

# Excellence

SPRING 2005

FOR ORAL ROBERTS UNIVERSITY ALUMNI AND FRIENDS



## ***Finding Her Voice***

Lauren Kitchens has made a home (and a career) for herself in sunny California. See page 5.

**Also inside:** Homecoming • Alumnus of the Year awards • Hall of Fame • Women's basketball missions in Mexico

## ORU at Forty: Getting Older and Better

**A**fter forty years and thousands of alumni released into the world, this year of 2005 brings ORU to a milestone. In human terms, forty years is about half a lifetime. In terms of the number of years other colleges and universities have been in existence, ORU might be considered a pre-teen. And in comparison to eternity? ORU has existed for mere moments. The question is, what have we as ORU alumni accomplished in fulfilling God's plan for mankind?

In 1965, ORU students dreamed of "going into every man's world," reaching people from all walks of life for Christ. Some dreamed of serving on a foreign mission field. Some dreamed of serving in the dental field. Some dreamed of serving on the athletics field. In 1975, when I and my fellow classmates first came to ORU, we were also drawn to the same "educating the whole person" principle and dreamed of reaching the world for Christ in our professions. The same can be said for the classes of 1985, 1995, 2005, and all those in between.

The founding principles of ORU remain the cornerstone of our university.

Over the years, ORU alumni have written bestselling books, produced great movies, brought joy to many in athletic competition, cared for thousands of ailing people, started and contributed to the growth of many businesses, taught with excellence, brought up their children to hear God's voice, cured people with a variety of illnesses, and preached God's Word to millions. There are many stories of how ORU alumni have impacted the lives of people in the manner that Christ modeled for us. The torch still brings God's light to the world.

This year's Homecoming theme was "Shades of Yesterday." Take time to reminisce. What were your dreams when you came to ORU, and how have you made some of those dreams come true? What dreams were stirred up inside you when you were on campus? And have they come true?

With all the advances in communication (Internet, e-mail), ORU and its

alumni have even more advantages when it comes to going into every man's world. Through the support of alumni, friends, corporations, foundations, etc., we can do a better job of getting future alumni ready to make an even greater impact than we ever dreamed of back in 1965. Let's continue our dream to the very ends of the earth, where God's voice needs to be heard.

*We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints — the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth. (Colossians 1:3-6)*

*E. Rhae Buckley*

E. Rhae Buckley 80  
Vice Chairman, Alumni Board of Directors



*Alumni truly have gone into every man's world. Here, 2005 Alumnus of the Year Keith Wheeler has two walking companions during his trip to Mongolia.*

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# Excellence

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**Excellence Magazine  
Mission Statement**  
*The purpose of Excellence magazine is  
threefold: to make alumni aware of what  
their former classmates are doing, to tell  
alumni what is happening today on the  
Oral Roberts University campus, and to  
share the good news about alumni  
accomplishments with faculty, staff, and  
friends of the University. Excellence  
magazine is proof positive that the  
mission of ORU is being carried out on  
a daily basis all over the globe —  
"in every person's world."*

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## Meet Us at the Top

**I** have a great deal of hope for 2005. With everything that is going on around us, it is clear to me that this year will be remembered as a milestone. Not just because ORU turns forty this fall, but because I sincerely believe this is the year that people who love and serve the Lord are going to put aside their points of contention, and we're going to work together to get this nation back on track. There are so many new things happening right now that I believe are responses to the prayers of many people crying out for good leadership and revival in the land.

Not too long ago in chapel, I told the students about the prophecy Kenneth Hagin, Sr., gave to us just before he passed on. He declared that 2005 would be a year of judgment, but that if we were committed to judging ourselves (and not each other), we would enjoy an unimaginably amazing and prosperous year. I believe that if we, like King David, daily ask the Holy Spirit to search our hearts and cleanse us, we will become the leaders God has called us to be.

We're really focusing on leadership here at ORU this year. As of last fall, the Leadership Academy, led by Dr. Connie Sjoberg, is up and running full speed, and I want to remind you that it was the Alumni Foundation that helped get it off the ground with a \$3,000 gift drawn from alumni contributions. Our third student-led Ignite conference served as the grand finale for Leadership Week, and was another huge success. The students assembled a fantastic lineup of speakers, including ORU alumni Dr. Tim Elmore, Lynette Troyer, Tim Redmond, and John Mason.

Students are also getting involved in leadership and role-modeling all over Tulsa through our highly successful

service learning program. The goal of the program is to get students involved in community work that is related to their majors, and to help undecided students explore areas where they might discover their passion and special purpose in life. We've had students teaching Art, French, History, and Government and working with a variety of ages and socioeconomic back-

made up of faculty and staff who have been appointed as coordinators of the self-study portion, which essentially makes the case for ORU's continuing accreditation. *Are we doing what we said we would? Are we growing as a university?* We're doing our research this year.

I am so grateful to have such generous alumni who are helping us with our



*President and Mrs. Roberts lead the cheers at the men's Homecoming game.*

grounds. Overall, the students participating are stretching themselves and maturing as they apply their talents and the knowledge they learn in class. Our School of Business recently received a \$10,000 grant from the Bank of Oklahoma that will open up a special opportunity for students to serve alongside Resonance, a Tulsa organization that helps those who are struggling — mainly at-risk women — readjust to life after a traumatic or life-altering experience.

Yet another way we're taking the lead and "judging ourselves" this year is in our preparations for the 2007 accreditation site team visit. We already have a steering committee

Leadership Academy, and doing specific things such as buying computers for the School of Business. All of your efforts on ORU's behalf are keeping us in a position where we can continue to attract top-quality students who will go out from this place and prove that ORU is doing exactly what it has been doing since the fall of 1965: preparing godly leaders who will turn the world upside-down . . . in a good way!

*Richard Roberts*

Richard L. Roberts  
President and CEO

# Rise and Shine

*Lauren Kitchens has your wakeup call.*

*By Debbie Titus '77 George*

On the nightstand, there's a battery-powered alarm clock (can't trust California electricity!), and the batteries get changed frequently — just in case. The clock is set to go off at 3 a.m., but Lauren Kitchens is usually awake before the buzzer sounds. After all, when you're the morning show co-host on one of the hottest Christian radio stations in the country, you're not allowed to oversleep.

**Sleep might be hard to come by** for the Higher Powered Kitchens, but it's a small sacrifice, really. You do what you have to do to make the most of virtually every hour of the day.

Heredity could explain Kitchens' boundless energy. Her parents started doing high-impact aerobics long before the craze caught on. This daughter of the South (born in Tupelo, Miss.) has gone for the burn in college (two degrees from ORU, in communications [88] and music [89], and a master's from Regent University in television), beauty pageants (runner-up to Miss Mississippi America, Miss Mississippi USA, top ten Miss Virginia and talent winner — which paid

for grad school), and television (Family Channel host and news reporter). These days, at *The Fish* in Los Angeles, Kitchens is one-half of a morning team that gets its listeners off to a great start each day.

"I wanted to be a soap star for Jesus," Kitchens admitted at lunch one day in late September. "But God had another plan for me — thankfully. My parents' steadfast prayers had a lot to do with that."

Kitchens transferred to ORU her junior year. After two years at a state school with the Greek system, ORU was a revelation. "Everybody had a brother wing, a sister wing, you



*What could be more Politically Incorrect than an ORU grad on this TV show? Kitchens posed with (from left) Carrot Top, host Bill Maher, Jami Gertz, and Tim Matheson.*

sat with them at SAGA, and everybody had a place, and that just warmed my heart, that everybody, no matter how much their daddy made or what they looked like or how athletic they were — it didn't matter. Everybody fit in."

At the other school, Kitchens said, "for the most part, God was not the center of people's lives." But at ORU, "it was ingrained in me to love the Lord so much and lead other people to Him. I knew then my life was really being used for something. And I've walked in that ever since."

Kitchens learned something else at ORU: you don't major in music just because you can sing. She switched to communications her senior year. True to her nature, she worked overtime to graduate on time, taking some courses off campus. Also true to her nature (and to satisfy her mother), she came back to ORU the next fall to do her senior recital and complete her music degree.

There was one memorable moment in music that truly defines Kitchens. "I was taking Dr. (Stanley) George's orchestration class," she said, her eyes dancing with humor. "We had to write a sixty-measure piece for a full orchestra." The kicker? "I had every instrument playing all sixty measures! There was not one rest in the whole entire piece. It sounded like two garbage trucks colliding, over and over. I gave all my music teachers gray hair and wrinkles they didn't originally have!"

Even after Kitchens realized that she belonged in communications, radio was the farthest thing from her mind. She completed her graduate studies by taking a job at

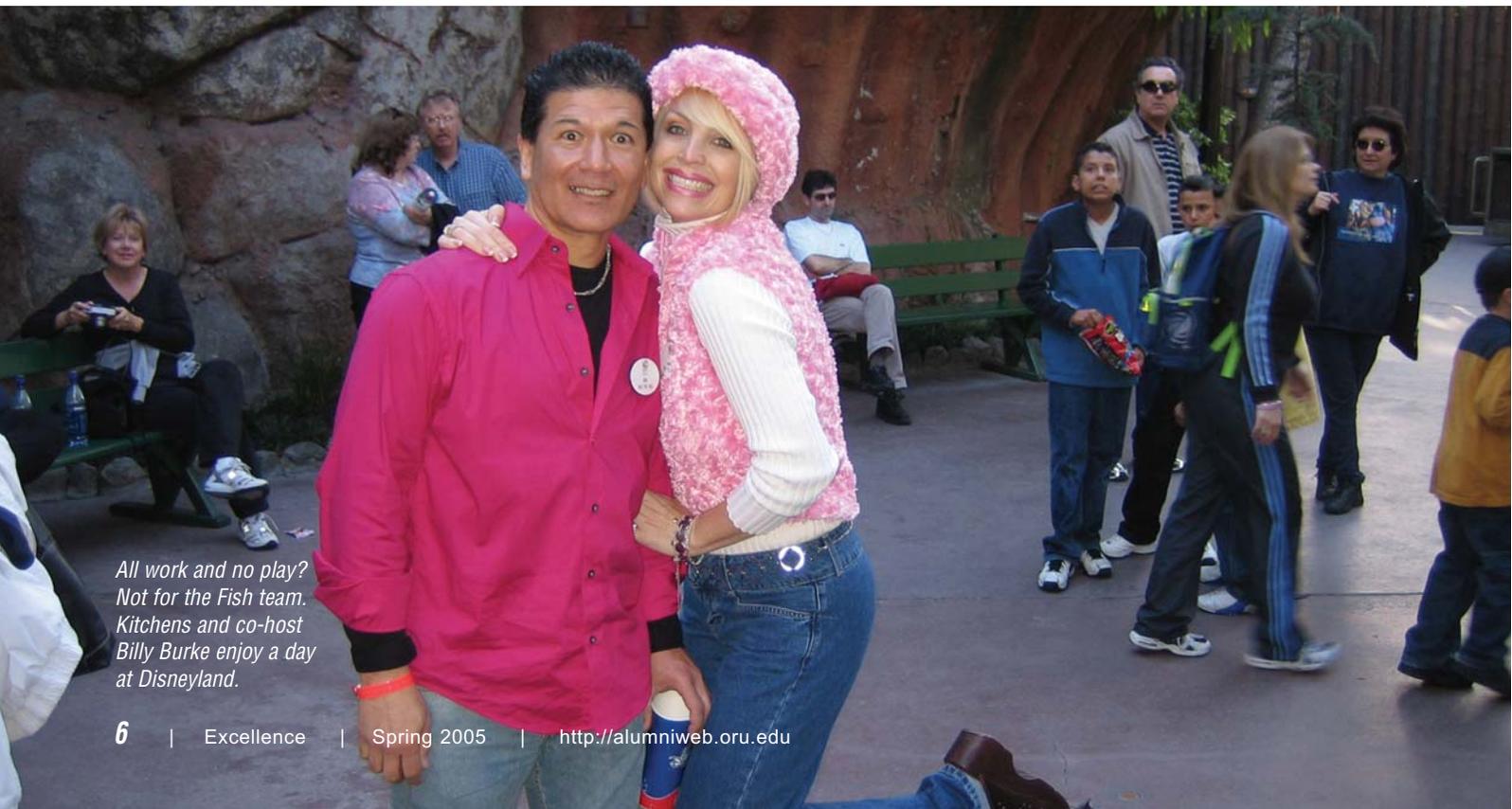
*Entertainment Tonight*. The idea of staying in California was attractive, especially with people at *ET* telling her she should. With a boyfriend in Virginia Beach, however, Kitchens said, "I just didn't know if that was the time for me to be out here. I just kind of let that dream die for a while." It would be ten years before she returned to California.

