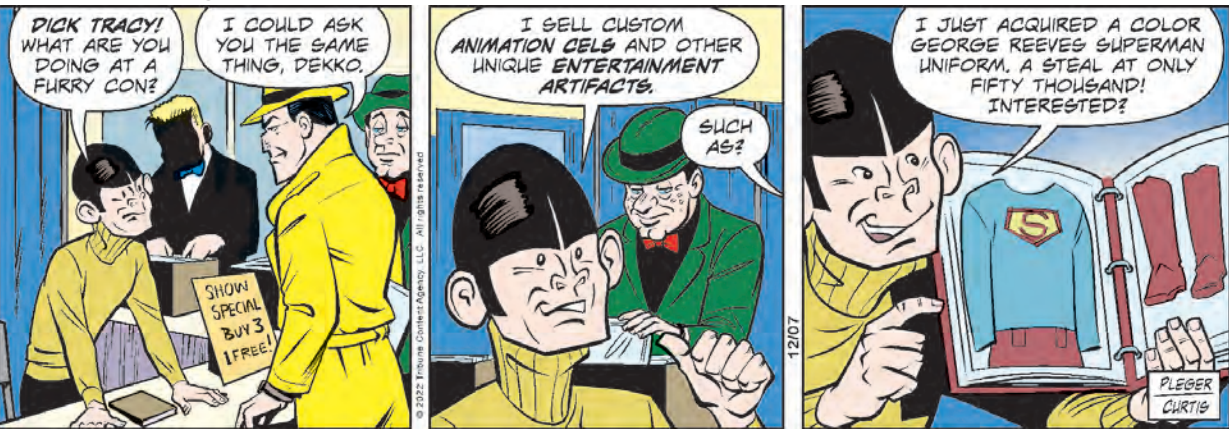


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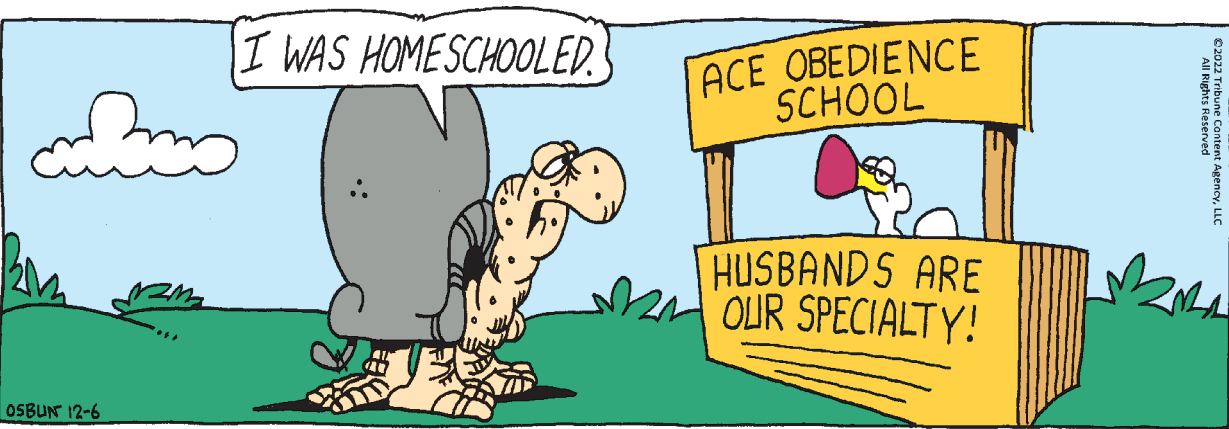




