Tulsa businessman and Distinguished Alumnus Jerry Buchanan was the guest speaker at Southeastern Oklahoma State University’s Spring Commencement on May 12.

Due to the threat of rain, two ceremonies were held in Bloomer Sullivan Arena at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. In between the two ceremonies, a reception at the Visual & Performing Arts Center honored the graduates and their families.

Other speakers included Southeastern president Larry Minks, who offered welcoming remarks; State Regent John Massey of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education; Regent Terry Matlock of the Regional University System of Oklahoma Board of Regents; and Rob Piearcy, president-elect of the Southeastern Alumni Association.

Photos, clockwise, from top: A backstage view of Commencement; Southeastern president Larry Minks presents a gift to speaker Jerry Buchanan; and Regent Terry Matlock congratulates his son Trevor, a 2012 spring graduate.

May 12, 2012
Bloomer Sullivan Arena
Student Government sponsors Educational Forum

The increase of technology use and the decrease in funding were among a wide range of topics discussed April 30 at SE Forecast: An Educational Forum. Sponsored by the Southeastern Oklahoma State University Student Government Association, the 90-minute event attracted a crowd of 60 students, faculty, and staff to the auditorium in the Glen D. Johnson Student Union.

Panelists were Southeastern president Larry Minks, Murray State College president Joy McDaniel, Durant Superintendent of Schools Jason Simeroth, Denison (Texas) Superintendent of Schools Henry Scott, and Director of the Southeastern Center for Regional Economic Development Kathy Hendrick.

Serving as moderator was Southeastern Assistant Dean of Distance and Adult Education and Assessment Management System Coordinator Aaron Adair.

As far as national trends in education in the 1970s-90s, President Minks mentioned diminishing resources, accelerated technology, the challenges of access and diversity, and conflicting public expectations.

President McDaniel noted that the evolution of technology is the greatest trend she has observed during her career in education, citing the popularity of on-line courses and interactive TV.

Dr. Simeroth said the new Durant High School offers the “latest and greatest technology. It provides us with the opportunity to change the way we teach -- to challenge our students to be problem-solvers.”

With 50 years of public school experience to his credit, Dr. Scott agreed that technology is a wonderful tool, but that “technology cannot replace a quality teacher.”

In her remarks, Hendrick emphasized the importance of business and industry and education continuing to communicate their needs to one another. That communication is key to sustaining a highly-trained workforce and healthy economic development future.

On the issue of decreased state funding, McDaniel said “we’ve changed from state-funded institutions to state-assisted institutions.”

Coupled with the decreased funding are increased accountability and expectations, the panelists agreed.

“We’ve gone way overboard on testing in Texas,” Scott said. He later stated that greater funding should be allocated to early childhood education so that students don’t fall behind in the early grades and become dropout risks later on.

Minks commented on such national and state initiatives as Compete to Complete and Complete College America as programs designed to increase the number of college graduates.

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Campus open house on June 14

Southeastern Normal School first opened its doors for classes on June 14, 1909.

Southeastern Oklahoma State University and the Durant Area Chamber of Commerce will celebrate that original opening day with a Campus Open House on the front lawn of the University at 5 p.m. Thursday, June 14.

There will be a commemorative ribbon-cutting on the front steps of Morrison Hall, and campus tours will be provided by the True Blue Ambassadors student group.

Everyone is invited to come out, join the festivities and enjoy a favorite summer treat with slices of watermelon.
Cardinal FG, Southeastern recognized by State Regents’ Partnership Program

Twenty-six business and higher education partnerships throughout the state were recently recognized for their innovative collaborations that further the education of Oklahoma’s workforce.

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education’s Economic Development Grant for the Partnership Recognition Program is designed to highlight successful partnerships between higher education institutions and businesses and to further cultivate the higher learning environment through State Regents’ Economic Development Grants.