One day, while working as a TV news reporter in Columbus, Miss., Kitchens was interviewing family friend Donald Wildmon, founder of the American Family Association, when he said she needed to come work for him at one of his radio stations.

"I had never even *seen* a radio board," Kitchens said, but Wildmon won her over. "He said, 'Lauren, you could talk to a brick wall with nobody talking back. You're the perfect radio personality.' Which is true! The only child in me comes out."

After two successful years with American Family Radio in Tupelo, the thought of being a musician became very appealing, so Kitchens pulled up stakes and moved to Nashville. "I thought, well, I'll go there and pursue my music and try to get back into radio," she explained. She was thirty, and in a way, she was starting over.

She couldn't get a radio job, and the competition in music was intense, so she took the only jobs she could find: working in retail and — we are not making this up — blow-drying plastic covers on cassette tapes and CDs at a music store. "I remember just going, oh, dear Lord, what am I doing?" In the very next breath, though, she came back with "I'm telling



All work and no play? Not for the Fish team. Kitchens and co-host Billy Burke enjoy a day at Disneyland.

you, if you're faithful in the small things, He'll give you greater."

"Greater" came unexpectedly a short time later. A TV news anchor for Nashville's Channel 2, who is one of Kitchens' best friends to this day, threw some freelance work her way. The next thing Kitchens knew, she was working for Sony Worldwide, filling in at a radio morning show, and then working through a variety of shifts at a Christian radio network (and teaching college classes full-time).

When Kitchens looks at everything that happened to her in those ten years between *ET* and her return to California, she sees that God was preparing her for the challenges ahead and at the same time, proving that she could trust Him for everything. "He's more concerned about our character than our success," she said, "and it would have been better for me to keep blow-drying wrappers on cassette tapes and be a person of character than be someone who couldn't understand what His faithfulness was and what it meant to really know that I'm not too good to do anything He's called me to do."

Settled in Nashville and doing work she loved, Kitchens decided to take the next logical step: buy a house. Her mom tried to talk her out of it. "What if you get offered a job in Los Angeles?" (Or, as they say in Mississippi, "Los Angeleeze.") "I looked at her like she had grown horns out of her head," Kitchens said with mock horror. "I said, 'What are you talking about?'"

Well, as you might expect, Mother knew best. About four months later, Kitchens got the call to come to *Los Angeleeze* — and please bring your Southern accent.

"Isn't that just God?" Kitchens said. She believes that if she had gone to L.A. ten years before, "all the entertainment industry would have meant too much to me." But when her break finally came, she said, "my priorities were straight and I wanted to be out here for His purposes, not for mine. I couldn't have orchestrated it any more perfectly if I had tried. But I'm not good at orchestrating!"

What she *is* good at is talking to people. She has plenty of time for that at The Fish, the most-listened-to Christian station in L.A. and Orange County. Five days a week, before the sun is up, she prepares for work, bids her menagerie (five dogs, two cats, one lizard) goodbye, and spends four hours on the air with co-host Billy Burke.

"L.A./Orange County can be a very hectic place because of the way of life," Kitchens acknowledges — quite a change for a Mississippi girl. "But to know God's given me the privilege and the honor of being able to just come in and give people a reason to get up, and to be real with them and to just talk to them about my day — we just share together. Because life has got its tough spots, but boy, it's such a gift."

Outside the station, Kitchens has made frequent appearances on *Politically Incorrect*; taught communications classes at Azusa Pacific University; done several national commercials; and worked with her old *ET* buddy, John Tesh, on projects such as a



Friend and mentor John Tesh now has a radio program of his own. On the right is Kitchens' current co-host, Billy Burke.

hosting job on TBN. (Tesh and his wife, Connie Selleca, are two of her closest friends and mentors.) And, she speaks several times a month at women's conferences and retreats. Along with her involvement in two different churches and staying in touch with a long list of ORU friends, Kitchens admits that she also likes to "go sit in my back yard. I can tell I'm getting older because it doesn't take a lot to entertain me or make me happy any more. Just the simple things in life are endearing to me. Like, I can be with a friend I haven't seen in a while or somebody I see every day, and we'll just be visiting and having a good time and I'll stop and think, you know, this is a great moment."

Of course, there are also the valleys, what Kitchens refers to in her talks to women as "ratty, crabby, nasty days." She doesn't tell her audience that they have to snap out of it, but that they shouldn't take everything so personally — shouldn't mirror someone else's bad mood. "That's what I would do a lot," Kitchens said. "If people were sweet, I'd be sweet. If people were a little bit distant, I'd be distant. And I realized that's not what God's called me to do. He's called me to . . . have love, joy, peace, etc."

That fruit comes from something else she learned at ORU: intimacy with Christ. "And that's been building all these years," she said. "As the years go by and I know Him more, that's where it all started."

So, too, did most of her cherished friendships. "Eighty percent of my best friends are from ORU," Kitchens said, and

they share a history she will never forget. "There's still times I get big tears welling up in my eyes because I would do anything to be back there again, because we had SO MUCH FUN! I'd say those were probably the best years of my life, because that was before you had all the pressures of work and situations in life. It just formed who I was . . . it was a big melting pot, but it just made me whole."

The song says *It never rains in southern California*, but Kitchens knows better. She knows there are plenty of people within the sound of her voice who are living under a cloud. "Every morning when I get up, I really know that He has a plan for me that day, to encourage these Fish family members that they can do it one more day, and they can do it with joy and victory," Kitchens said.

The soap star dream might have been a washout, but as Kitchens will tell you, God can change *your* dreams to *His* dreams. "I do see now that I have such an amazing life, and I am so content. And it was completely different than anything I would ever have dreamt or imagined. I never would have picked all these things that I've done. But I'm so content because I know I'm right where He wants me to be."

It's a different kind of south, to be sure, but Kitchens has made it her own.

*In southern California, catch Lauren on Family Friendly KFSH 95.9 FM, Monday-Friday, 5-9 a.m.*



*Kitchens and her pal Joey.*



# SHADES OF YESTERDAY

## ORU HOME COMING 2005

Photos by Kristen Carollo and Rebecca Thompson

### Where Did We Go From Here?

It's not every day that you hear an Oral Roberts University alumnus say — in front of ORU's president, no less — that writing the required Holy Spirit paper “forever ruined” his life.

But the alumnus who said it at the Homecoming Banquet was **Keith Wheeler**, Alumnus of the Year in the category of Distinguished Service to God, so it's probably all right.

“When I wrote that paper,” Wheeler said, “I saw that the purpose of the Holy Spirit was that we might glorify Jesus and that we might be His witness,” which led him to accept God's call on his life and carry a cross all around the world. (See story on page 13.)

Wheeler's story was just one of many that came out as alumni celebrated “Shades of Yesterday . . . Homecoming 2005” on a rainy February weekend. There were many more stories to tell as alumni considered how “Yesterday” — their days at ORU — prepared them for what they're doing now.

Food and fun are always a big part of Homecoming, and this year was no exception. Virtually every school and department hosted an open house, a reception, or a luncheon. Some departments took advantage of this opportunity to meet with alumni face to face and held advisory committee meetings. Biology/chemistry alumni agreed to



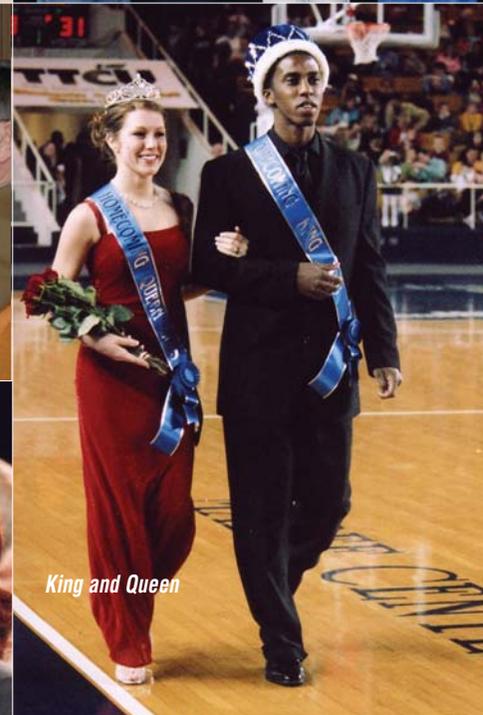
The Peacemakers



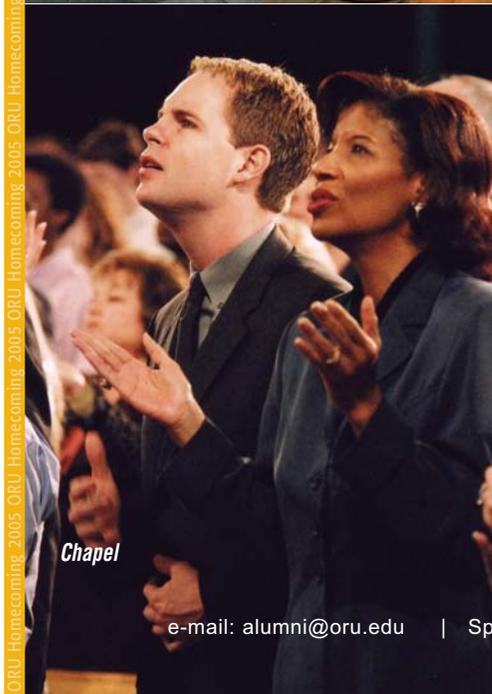
Alumnus of the Year



Theology Lunch



King and Queen



Chapel



## HOMECOMING 2005

help with recruitment of students, and engineering/physics alumni suggested ways to help students find internships and full-time positions after graduation.

