

fall2008

excellence

for oral roberts university alumni and friends



Ready for His Close-Up

Phil Cooke (pictured with wife Kathleen) has a lot to say about the ever-changing landscape of media, marketing and ministry. (See page 8.)

God's Ways Are Always Best

You would think that when God provides for us in a spectacular way, we would trust Him forever and never doubt or question His ways. When the children of Israel were delivered from their bondage in Egypt, they sang praises to God and they voiced their commitment to trust God forever. Exodus 14:31: "Then a short time later, as they faced discomfort and difficulties in their travels, they grumbled and complained about the way they were instructed to go." In this day and age, even we Christians forget or lose focus on the calling and mission God asks us to fulfill. Not that we are working for our salvation, but we are commanded to joyfully live out our salvation.

Ephesians 2:8-10: "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

I hope everyone has heard by now: ORU is in the midst of a revival of sorts, with new governance and a stronger-than-ever commitment to its founding mission. It is truly God's university. The campus is undergoing a renewal with technology upgrades, building renovations, strengthened academics and faculty and staff salary improvements that all build upon ORU's already-existing focus on excellence.

Remember the founding vision God gave to Oral Roberts:

"Raise up your students to hear My voice, to go where My light is seen dim, My voice is heard small, and My healing power is not known, even to the uttermost bounds of the earth. Their work will exceed yours, and in this I am well pleased."



Zoppelt Auditorium has entered the 21st century. (Goodbye, yellow desks and blue chairs!)

Now more than ever ORU needs us alumni to get involved by praying for our alma mater and supporting it financially. ORU has been blessed with large gifts and ever-increasing alumni giving. The 2008 fiscal year was our best year ever, with \$1.9 million contributed and a participation rate that rose from 5.6 percent (FY07) to 10.27 percent! In the current fiscal year (as of Nov. 21), gifts and pledges received totaled \$8,021,999 and we are on track to break the record we set last year for participation. Our gifts help the great faculty and staff prepare current and future generations to hear God's voice, to receive a whole-person education, and to go into every person's world, sharing God's saving word and healing power.

As we were going to press, it was announced that ORU will reduce its workforce in January by about 100 positions. Despite the gravity of the situation, it's encouraging to see how ORU is proceeding. I don't know of many companies that announce such reductions two months in advance, and then give employees another 60 days to adjust to their upcoming departure, and on top of that, offer job placement services and transition payments. ORU is handling this difficult task exactly right, striving toward excellence for God's glory.

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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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ORU Announces Staff Cutbacks

On Nov. 17, a special meeting was held in Christ's Chapel for all faculty and staff. Interim President Dr. Ralph Fagin announced an impending reduction in force. Below is the text of a letter that was e-mailed to all ORU employees that day. Copies of *Frequently Asked Questions*, with information pertaining to the cutbacks, were handed out at the end of the meeting, and employees were encouraged to refer to the Human Resources Web page in the weeks ahead for further updates. (Alumni may go to alumni.oru.edu and click on the "Staff Reduction" link to find out more.)

Dear ORU Family,

Oral Roberts University has come many miles in the last year. We have made progress in key areas to keep the mission of the university alive, but there are still tough decisions that have to be made to ensure we continue to provide a quality, whole-person education for our students.

The university is announcing a reduction in force of approximately 100 people in early 2009 as we continue to seek ways to reduce costs. Our annual budget must be balanced, and reducing costs through a reorganization is a

necessary step. We are also pursuing options to enhance revenue, including increasing donor support and student enrollment. We realize the impact this decision has on each of our employees and want to do what we can to help everyone move forward. The university plans to offer job placement support for employees who will be affected by the reduction.

We are currently involved in a review and evaluation process to determine departments, positions, and individuals that will be included in the reduction. Once this process is complete, ORU will provide notice in mid-January,

2009 to the employees included in the workforce reduction. These employees will continue to be employed by ORU for 60 days following receipt of this notification. Accordingly, no individual's employment at ORU will terminate as the result of the reduction in force until mid-March, 2009.

We are committed to the long-term restoration of fiscal soundness. Like any business, a university cannot spend more revenue than it collects. We have a responsibility to all of you to be good stewards of our resources.

Within the last year, ORU was given its largest gift to date of \$70 million from the Green family. An initial \$8 million was given for operational expenses and \$30 million was put toward ORU debt, which has helped reduce the debt from \$55 million to approximately \$17 million* in less than one year.

The other \$32 million is helping with long-deferred maintenance projects, increased financial aid for new and returning students, upgrades in technology and academic programs, and recruitment. Some of the funds were reserved for the shortfall caused by this year's projected operating deficit.

Please know that we are extremely grateful to each and every member of the ORU family for your support and passion for the vision of the university.

We ask for your prayers and patience as we determine the best course of action for our future and trust God to guide us moving forward.

In Him,

Board Chair Mart Green and
Interim President Ralph Fagin

**The \$30 million from the gift reduced the debt to \$25 million. The Renewing the Vision campaign has further reduced the debt to about \$17 million.*



Students worship God at a recent ORU chapel service.



Balancing Marriage, Motherhood and Mass Tort Litigation

How Joy (Lea-98) Palazzo does it

BY JADELL FORMAN 90

If her clients hear a toddler singing Sesame Street tunes in the background when they call, they're not alarmed. If her firm's partner e-mails a business question in the middle of the night, he's not surprised to get her response 15 minutes later.

And if becoming a lawyer was not a crystal-clear dream of her childhood, Joy Palazzo has nonetheless embraced the profession with her whole heart, because justice has been her passion ever since she can remember.

After graduating from ORU, Palazzo worked for U.S. Senator Don Nickles and then earned a degree from the University of Tulsa College of Law. She returned to Texas, where she served five years as an associate at a large firm before being named one of about 150 of "Houston's Top Lawyers" for 2008* by *H Texas* magazine. In June, Palazzo joined Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP, an international firm of 1,500 lawyers with twenty-two offices worldwide.

As a lawyer who is a Christian, Palazzo considers it an honor to assist in end results where truth is discovered and justice is done. Her clients are major manufacturing, oil and chemical companies who face "tough business decisions, labor and employment issues, state and federal law compliance requirements, and even contract disputes with suppliers



JOY PALAZZO

or customers," she says. "I counsel them through difficult waters to avoid litigation, but sometimes the lawsuit is unavoidable. In those circumstances, I'm guided by Luke 11:42 that encourages me to seek and do justice."

Palazzo and seven other lawyers at her former firm were selected by Houston-area attorneys for their "dedication to clients, commitment to their cases, and outstanding work ethic," according to the firm's press release. We asked Palazzo to share with us her perspective on those criteria, and a bit about her life's journey thus far.

What do those "Top Lawyer" criteria look like when lived out in your life? Specifically, "dedication to clients."

For me, "dedication to clients" means a dedication that requires sacrifice. First, it is synonymous with accessibility and responsiveness. My clients have my cell phone number



The 1997-98 Student Association officers. Back row: Dan Scott 98, VP of Services and Matt Rearden 97, SA President. Front row: Sarah (Steinmetz-98) Hansel, VP of Activities, Joy (Lea-98) Palazzo, Executive Vice President, and Molly McArdle 98, VP of Financial Services.

and know my Blackberry is a permanent attachment to my hip. They know when I'm leaving the office and when I'll be back online after I put my son to bed. They know where I vacation and that they can reach me at the Aquarium, the Zoo, the Children's Museum, and so on. Second, it is a dedication to telling the hard truths. Often the recommended course of action requires strong counseling and direction, and being the one to give this advice is often uncomfortable and requires the grace of God and His favor to deliver. Nevertheless, providing truthful and direct communication is what being dedicated to their best interests truly entails.

What about "commitment to cases"?

My mother used to say that when she studied German and French, she would dream in those languages. Now, when I awake from a dream, I write down legal strategies for my cases or send an e-mail regarding a priority for the next day. My partners would often tease me that I was the only associate they knew they could e-mail at 2 a.m., and I'd write back at 2:15 with the answer. It's a commitment to make certain that you've explored every angle, anticipated the counter-arguments, researched the most recent case law in support, and mastered the facts of your case. As my father taught me, "Excellence is about doing everything required of you, and then at least one thing more."

And finally, "outstanding work ethic"?

For me, work ethic is a matter of personal integrity. It means delivering a quality product and working smart — being efficient and effective in order to build long-lasting trust with the clients I serve and the judges before whom I practice.

In what areas do you specialize?

I specialize in commercial, energy, and environmental litigation. Typically, I defend companies that have been sued in complex litigation by hundreds or even thousands of plaintiffs ("mass tort litigation"). As a Christian lawyer, there is a delicate balance in these defense cases. On one hand, if an injury has been inflicted by a company that I represent, then I counsel my client to do justice and work to facilitate a reasonable and fair settlement to facilitate restoration. However, on the other hand, I too often see cases that are profit-driven, where there is no real injury that has occurred or where greed would bankrupt my clients for a harm that they are willing to try to make right in a reasonable and fair way. In those cases, defending the companies from bankruptcy and saving employees' jobs and livelihoods becomes a necessity.



Right after taking her Texas bar exam in 2003, Joy met Gabriel Stefan Palazzo on a blind date. The two married in April 2004.

Were there formative moments in your childhood that made you advocacy-oriented?