Dick Tracy



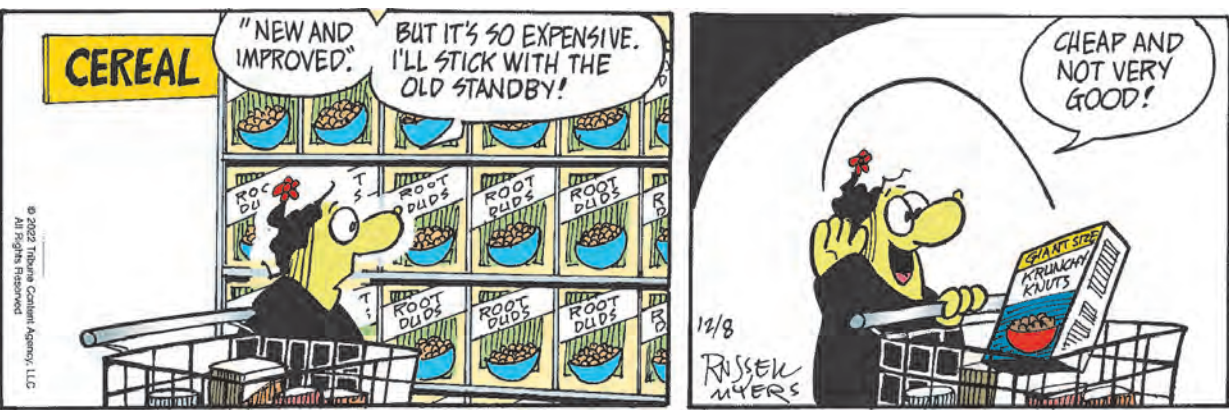
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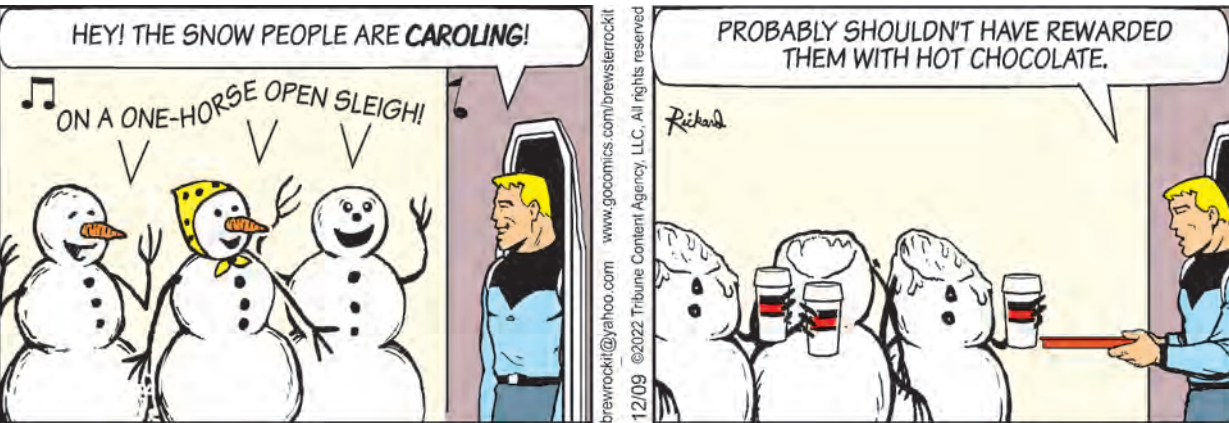
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Maybe a broken reputation can be repaired, but the world will forever be watching the spot where the crack was.

**MINION ALLEY - It's good to be a Minion**

My boss told me to Have a good day... so I went home



# I refuse to be that friendly, old, naked locker room guy

by Greg Schwem

I saw him approaching the day after Thanksgiving, the Friday that sends even the most passive “athletes” scurrying to the gym, convinced that one 30-minute session on the Stairmaster will melt away the sweet potatoes and pumpkin pie they gorged upon the previous afternoon.

During my holiday meal, I gave thanks for good health. The next morning I was thankful for clothes, because I was wearing some. Not so for him.

He had just exited the shower and was all pink and naked. Seeing that I had just stepped off a scale (I also gave thanks for only gaining 2 pounds) he pointed at the number and then at me. My eyes stayed transfixed on his because I had no interest in looking elsewhere.

“You sure you want to do that the day after the holiday?” he asked, before emitting a wry chuckle.

“Yeah, probably not the best timing,” I replied.