Two decades after graduating from ORU's School of Medicine, fifteen M.D.s returned for a reunion banquet, held in the atrium of CityPlex Towers. "The banquet . . . was very moving," said Dr. Clay Powell. "Each classmate had a chance to share briefly their twenty-year journey since graduation. God has been faithful in each of our lives. . . . We all went away encouraged to continue to serve the Lord Jesus and finish strong in the next half of our medical careers."

Yes, it was a sentimental weekend, but there was plenty of huffing and puffing, too, as faculty and staff prevailed over alumni in some hotly contested basketball games at the Aerobics Center. At the Mabee Center that afternoon and evening, there was plenty of yelling and screaming as the Golden Eagles took the wind out of Chicago State's sails. The women won their game, 58-54, and the men made it a clean sweep by rolling to a 65-49 victory.

The one thing alumni learned this weekend, courtesy of students, faculty, and the president, is that ORU's future is brighter than ever.

"ORU is firing on all cylinders," reported **President Richard Roberts** at the banquet. "My hat is off tonight to all the faculty who have had creative, insightful ideas of how to do more for less, how to create better programs and spend less money, so that for the first time in the history of Oral Roberts University we are operating under a balanced budget. And I thank God for it."

Perhaps the greatest encouragement came from the Alumnus of the Year award winners, who were about as diverse a group as you could ever hope to have. **Bob Goodwin**, president and CEO of the Points of Light Foundation, "America's address for volunteering," said that for many, volunteering is "a secular charge. For me it is a spiritual charge, because I think if we can do a better job at helping people to understand who





School of Medicine Reunion



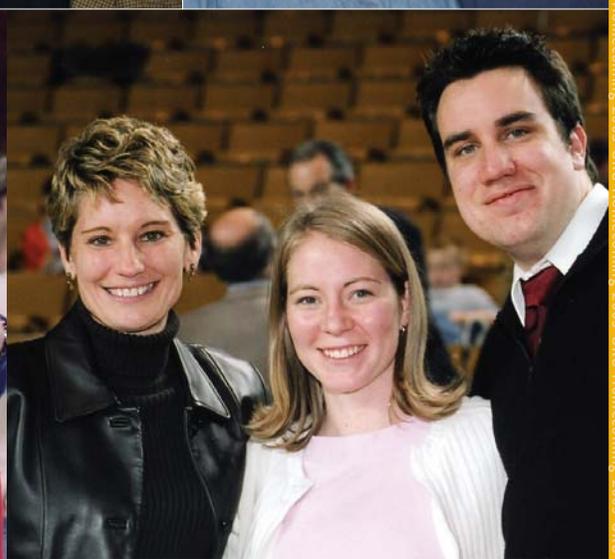
School of Medicine Reunion



School of Medicine Reunion



Alumni vs. Faculty/Staff Basketball



their neighbor is and what the responsibility is to their brother, that it brings them one step closer to being able to fulfill the mandate of Christ in their lives.”

**Carrie Witham**, who coordinated the Wing Backer program for nearly a decade, gave credit where it was due for her award. “I realize that I wouldn’t be receiving this award if it wasn’t for God putting that desire, that passion, and that vision in my heart” to minister to thousands of ORU students, “and then giving me the communication skills, the organization skills, and the patience to do the Wing Backer program . . . I also realize that I wouldn’t be here if it weren’t for the hundreds of alumni that embraced my vision and gave freely of their time, their expertise, and opened their homes” to the students.

Witham also thanked her 13-year-old son, Michael, who spent almost as much time on campus all those years as he did at home. “I was always afraid when his teacher would ask, ‘How many sisters and brothers do you have?’ he’d say, ‘Thirty sisters and thirty brothers,’ because we always had kids at our house,” Witham laughed.

Keith Wheeler said he felt awkward in receiving his award, “because one day we give all these things back to our Master anyway, every crown.” He had everyone simultaneously laughing and crying when he described how he came to be a cross-bearer. “I think when God looked at me, He saw that I wasn’t real smart, wasn’t real good-looking, can’t preach very well, definitely can’t sing. But I loved Him and I loved people. And He said, ‘Well, he can’t do much, but he loves Me and he loves people, and he can carry wood.’”

What should alumni take away from Homecoming? The memory of what we learned at ORU about hearing God’s voice, the commitment we made as students to serve and obey Him, and the amazing love we felt when we first met Jesus.

May it be more than just a memory . . .





# Pilgrim's Progress

By Lacey L. Clay

Long before *Survivor* hit the airwaves, **Keith Wheeler 88 MDiv** was already winning the game. Surviving extreme climates, eating strange food, and dealing with wildlife are just a few things Wheeler has done during his nineteen-year journey carrying a twelve-foot wooden cross and proclaiming God's message of love and peace to the world.

Wheeler's survivor challenge began at the Eternal Flame on ORU's campus in 1985. From there, the playing field broadened to the entire world. His journey has stretched over 15,500 miles in more than 150 countries on all seven continents.

Wheeler's first challenge was obedience. He chose to obey God's call to carry a cross. He felt God say, "For you, the cross is never to be a symbol of protest, but a message of reconciliation; I want you to be a 'pilgrim of peace' and a messenger of My love." The prize: spreading the love of Jesus, proclaiming the Prince of Peace in the midst of wars, and seeing the world.

Many of Wheeler's steps have been in very remote places that most people have never heard of. He took the cross to the islands of Vanuatu before *Survivor* made it a household word. After Wheeler shared Jesus with a native tribe, the chief gave Wheeler his staff as a parting gift. The 86-year-old Chief Kikwit held out his tribal staff that represented his authority



Keith and Cherie (Dawson-87) Wheeler attended this year's President's Banquet, where Keith received the Alumnus of the Year award for Distinguished Service to God . . . and promptly gave it to his wife.

## KEITH WHEELER 88 MDiv



1

1 Wheeler looked in on the penguins while he was in Antarctica. 2 During a walk in Poland, a woman took up the cross. 3 Wheeler preached to a crowd in Papua New Guinea. 4 Wheeler shared his heart in Tibet. 5 Wheeler survived the sand and sun in the Kalahari Desert in Namibia. 6 A group of children posed with the cross in Vanuatu.



2



3



4



6



5



and said, "I want you to have our stick. Thank you for bringing God's stick (the cross) to us." Wheeler replied, "But sir, I can't leave my cross!" Chief Kikwit patted his chest and quickly answered, "You already have; you left your stick in our hearts."

If you head north from Norway, you will find Svalbard Island. Wheeler survived the cold and the polar bears to take the love of Jesus to that northern land. Only a few weeks before Wheeler arrived, a tourist was attacked by a polar bear, and teachers, watching children at recess, were required to carry high-powered rifles to protect them from the bears. Svalbard is a wild, remote place, but Wheeler is going "where My light is seen dim and My voice is heard small."

Wheeler has not only won survivor challenges, but he has also seen other people win them. In Costa Rica, he witnessed a man win freedom and a changed life.

The man insisted on carrying Wheeler's cross and wanted to do penance by scraping his bare feet and knees against rocks and sharp objects on the jungle road. The entire time, the man was confessing all the bad things he had done in his life and saying, "I'm a bad man. I'm a bad man." Wheeler told him, "You don't have to shed your blood; Jesus already did. You don't have to suffer; Jesus already suffered for you. You don't have to make a sacrifice; Jesus' sacrifice is sufficient."

The man walked seven and a half miles with Wheeler and at the top of a hill, the realization set in. The man set the cross down and said, "You mean I didn't have to walk all this

way? Jesus already walked from heaven? I don't have to shed my blood? I don't have to suffer? I don't have to sacrifice? Jesus did it all for me?"

Wheeler said the man didn't pray with him, but he "never saw a man get saved so well." He said, "The guy leaped up, clicked his heels together, and yelled, 'Yieeee hooooo!' The last I saw him, his hands were up and he was running down the road, yelling, 'I'm free! I'm free! I'm free!'"

Yes, from polar bears and penguins to sand and extreme heat, Wheeler has won survivor challenges across the globe. Maybe it's not so much *survivor* challenges, though, as it is *Savior* challenges.

Of all the Savior challenges, the greatest is love. Wheeler's desire is for people to fall more in love with Jesus and follow Him wherever He leads.

Wheeler has so many beautiful stories of kindness, forgiveness, and human goodness. He said, "It's not always the big stories as it is the individual stories, because this glorious pilgrimage has been made up of individual steps and individual faces and individual places along the way."

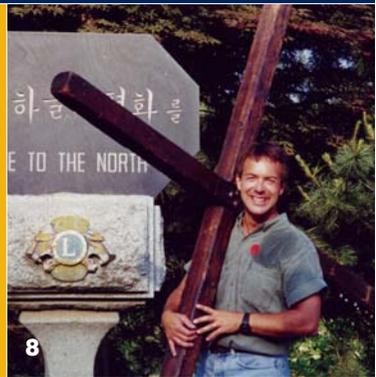
Everything in this pilgrim's entire walk has been about God, and comes from a desire to simply be the "overflow of a life lived in love with Jesus."

Love is what it's all about. Love for other people. Love for his Savior. Wheeler said, "I live in a great big world that's been made small by love." Wheeler meets his Savior's challenge by making sure each step is filled with love.



7

7 Wheeler enjoyed his walk with a group of boys in Papua New Guinea. 8 Wheeler stopped for a moment at a sign in South Korea. 9 Wheeler was a guest in one of Saddam Hussein's palaces in Iraq.



