



January 2012

UPDATE

Bright future for historic Montgomery Auditorium

The future looks bright for Montgomery Auditorium on the campus of Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

Thanks to a generous gift from the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and University funding, the facility will see \$386,000 of improvements that will include the installation of new lighting and theatrical rigging systems.

The auditorium, located inside historic Morrison Hall, plays host to a number of events -- both University and community-related. Over the years, the venue has hosted politicians, principals, and Pulitzer Prize winners, as well as grand choirs and Grammy winners. Its theatrical productions have included musicals from *Oliver to Oklahoma*, and playwrights from Dr. Seuss to William Shakespeare.

The auditorium was named for T.T. Montgomery, the 12th president of Southeastern, during a ceremony in June 1953.

The Choctaw Nation is contributing \$257,000 toward



Southeastern president Larry Minks, left, accepts a gift from Chief Gregory Pyle of The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma as Southeastern vice president of business affairs Ross Walkup looks on.

the improvements, with the University funding the remainder.

“We are very appreciative of this gift from The Choctaw Nation,” said Southeastern president Larry Minks. “It is a gift not only to the University, but to the community as a whole. This area is very fortunate to have leaders such as Chief (Gregory) Pyle – leaders who never waver in making the commitment to give back to their communities. As a University, we have worked with the Nation on a number of what we call ‘win-win projects,’ and we look forward to

continuing that partnership.”

“The auditorium’s major systems have, with so much use, become in need of replacement and repair,” said Dell McLain, Chair of the Department of Art, Communication and Theatre. “This enhancement project includes replacing the incandescent theatrical lighting system with a state-of-the-art, all-digital, Intelligent LED lighting system. Once fully operational, the system will be able to support multiple events with greater safety, at a fraction of the energy consumption, heat generation, and cost.”



Southeastern Oklahoma State University celebrated the holiday season with the community Dec. 5, 2011, by hosting the 90th annual Candlelighting ceremony and concert. The event was held in Montgomery Auditorium and featured the Southeastern Symphonic Choir, the Southeastern Brass Ensemble, and members of the Southeastern Jazz Ensemble and Percussion Ensemble. Candlelighting is the oldest tradition at Southeastern, with its origins dating back to Dec. 18, 1921.

A community effort

Southeastern serves others through such programs as Families Feeding Families

Giving back to the community is a phrase that is used frequently in this day and age. Southeastern Oklahoma State University has been a proud member of the Durant community for more than 100 years, and the University understands the importance of community involvement.

In his role as assistant vice president for academic affairs and instruction, Dr. Bryon Clark, tracks Southeastern's civic engagement efforts, and in doing so, has collected some impressive numbers.

According to Clark, during the 2010-2011 academic year, more than 760 individuals from Southeastern (students-faculty-staff) completed, collectively, approximately 30,000 hours of community service activity.

And while those may be impressive numbers, Clark points to another figure – 28,495 – the estimated number of individuals who were served through the University's involvement – as the most important statistic of all.

Southeastern president Larry Minks is well aware of these volunteer efforts, and has witnessed many of the efforts firsthand.

"We emphasize to our students the responsibility they have to be productive citizens," Minks said. "This includes being an active participant both on and off campus and contributing to the betterment of society. At Southeastern, we are fortunate to have a culture among our students, faculty and staff that fosters assistance to those in need. Our campus community understands that they can make a difference in the lives of others, and this is reflected by their willingness to volunteer their time and effort in meaningful ways."

In the past, assistance has been provided by the Southeastern family in times of disaster – tornadoes, fires, etc., -- but there are also ongoing efforts such as blood drives, the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, American Cancer Society Relay for Life, volunteer income tax assistance program, theatrical workshops, tutoring, and Special Olympics, to name just a few.

Another well-known program that Southeastern has been involved with in Durant is "Families Feeding Families (FFF)."

This program was founded in 2003 by Tish Burkhalter, her husband Brian and their children, with the support of the community.

FFF is a working kitchen providing daily hot meals at no

cost to those in need.

Tish, a Durant High School and Southeastern graduate ('10), took over FFF after her husband became ill in 2009 and became director in 2010. She was recognized for her efforts with the 2009 Frank Newman Leadership Award, which honors outstanding civic leadership.