As long as I can remember, I've been moved by injustice and compelled to act. I remember being a small child and getting into trouble for sneaking into the living room and hiding under the coffee table to watch the presidential election returns for [Ronald] Reagan. My mother often mentions that she would have to turn off the evening news because I'd be too upset by world politics and events. As a grade-schooler, I embarked on countless letter-writing campaigns to my local congressmen to protest what my 10-year-old mind saw as injustice. It wasn't long afterward that I set up voter registration booths at my high school and then subsequently at ORU as a member of the College Republicans.

Did you know coming into ORU that you wanted to be a lawyer?

I knew coming into ORU that I loved politics, justice, and advocacy. Through Dr. [Frank] Sexton's course on Renewing America, I traveled to D.C. That trip opened up doors to political internships in Tulsa and Washington, D.C. Subsequently, Dr. [Rick] Westcott and Dr. [Agena] Farmer's classes equipped me to represent U.S. Senator Don Nickles around the state in multiple capacities and before crowds of hundreds and thousands, even before I graduated.

In Senator Nickles' D.C. office, I met a great mentor in the law, Barbara Olson. Barbara encouraged me to pursue a law degree — to equip myself to operate in larger arenas of influence that otherwise would be closed merely because of the lack of a legal education.

How did ORU influence you to “change your world”?

[ORU's '90s] mantra, “Change your mind, change your world,” serves as a constant challenge to renew my mind and think about my cases and clients in light of biblical principles and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Additionally, as a founding board member and officer of the Houston Chapter of the Christian Legal Society two years ago, I have been able to network with legal professionals of similar values as we assess how we may change the world of Houston law and politics for the glory of God.

**H Texas magazine solicited nominations from more than 2,000 Houston-area attorneys. Voters were required to nominate only those attorneys whose work they knew firsthand, including firm colleagues, co-counsel, lawyers they had observed in court and opposing counsel. The Houston Bar Association, incidentally, has more than 11,500 members.*



TOP: Even when she's at the beach with her son, Palazzo's clients know how to reach her. In her book, dedication to clients "is synonymous with accessibility and responsiveness."

ABOVE: In November 2005, Palazzo and her "wonderful husband," Gabriel Stefan, welcomed their "Thanksgiving baby," Gabriel Lucas, who is now 3.

Faith, Culture and Other Mysteries

BY RACHEL WEGNER 07

Photos courtesy of Cooke Pictures

A seasoned media professional takes a candid look at how the church can impact culture for the better . . . in the midst of the most important technological revolution since the printing press.

Meet Phil Cooke. He has one foot firmly planted in the secular media world and the other in the Christian media world. Drawing upon his experience so far, he offers his expertise as both an author and a media consultant. In fact, the folks at *Christianity Today* have gone so far as to call him a modern “media guru.”

The essence of what he does

Working with well-known Christian leaders such as Joel Osteen and Joyce Meyer through Cooke Pictures, his media-consulting firm based in Burbank, Calif., Cooke has an insider’s perspective on the intersection of media,



Lights, camera, action! Cooke calls the shots on set at one of his productions.

culture and the church. He founded Cooke Pictures in 1991 with his wife, Kathleen, who helps cast actors and decide on design and style issues. She is also a commercial actress and the director of the prestigious Biola Media Conference.

Cooke is also part of a three-way partnership that owns TWC Films and, consequently, works closely with Hollywood executives. TWC produced two 2008 Super Bowl commercials and another during the opening ceremonies of the Beijing Olympics. In his March 2008-released book, titled *Branding Faith*, Cooke addressed the controversial issues surrounding marketing and branding the gospel, the church and the Christian faith.

“Most people have negative connotations when they hear the word ‘branding,’” Cooke said. “They think commercialism, they think capitalism. But the fact is, branding is simply a compelling story around a product or a person or an organization. It’s important that people realize that you’re going to be swallowed up in the media clutter out there if you don’t have a compelling story. That’s what really allows your message to be heard.”

When Cooke Pictures first takes on a client, they ask that client four essential questions: “Who are you?”, “What are your gifts and talents?”, “What’s the point?” and “What makes you different?” Building upon the answers to those questions, they work as a team with their clients to create, or re-create, an effective media identity. In the end, Cooke said they are looking for clients who are passionate about what they do and who are interested in doing it in a contemporary and innovative way.

BELOW: **Dearly beloved** . . . The Cookes gather to celebrate the wedding of elder daughter Kelsey. L to R: Kathleen, Kelsey, Phil and Bailey. RIGHT: **Creatively driven**. A tireless advocate of innovation and creativity, Cooke challenges his clients to think outside the box.



The online revolution

Aside from his involvement in the media and marketing industries, Cooke also writes frequently via his blog — *The Change Revolution* — located at www.philcooke.com. His blog highlights issues such as the balance between marketing and morality, along with news stories and current events that affect the way the church intersects with culture, politics and government. It also addresses a myriad of other topics that relate to faith, media and culture and often sparks lively conversations among its readers in the Comments section of his posts. Cooke also maintains a monthly e-newsletter and a podcast that is distributed via iTunes.

With the rapidly growing popularity of communication tools such as blogs, social networking Web sites and other technological advancements, the generation coming of age, known as the Millennials, is becoming more prominent in American media and culture. The previous generation, known as the Boomers, still has a strong influence over society, but is beginning to retire or step out of leadership positions. As a result, Cooke sees a major media and leadership shift underway, one that churches, advertisers and businesses alike will need to heed if they want their message to be heard.

The shift between two generations

“We are experiencing the greatest transition in the history of media,” Cooke said. “That transition is going to affect not only media, but entertainment, politics, education, government, religion and the way we worship. The Millennial generation wants to have a voice. I’m calling it the ‘open media revolution’ because what’s



happening out there is that media has suddenly become a two-way conversation.”

For this generation, Cooke said, it’s more about who is behind the camera than who is in front of it. Instant communication via Internet-enabled cell phones and wireless computers has impacted the way people interact and discuss things — even sermons.

“A pastor can have conversations happening and blogs posted about what he’s preaching on before he even leaves the pulpit,” Cooke said. “That’s a radical shift in the way we do church. We need to understand that.”

The challenge facing the American church now is being able to effectively engage the culture — through means such as technology and media — while holding fast to their vision.

“Today, media *is* culture, and if we don’t learn how to speak in a language and style this culture understands, we will lose this generation,” Cooke said. “Most pastors think that media strategy is having flashy lights, wearing my shirttail out when I preach, having cool music. That’s not a strategy. That’s just rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic. A real strategy is coming up with a compelling story of who you are, what potential audience would be right for your message and how to connect with that audience effectively.”

Complementing the sunset of the Boomer generation and the increasing influence of the Millennials, Cooke believes many changes are at hand in the arena of church leadership. For example, he said that the transition from the late John Osteen to Joel Osteen, among others, exemplifies the dramatic difference between first-generation and second-generation leadership.

“First-generation leaders are generally very driven, they have enormous energy, they are enormously creative, they know what they want, when they want it and where they want it delivered,” Cooke said, noting that first-generation leaders tend to surround themselves with “make it happen” guys.



Kathleen and Phil spoke with Chancellor Oral Roberts at an event in California this fall.

“Second-generation leaders are generally more team-oriented. They’re also much more open to technology.”

Bursting the bubble

In light of the shifts happening in media and leadership style, Cooke impels his clients to be creative, to do something fresh and unique rather than mimic what they see in the culture around them.

“We’ve got to get out of our bubble,” Cooke said, referring to the Christian church at large. “We’ve found out that we can create our own media and have our own world, our own rock stars, books, movies and TV shows. We feel like we don’t have to go out and engage the culture anymore, and I think that’s a terrible thing.”

An analogy that Cooke employs in his approach to working with a client is Michelangelo. When Michelangelo was asked how he carved such wonderful, lifelike statues, he responded by saying that he didn’t carve statues, he simply cut away the excess stone so the angel inside can come out. In many ways, Cooke feels his job is to “cut away the junk” and discover who his clients really are. When that happens, he believes, anything is possible.

“One of the keys to our success is that we are very, very sensitive to just how different every organization is,” Cooke said. “We want to create an original program, campaign, marketing effort or branding effort that captures who you are. Real branding is not trying to make you something you’re not. Real branding is about finding out who you really are.”

Ultimately, Cooke believes the church is fully capable of effecting positive change in the culture that surrounds it. However, he said that culture historically changes in 100-year increments, and the focus of the church should be more on engaging culture and reaching out to people.

“Changing the culture is a gigantic task,” Cooke admits. “It’s like the weather. It permeates everything we do. We can’t change the weather, but we can rescue people from the storm. A great task of ministries today is rescuing people from the storm of the culture. In the meantime, we need to connect with that great audience out there so real change can eventually happen.”

Phil, a 1976 graduate, and his wife, Kathleen (Paille-77), live in Burbank, Calif. and have two daughters, Kelsey, 23, and Bailey, 20. To read more about Phil’s experience, including his time working alongside Oral Roberts, and to hear more about his thoughts on faith, media and culture, visit www.alumni.oru.edu and select the “Phil Cooke: Continuing the Story” link. To read Phil’s blog, go to www.philcooke.com.



Wayne's New World

A 1975 grad discovers what it's like to be applauded, rewarded — and, yes, disparaged — for publishing what has become a *New York Times* bestseller.

BY DEBBIE (TITUS-77) GEORGE

There was Wayne Jacobsen, minding his own business . . . writing books, mediating conflicts, and helping fellow Christians find true community and communion with God. To be blunt, he was flying under the radar when it came to being recognized in airports.