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# Singing a New Song

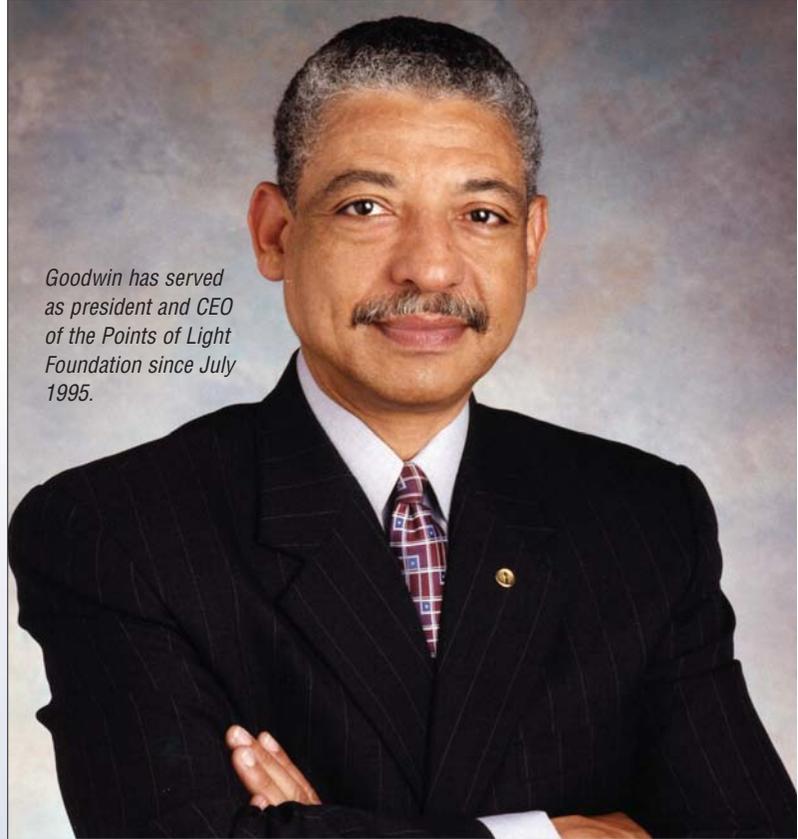
By Debbie Titus '77 George

**I**t doesn't require much of a stretch to imagine **Bob Goodwin '70**, Alumnus of the Year for Distinguished Service to the Community, as the president and CEO of the Points of Light Foundation.

As an ORU student, Goodwin made a point of getting involved in activities that had a positive impact on other people's lives, from student government and music groups (World Action Singers, the Collegians, and We'll Tell the World Singers) to yearbook and a World Action team that went to Indonesia. Today, he's simply doing more of the same, albeit on an international scale (and without musical accompaniment).

His goal at ORU, he said, centered on "the ministry of helping to mend broken communities, bringing people together. This [job] is a position where God has planted me. I'm fortunate that my vocation and avocation have powerfully collided."

Goodwin says "divine providence" took him to Washington, D.C., in the early 1990s. After a stint at Prairie View A&M, he was serving as the assistant deputy chancellor for external affairs at Texas A&M University. "I hadn't been in College Station long," he said, "when a friend in Republican politics encouraged me to get involved with Presidential election efforts of George Bush." Goodwin, who remains a registered Democrat, then got involved in the National Steering Committee of Democrats for Bush (the first President Bush).



*Goodwin has served as president and CEO of the Points of Light Foundation since July 1995.*

## BOB GOODWIN '70

Eight months later, Goodwin was offered the job of director of the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Then he began hearing about Points of Light. "Something in my heart said, 'That is what you want to do.'"

"You know how God will close a door and open a window?" Goodwin asked. "For me, that meant being fired from the White House Initiative job. I was fired on Thursday (for going directly to President Bush for his support on a case being argued before the Supreme Court) and hired on Saturday by Points of Light."

The foundation grew out of the first President Bush's 1991 State of the Union address ("We can find meaning and reward by serving some purpose higher than ourselves, — a shining purpose, the illumination of a thousand points of light") and has become known as "America's address for volunteering," providing resources and training to millions of volunteers.

Goodwin asserts that our communities' problems can be traced to "social isolation. We're estranged from one another."

People are "cut off from the social safety net and benefits derived from positive [interaction with others]." Volunteering, he believes, can bridge the chasm of isolation.

At ORU, Goodwin was given, in his words, "such a wonderful background, beginning with the emphasis on the Whole Man." Communication and leadership skills, the mandate to go into every man's world, seed-faith — "all those had a profound impact on who I am as a person."

"My philosophy," he continued, "has always been, leadership is being, not doing. It's a consequence of who I am as a person, not just a set of skills. My experience at ORU honed those values."

Those values, of course, began at home with two attentive parents. And although Ed Goodwin, Sr., has passed on, 101-year-old Jeanne Goodwin (102 this July!) is still on the job, remaining who Goodwin calls "the most influential person in my life."



# Getting the Job Done

By Debbie Titus '77 George

In the years when the Wing Backer program was going full steam, you always knew where to find **Carrie Witham '80** during the summer months: glued to the telephone, working day and night to recruit alumni to adopt a dorm wing full of ORU students.

During the school year? Up at the crack of dawn to deliver holiday-themed goodies to the dorms for her wings, playing flag football, hosting Super Bowl parties, doling out career advice, and sending encouraging notes to her students.

For Witham, it wasn't a chore; "It was a passion." And winning an Alumnus of the Year award for coordinating the program for ten long years? "I'm terribly humbled," Witham said. "I don't see it as that big of a deal."

A bit of history here. Witham came to ORU from Racine, Wisc., as a 16-year-old and graduated at 20 with a degree in elementary education. She skipped the ninth grade. That's pretty amazing, considering that she attended three different schools during first grade, and fell so far behind that her third teacher, Mrs. Bergeman, was sure the young Carrie would never catch up.

"I still remember the day when I earned the spot of 'Engine' in the reading circle," Witham said "I had been the 'Caboose' for *months*." It was Mrs. Bergeman who changed

With a master's in education, Witham teaches third grade at Arrow Springs Elementary School in Broken Arrow, has another job at a gym, is raising a teenaged son, manages a home, jogs every day, and runs the recycling program at her school.

"I know I can multitask and handle just about anything," Witham said. (That must explain how she finds time for



Witham with son Michael (right) and nephew Jason Jeffries.

## CARRIE WITHAM '80

Witham's life. "I am who I am because of her," she said, adding that she is still in touch with this special teacher.

When former alumni director Lynette Troyer asked Witham to join the Wing Backer program back in 1990, Witham says that she "stumbled through the first year," and then was asked to help with phone calls to recruit more alumni. "Each year I did more and more," she said, "until it was all mine. I really didn't mean to get involved. It got huge."

In making the calls, Witham could talk from her own experience as a 16-year-old freshman. "If only that program (Wing Backers) had been around then," she said. Of course, it's hard to figure out when she would have found time to spend with alumni back then; she was taking a full course load every semester, playing intramurals, working forty hours a weekend at laymen's seminars, and holding down several part-time jobs. Kind of like what she's doing now.

manicures!) "I credit that to ORU." And still, she wants to do more.

"I wish I could take the whole neighborhood a tray of cookies," she said. "That's probably why I loved Wing Backers — I could do, do, do, do, do."

In Witham's opinion, ORU alumni should be models for the current students and "should have a vested interest in the university — see that it succeeds and has the best of everything." She herself has no regrets about her involvement in Wing Backers. "How could you? I like to think that everything in my life has a reason and a purpose and something good's going to come out of it." Her only hope is that the students she ministered to "remember that there was someone that loved them very much."

It's also likely that they'll remember not to throw trash on the ground. "I'm black and white," she warned. "If you litter, I'm calling the hotline."

## 'A Special Place': McKissack Room Dedicated

**D**uring Homecoming weekend, the School of Education faculty and staff came together to dedicate a special new room in memory of a beloved friend and colleague.

The School of Education McKissack Conference and Reading Room, located within the school's office suite on the fifth floor of the Graduate Center, is a true reflection of the man who was known for his interest — and expertise — in subjects such as Christian school education philosophy and history, Christian counseling, American heritage and history, and brain research and development.

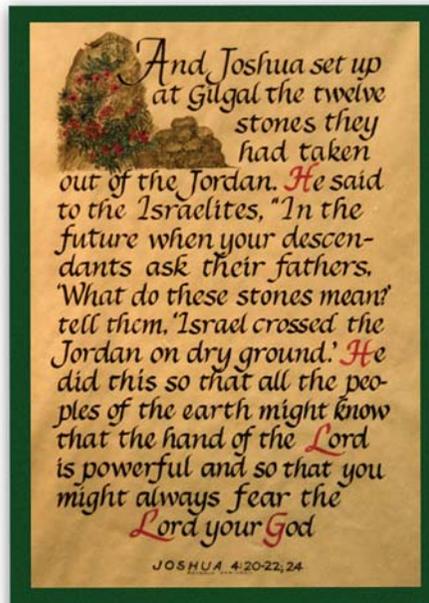
Once the library staff has finished its cataloging task, more than 1,300 of Dr. Byron McKissack's books and videos will be available to students and faculty members for research and reference purposes. There is also a DVD player/VCR and DVDs and videos that faculty members can use for preview purposes.

What makes this room unique is a display of photos featuring McKissack — both with students and in his adored Africa, Winnie the Pooh and Tigger items (he was known for wearing Pooh and Tigger ties), his scrapbook, and other personal artifacts.

In addition to his teaching duties, McKissack served as director of the School of Education Summer Institute and coordinator for Christian School degree programs. He was instrumental in the creation and development of the Doctorate in Education Leadership degree program.

"This [room] is a vast resource for us, and I think Byron would love it because he always wanted a special place for us to meet," Dr. David Hand, dean of the School of Education, shared at the ceremony.

Before the ribbon was officially cut, Dr. Hand and associate dean Dr. Kim Boyd, along with the school's dean emeritus, Dr. Clarence Oliver, Jr., and Academic Affairs executive vice president



Dr. Ralph Fagin, shared their favorite memories of their friend.

**Dr. Fagin:** "He was really a guy who 'chose life.' He loved to learn. If he ever talked about his brain research, he was just so enthused, so excited. He took great pleasure in how we were 'fearfully made.' I believe he's still alive because he served the 'God of the living.' He was engaged to the max. Looking down at all this, I'm sure he's smiling. He was always excited about learning."

**Dr. Boyd:** "It was such a blessing to know this wonderful man of God. He left me with so many life lessons to ponder and grow from. He was certainly a mentor to me."

**Dr. Oliver:** "My best memory of him was watching him design the doctoral program on a napkin at Rib Crib. It was a wonderfully written napkin; it's too bad we cannot find that napkin now. I appreciate his life so much."



*Clockwise from upper right: Dear friends of the late Dr. McKissack (L to R: Drs. Fagin, Boyd, Oliver, and Hand) led the ceremonial ribbon-cutting to officially open his special room. • This room will soon hold more than 1,300 books and videos that Dr. McKissack wanted the university family to enjoy. • This picture, which also belonged to Dr. McKissack, hangs in the new room to inspire the next generation of passionate learners.*

**Dr. Hand:** "We can all remember his stare — how he'd talk to you for so long and then just stare at you and you'd feel guilty during that silent pause. When I think of him today, I'm reminded of the story of Elisha staying with and ministering to the woman and her husband. She says, 'A holy man of God has passed by us, let us make a room for him' (2 Kings 4:9). Dr. McKissack, a man of God, has passed through our lives and now we dedicate this room in his name."