And with that, he retreated to his locker and began to dress. But he’d made his presence known.

Every male locker room — even those in clubs that cost thousands to join, reek of body butter and hire attendants to pick up fluffy, terry cloth towels haphazardly tossed about by members — has one. He is that friendly guy who will start locker room conversations with fellow inhabitants, be they no-necked muscle heads, triathletes in training, Pickleball beginners or massage enthusiasts.

He will also do it without wearing any clothes.

He is usually in his late 60s or older. No need to describe any other characteristics. Maybe he’s a lonely divorcee or widower. Maybe he spent a career as a traveling salesman and has a flair for conversation and entertaining icebreaker statements. None of that is relevant; I only care that he clothes himself. Quickly.

I have never been in a female locker room, so I have no idea if women are comfortable chatting with their compatriots while bare breasted or in other stages of nakedness. My wife insists every woman is always wearing, at the “bare” minimum, a towel. Fantasies aside, I applaud their modesty.

Younger men, I have noticed, well not noticed, observed, glanced at, uh forget it. Younger men seem to be more inclined to cover their private areas in locker rooms. Sexagenarians and above need to get that memo soon. And, because I recently turned 60, I need to read it as well.

You see, I briefly became a friendly old naked guy.

It didn’t happen by choice, but it still happened. Shower completed, I was headed to my locker when I noticed a health club regular, a disabled man confined to a wheelchair but still ripped to the core, attempting to pick up a training glove he had dropped. I ran over to help and suddenly found myself quizzing him. I asked about his disability; he revealed he lost the use of one leg in a factory explosion. I complimented him on his tenacity in the weight room. I asked his age. He was also 60, which explains why he was only too happy to converse.

I wished him well, retreated to my locker and only then realized the cardinal rule I had just broken. I’m sure younger men in the locker room were silently mouthing, “Dude, cover that up.”

I have always been an extrovert and pride myself on being able to easily talk to people of all sexes, age groups and races. It’s a trait I was robbed of during the pandemic, and one I was only too happy to jumpstart after lockdown eased. People, and their stories, fuel my writing and my standup comedy routines. Don’t worry; a bit about talking to a disabled gym rat while naked will not be included in my Netflix special, should I ever be offered one. But I left my club feeling more inspired than if I had just dressed in



Greg Schwem is a corporate stand-up comedian and author.



Some guys might need extra towels to cover their faces in the locker room.

silence.

Now I must remind myself that inspiration can come while fully clothed. In fact, I’m headed to the gym shortly. My bag contains the essentials: combination lock, AirPods and toiletries.

Also, for the first time ever, a full length robe.

I had better leave some space on my arm for a crudite tattoo.

(Greg Schwem is a corporate stand-up comedian and author of two books: “Text Me If You’re Breathing: Observations, Frustrations and Life Lessons From a Low-Tech Dad” and the recently released “The Road To Success Goes Through the Salad Bar: A Pile of BS From a Corporate Comedian,” available at Amazon.com. Visit Greg on the web at [www.gregschwem.com](http://www.gregschwem.com).)

You’ve enjoyed reading, and laughing at, Greg Schwem’s monthly humor columns in Senior Living News. But did you know Greg is also a nationally touring stand-up comedian? And he loves to make audiences laugh about the joys, and frustrations, of growing older. Watch the clip and, if you’d like Greg to perform at your senior center or senior event, contact him through his website at [www.gregschwem.com](http://www.gregschwem.com).)

## STRANGE BUT TRUE SO THEY SAY...

**BBT** Queen Elizabeth II had a stand-in to make sure the sun would’nt get in her eyes

*Ella Slack has a similar height and stature to the queen, so before big events, she’ll do a rehearsal to avoid any royal pains like the sun getting in Her Majesty’s eyes. Slack has been doing it for three decades but isn’t allowed to sit in the throne, so she has to squat above it.*

**BBT** Queen Elizabeth II never went to school.

*Princess Elizabeth never attended a public or private*

*school, and she didn’t have a college degree—in fact, one of the facts you didn’t know about the British royal family is that Elizabeth’s grandson, Prince William, was the first royal not to start their education at the palace.*

**BBT** Queen Elizabeth II paid for her wedding dress with coupons

*Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip tied the knot in 1947 when the United Kingdom was recovering from World War II and still had rationing measures in place—not even the future queen was exempt. Elizabeth dressed in a gown that had to be purchased with war-time rationing coupons.*



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# Navigating cancer care: Stephenson Cancer Center leads the way

Story and photo by James Coburn, Staff Writer

When Patricia Powell's mother died of metastatic breast cancer, she turned her experience into a way to give back to the cancer community.