And then one day in 2004, this born-and-bred Californian who majored in New Testament at ORU got a call from some guy named William Paul Young (he goes by Paul) up in Oregon. “He had read an article I’d written online,” Jacobsen said, “and he was taken by it.” On his Web site, *lifestream.org*, Jacobsen shares his thoughts on the church. As someone who pastored churches for 20 years, he has plenty of experiences (both positive and negative) to draw upon. Young had been a pastor “and he’d been through some painful experiences too,” Jacobsen said. So when the two of them met for a few short hours, “we more or less talked about how Jesus made Himself known in our lives and who He was leading us to.”

Time passed — about 15 months or so — and Jacobsen received an e-mail with an attachment. *Uh-oh. A manuscript. Single-spaced, no less.* Now, Jacobsen is happy to encourage writers-in-training (he was one of those himself, once), but he could tell that this was Christian fiction, and as he’ll tell

you, “I just don’t read much Christian fiction. I really, honestly was not excited about reading it.” “It” was *The Shack*, written by Paul Young as a way to share his thoughts about God with his six children. He didn’t send it to Jacobsen to critique; he was just grateful that one of Jacobsen’s books, *So You Don’t Want to Go to Church Anymore*, had inspired the framework for his own book.

Jacobsen decided he’d print out and read the first 25 pages, “to give Paul some feedback,” but then he felt compelled to read the *next* 25, and then, with the character of Mack standing at the door to the shack, there was no turning back.

“At the end of it, I was just so deeply touched by the portrayal of God reaching into the pain of one of His children,” Jacobsen said. “That began our journey with it.”

It’s no simple thing to publish a book, although it might look easy once the book has hit #1 on the *New York Times* bestseller list, as *The Shack* did earlier this year. Jacobsen reveals that even though he was taken by the story, “there were a lot of problems with the book and with publishing it as it was” — among them, theological issues and storytelling weaknesses. Jacobsen said he spent 16 months with Young and his podcast partner and friend, Brad Cummings, who

was also taken by the story; they did a total of four complete rewrites. And for those critics who have spoken out against the final version, Jacobsen has this to say:

“There’s not any book I write, not even my own books, that I’d say are flawless. My goodness, we’re all growing to understand God’s truth. So I wouldn’t sit here today and defend *The Shack* as flawless. I wouldn’t defend *mine* as flawless. It’s the best depiction we could give at that moment in our lives when we’re trying to express something.”

What Young wanted to express was his own journey, a journey marked by childhood abuse, emotional damage caused by others in the faith community, and the guilt he felt over his own sins. For 38 years, as he told Jacobsen, he went through “absolute torment and shame and pain,” followed by 11 years of healing, “and all of that,” Jacobsen said, “is what *The Shack* is about.”

Ironically, the printing of the book was triggered by conversations Jacobsen had with some believers he knew in the movie industry. They read the manuscript and said, “Can we do this movie?” The strategy, as Jacobsen explained, was to print the book and sell at least 100,000 copies of it, to prove there was an audience for the movie. And so, once the rewrite was done, Jacobsen took the book to some publishers — “probably a couple of dozen,” he said — and “they all turned it down.”

This is where it begins to get a little crazy. Young and Cummings said, “Why don’t we start our own publishing company?”

“Neither of those guys had ever published anything before,” Jacobsen said, marveling at their naiveté. “I said, you don’t know what this means! And we’ll never sell 100,000 copies on our own!” Finally, though, they decided to take the plunge — to

start a publishing company called Windblown Media, print 10,000 copies, and see where it would lead. At first, the book was only available on its own Web site, where it sold 10,000 copies in four months. Selling 100,000 still seemed like the impossible dream, but by the end of the first year, after offering the book through Amazon and other outlets, *The Shack* had sold an impressive 850,000 copies.

The original version of *The Shack* might have been written for Young’s children, but Jacobsen says that ultimately, it was published “for people who didn’t know God, or that had been marginalized from religion by the excesses and abuses of Christianity as a religion. We wanted them to know the love of God that transcended the failures of religion.”

Whatever their intentions, the Windblown team has been battered by critics (mostly from the Christian camp) who take issue with the book’s portrayal of God and its description of the Trinity.

“People have accused us of making an idol, a graven image of God, because we presented God in a novel, which is — well, preachers do that from pulpits every Sunday,” Jacobsen said. “Anybody that testifies is saying, this is how I view God. We’re not saying (*The Shack*) is the last, best, greatest revelation of God. The Bible and the person of Jesus Christ, that’s the best revelation of God on the planet.”

Jacobsen is firm in his belief that people have been taught “to read the Bible wrong. We got a caricature of God from the Bible that the Bible doesn’t give us but religion has. I think some of what has been taught in Christianity is different from what Jesus taught in the gospels.” He also thinks some people “read *The Shack* wrong” too. “I’ll read what

LEFT TO RIGHT: Wayne and Sara (Fought-75) met as freshmen at the Homecoming Banquet. They’ve been married for 33 years. • Jacobsen was the teacher at a recent

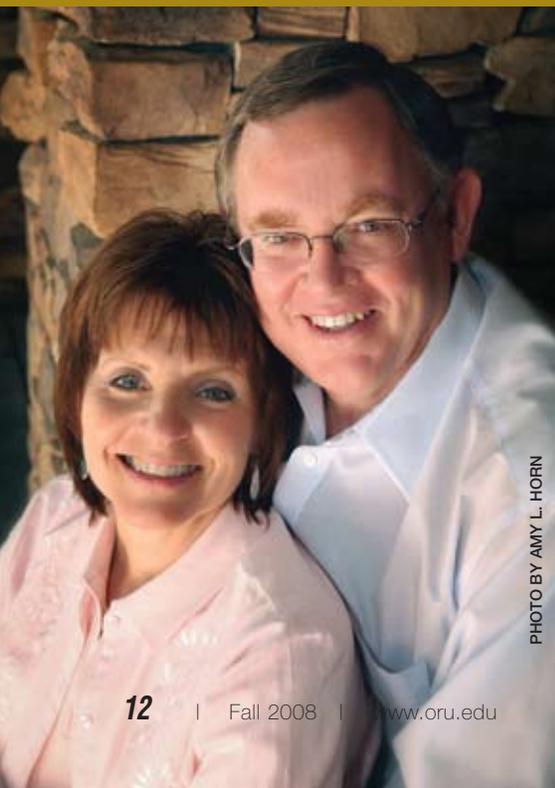


PHOTO BY AMY L. HORN



other people tell me is there,” Jacobsen said, “and I’ll go, no, that’s *not* there; you’re making that up.”

Clearly, the book has started “a national conversation,” in Jacobsen’s words, about who God really is. Judging by the e-mails Windblown Media has received, it has also brought healing to many readers.

All the buzz and the skyrocketing sales caught the attention of previously uninterested publishers as early as August 2007, but most of them wanted to take the book out of Windblown’s hands. Hachette, however, offered a partnership as a “co-venture publisher” because, as they told Jacobsen, Cummings, and Young, “We think you guys have identified an audience that really is between the secular, that can only talk about a New Age god, and Christian publishing, which has a sometimes-unimaginative way of talking about God in the world.” Windblown hesitated to make the deal, but as Jacobsen humorously explained, “We were getting close to a million copies and it was definitely taxing our shipping department — the Ping-Pong table in the garage.” So, they signed a contract on June 1 that also allows Windblown to bring four to six new books a year to Hachette for printing and marketing.

“This has been an amazing gift to us, and we’re very, very excited about it,” Jacobsen said during this phone interview that found him — briefly — at home. These days, he is spending much of his time on the road, supporting the book but also managing two of his other careers: BridgeBuilders, which offers mediation and consulting services regarding First Amendment rights to educators, parents and community members across the U.S.; and Lifestream, which involves writing books, travel, and Web site resources he’s developed

to encourage people, as he says, to experience “a closer walk with Jesus and more relational engagements with others.” And, with plans to turn *The Shack* into a movie, Jacobsen will add another title, associate producer, to his résumé. (Oh, and he’s working on five or six books, too.)

It all sounds like a dream come true, but Jacobsen doesn’t want you to get the wrong idea about what it means to him. “I don’t feel any more successful today than I did three or four years ago before *The Shack* when hardly anybody on the planet knew who I was,” he said with all sincerity. “Three years ago I was . . . self-publishing my own books and meeting in homes with 25 to 30 people, sharing Jesus together. I think that was maybe more successful than what we’re doing today in terms of its fruitfulness for the kingdom.”

Living through what Jacobsen acknowledges is “a very, very busy season,” has he considered calling a halt to any of his non-*Shack* activities? Matter-of-factly, he responds: “I still get to wake up every day and do what God puts in front of me. I just don’t sense that it’s time to close any of those down.” On the other hand, he admits, “some things will have to change. I’m hoping God has a plan out there. From where I sit today, I don’t see what that plan is. I’m living today and I’m comfortable that it’ll work out in the months to come.”

After a recent meeting with “the Spiderman guy” (a producer Jacobsen knows who might come on board for the movie), Jacobsen’s daughter, Julie, looked at him and said, “Don’t you think you’re way in over your head?”

Jacobsen said, “Darlin’, I don’t even know what bottom feels like anymore. And that’s fine with me.”

Hear more from Wayne at alumni.oru.edu.

spiritual life seminar in Charlottesville, Va. • A new garage band? No, it’s the Shack mailing and shipping team. L to R: Paul Young, Brad Cummings and Wayne Jacobsen.