**Four Athletes Enter Hall in January 29 Ceremony** • Ask an ORU Athletics Hall of Fame inductee for his or her most vivid memory of ORU and you'll get lots of different responses. Juliana Moser remembers the volleyball coach at the 1997 NCAA Regionals who was unimpressed with the ORU team and "was planning to walk all over us." (ORU, of course, won.) Arnold Dugger says his best moment as an ORU athlete was "the day I stepped on campus." Keith Lockhart was "a fish out of water," he said, until he got saved. And Joe Rassetz remembers making friends — from various sports, not just golf — and keeping those friendships going for all these years (including one with "Bionic Bill" Glasson, the oft-injured PGA Tour perennial). What we remember best about these athletes is the way they dazzled us with their skills in four very different sports.

## Whole in One

A golfer from California coming to Oklahoma to play golf might sound crazy, but for All-American **Joe Rassetz**, the man with the million-dollar smile, it was a smart move.

"It's easy to go to school in California and play in nice weather," Rassetz said during a telephone interview from his home in Bucks County, Pa. "The hard adjustment is to go somewhere else and have to acclimate yourself and adjust to different conditions. I knew that I wanted to play professional golf and I knew that was really an important requirement for that."

Rassetz was a preteen when his father introduced him to the game. As a senior at Turlock High School, he won the California state high school championship.

With his skills, Rassetz had "a lot of opportunities" when it came to college options. But after a recruiting trip to ORU, "after meeting Oral and Richard and Coach [Bill] Brogden, when I got back on the plane to go home," Rassetz said, "I knew that was where I was going to go to school."

Rassetz was at ORU at a time when sports teams were riding high. Men's basketball had been to the NCAA Tournament, men's tennis had cracked the top ten, and the baseball team would go to the College World Series for the first time in 1978. With a talent-rich squad, Rassetz and his teammates proved that golf could be just as big. "We knew we had something special, especially after our first year (1977-78) when we finished sixth" in the nation, he said. They repeated that feat in 1978-79.

Titans Bryan Norton, Jim Kane, Bill Glasson, Rick Long, and Rassetz placed third at the 1980 NCAA Tournament. The outcome was better in 1981--second place, just two strokes out of first.

"I think we were disappointed," said Rassetz, who is not one to dwell on the might-have-beens. "There really was no reason for us not to win." Nevertheless, that No. 2 finish remains the best by any ORU sports team, ever.

Rassetz's most memorable moment at ORU was the first team win they ever had. They were in Oklahoma City and "once we won, we realized that we could win. Everybody realized it. . . . We beat Oklahoma State by a shot. And that really turned the year."



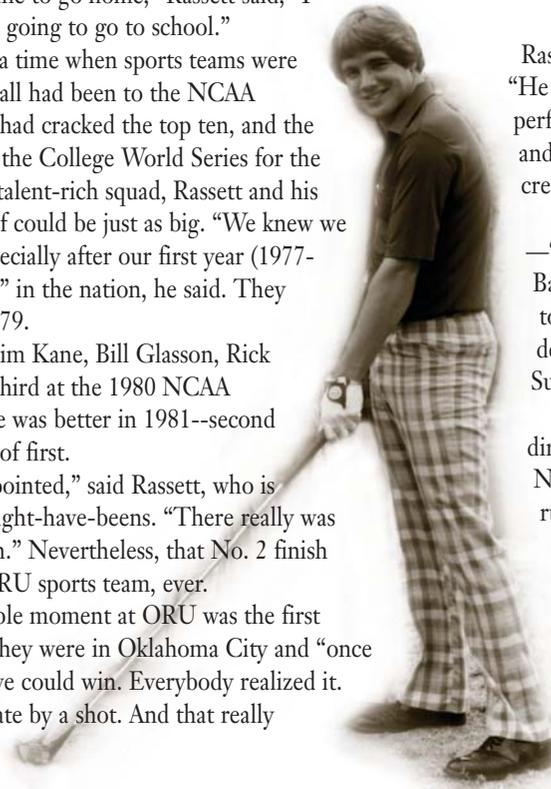
Rassetz, flanked by Athletics director Mike Carter (left) and Terry Unruh, accepts his award and the fans' applause at halftime of the ORU-UMKC game.

Rassetz appreciated Bill Brogden and his coaching style. "He had a sense a lot of time to just let us go out and perform. He also knew when he had to tighten the reins and when he needed to build us up. I give him a lot of credit for that."

After leaving ORU, Rassetz played in Europe for a year — "continuing my education in golf," as he describes it. Back in the U.S., he spent several years on different tours, including seven on the PGA Tour. In 1995 he decided it was time to stay closer to home with his wife, Susan, and their young children, Lauren and J.D.

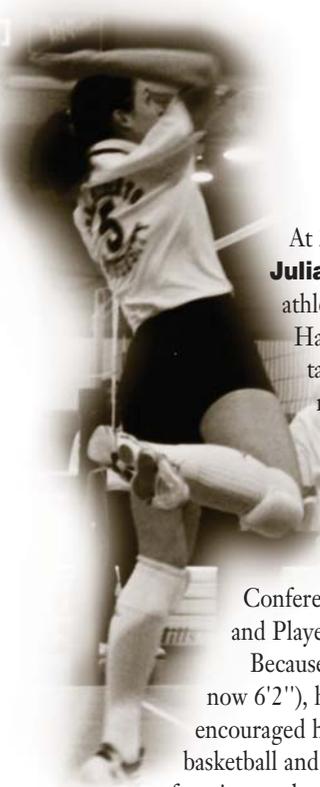
Of course, golf is still in Rassetz's blood. He's the director of golf at The Ridge at Back Brook in Ringoes, N.J., where his duties include instructing members and running tournaments.

When it comes to his personal game, "I tell everybody I can still find it," he said. (He won the New Jersey section championship of the PGA last year.) And his past still matters. "I've already designated a wall where the (Hall of Fame) plaque and our team picture and stuff will go. It means a lot to me."



# Moser Serves with Attitude of Gratitude

By Elissa K. Harvill



At 27, former ORU volleyball captain **Juliana Moser '99** is among the youngest athletes ever to be inducted into the Athletics Hall of Fame. She's thrilled. And the mountainous evidence that she deserves the recognition is undeniable. As a hitting/blocking/digging/killing machine with a 3.7 grade-point average, Moser set records at ORU that included all-time career games played (483) and career kills (1,749). She was also honored by the Mid-Continent Conference as Student Athlete of the Year (twice) and Player of the Year (three times).

Because Moser was an especially tall child (she's now 6'2"), her dad, a Brazilian basketball player, encouraged her to get involved in sports — especially basketball and volleyball. Volleyball turned out to be her favorite, so she stuck with it and played from the time she was thirteen.

As a child, Moser dreamed of someday studying overseas, but she had no idea how that could happen. At eighteen, she watched her dream miraculously become reality when her best friend happened to connect with an ORU volleyball player (and current assistant volleyball coach), Jani Hagen. "It was through Jani's mom and my best friend that I was offered a scholarship," Moser said. "It was a quick deal — fifteen days later, I was here [at ORU]." Arriving from San Paulo, Brazil, in 1996, Moser knew almost no English. "I could say my name and ask for French fries from McDonald's. It was four or five months before I was able to communicate."

With her determination to give back to the school that actualized her childhood dream, and with some encouragement from her fellow Brazilian teammates, Moser went on to lead the ORU team in consecutive undefeated conference seasons, breaking the Mid-Con record in 1999 for hitting percentage in a single season.

Moser's favorite memory and personal victory was actually during the 1997 season when ORU went to the second round of the NCAA tournament: "I will never forget beating the No. 17 team in the nation, Arizona State at the time — that last point in the fifth game will always stay with me. Too bad we lost the second round!"

Moser also explained how her volleyball experiences in Brazil were much different from playing at ORU. "In Brazil, although we weren't professional players, we had the mentality set that we were supposed to be professional. There was a lot of pressure, and after a while volleyball became something that I had to do instead of something I enjoyed. When I came [to ORU], I got back the

enjoyment of playing. One of the reasons why, when I got back home, I didn't want to play any more was because I just wanted to keep that good feeling about playing volleyball. It was a really nice experience."

So what has Ms. Moser been up to lately? She became "Mrs. Moser" (yes, she kept her maiden name) when she married fellow Brazilian Anderson Mattos in 2003. But let's go back to Commencement '99. Newly graduated, Moser spent two months on missions in China. She then returned to her native Brazil where she spent three months searching for a job in her field, which is international business. In the interim, she taught English to Brazilian business professionals until she landed a job with a Dutch import/export that transported steel. She was there for seven months, decided that was not what she wanted to do and went back to teaching English for three months. Finally, she was offered a position at Steinweg (also a Dutch company), where she works today. (No employment gaps for this girl!) Currently, she and her husband are on transfer in New Orleans. (Beautiful Brazilian children are expected to follow in a year or two.)



Moser (left), seated next to All-American Rhonda Penquite, felt right at home in the Mabee Center.

Moser plans to stay in New Orleans through the year, but is not completely certain of where her job will take her next. And though it's been five years since she last set foot on the ORU campus, its influence is still fresh in her life. "Career-wise, I want to keep doing what I'm doing," Moser said, "but I hope, after I gain some more experience in this field, to be able to do something logistics-related (transporting goods from one country to another) in relief efforts, or in a more meaningful way that will actually benefit people and not just companies. I hope that people who've met me will always remember me as someone who enjoyed and made the best of every opportunity that God gives in this life, and that I could make the best of anything and everything."

# The Nicest Man in Baseball

By Lacey L. Clay

In 1986, **Keith Lockhart** made his first visit to ORU. Little did he know that one twenty-four-hour recruiting trip would catapult him into one of the best baseball seasons on record at ORU, and eventually into the major leagues.

Lockhart grew up in Covina, Calif., a large town about twenty minutes east of Los Angeles. For the most part, his mother raised three rough-and-tumble boys on her own. But Lockhart remembers his start in baseball as one with his dad. “When I was seven years old . . . we were outside doing something and a friend of ours from down the street came by and said, ‘Hey, baseball sign-up today!’ I begged my dad and he took us down there and we signed up.”

Little League baseball became Lockhart’s introduction to the sport that would later become his career. “I knew right away that it was something that I loved to do and was fairly good at, so I just kept playing.” He said he also played other sports such as football and basketball, but admits with a laugh, “I wasn’t tall enough to play basketball.”

Lockhart played ball for two years at Mt. San Antonio junior college. Then the gears in the machine of connections began to grind. His junior college coach called ORU coach Larry Cochell and arranged a recruiting trip for Lockhart and a friend.