"This is a way of life for our family," she said. "We believe in serving in every aspect of our lives. We believe in the importance of providing and assisting as the need arises.

"Southeastern has become an active participant with the Families Feeding Families community kitchen program," Burkhalter said. "Various groups, classes, University students and faculty have integrated Families Feeding Families and the Hope Chest community closet volunteer opportunities into individual class schedules.

"The University is active not only in physical volunteering, but also in opportunities

regarding various donation needs such as food and clothing."

Families Feeding Families acts as a clearinghouse through which the food industry and community may donate food and other goods. FFF strives to provide nourishment for the physical hunger people experience, as well as the emotional and spiritual hungers so many people experience on a regular basis.

The FFF kitchen is located in the former George Washington Elementary School, 314 East Main Street in Durant. It is open for dinner between 4:30-6 p.m. Monday through Friday. The menu includes a main course with a vegetable or two, bread and desserts or cookies and drinks each evening.

Southeastern's Dr. Charla Hall, professor of psychology, is also very involved in the Families Feeding Families program.

"I take a group from Southeastern to serve and clean-up at Families Feeding Families on the second Tuesday of every month," Hall said. "I have been doing this for about three years. Groups vary from month to month, and have included academic departments, student organizations, the President's office, and some of my classes.

"Many times it is a mixture of staff, faculty, students, alumni and family members. This is my favorite because people with different connections to the University have an opportunity to work with one another while making a difference in our larger community."



Southeastern faculty and staff members assist with the Families Feeding Families program.

FALL COMMENCEMENT



Rodney Bivens, the founder and executive director of the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, was guest speaker at Southeastern Oklahoma State University's Fall Commencement.

The ceremony was Dec. 10 in the Bloomer Sullivan Arena. Following commencement, a reception was held in the Visual & Performing Arts Center.

Bivens, pictured above right, is a 1971 graduate of Southeastern, where he earned a degree in sociology, with a minor in accounting and business administration.

Also participating in commencement were Regent Terry Matlock, shown at right, who offered welcoming remarks from the Regional University System of Oklahoma Board of Trustees, Southeastern President Larry Minks, above, and Southeastern Alumni Association President Mark Webb, who delivered the Alumni Charge.



Gold & Blue Alumni Gala scheduled for February 11

Southeastern Oklahoma State University's annual Gold and Blue Scholarship Gala and Auction will be held at 7 p.m. Saturday, February 11, in the Visual and Performing Arts Center.

Since 2000, the event has contributed \$143,066 to the Southeastern Alumni Scholarship Endowment Fund.

Last year's gala drew a crowd of 145 and provided more than \$13,000 to the scholarship fund. This year's goal is to raise at least \$20,000.

It's a night of food, fun, dancing, live and silent auctions, all to raise funds to help students realize their dreams of a college education.

This year's theme is Denim and Diamonds and for the third year in a row, the premier sponsor of the gala will be the Choctaw Casino/Resort.

The evening's activities will include the live music of the Bob Baldwin Band from Dallas.

Tickets are \$50 and may be purchased at <http://alumni.SE.edu> or by contacting Stephanie Davison at 580-745-2267, sdavison@SE.edu, or in the Welcome Center on the corner of N. 5th Avenue and University Boulevard in Durant.

Davison said, "The Gold and Blue Gala is a way for people to go out and have a great time while raising money for scholarships for Southeastern students."



Mark Webb, president of the Southeastern Alumni Association, auctions off items at last year's Gold & Blue gala.



Calendar of Events

January

- 4 Ribbon-cutting for Southeastern Aviation Sciences Institute at Rose State College, Midwest City, 1:30 p.m.
- 11 First day of spring classes
- 16 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday
- 31 Freshman Success reception, ballroom, 3:30 p.m.

February

- 8 SE Live open house
- 11 Gold & Blue Gala, Visual & Performing Arts Center, 7 p.m.
- 21 Higher Education Day, State Capitol
- 23-24 Regional University System of Oklahoma Board of Regents meeting at Southeastern

March

- 19-23 Spring break

April

- 6 Good Friday holiday

May

- 11 Last day of spring classes
- 12 Commencement

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

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