10.4 million reasons to be

That's 10.4 as in \$10.4 million — the amount ORU spent this summer catching up on deferred maintenance projects. Within days of Commencement, crews were pouncing on ORU's buildings and grounds . . . making noise, making a mess and ultimately, making something beautiful out of dorm rooms, classrooms and the library.



Summer Projects

1. LRC front porch: polished like a shiny new penny.
2. Expanded Fishbowl with game tables, flat panel LCD TVs and lots more.
3. A new sprinkler system has been installed.
4. Senior Megan Spees loves her microfridge.
5. Flowers and shrubs to trees: "We've got you surrounded!"
6. LRC 2 classrooms and lobby got new carpet, too.
7. You can tell the bookstore by its new floor cover.

If it's drastic change you want to talk about, consider Zoppelt Auditorium, the top-to-bottom overhauls of Claudius Roberts and E. M. Roberts halls, the enlarged Fishbowl, the new pavilion, the remodeled fourth floor of the library, and the LRC and GC's resurfaced porches and ramps that provide easier access for the handicapped.

For less drastic but much-appreciated change, there's reupholstered furniture and new carpeting in numerous office areas throughout campus, new exterior paint and repair on various buildings, sound-

proofing in Timko-Barton Hall, and a new sprinkler system.

What do students think of all this? "It means a beginning," junior Alyssa Bailey said. "It encourages you to keep going. It gives me new life and new hope."

Alumni have opinions too. Nan (Stoskopf-87) Gammill lived in Claudius and Frances Cardone Hall for three of her four years at ORU. She and husband Dana (1983-87) have a son, Michael, who is a freshman at ORU this year. A visit to ORU in 2006 left her saddened, she said, when it came to the physical

Thankful



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appearance of the campus. “You can imagine my amazement,” she said, “upon my arrival on August 8, 2008. I was very impressed and so set at ease by all that I saw happening.” All the renovations, she said, “blew me away. I couldn’t believe so much had been accomplished in so short a period of time.” Outside of the physical changes, she said, she was “incredibly blessed to see that Oral’s vision is not only being preserved but promoted to a whole new level.”

“... What I witnessed firsthand in the students and through the deliveries of Interim President Fagin, Dean

Boyd and Board Chair Mart Green, I was not only deeply encouraged but convinced that we had nothing to fear. ORU is alive and well and ready for all whom God has called there, including our son.”

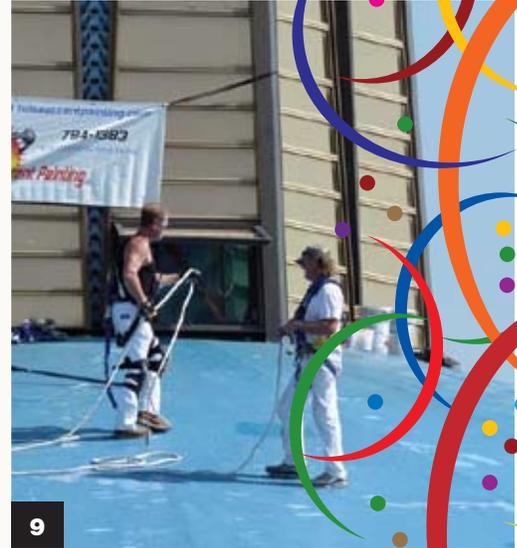
Michael Muccio, a 1982 graduate, lived in EMR and Towers as a student. When he came to campus in August, he said, he was “very pleased and excited for the students. I believe my son Joshua (junior at ORU) and daughter Arielle (a freshman) are in ORU in perhaps its finest years. . . . I met and spoke at length with Mart

Green and I love his heart, his attitude and his zeal to make ORU better. I take great pleasure in being a graduate of ORU and both my kids are thrilled about being there. I’m very excited about what they are contributing to the campus and what ORU will deposit into them.”

See for yourself what God has done at ORU. Take a look at these photos, and then make plans to visit the campus sometime soon (Homecoming 2009, Feb. 13 and 14, is a good time to come!) In this case, seeing is believing.



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Summer Projects

- 8. GC 6th floor pit: reupholstered
- 9. It took a few brave men to paint the Prayer Tower. (More remodeling is happening inside. Stay tuned for exciting news about our new prayer initiative . . .)
- 10. Library, 4th floor: new glass walls and new group study rooms.
- 11. New LRC ramp means easier access to LRC 2.
- 12. New pavilion: another place to gather.
- 13. Claudius and EMR: all-new bathrooms
- 14. "Can we see some ID?" The Eagle Card Center is bigger and better able to serve students and alumni who need ID cards.
- 15. EMR: It's hip to be (carpet) squares.
- 16. A sight for sore backs: new mattresses



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Praise, Prayers Offered Up for ORU

Since the early days of his ministry, Chancellor Oral Roberts has been known for saying, “There is no distance in prayer.” It’s a truism that has lodged in the psyche and spirit of anyone who has ever gone to ORU.

On Sept. 6, alumni, faculty and friends all over the world displayed their belief in the concept once again by taking part in an Alumni Day of Prayer and Fasting, called by Board of Reference member and ’81 grad Suzanne Behr. The more than 400 who signed up on the Web agreed to pray (and fast, as they felt led), and many attended one of the closing prayer services hosted by alumni in 38 cities, from Orlando, Florida and Jelgava, Latvia to Cologne, Germany and Beijing, China.

At the Tulsa service, held in Christ’s Chapel (and viewable at alumni.oru.edu), attendees heard why their prayers on this day were important and what their focus should be. “We want the founding vision of ORU to grow and get bigger and brighter,” Behr said, adding, “We’re not seeking some experience; we’re seeking God.”

As Brandon Snell, an ’06 grad, softly played worship songs on his guitar, people prayed — led by faculty and alumni (including Drs. Trevor Grizzle, Nate Meleen, Jim Shelton, John Korstad, and Larry Hart; Chené Tucker, Kim [Allen] Ford) and student Matt Rauch. They prayed for the ORU family, ORU supporters, ORU’s next president, ORU’s finances, and ORU’s future. There was rejoicing for the blessings of the past year, repentance for individual and corporate sins, and prayers for revival and renewal.

“We’re in awe of Your power and Your majesty,” Behr prayed, “and we are honored to be called Your friends.”



Orange You Happy With the Library?

Once upon a time (on Aug. 9, to be exact), more than 50 people — alumni, faculty, and other ORU family members — showed up at the library to take part in “Working the Vision” Help Day.

Organized by David Burkus, a 2005 graduate, WTV involved moving tons of books and lots of furniture as well as cleaning, dismantling and reassembling those bright-orange shelves that most alumni remember so well. The volunteers spent many hours putting much of the library back together — a process made necessary by the installation of new carpet and remodeling work.

WTV was an offshoot of Renewing the Vision, ORU’s \$25 million matching gift campaign. It was a way for alumni, especially, to give back to ORU in a non-monetary fashion.

“Your participation demonstrated what I knew was true,” Burkus said in a thank-you e-mail to volunteers, “that the alumni and other stakeholders are ready, willing and beginning to take ownership over our university. It is my hope that this will not be a ‘one and done’ event, but that we will continue with future ‘Working the Vision’ events and projects.”

By the time you read this story, all of the library renovations should be complete.

Now, that’s a happy ending . . .

1. The few . . . the proud . . . the vision-workers!
2. Some things just won’t fit on the elevator.
3. The Class of ’81’s Michael Hairston (L) and ’77 grad Doug Scott did some of the heavy lifting.



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4. David and Janna (Korstad-05) Burkus enjoyed some pizza — a treat that library watchdog Dr. William Jernigan said would be a one-time-only rule-bender. 5. Bookstore magnate and ORU Board Chair Mart Green helped work the vision. “I’ve moved a lot of books in my time,” he says.



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Armstrong Means Extra Strength

All along, Kevin Armstrong (1980-82) planned to start his education in ORU’s communication arts department. But he didn’t plan to end up teaching there.

Born in Tulsa but raised in Ohio, his heart’s desire was to return to his birthplace and attend ORU. But as an aspiring journalist, Armstrong knew he’d have to finish his degree at a school with a journalism emphasis — something not offered at ORU. So, after attending ORU his first two years, he transferred to the University of Missouri.

In 1984, Armstrong graduated from UofM and launched into 24 years in the newspaper business, mostly at *The Virginian-Pilot* in Norfolk. There, through the invitation of a friend, he also began teaching adjunct at Regent University in 2005.

He and his wife Marcy and their son Tyler were enjoying life in Virginia while the couple’s two daughters (Amanda Espino 08 and Ashley [Class of ’09]) attended ORU. Then, during a Thanksgiving 2007 visit to Tulsa to visit the girls and his parents, Armstrong saw a possibility for doing more teaching while living close to family. So, the newsman-educator sent a letter of interest to the communication arts department. His letter went something like this: “I have a job at Regent University and *The Virginian-Pilot*; I don’t need a job. But if you ever see a place for me at ORU, give me a call.” A few months later, ORU called, Regent counter-offered, and Armstrong ultimately accepted the ORU position.

Armstrong’s veteran media experience now infuses his newfound joy



Dr. Joel Gaikwad (foreground), assistant professor of biology, and biology/pre-med major Anup Kumar were among the first to use the new microscopes.

of Christian university teaching. He believes he can do more good as a teacher training a class of college students than as a journalist training a few new-hires.

At ORU, Armstrong teaches courses in News Reporting, Feature Writing and Mass Media Law. As director of student publications, he helps students apply those skills to the student newspaper (*The Oracle*) and yearbook (*Perihelion*).