ORU needed an infielder and Lockhart was a great possibility. He climbed on an airplane for the first time, left his comfort zone, and headed to Oklahoma. The one-day trip was a whirlwind of activity as Lockhart and his friend watched ORU play the University of Miami and met the players and coaches.

Even though Lockhart wasn’t a Christian at the time and he had other options, he knew that ORU was the place for him. “We liked what they were offering . . . it was just odd that it was a Christian school because I had never been to church before.” He

recalls his biggest adjustment in coming to ORU was being required to wear a tie and going to chapel. Even though he felt like “a fish out of water” for a while, Lockhart observed other “normal” people who were Christians.

He made friends with someone who had a very similar background. “It seemed like he really had things all together and I felt like I was a wreck.” After watching his friend’s lifestyle,

Lockhart realized that the difference between the two was, his friend had Christ and he



*Lockhart, a former major leaguer, is used to signing autographs.*

didn’t. He said no one ever preached at him; the people he observed “just lived it.”

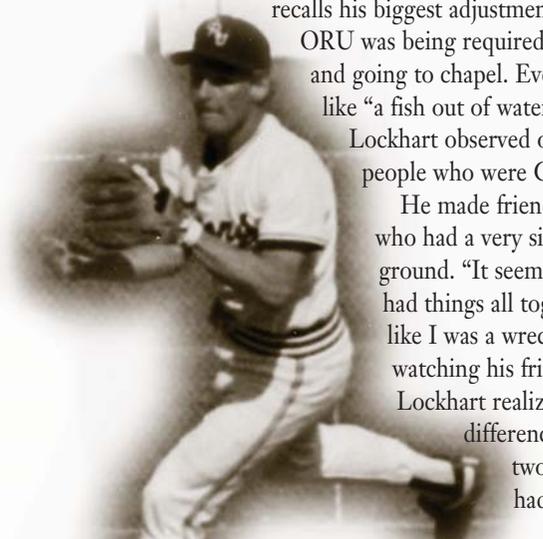
During his two seasons at ORU, Lockhart was part of a great team that he recalls as “really competitive. Good outfield, good pitching, good defense, just a strong team. We had unbelievable coaching here.”

The team that year included a couple of All-Americans. Lockhart said, “We had plenty of scouts that came to watch us play and they never came to watch *me* play.” Outside the limelight, Lockhart made his own success by working hard. He didn’t see himself as a player who stood out in one game, but knew he had a strong work ethic. “I was a very coachable player. I worked hard, kept my mouth shut, and just did what I was told.”

Lockhart’s efforts paid off. In 1986, he was an eleventh-round draft pick for the Cincinnati Reds. After ten years in the minors, he broke into the major leagues in 1995. Lockhart’s most successful years — 1997-2002 — were spent with the Atlanta Braves and included a trip to the 1999 World Series.

Lockhart retired from baseball in 2003, enjoying more time with his wife, Lisa, and their three children: Danny, 12; Sydney, 10; and Jason, 3. Today, he is vice president of baseball operations for Marketing Etc., a friend’s company.

Even though Lockhart’s retirement from baseball was a relatively quiet affair, it didn’t go completely unnoticed. The Web site [boyssoftireball.tireball.com](http://boyssoftireball.tireball.com) paid him a compliment with this statement: “[Lockhart] went out with little fanfare and most fans failed to notice that one of baseball’s nicest men had walked away.” Lockhart’s response to the statement? “It’s nice when someone else tells you that you are nice. You just try to live your life in a certain way and it’s nice when it’s recognized.”



## Back in the Spotlight

'Round about 1962 in the Bronx, New York, a six-year-old named **Arnold Dugger** would rise early in the morning (or maybe he just never went to bed) and make his way to the nearest basketball hoop, where he would practice for a future at a school that hadn't been built yet.

This only child of two adoring parents started making some serious noise years later in high school, scoring MVP honors in numerous basketball tournaments in the U.S. and abroad and finally getting recruited to play at Southern Idaho Junior College for a coach named Jerry Hale. He didn't know this in 1973, but he was on a fast track to the ORU Athletics Hall of Fame.

"You know what?" Dugger asked. "When I played ball back then, I was just playing ball . . . it was never a focus of mine to ever take it as far as I can . . . but everybody else around me [was] pretty much saying that I had the NBA opportunity."

In an interview the day before his Hall of Fame induction, Dugger was the man fans had grown to love during his 1974-77 heyday. The swagger and confidence were still there, as was a razor-sharp memory that pulled up story after story from his years at ORU.

When Hale came to ORU in 1974, Dugger came with him.

"They thought I was a little white guy from Arizona, 'cause my name was Arnold Dugger," he laughed. Then he arrived on campus, and met Anthony Roberts, and his star began to rise.

"Tony wouldn't have gotten the shots that he got if it wasn't for me," said Dugger, not immodestly but matter-of-factly. "My forte was for passing and ball handling." He set a school record for assists with 501 (broken by Luke Spencer-Gardner in February 2005). He also scored plenty of points — 1,229 in his career — but it was his showmanship that really got him noticed.

"Basketball was my ministry," he said. "I wanted the people to come out here in the snow and rain, to go home and say, 'I'm looking forward to seeing what this kid will do the next day.' I wasn't just coming out here to score and play ball, I came out here to entertain, okay? . . . I was the first one on national TV to do a 360 and that was unbelievable for a guy my size."

Dugger was a Philadelphia 76ers third-round draft pick in 1977 who

bounced from team to team until he wound up playing ball for corporate teams in the Philippines. Back in the U.S., he worked in the recreation department at Sing Sing State Prison (N.Y.) for fourteen years. "I had to deal with about 600 inmates," he recalled. "I was in the gym, so I played ball with them. I watched soap operas with them, we played pinochle, we did a little bit of everything." He also worked with the Police Athletic League,

running basketball tournaments for children.

In 1998, he and his family moved to the Poconos, where he went into the real estate business and his wife, Gwen, opened a barber shop that also serves as a community center where children and teens are encouraged to think about their future. "Our ideology," Gwen said, "is, when you look good, you feel good, you can go out and get a job. We just want to make a difference, and we have." The Duggers have four children of their own: Earl, Boisey, Kordell, and Khaila.

This was Dugger's first trip back to ORU since 1977. "It's the first time I ever sat in the seats as a fan," he said. "Before, when I sat in the seats, it was only because we were at practice and we ran up and down those

stairs and I got tired and I sat down."

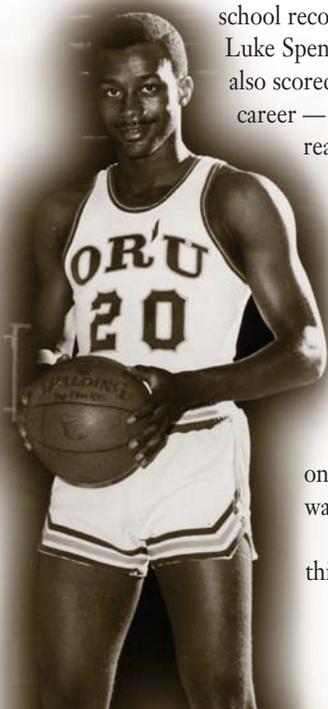
Most of his memories are sweet. "Everything I could have imagined in the pros as far as arenas and fans and getting the cheers . . . Oral Roberts gave to me," he said. "I used to make plays that people didn't think could be made. Referees used to make calls on me because, 'Yo, man, that just had to be illegal!'" He loved playing in Madison Square Garden in the 1975 NIT and making the game-winning shot in what remains ORU's most recent postseason win. He loved the rivalry with TU, and was glad to hear that the Golden Hurricane is no longer playing in "the big red barn — it was cold, had a little hay around the back," he remembered, laughing. And he had nothing but praise for teammate Alvin Scott: "Tony and I got all the publicity, but this kid came and worked every day without saying a word. . . . He played for Phoenix for fourteen or fifteen years. I was very proud of him for that."

The one thing that bothered Dugger post-ORU was that people only saw him as a ball player. "Nobody ever said, 'How are you doin', man? How's life?'" It took years for him to transcend that image. When he did, he said, "I was kind of relieved. It was like taking a lot of weight off my shoulders."

Now there's just the weight of his accomplishments, which he's happy to bear. "I can't describe all the moments and memories and glory I had at this school," he said. "We put on a show here, man. We made these people happy."



*Dugger chats with young fans.*



# Soak Up the Sun

*A missions trip to Mexico brought waves of change to ORU women's basketball.*

*Story and photos by Debbie Titus 77 George*

After eight weeks of classes and chapel and aerobics, ORU students are more than ready for fall break. That goes double-double for the women's basketball team, because they know that when break is over, it's going to be a full-court press of practice and play until their season ends in March.

**And yet, this being ORU**, there's that mission statement hovering over them, encouraging them to do something more than sleep late and eat during those precious days off.

Head coach Jerry Finkbeiner, who just wrapped up his ninth year at ORU, certainly understands that athletes are expected to go into every person's world the same as other students. And he wouldn't have it any other way.

"It is a missions-oriented university and we want to do our part," he said. That's why the team traveled to Mexico in August 2000 for a two-week missions trip that included exhibition basketball games. Right after that trip, Finkbeiner began planning for the next one, which took place last October. His intent, he told the team, was to put the heaviest emphasis on missions, not basketball.

"I honestly didn't believe him at the beginning," said Elisha Turek, the team's leading scorer and rebounder. "But I was pleasantly surprised that it was more ministry" than basketball. "I really enjoy talking to people about God, and sharing that. I really want to be a missionary when I get older, or

do something with ministry, so it doesn't bother me to talk in front of people."

There was plenty of that as the women and their coaches spent seven days in Cancun and Cozumel. Turek and several of her teammates shared their testimony (through a translator) at a school and during clinics and games. They also performed skits made popular by Youth With A Mission — "Eat, Work, Sleep" and "Smiles for Sale" — and sang Christian songs in Spanish, including "El Perfecto Regalo" (the perfect gift), which was written by their translator, Mark Mann.

Finkbeiner, who took plenty of missions-oriented basketball trips himself before and during his playing days at Southern Nazarene University, says that the maturity he gained from those trips led to what he considers "a calling I have to provide that experience for players who play for me.

"I think in today's world, a lot of our athletes are coming to us as athletes first, and we wanted to provide a platform [to show] that there's more to it and more responsibilities to it than just being an athlete."