Among the recognized partners were Cardinal FG (Cardinal Glass Industries) of Durant and Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

Institutions involved in these partnerships provide $500 for tuition waivers to employees of the partnering businesses; internships for current students of the institutions to work at the partnering businesses; faculty externships with the partnering businesses; and/or enhancement of the partnerships with additional equipment, materials or supplies. The State Regents provide a $500 match to the waivers.

Cardinal has been a strong supporter of the “Real Life Math!” program, where local professionals participate in high school classrooms to help students answer the question, “When will I ever use this in the real world?”

According to Larry Peck, Cardinal human resources executive, this gives Cardinal an opportunity to showcase the company and illustrate the value of learning math, which is used every day in the real world.

Scholarships are also important to Cardinal. Colton’s (Sherrill) Run is an event that honors the son of a Southeastern graduate who died unexpectedly at a University sports camp. The majority of the proceeds benefit a Southeastern scholarship in Colton’s honor.

The Miss Southeastern Pageant is another scholarship co-sponsored by Cardinal. The company was also a title sponsor for the first ice skating rink in Durant. “The Durant community and the University are very fortunate to have partners such as Cardinal,” said Southeastern president Larry Minks. “This is a great example of a company that actively supports its community not only through its economic impact, but through volunteer efforts that enhance the quality of life. Cardinal is most deserving of this state recognition.”

SE, Choctaws team up for theatrical performance in Washington, D.C.

Southeastern Oklahoma State University and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma have long been partners in innovative approaches to better living through education.

The partnership takes a new step this month when Southeastern and the Choctaw Nation will combine talents to present a play at the annual Choctaw Days event hosted by the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., on June 20-23.

The production, with a working title of “It Wasn’t Code to Us,” will be presented on-stage at the Smithsonian’s renowned Rasmuson Theatre.

The Choctaw Code Talkers pioneered the use of a native language as a military code. Also, the play will offer glimpses into Choctaw life such as stickball, basket-making and other issues as it follows a young Choctaw woman who learns about her heritage from an elder of the tribe.

The performance will be in dual narrative, featuring the truest form of the Choctaw language, and will be presented in a new ambitious style known as “theatrical collage.” In this format, actors on the stage will be ac-

(See Choctaw, page 4)
Tobacco-free campus to go into effect on August 1

Beginning August 1, 2012, Southeastern Oklahoma State University will be tobacco-free.

This is in accordance with an executive order signed by Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin on February 6, 2012. In part, the order states, “The use of any tobacco product shall be prohibited on any and all properties owned, leased or contracted for use by the State of Oklahoma, including but not limited to all buildings, land and vehicles owned, leased or contracted for use by agencies or instrumentalities of the State of Oklahoma.'’

Southeastern has taken an informative, pro-active approach to implementation of the new law. Assisting in the transition is the Southeastern Tobacco-free Task Force. In addition, April Lehrling, director of student health services, and Debra Fulenchek, clinical counselor, recently presented a workshop on campus to educate and raise awareness of the change to employees.

Choctaw Days to feature University play

(Continued from page 3)

accompanied by soundtracks, videos, and montages, and will be acting opposite filmed actors.

Directing the play is Kathleen Hardgrove, Assistant Professor of Theatre, who is completing her fifth year as a member of the Southeastern faculty.

Southeastern’s Dr. Randy Prus, Professor and Chair of the Department of English, Humanities and Languages, is writing the content of the play.

Prus said, “The performance deals with the Choctaw Code Talkers of World War I, but the emphasis is on the Choctaw language and culture. Twahna Kemp-Finley, a Choctaw student studying English at Southeastern with a Writing Emphasis major, is a tribal member, yet doesn’t speak Choctaw except for a few words. From discussions with Twahna and Chantelle Standefer, another collaborator, we realized that Choctaw language speakers are primarily of an earlier generation. The intention of Southeastern’s Choctaw Nation Language Program is to pass the language and culture on to the following generations.”

Standefer works in Southeastern’s Native American Advisement Center on campus and has been studying Choctaw culture and history.

Standefer and Kemp-Finley are heavily involved in the collaboration.

For a complete schedule of Southeastern athletic events, visit www.GoSoutheastern.com

Update Editor
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