Asked what he hopes for ORU’s students, Armstrong said, “I hope and pray that they live each day with great expectations of what the Lord wants to reveal to them about the plan He already has prepared for them. It’s so much greater than they could ever imagine. I know. I’m living proof by being here at ORU!”

ORU By The Numbers

This fall, ORU is serving 3,067 for-credit students. These students represent 49 states (no Vermont!) and 62 countries. The top five states for student enrollment are Oklahoma, Texas, California, Florida, and Michigan.

Scope These Out!

“Awesome!” is a word that’s been used to describe the newest additions to ORU’s Microbiology Lab: 24 Labomed Lx400 microscopes, which arrived this summer. They’re top-of-the-line and worth nearly \$16,000. Funds for purchasing the microscopes came from two sources: biology alumni gifts and a portion of a gift received by the School of Nursing from Cancer Treatment Centers of America.

The Ervin Legacy

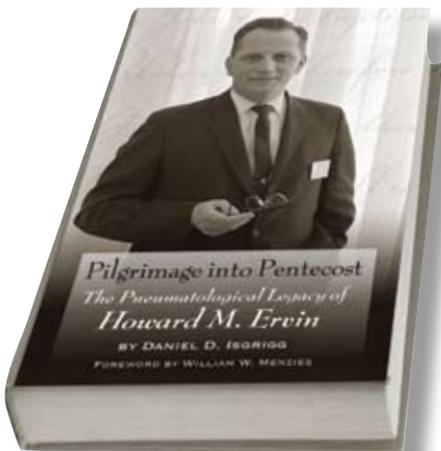
When Daniel Isgrigg was looking for a master’s thesis topic, Dr. Cheryl Iverson suggested Dr. Howard Ervin. Unfamiliar with one of ORU’s original theology professors, Isgrigg said he’d think about it, especially since he would be taking Ervin’s Pneumatology course.

A few days into the course (which incidentally was Ervin’s final course as an ORU professor), Isgrigg knew he had to capture the life and legacy of this man. The end result, *Pilgrimage*

Into Pentecost: The Pneumatological Legacy of Howard M. Ervin, was the master's thesis that became both a book and a presentation at the Society of Pentecostal Studies meeting on March 14 at Duke University in Durham, N.C.

Isgrigg said the project changed his life. "I am much more committed to the Pentecostal message because of Dr. Ervin . . . He showed that we have sound reasons for believing in baptism in the Spirit, tongues as evidence, and an empowerment that is needed to reach the world for Christ. For 50 years, this is what he preached."

For the full story, visit alumni.oru.edu.



Careers That Count

Alumni are welcome to contact Career Services for help in finding a job. But that's not all! Career Services would like to hear from alumni who are willing to serve as mentors to current students (for a very short time commitment), and from those alumni who are in a position to hire other ORU graduates (or who know of openings at their company). Go to orugoldenhire.com, write to careers@oru.edu, or call 918/495.6912.

Theology Is Intact

Although Oral Roberts University has recently experienced dramatic changes, its seminary hasn't.

Dr. Thomson Mathew, who has been dean of the school since January 2000, confessed that when the new leadership arrived, his school admittedly and rightly had initial concerns about the university's spiritual direction. "In the beginning, we didn't know what we were signing up for!" But now enthused to have several academicians on the Board of Trustees, he realizes the benefits of their support. "They enhance our work," he said.

Because Pentecostal denominations make a strong showing on the board, observers might wonder if ORU has gone denominational. According to Dr. Cheryl Iverson, associate dean of Academic Affairs in the School of Theology and Missions and an ORU graduate (M.A., Theological/Historical Studies, 1985), ORU remains not

only charismatic but also ecumenical. The school's faculty represents various denominations, including Assemblies of God, Lutheran, Southern Baptist, and Roman Catholic.

Mathew said the school's curriculum remains unapologetically charismatic in conviction and commitment — and balanced. "We teach the whole counsel of God — everything God wants us to know to live the kingdom lifestyle."

Holy Spirit in the Now, Charismatic Life and the Healing Ministry, and Signs and Wonders are still on undergraduate and graduate degree plan sheets, along with Old Testament and New Testament survey courses.

Joy Ames, an '08 M.Div. graduate, said, "If someone . . . approached me and asked about ORU's spiritual direction, I would assure them that the Holy Spirit is still alive and active on the campus of ORU. I am proud to be a graduate of ORU's School of Theology and Missions. If asked if I would do it again, there is no question; the answer is yes."

Put Your Stock to Work!

At Oral Roberts University's Estate Planning office, our first responsibility is to help individuals practice good stewardship by making the most of the financial resources that God has entrusted to them.

We also find great joy and satisfaction in working with individuals who have a passion for the mission of ORU.

We want you to know that if you purchased stock a number of years ago and it has grown in value, it is possible for you to receive fixed, monthly income in exchange for that stock, as well as possible tax savings. To learn more about receiving high fixed payments — with added tax savings — please contact our office at 800/822.8203 or send an e-mail to development@oru.edu.

Additional information on this and other planned giving options that allow income generation for you and benefit ORU is available on our Web site. Just go to www.orugift.com.

The Voice You Are Now Hearing . . .

Chancellor Oral Roberts has a fresh word on a familiar subject.

There was a time when Oral Roberts' name and face were everywhere. Since retiring from the presidency of ORU and becoming chancellor in 1993, however, his appearances on the national stage have been few and far between. And that's been fine with him.

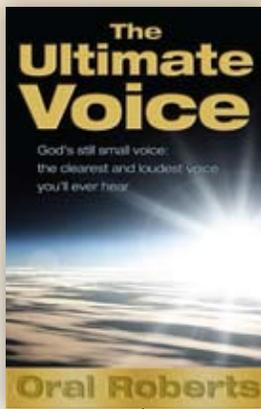
That is not to say that his influence has diminished. He's simply found another way to take God's healing power to his generation, which has been the call on his life since he was healed of tuberculosis as a 17-year-old.

For the past several years, small groups of pastors and evangelists (including ORU alumni) — from six to fifteen at a time — have come to his home in California “to ask me questions” and “to discuss the things of God with me,” Roberts says in his new book, *The Ultimate Voice*. As you might expect, their questions draw upon the author/evangelist/educator's areas of expertise: healing, the work of the Holy Spirit and — no surprise — what it's like to hear the voice of God.

What still surprises Roberts is that others don't believe, as he does, that “God speaks to every person who believes in Him, and even to some who don't.” In part, that is the reason why he wrote *The Ultimate Voice*: to demystify communication with God.

“At the very core,” Roberts writes, “I believe two things. First, every person *wants* to hear from God. And second, many people don't believe they are *worthy* to hear from God, and therefore, they are a little frightened to hear from God. After all, if and when God speaks to a person, there's only one response to be made: wholehearted obedience.”

From the moment they first set foot on campus, ORU students get the message that defines the university and distinguishes it from all others: *Raise up your students to hear My voice . . .* Roberts is gratified that so many of them have taken that message to heart and are more effective



ministers of the gospel — in every profession — because of it.

One day, he says in his book, an ORU graduate in his late fifties came to see him and was able to quote the entire mission statement (now known as the Founding Vision) verbatim. “It's what drew me to ORU,” he said. “It became the mission statement for my life.”

The dedication of Roberts' 224-page book reads: “*To the alumni of Oral Roberts University. Your work will exceed mine as you listen to God's voice and obey Him.*” That

obedience, he says, might not always be easy, and might in fact lead to what the world sees as failure, but “God uses everything we do in obedience and faith to bring glory to Himself.”

Alumni who call 1-800-910-6345 to order the \$24.95 book, identifying themselves as ORU alumni, will generate a significant rebate to ORU that will go to the Renewing the Vision campaign. As with all campaign contributions (through April 30, 2009), these rebates will be matched by the Board of Trustees and result in a further reduction of ORU's debt. (A sample chapter of the book is available online at www.OralRoberts-book.com, but **purchases must be made by phone to ensure that ORU receives the rebate.**)



The chancellor, who will celebrate his 91st birthday on Jan. 24, is living proof that God still speaks to those who will listen.

The Whole Person Scholarship

Equipping well-rounded students to be whole-person leaders

From its inception over 40 years ago, ORU has been a university committed to offering a whole person education — mind, body and spirit — and Board Chair Mart Green and his family want to make sure that continues. Recently, the Greens presented a challenge to alumni and donors to give toward the newly formed Whole Person Scholarship.

The Whole Person Scholarship will seek out prospective freshmen and transfer students, nominated by their schools or church officials, that are spiritually alive, intellectually alert, physically disciplined, socially adept and on their way to becoming professionally competent (a task that ORU will help them complete). Over the next four years, the Greens have committed to matching up to \$4 million a year for the purpose of the Whole Person Scholarship.

Students receiving this scholarship will be given an award ranging from \$2,500 to full tuition and will be eligible to renew their scholarship each year if they continue to maintain a “whole-person lifestyle.” During the 2008 Commencement ceremony, student response speaker Jamie Weathers addressed her fellow graduates with a passionate speech about how the whole-person lifestyle at ORU

made their education among the best in the world.

“At ORU, we believe that the pursuit of knowledge is intimately acquainted with the pursuit of God, and it is by the discipline of our spirit, mind and body we are able to fulfill the call of God on our lives,” Weathers said, drawing an enthusiastic response from those gathered.