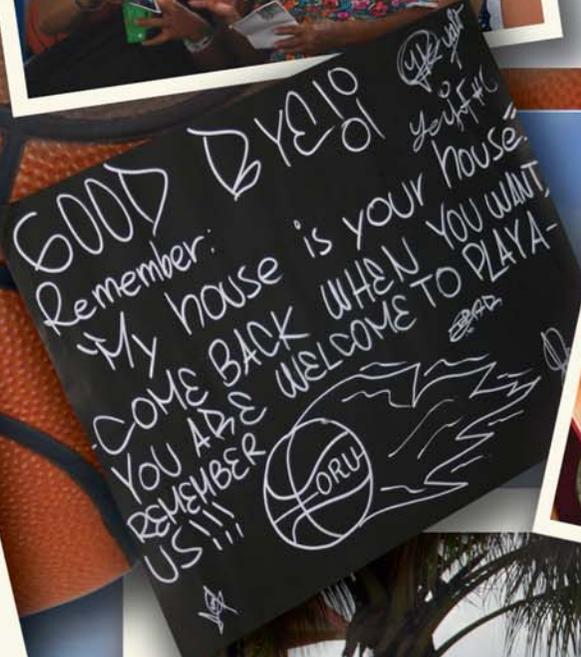


Most of the players had never been on a missions trip, but in no time they reached a comfort level with the children and adults that they encountered at the gym, on city streets, at the hotels and restaurants, and at the two schools where they left behind some very

special gifts: four wheelchairs for youngsters who suffer from cerebral palsy.

“To just be able to bring these people something they never dreamed of — that’s better than winning any game [or] any amount of money — that feeling is just so rewarding,” said senior Claudia Louis, who is planning to teach elementary school art.

Freshman forward Katie Fichtner, who redshirted this year, recalled how



Donating Wheelchairs



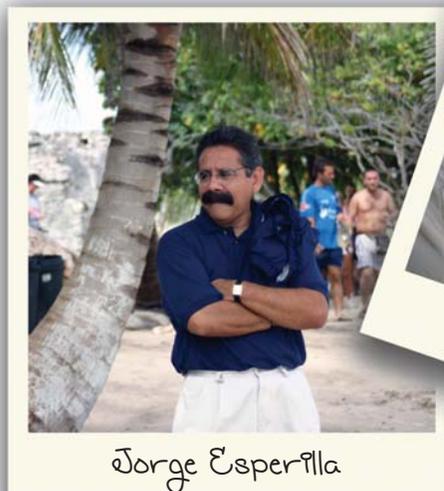
difficult it was to carry the shrink-wrapped wheelchairs through the airports. “But when we gave them to the kids,” she said, “it was totally worth it.”

During the clinics and games, the players quickly discovered that they were seen as more than just a group of rather tall tourists. “The children don’t know the difference between us and WNBA players,” sophomore forward/center Alycia Seay said one day on the way to the gym, “so we have a lot of influence on them.” The women used their influence wisely and made many friends, including one special child who latched onto junior guard Tiffany Johnson.

“There was a little girl, Jessica, who was three,” she said. “Every time we came to the gym, she’d run up to me and hug me. She’d talk to me in Spanish, and I don’t speak Spanish. I said ‘Si’ to everything.”

At halftime, Finkbeiner would entertain the children by spinning a basketball on his finger...and teaching a few happy volunteers to do the same. Then, he’d get down to business and explain the three things that mattered most to his team: academics, basketball, and their relationship with God. “It’s important to study and stay in school,” he said to his attentive audience, “and to believe and seek God. Each player believes God has a plan for us.” The spiritual side of this message was emphasized as players handed out cards that contained their photo on one side and their favorite scripture verse — in Spanish — on the other. They also gave away Spanish-language copies of a booklet called *La Historia de Jesus* (The Life of Jesus), which were donated by Terry Law Ministries, Spanish Bibles, and other items such as posters, mini basketballs, T-shirts, and shoes.

This generosity was a two-way street.



“One little girl gave us all little gifts every day at the games,” Fichtner said. “The fact that she spent the time — she wrapped them in tissue paper and put a bow around each one — was just really cute, because she took the time and effort to make them for us.”

The language barrier wasn’t much of an issue, with three people translating and the children just lapping up the attention of the players.

what to expect in Mexico, but admits, “It was also so much more. I think we touched more people than I expected. There were more kids involved than I’d ever dreamed of. There were a few there the first day and then all of a sudden we were dealing with hundreds, and it was like, wow!”

With three and a half years of Spanish instruction under her belt, Seay was happy for the opportunity to

“They really love you,” said Maureen Obudho, a nursing major from Kenya. “You can tell it from their faces. Seeing them respond positively to what you’re teaching them, it made me feel like I’m doing something in somebody’s life.”

Finkbeiner and his assistants — Misti Cussen, Dave Wilbers, Ben Finkbeiner, and Allison Russell — had more than a one-way mission in mind with this trip. They brought along a chaplain, Kandy Newton, who led devotions each night.

“It was a missions trip to the people of Mexico, but probably it was more a missions trip within our own team,” Finkbeiner noted. “Three of our girls accepted Christ through this experience. That was worth it right there.”

Alycia Seay has been on several missions trips and thought she knew

practice the language on this trip. Even that experience was full of surprises. “I told my mom later, at times I just thought that maybe God just took over, because there were words that I would say sometimes that I didn’t really think I knew how to say, but somehow, I said it.” It opened a door for her to share her faith, as she did one day with two adults. “I don’t know if a light completely came on, but I know that they were very interested and they wanted to know more.”

Ebony Haliburton, a transfer from Kansas City, admits that her grasp of

Spanish is rudimentary, but that didn't stop her from talking about God with anyone who would listen. At a bus station one day, she struck up a conversation with an elderly woman.

"I was asking her to read the Spanish Bible to me, but she couldn't read, and I didn't know she couldn't read," Haliburton said, "and she kept changing the subject. But the interpreter came up, and she told him to tell me that I have a gift, and the Lord wants me to read my Bible, and He wants me to get in my Word, because my Word is my life. I said, 'Goodness gracious!' Here I was trying to minister to her, but she ministered to me." It made her realize that "if you don't have that personal relationship with God, if you're not reading your Word and living the Word, it doesn't mean anything, see? So that helped me a lot, and I've been reading the Bible more."

One day, Turek and Jessica Boan, a junior from Kansas, spoke with a taxi driver at the market in Playa del Carmen. "It was the first time I've witnessed to a complete stranger," Boan said. The man came to some of the team's games, Turek said, "and we gave him tracts, and he was like, 'I'll read about this, thank you so much.' He was really receiving about the Word of God."

Experiences like this convinced Turek of one thing: people in other countries are "a lot more hungry" for God. "For instance, when we had those basketball clinics and we'd stop and tell them about God," she said, "they would receive everything we said, kind of clinching on every word we said." Unlike the U.S., where "you give them a tract and they throw it on the ground." But in Mexico, "they were very receptive and wanted to learn more about God. It kind of makes you realize that we take it for granted, what we have."

The women also did a little sight-seeing. Even then, however, ministry opportunities popped up. At the Mayan ruins in Tulum, after a tour and a brief

swim, they returned to shore and put on their bright yellow ORU shirts, which immediately caught the attention of a group of elementary school students. Soon, the players were talking with the children, handing out player cards and leading them in prayer.

One night at the hotel restaurant after a game, the ORU players and their opponents shared a meal, a prayer, and a group shout: "Equipo!" (Team.) All of that drew questions from some Americans who were sitting nearby. Sophomore Jamie Fithian, Seay reported, "stayed and talked to them for fifteen or twenty minutes, and she said that was just a great experience for her because she did share her testimony, and say why we were there and talk a little bit about our school and about our religion. So that was really neat."

Claudia Louis admitted that although she's a very outgoing person, it's not always easy for her to witness. Mexico, she said, "kind of opened another door to just being able to talk with people about something that means so much to me." It became a matter of trust, and of "being faithful that the words I speak are going to be His words," and "being more outgoing about what I believe in."

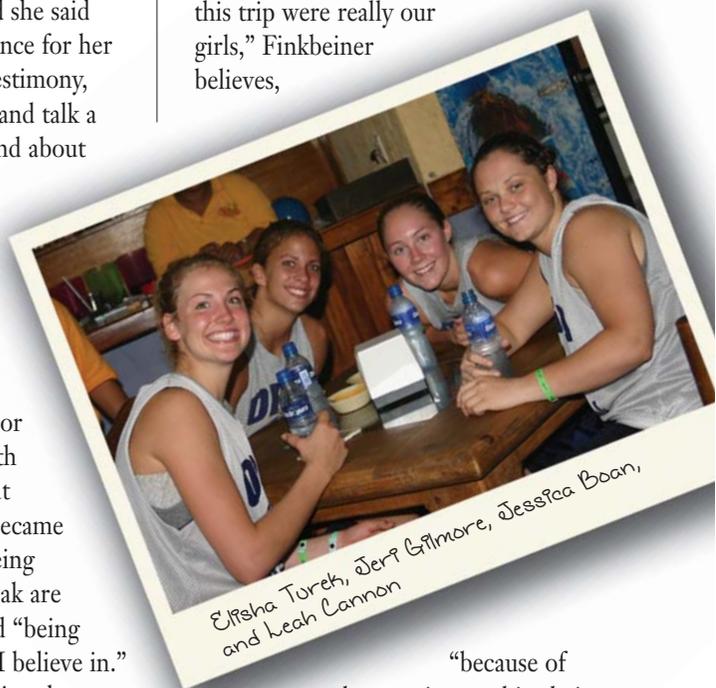
This trip, Finkbeiner pointed out, was not a freebie. Each of the fifteen players had to raise about forty percent of her expenses. Other costs were borne by ORU and donors. The Alumni Foundation made a major contribution, helping pay for player cards and gifts for opponents, arranging for the donations of the Jesus story booklets and the wheelchairs from Joni and Friends, and making it possible to archive the trip with photos and video. Every aspect of the trip ran smoothly, thanks to the efforts of tour director Jorge Esperilla, owner of Fun in the Sun Tours of Oklahoma City. His knowledge of the

area and language skills kept everyone on schedule and in a good mood.

The coach is already thinking about the next trip. NCAA rules won't allow another one like this for four years, but Finkbeiner has some ideas about taking a similar trip while staying within the rules.

The team went back to Cancun in December for a basketball tournament, which they've taken part in for several years. And the friends they made in October were there for the games, cheering them on.

"The biggest beneficiaries of this trip were really our girls," Finkbeiner believes,



"because of what was invested in their lives. I told them before we left, 'This could be a highlight of your career at ORU.'

"We had one devotional one night — we kind of went around the room to the mature Christians in the group [and asked] 'Where did you accept Christ?' . . . There's three girls that can testify now that they accepted Christ in Playa del Carmen, Mexico.

"Yeah, we took the missions trip, but really it was the 'missions within the missions' trip."

What they call in basketball a four-pointer.

## Gifts Go a Long Way

In 2004, 381 ORU alumni gave to the Annual Fund. The campaign, which ran from Jan. 1 through April 30, raised a total of \$123,199. The Alumni Foundation asked 3,500 graduates to make a contribution and of those, 11 percent gave gifts.