"So many people touched my family in my mother's journey, and this is my way of giving back to others," said Powell, RN, a radiation department nurse navigator at OU Health Stephenson Cancer Center, located in Oklahoma City.

There may be a lot of confusion for families and their loved one when first diagnosed with cancer. Nurse navigators are there to help ease their journey.

"I have certainly learned from the other navigators in this facility in trying to build this role. I've certainly reached out to them, and they are a fantastic group that all work so well together," she said.

Navigators are behind the scenes a lot. They coordinate the patients' timeline of care, keep the patient up to date with what's happened. They make sure treatments are running on course and imaging is ordered.

"Making sure things don't fall through the cracks, I think is a big part of navigation," she said.

Powell is currently working toward her Master of Science in Nursing Administration and Leadership degree at the University of Oklahoma. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree at West Texas A&M University.

She has served 10 of her 30-year nursing career at Stephenson Cancer Center. She moved to Oklahoma City from Texas, and it has been a long lasting career move.

"I can't imagine leaving the Stephenson Cancer Center at OU Health," Powell said.

Her career includes hospice and postpartum nurse.

"This is my third stint in oncology nursing. I've always come back to it because I have a passion for it," Powell said. "It was my first real job out of school. There is something about oncology patients that just teaches you so much about resilience and so much about life."

She worked in radiation oncology before accepting the role of nurse navigator about a year ago. As nurse navigator she has advocated for patients. At times she has pushed to get people treatment at Stephenson Cancer Center when they couldn't get their treatment elsewhere, she said.

"There's so many things that

people often don't realize goes into a person's journey that's not just their diagnosis," she continued.

Cancer impacts a person's life and finances. She found that many issues cause disparities in getting people the care they need. She has helped others find solutions for lodging and obtaining insurance to allow them to come to Stephenson Cancer Center.

"I've been able to do that for someone — a young girl that lived in Texas who couldn't get treatment where she was at," Powell said. "I've been able to do that for someone who couldn't get treatment in a smaller town around here because they just couldn't provide the treatment that was needed."

It's important to understand that cancer is not necessarily a death sentence. She has seen tremendous advancements in care since serving in a bone marrow transplant unit many years ago. Conditions brought a shorter life expectancy than today's technology provides.

Nursing has enriched her life by getting to know patients, seeing them frequently and seeing their positive outcomes. The nurses have relied on each other to get through the difficult times, especially through COVID, she said.

"When you see the negative outcomes, it bonds you with your coworkers. You really get a camaraderie. They become almost like family to you," Powell explained.

The group of nurses she works with do a lot of things outside of work together. They help each other through personal struggles. There is something special about working at Stephenson Cancer Center, she said.

"Research is a big part of what we do," Powell said. The center has been a national leader in the number of people involved in research.

"Our physicians, our nurses, our research team — everybody is so dedicated to helping patients understand the research study, getting them the choice about it, answering questions and helping them through that study," she said.

Powell thinks about how much research has evolved since her mother's experience with breast cancer.

"We wouldn't have that without the research," she said. "It's a privilege to be part of a system that focuses on that, for the people of Oklahoma and nationally."



Patricia Powell, RN, helps cancer patients navigate their journey of care.

Powell has learned a lot about life from being a nurse, she said. She has engaged with people of different cultural backgrounds.

"It has given me a whole new

perspective on things, and certainly working with the cancer patients and enjoying their humor and resilience and everything that they do for this journey is such an honor," she said.

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Nerve Renewal  
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