In light of the passion of students and alumni like Weathers, this scholarship will first be offered to a unique group of 25 incoming freshmen and transfer students for the fall 2009 semester. This initiative also joins forces with ORU's \$25 million Renewing the Vision campaign, which will add yet another matching fund that will go toward erasing the debt of the university. Essentially, each Whole Person gift will be quadrupled (if given by April 30, 2009), impacting students and sustaining the future of ORU. For example, here is how a gift of \$1,000 would grow: \$1,000 original gift → matched by Green family = \$2,000 (given toward a WPS) → matched by Renewing the Vision = \$4,000 (\$2,000 is used to pay down university debt, \$2,000 goes to WPS).

For more information on how to support or nominate a student for the Whole Person Scholarship, visit www.oru.edu/wholeperson.





Bain Turns in Sterling Performance

BY RACHEL WEGNER 07

Christ's Chapel roared with applause and cheers on Aug. 29 as Andretti Bain took the stage and held high his Olympic silver medal. Just a week earlier, he and his fellow Bahamian teammates won the silver medal in the 4x400-meter relay at the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing.

As a graduate student set to finish in December and a former member of the ORU track and field team, Bain also has two NCAA 400-meter national titles to his credit. He made it to the semifinals of the 400 meters during the Olympics, but failed to qualify for the finals.

At a press conference on Aug. 28, Bain said he was still in a state of disbelief when it came to his Olympic experience.

"It's something I've been dreaming about all my life," he said. "When I first came to ORU, I told Coach [Joe] Dial that I wanted to be an Olympic champion. Everything just happened so fast, and I've truly been blessed this entire year."

Bain said he hopes to win an individual gold medal in the 400 meters at the 2012 Olympics, along with a

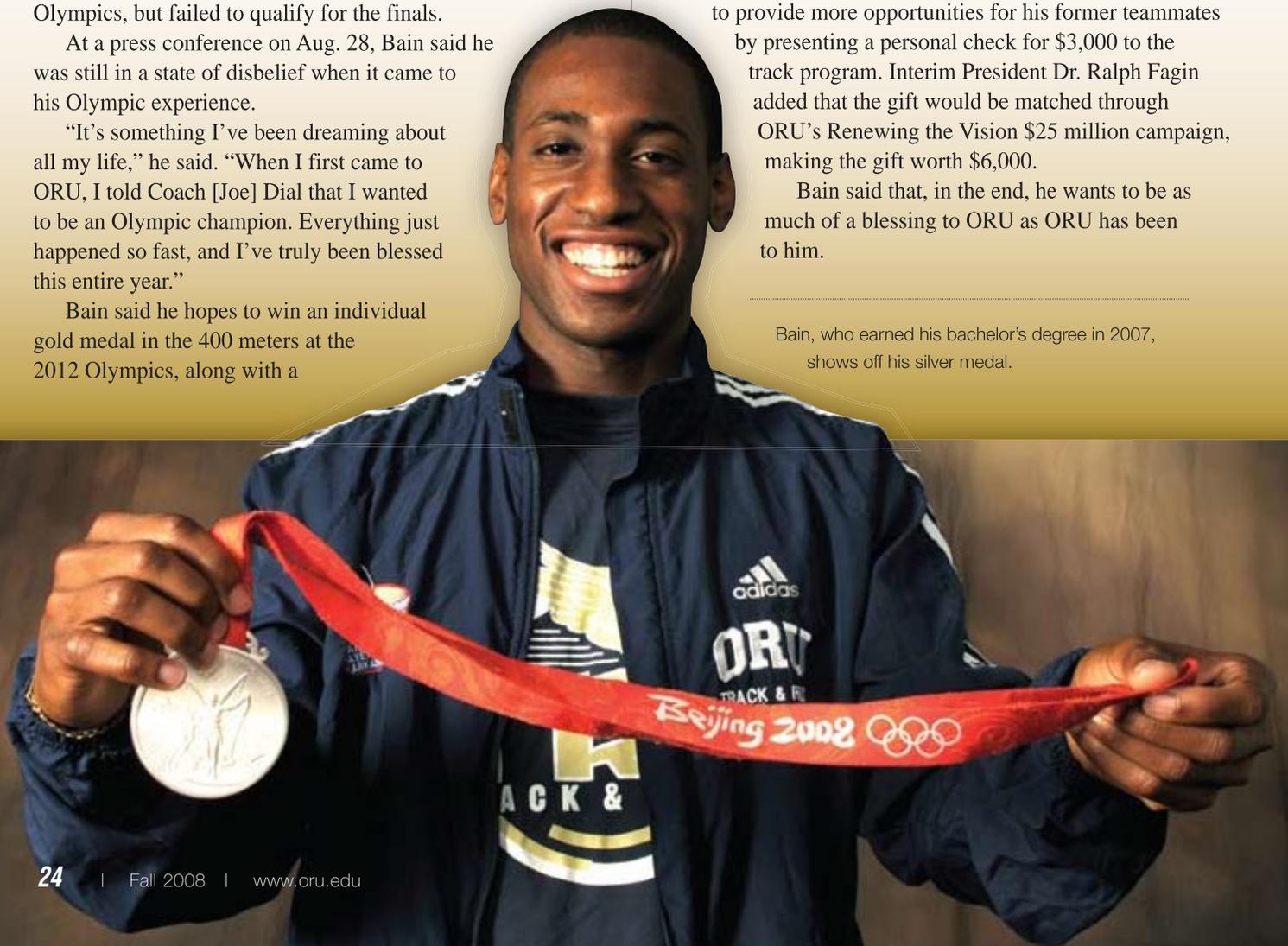
gold medal with his four-by-four relay team. Driven as he is to succeed on the track, Bain also has dreams to make an impact in the business world. He attributed his love for business to the professors he has had at ORU. Bain speaks well of his coaches and his teammates; in fact, he is serving as an assistant track coach this year. He believes his former teammates are just as talented as (if not more talented than) he is.

"It's a matter of those guys taking advantage of every opportunity they get," Bain said. "From day one, the track team and Coach Dial made me as comfortable as possible and kept motivating me."

During the chapel service on Aug. 29, Bain took a step to provide more opportunities for his former teammates by presenting a personal check for \$3,000 to the track program. Interim President Dr. Ralph Fagin added that the gift would be matched through ORU's Renewing the Vision \$25 million campaign, making the gift worth \$6,000.

Bain said that, in the end, he wants to be as much of a blessing to ORU as ORU has been to him.

Bain, who earned his bachelor's degree in 2007, shows off his silver medal.



Celebrate the Vision

ORU HOMECOMING 2009

FEBRUARY 13 & 14

It's a new day at ORU. Come celebrate with us!

Here are just a few of the many exciting events you'll want to check out at Homecoming 2009 . . .

Noteworthy Events

»» "Brother Bob" Stamps @ Chapel

Former campus chaplain and favorite among ORU speakers Dr. Bob Stamps will be speaking at the Homecoming 2009 chapel, and also at the 30-year class reunion.

»» "Golden Grads" 40-year-plus Reunion

We will be celebrating our first-ever 40-year class reunion!

»» ORU Update with Mart Green

Board Chair Mart Green will give alumni the inside scoop on what is happening at ORU.

»» Women's Luncheon

Our special speaker will be Ann (Molitor-86) Dunagan, author of *The Mission-Minded Child*. Our musical guest will be vocalist Terri (Hubbard-87) Miller (*Livin' Everyday*).

»» Return to Port

It's an all-academic-department reunion extravaganza, complete with departmental displays, hors d'oeuvres and conversation with fellow alumni and faculty.

»» Alumni Homecoming Banquet

This year's banquet will feature "Alumnus of the Year" award recipients Laura Pratt-Nelson, Tim Harris and Mark and Paula Sterns. Shortly after the banquet, join fellow Eagle fans for the men's basketball game . . . and stick around for the Post-game Reception.

What's New

- »» **The Legacy Hike** (a campus tour for alumni parents)
- »» **Past and Present Student Association Members Reunion**
- »» **Former Student-Athlete Reunion**
- »» **Souls A' Fire and Music Ministries Reunion Dinner**
- »» **Speed Networking** (for our entrepreneurs and business people)
- »» **Women's Basketball Alumni Reception**

For more information or to register, visit alumni.oru.edu/homecoming or refer to the Homecoming 2009 brochure you received in the mail.



John Cherry (an '80 grad who shoulda been '78): "Is this where I register for Homecoming?"
Peter Thavornrat (Class of 2005): "Yes, John. You DO know how to use a computer, right?"
John: "Very funny, Peter."



Touching Heaven with Their Prayers

BY RACHEL WEGNER 07

How a group of praying moms are effecting change in the lives of their children and other students at ORU

In the four-year history of the ORU Intercessors group, the results have been encouraging. As a group of mothers that communicate via e-mail to pray for their children at ORU, they have seen God move in response to their prayers. There have been grades brought up, classes weathered, relationships strengthened, missions trips funded and accomplished, sicknesses healed and hearts encouraged.

Each week during the academic year, Paula (McGregor-77) Sterns sends out an e-mail to the group of more than 20 “ORU moms” that spans the country and even reaches Africa. Within that e-mail, she includes an encouraging scripture and prayer requests from her son Tyler, who is currently a senior at ORU. In turn, members of the group respond with their own scripture and prayer requests from their children.