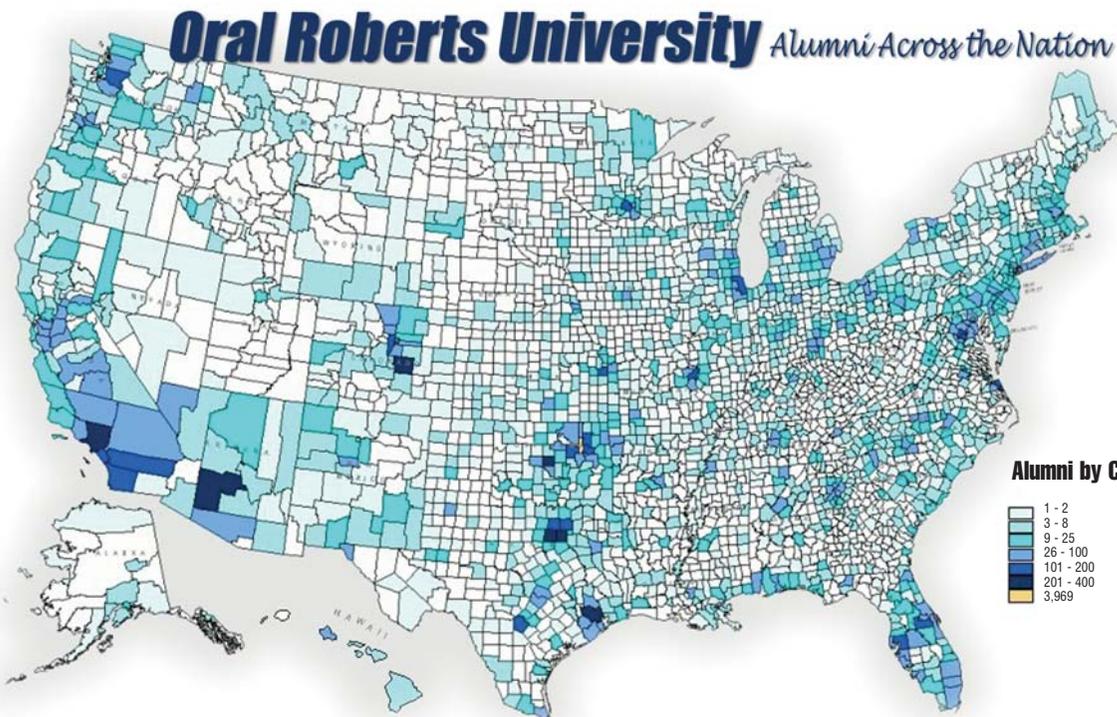
Those gifts enabled the foundation to give support to the university in several ways:

- Missions trip to Mexico** — The women’s basketball team spent fall break in Mexico, sharing the gospel, holding clinics, and playing basketball. They also took four wheelchairs with them to give to children suffering from cerebral palsy.
- Graduation Bibles** — The foundation purchased Bibles to give to the 830 members of the Class of 2004. President Richard Roberts signed and wrote an encouraging note in each Bible.
- Faculty Retreat** — The retreat allows instructors to enjoy some fellowship in a relaxed setting, learn about new initiatives, and cast a vision for the upcoming school year.
- Honors Program** — Gifts from the Alumni Foundation have helped honors students attend the Great Plains Honors Council. In March 2004, five students participated in two oral presentations on “Understanding the Muslim Paradigm and Martyrdom” and “One Nation Under God: Interpreting the Constitution in a Historical Context.”
- Leadership Academy** — The foundation gave \$3,000 to help ORU alumna Dr. Connie Taylor Sjoberg get this new leadership initiative off the ground. The money helped Dr. Sjoberg buy training materials and equipment.
- Photography Department** — New computer hardware and software has allowed the staff to become more creative in their work, to produce more in-house work, and to archive film and prints for the future. (Photography provides the lion’s share of the photos in *Excellence* magazine, on the alumni Web site, and in other printed pieces, such as the Homecoming brochure.)

“We want to give our heartfelt thanks to all of you who donated to the Alumni Foundation, not just during the annual campaign but also throughout the entire year,” said Alumni director Bob Beard 88, 99. “Your contributions of any size are always appreciated, and we strive to always use your donations to further the mission of ORU.”

*We really are all over the map!*

Did you know that ORU graduates and associates can be found in EVERY state, including Alaska? This up-to-date map, produced by Personalized Map Company, shows the distribution of alumni by county, a range of how many alumni live in each county, and which states have the highest concentration of alumni. So, whenever you’re feeling alone in the world (or, at least, in the U.S.), remember: Your fellow alumni could be just a few miles away!



## The 2005 Alumni Board of Directors

# 'Called and Committed to Supporting and Serving'

**T**wice each year, the ORU Alumni Board of Directors meets on campus to discuss the future of the university and the Alumni Association, and the role that alumni will play in setting and meeting specific goals.

Alumni directors are elected by their fellow ORU graduates, making them the voice of the alumni on campus. They take the concerns and suggestions of their constituents and share them with the administration. In short, they are people of influence. Get to know them. Tell them what you think. Use the contact information below to get in touch.

New on the board this year are Mary Banks, Terry Blain, Dil Kulathum, Steve Nussbaum, and Don Ryan.

### Segment I (1968-78)

David Barton (Chairman)  
scarlett@wallbuilders.com

Joanne Crain  
jcrain2@juno.com

### Segment II (1979-82)

Rhae Buckley (Vice Chairman)  
rbuckley@hayes-lemmerz.com

Greg Ford  
greg@gregford.org

Gene Gregg  
ggregg@pressgroup.com

### Segment III (1983-86)

Dr. Scott Cordray (Treasurer)  
scordray@cfaith.com

Brent Coussens  
brent.coussens@williams.com

Dr. Steve Nussbaum  
golferdoc1@aol.com

### Segment IV (1987-90)

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tammydenton@peopleschurchtulsa.com

Dil Kulathum  
dkulathum@cs.com



Banks



Blain



Kulathum



Nussbaum



Ryan

### Segment V (1991-94)

Jeff Goforth  
jeff.goforth@williams.com

Jeffrey Ross (Secretary)  
arshowhomes@comcast.net

### Segment VI (1995-99)

Josh Allen  
jall6871@hotmail.com

Jeff Burrirt  
jeffburrirt@yahoo.com

### Segment VII (2000-2004)

Jeremy Baker  
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Angel Faulk  
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### At Large

(representing all class years, all schools)

Mary Banks  
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Terry Blain  
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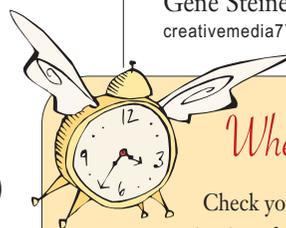
Doug Foster  
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reggie\_goodin@yahoo.com

Joleen Minyard  
jminyard@uniflexcom.com

Don Ryan  
dryanok@earthlink.net

Gene Steiner  
creativemedia777@yahoo.com



## Where does the time go?

Check your calendar. It's time to send in your nominations for Alumnus of the Year 2006.

Each year the Alumni Association recognizes three deserving alumni in the categories of Distinguished Service to God, to the Community, and to the Alma Mater. You play a very important role in honoring these special people — you have to nominate them!

You can nominate one or more alumni by logging on to [alumniweb.oru.edu](http://alumniweb.oru.edu) and clicking on Alumnus of the Year 2006. It is VERY important that you fill out all of the requested information. Be sure to tell us about all the great things your nominee has done and is doing.

**Remember: The deadline is July 1, 2005.**

# LEAVE NO STONE UNTURNED . . .

Did you know that you play an important role in producing a new generation of ORU students? It's the gospel truth: When it comes to recruiting students who will find a college home in Braxton, Gabrielle, the High Rises, and the Towers, alumni referrals pack the most punch.

It's no wonder, then, that the Admissions Office is asking you to talk to prospective students about your experiences at ORU and encourage them to consider ORU for their future.

Were you also aware that the Admissions Office and alumni team up through the Admissions Recruiting Association? This organization allows alumni all across the United States to help recruit students in several ways:

- Talk about your experiences at ORU.
- Represent ORU at college fairs. The Admissions Office supplies all the materials, you supply your time.
- Identify churches in your area that would be willing to set up a table with recruitment information.
- Locate scholarships in your area that local students can apply for.
- Distribute College Weekend posters.
- Make sure that the Alumni Office and the Admissions Office have your most recent address. We can't let you know what's going on at your alma mater if we can't contact you.

If you are interested in helping recruit future ORU alumni, you can contact a Territory Manager for your area. (See the map.) You can also call the Admissions toll-free number (800/678-8876) or the direct line (918/495-6518) or e-mail [admissions@oru.edu](mailto:admissions@oru.edu).

Help perpetuate the legacy of outstanding students by encouraging others to launch their future at ORU.



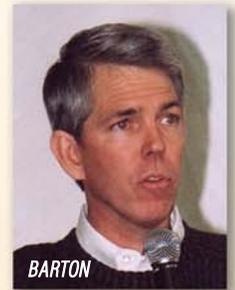
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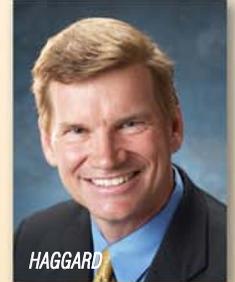
JENSEN

## Two ORU Alumni Recognized in *Time* Piece

Alumni Board of Directors chairman **David Barton 76**, founder of the nonprofit organization WallBuilders, and **Ted Haggard 78**, senior pastor of New Life Church and president of the National Association of Evangelicals, were among "The 25 Most Influential Evangelicals in America" listed in *Time* magazine's Feb. 7 issue.



*Time's* focus was not on the more familiar evangelical leaders, but on the up-and-coming. Barton and Haggard are both becoming more visible and are in positions of influence, especially in the political realm.



Barton's organization, WallBuilders, is dedicated to distributing materials that help citizens become more active in their communities, and to educating people on historical and legal information. He has done extensive research on the Founding Era and because of his expert knowledge, he has served as a consultant to state and federal legislators, helped develop the history and social studies standards for schools in Texas and California, and participated in several Supreme Court cases.

For several years, Barton has been co-chair of the Texas Republican Party, and was active on behalf of the Republican National Committee during the 2004 election.

Haggard founded what has become Colorado's largest church, New Life Church, in 1985. He has authored six books, founded the Christian Information Network, and serves on numerous boards, but his position as president of the National Association of Evangelicals seems to have drawn the most political attention.

Haggard's name and face are well-known at the White House, and according to *Time*, his opinions are not only sought after but given serious consideration.





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*Claudia Louis signs an autograph for a fan. Louis and her teammates spent fall break in Mexico, taking part in basketball clinics for children and sharing their faith in a variety of venues. (See story on page 22.)*