“It’s so important that we pray for our kids,” Sterns said. “Even in a Christian university, the attacks [on them] are the same. When you invest in these kids in prayer, you really care about the outcome. It’s not just a little, ‘Oh, God bless

them.’ You really care that Anna made the worship team. You really care about Tyler’s missions choices. You really care about Lindsay’s major or Natalie being sick.”

Although the participating mothers receive the prayer requests of all the students represented, Sterns said they keep those requests confidential within their group. At times, mothers will e-mail her with private prayer requests. Other times, she said their children request that some things not be shared with the group at all. In the end, the purpose is the same: to cover their children and their situations with prayer.

Erin (McGinnis-81) Nelson, whose daughter, Natalie, is a junior and son, Nathan, is a sophomore, said that she has seen the power of the unity the group exhibits.

ABOVE: **One big, happy family.** Paula Sterns with four of her son’s friends at the Sterns residence in Grand Prairie, Texas. From L to R, seniors David Palomares, Tripp Hipple, Stephen Zarlengo and Josh Becker.

“As I think of the time we have joined together as a network of believers, intercessors and moms, I am so thankful to God for the answers to prayers that have taken place in the lives of our children at ORU,” Nelson said. “What an encour-



A classy car, a classy pair. Paula and Mark Sterns pose for a photo at a family friend's wedding in Long Island, N.Y.

agement and blessing to take the needs of other ORU students to the Lord in prayer, knowing in turn, prayer is being offered up for your own. I have sensed a powerful work of the Holy Spirit as we have prayed in unity for our kids [and] for their growth and maturity in their walk with Him.”

Another mother, Teresa Klein, has a son who is currently a junior and said that as they draw near to God and pray as a group, He is faithful to draw near and answer their prayers.

“It is so comforting to have a group of mothers stand in agreement with you in prayer for your child,” Klein said. “As we pray together for all of our children, God has moved on their behalf and we have experienced many answered prayers. There is no distance in prayer and there is power in agreement.”

As word spreads about the ORU Intercessors group, Sterns hopes that it will become an even greater force to cover the students and campus of ORU with fervent prayers.

“I wish every mom from ORU could be a part of it — not to grow the group, but so we could completely cover our children in prayer,” she said. “Nothing touches Heaven like a mom’s prayer.”

For more information about the ORU Intercessors group or to become a part of it, contact Paula Sterns at p_sterns@yahoo.com.

ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR 2010 AWARDS



WHO WILL WE HONOR FOR
THEIR DISTINGUISHED
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Going Where His Light Is Seen Dim

How one graduate is working to lower the 90% abortion rate for babies with Down syndrome

Anne Fox Downey, Esq., a 1985 graduate of the former O.W. Coburn School of Law at ORU, credits the university for many blessings in her life. One is “a quality legal education from Christian professors who taught their students how to combine faith with the practice of law.” Another is her introduction to classmate Brian W. Downey (82, 85-J.D.), who became her husband two months after their law school graduation. The Downeys moved to Brian’s hometown near Buffalo, N.Y., and went on to adopt two children, Jacqueline and Wesley, now 18 and 16.

Since graduation, Anne and Brian have had many opportunities to live Chancellor Oral Roberts’ vision to go where God’s light is seen dim and His voice is heard small. Aside from integrating faith into the practice of law at their firm, Downey & Downey, Anne says she and Brian have seen the Lord’s hand at work time and time again in their volunteer activities for various Christian organizations.

In September 2008, Anne spent time working with Concerned Women for America, the nation’s largest public policy women’s organization, to launch an international pro-life project aimed at reducing the 90 percent abortion rate for babies diagnosed as possibly having Down syndrome. In consultation with the major Down syndrome groups in the United States, Anne prepared a brochure for parents that have learned their babies may have Down syndrome. The brochure and its companion Web site provide resources for families who are facing a prenatal diagnosis or who have a



REUBEN, AGE 1, IS THE PICTURE OF JOY.

newborn with Down syndrome. Eventually, Anne said, she hopes to have many country-specific versions of the brochure that connect people internationally with local agencies that can help them.

“With Gov. [Sarah] Palin’s story of her family’s loving embrace of baby Trig, born in April 2008 with Down syndrome, we are starting to see a growing awareness of the joys that await families who choose to give life to a baby with Down syndrome,” Anne said. “We pray that many more families will experience this blessing and will allow all of us to benefit from the presence, the life and the potential of individuals with Down syndrome.”

Medical professionals, university officials, pregnancy clinic workers, pro-life activists and others may go to DownSyndromeBrochure.com to download free copies of the brochure in English and Spanish. Print copies can be ordered for a small fee. For more information, please contact Anne at director@newyork.cwfa.org or 716/359.3226. The Downeys are asking their fellow alumni to join them in praying for the success of this project.

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Notes From Alumni

1970s

Dr. Julia (Van Loan) Stewart 76 was recently promoted to the position of professor of foreign languages at Eastern University in suburban Philadelphia, Pa. She is also working on a research grant from the John Templeton Foundation to further investigate fMRI (a specialized form of an MRI) evidence of the linguistic nature of glossolalia. She and her husband, Len, are a blended family, as her husband grew up in Iran as the son of missionaries. Len is currently working in a worldwide ministry with Iranians. They have six children: Stephan, 25, Aaron, 23, Sarah, 22, William, 20, Erica, 19 and Elise, 16, and reside in West Chester, Pa.

Carole (King) Liston 77 penned two magazine articles that were selected for the Apex Excellence in Writing Awards in the International APEX Excellence in Publication Awards for 2008. Her winning articles were "Million Dollar Ride" and a series titled "Health Care Heroes," both published in the *Joplin Business Journal*. There were about 4,500 entries in the highly competitive annual contest for publication excellence.

Jerry 78 and Val (Dougherty) Reddix 77 currently live in Garden Valley, Idaho in the mountains. Jerry received his doctor of psychology degree in 1989 and was in private practice for a number of years before

feeling called to use his gifts to provide emotional and spiritual support for missionaries in the field — specifically in the 10/40 window. Val has written several books for children and short stories for teens. She is a home school mom and shares Jerry's heart for field workers. They are currently in the process of building a missionary apartment for field workers to visit while on furlough. They plan to offer missionaries prayer, counseling, rest and relaxation or a combination of all three when they visit. Jerry and Val have four children: Rachel, 27, Sarah, 25, Isaac, 13 and Emily, 8.

1980s

Scott Robertson 80 has formed a nonprofit organization called "Let Hope Begin Here/Guatemala." He is closing his practice as a psychologist in December 2008 to serve at-risk children through established benevolence networks in Bella Nueva, Guatemala. All ORU alumni are welcome to bring service teams.

William McConnell 82 serves as the chair of the music department and the director of choirs at St. Andrews Presbyterian College in Laurinburg, N.C. Recently, he was awarded tenure and promotion to the rank of associate professor. In June, he took on the role of associate dean for adult and external programs for St. Andrews as well. In May, he was traveling in Vietnam and was invited to conduct a rehearsal

of the choir at the Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory of Music. He has been invited to come back and conduct a full concert at the Conservatory in 2009. Bill currently resides in Laurinburg, N.C.

Michael Murphy 82 spent 15 years as a pastor in his hometown of Sherman, Tex. In 2006, he finished writing his first book, titled "Powerful Attitudes," with an introduction penned by *New York Times* bestselling author Dr. Harold H. Bloomfield. Michael had also long dreamed of creating, selling and publishing books that were personalized by putting the name of the reader directly into the scriptures included in the books. After writing his first book, he came across a company that helped to make that dream a reality. He has since written three reader-personalized books and now resides in Sherman, Tex., with his wife, Laurie, and their daughters, Ashley and Courtney.

Charles "Chasz" Parker 82, 85-M.Div., executive director of the Rescue Mission in Syracuse, N.Y., accepted the bronze CNY BEST award from the Central New York Chapter of the American Society for Training and Development on June 19. The Rescue Mission was one of 15 businesses in his region competing for this inaugural award, which was established to recognize the best practices in workplace learning and development. Chasz has been in leadership of the Rescue Mission for 10 years, having previously served for a decade at Metropolitan Ministries in Tampa, Fla. Chasz and his wife, Christa, live in

Baldwinsville, N.Y. They have five children: Claire, 20, Chloe, 18, Charles, 16, Charis, 13 and Cullen, 11.

John Breon 84 earned his doctor of ministry degree from Asbury Theological Seminary in May. For his doctoral project, he conducted a study of the Apostles' Creed and measured the study's impact on participants' spiritual growth. His dissertation is titled "Christian Doctrine as a Means of Christian Spiritual Formation." John continues to serve as pastor of First United Methodist Church in Eufaula, Okla. His daughter was valedictorian of her class at Eufaula High School and plans to attend the University of Oklahoma to study journalism. John and his wife, Nancy, reside in Eufaula and have three children: Rachel, 18, Eric, 15 and Eli, 10.

In May, **Mitch Ernst 84** was elected president of the Omaha Coin Club, which is Nebraska's oldest numismatic organization (founded in 1934). Also, in March he was named editor of the Nebraska Numismatic Association Journal, a statewide publication that focuses on Nebraska club information and state and local coin show information; it also includes articles related directly to numismatics in Nebraska.



STEWART 76



MCCONNELL 82



PARKER 82, 85

Notes From Alumni

Dave Dowler 85 and his wife, **Laura (Blanchard) 84**, announced the launch of Waveside Church located in Malibu, Calif., in July. Over the past 12 years, Dave and Laura have served as associate pastors and elders at Guts Church in Tulsa. The Dowlers have recently co-authored "Reality Revealed," published to help lead people out of their past and into the hope-filled future God has available. Dave, Laura and their two sons, Aaron, 18, and Nathan, 15, are excited to be back in Southern California fulfilling the dreams and purposes in their hearts. For more information on the Dowlers' new church, visit www.wavesidechurch.com.

Brian Bucks 87 received Western Area Power Administration's highest departmental honor, the Exceptional Service Award, at a ceremony on July 24. Brian serves as an electrical engineer for the WAPA. The award reflects his value to the company in several areas, including: demonstration of unusual initiative in contributing to organizational efficiency or improved management, outstanding executive or technical ability, and unusual devotion to duty under adverse conditions. He was nominated for the award by co-workers for his contributions to the field office in Gering, Neb., especially in the safety arena. Brian and his wife, Colleen, live in Mitchell, Neb., and have three children: Alison, 13, Zeke, 11, and Abby, 6.

Brent Ritenour 88 was promoted to the position of vice presi-

dent of Internal Audit in August at his company, Steel Dynamics. He joined the team at Steel Dynamics in 2003 as a corporate auditor and oversees internal audit activities and other audit matters related to the company's existing and acquired operations. Before joining Steel Dynamics, he served for 12 years at Ernst and Young, becoming a senior manager and managing internal audit functions in industry there for four years.

1990s

After graduating from ORU, **Kelli (Beattie) Penna 91** lived in Germany and also in Albuquerque, N.M. She now teaches special education in Tucson, Ariz. She would enjoy hearing from friends.

Jeff Ross 93 and his wife, **Heidi (Larson 92-93)**, are excited to announce that they are the new franchise owners for Showhomes West Tennessee, a business that stages homes for sale. This will be the Rosses' second franchise. In February, Jeff and Heidi were awarded franchise of the year for their Showhomes Central Arkansas franchise. Jeff, who has served on the ORU Alumni Board since 2003, is excited to see all the positive changes happening at ORU. Both Jeff and Heidi are also looking forward to their children, Bailee and Parker, attending ORU in 2017 and 2019.

www.showhomes.com.

Darcy Veer 93 and his wife, **Shelly (Tackett) 93**, joyfully welcomed their new baby girl, Kaylee Gabriella, into the world on May 16, 2008. They currently reside in Broken Arrow, Okla.

Sandra (Weilin) Walker 93 is a vice president and foreign exchange trader at U.S. Bank's office at Seventh and Washington in St. Louis, Mo. In June, she received the U.S. Bank's Annual Summit award, one of U.S. Bank's highest employee achievement honors. This is her second Summit award, which recognizes outstanding achievement and rewards employees for their tremendous performance. Sandra has 14 years of experience in the financial services industry, spending the last 10 with U.S. Bank. She and her husband, **Jason "Todd" Walker 93**, reside in Wildwood, Mo., with their two children, Megan and Scott.

Deborah Given 97 married John (JK) Kunzē on Sept. 1, 2007. They are expecting their first child in February 2009. debnjk@gmail.com

2000s

Shauna (Shotton) Wortinger 00 married Travis in October 2007 and relocated from Tulsa to Sebring, Fla. She does CPA work for various clients and travels with a company out of Dallas, Tex., teaching QuickBooks seminars. Her husband is a financial advisor for Bank of America. Shauna would love to hear from anyone from the 1996-2000 school years or alumni living in the Orlando/Tampa area.

Joanne (Ball) Burgess 04 is in the process of publishing her children's book, "The Lizard and the Rock," which is about her home country of Bermuda. She had originally written the book for Professor Lori Kanitz's English class in 2003, where they had been assigned to write a fable. Professor Kanitz encouraged Joanne to publish her story someday, and she now is working on getting the book implemented into the government school system in Bermuda. Joanne and her husband, **Quincy 05-M.Div.**, have two children, Yeshai and Zahari.

Matthew McLeod 04 was named in spring 2008 as the Texas Association of Basketball Coaches Outstanding Coach of the Year (Small Private School Division) after leading Faith Academy (Victoria, Tex.) to 25 wins, a district title, and appearance in the regional finals. He and his wife, **Emily (Hawkinson) 04**, also welcomed their first child into the world when Olivia Mae McLeod was born on Feb. 23, 2008.

On May 23, **Allison Tuttle 04** married Richard Gilliland in Tulsa. Allison is currently on the worship team singing in seven services at the largest church in Oklahoma, lifechurch.tv. During the week she is a hair stylist at Tulsa Style. Her husband, Rich, plays bass guitar professionally throughout the U.S. for the Christian rap artist, KJ52.



BREON 84



BUCKS 87



ROSS 93



WORTINGER 00

He also works at Wyatt Technical Services and at a family business called Beamerz, Inc.

Christine Lederle 06 has been the director of a female dormitory at Sterling College in Sterling, Kan., for the past two years. During that time, she helped to lead a missions trip to Cape Town, South Africa (in December 2007). While in Cape Town, accompanied also by her family, she and her team of college students ministered in an orphanage with children who suffered from diseases such as AIDS and cerebral palsy. Originally from South Africa, Christine was so moved by her experience that she decided to move back to South Africa in August. She plans to spend four months partnering with and volunteering for Hillsong Church Cape Town. She will also be living with extended family and is excited to find out more about her heritage.

Obituaries

Monique (Kaleda) Boss, a 1991 ORU graduate who earned a bachelor's degree in speech/drama/debate secondary teaching, passed away on Sept. 7, 2008. She was 41. Monique had been the drama director and bookkeeper at Victory Christian Center in Austin, Tex. She is survived by her husband, Mike, and their children, Kayleigh, 5, and Cameron, 3.

Dennis Byrtus (1983-88) passed away on July 25, 2008 in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He was 42. He is sur-

vived by his wife, Julie (Grace), a 1990 ORU graduate, and their daughters, Miriam and Sarah.

Paul Greilick, a 1979 ORU graduate who earned a bachelor's degree in psychology, passed away on June 13, 2008 in Traverse City, Mich. He was 51. Paul earned a master's and a Ph.D. in psychology from Western Michigan University and maintained his own practice for several years.

Rebecca Hamilton, a 1973 ORU graduate who earned a bachelor's degree in education, passed away on July 23, 2008 in Claremore, Okla. She was 58. She is survived by her husband, Richard, who earned an M.Div. in theology from ORU in 1981.

Hannah-Joy T. Mankey, a 1999 ORU graduate who received a master's degree in Teaching English as a Second Language, passed away on July 29, 2008. She was 66. She was the mother of **Doug Bella (1986-89)** and **Barbara Corbett 94, 06-MBA**.

Michael Schlorke, who earned a bachelor's degree from ORU in 1994 (history) and an M.Div. in 2000, passed away on August 16, 2008. He was 40.

Peggy Eland, who worked as a librarian at ORU for more than 25 years, passed away on July 25. She was 85. Peggy was the wife of the late Gene Eland, who served as chair of music at ORU for almost 40 years, and mother of **Dave 69, Linda Foster 70, Don 75, 84, and Nancy 73**.

Dr. Ed Nelson, who taught full-time in ORU's biology department from 1968 to 1992, died peacefully on June 8 at his home in Tulsa, Okla. He was 80 years young. Dr. Nelson was born in Seattle, Wash., and spent much of his life pouring into others as a teacher at various institutions. He was also a member of the U.S. Marine Corps, serving stints during World War II and the Korean War. Dr. Nelson earned an M.S. and Ed.M. from Oregon State University in 1959, and his Ph.D. from Oklahoma State University in 1977. By the time he retired from full-time teaching in 1992, he was a tenured professor and was granted the rank of professor emeritus. For ten years after his retirement, he taught part-time at ORU as an adjunct professor. He was faculty advisor to Mu Kappa Chapter of Beta Beta Beta Biological Honor Society. In 1983 this chapter was named the outstanding chapter in the U.S. He also served as executive secretary-treasurer of the Oklahoma Academy of Science (1991-2001) and was a member and treasurer of the National Association of Academies of Science (1999-2002), from which he received the highest honors for his outstanding contributions. Among others, Dr. Nelson is survived by his high school sweetheart and wife of 61 years, Elsie, sons Steven and Joel, daughters Heidi and Marianne, seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Dr. Robert G. Voight, born March 26, 1921, passed away on May 26. Joining the ORU faculty in 1967, he served for 41 years in many capacities: as

a professor of English, chair of English, dean and vice president of Student Affairs, dean of Arts and Sciences, dean of Instruction, and vice provost of Academic Affairs. At the time of his passing, he had been teaching the Holy Spirit in the Now course for 25 years; Dr. Carl Hamilton said that Dr. Voight "had more contact with ORU students (16,000-plus) than any other professor." Dr. Voight wrote his letter of resignation the day before he died. He had received the Professor Emeritus award at Commencement three weeks earlier. An avid black bass fisherman, Dr. Voight also served for many years as a pastor. He earned his degrees from John Brown University (B.A.) and the University of Arkansas (M.A., Ph.D.). A short time ago, he established a scholarship fund at ORU in memory of his late wives; students in the School of Theology and Missions and the social work department benefit from it. (Contributions to this fund are welcome.) Dr. Voight is survived by his daughter, Elizabeth, son Larry, and numerous loving relatives.

Donna Wong, an adjunct associate professor/consultant in the ORU Anna Vaughn School of Nursing, passed away on May 4. She was 60.

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MCLEOD 04



TUTTLE 04



LEDERLE 06



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