OKLAHOMA AFRICAN AMERICAN EDUCATORS HALL OF FAME

EST. 2010

Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame, Inc.

Fifteenth Annual
Induction Ceremony and Banquet

Friday, October 9, 2026

DOORS OPEN AT 6:00 P.M.
DINNER & CEREMONY AT 7:00 P.M.



Grand Casino Event Center
777 GRAND CASINO BLVD.
SHAWNEE, OKLAHOMA 74804

Celebrating Fifteen Induction Ceremonies Since 2011
Honoring Oklahoma's Outstanding African American Educators.


OKLAHOMA AFRICAN AMERICAN EDUCATORS
HALL OF FAME

CELEBRATING FIFTEEN INDUCTION CEREMONIES

2011-2026

- Fifteen induction ceremonies represent years of recognizing, honoring, and preserving the contributions of Oklahoma's African American educators.

- Ten 2026 Inductees

- Three E.M. "Nat" Watson Jr. Athletic Scholarship Recipients

- Educational Scholarship for Teachers

- Honorary Lifetime Membership

- Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame, Inc. Clearview, Oklahoma



Thoughts from the President

Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr.

Welcome, Honorees and Distinguished Guests:

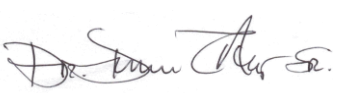
With extraordinary pride and heartfelt gratitude, I welcome you to the Fifteenth Annual Banquet and Induction Ceremony of the Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame, Inc. This evening marks a significant milestone in our organization's history and gives us an opportunity to reflect on fifteen ceremonies devoted to recognizing excellence, preserving history, and celebrating service. Since our first induction in 2011, we have remained committed to honoring educators whose leadership, sacrifice, scholarship, and compassion have strengthened students, families, schools, and communities throughout Oklahoma.

Tonight, we proudly welcome the 2026 class of inductees into this distinguished fellowship. Their individual journeys represent many forms of educational service—teaching, coaching, administration, mentorship, scholarship, and community leadership, but they share a common purpose: helping others discover their gifts and realize their potential. We honor not only their professional achievements, but also the countless moments of encouragement, guidance, patience, and advocacy that changed lives beyond the classroom.

We also extend sincere appreciation to the families of our inductees, the Board of Directors, committee members, sponsors, supporters, volunteers, and community partners whose dedication makes this celebration possible. Every nomination prepared, memory preserved, scholarship supported, and hour volunteered contributes to the continuing work of the Hall of Fame. Our historic home in Clearview stands as a reminder that lasting institutions are built through vision, cooperation, and an enduring commitment to service.

As we celebrate this milestone, may the stories shared tonight inspire each of us to continue the work of recognizing excellence, encouraging young people, and protecting the history entrusted to our care. The influence of a dedicated educator reaches far beyond a single lesson or school year; it lives on in the confidence, character, and accomplishments of generations. Thank you for joining us as we honor the past, celebrate the present, and strengthen this legacy for the future.

Sincerely,



Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr.

2026 Inductees

Ten educators • Ten stories • One evening of honor

Mrs. Tanya Rachel Nero-Blades
Glenpool, Oklahoma

Dr. Rodney L. Clark
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Dr. Emily Patterson Harris
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Ms. Doris Johnson
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Dr. Alexander O. Lewis
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Mr. Marvin Mack
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Dr. Charolette Myles-Nixon
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Dr. Wennette West Pegues
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Ms. Carole A. Thompson
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Mr. Jimmy Walker
Taft, Oklahoma/Arlington, Texas

E. M. "Nat" Watson Jr. Athletic Scholarship

Da'Monica Baker
Haworth High School

Isaiah Fields
Broken Bow High School

Quintasia Johnson
Idabel High School

Educational Scholarship for Teachers

Jordan Marie Blades
Senior, East Central University, Ada, Oklahoma

Honorary Lifetime Membership

Jason Bondy - Oklahoma History Center Museum Exhibits AV/IT Manager - Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Walter Taylor III - Taylor Made Jazz (TMJ) - Blues Funk Movement - Oklahoma City, Oklahoma —

Fifteenth Annual Banquet & Induction Ceremony

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Entertainment

Taylor-Made Jazz *— Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*

Welcome

Sharon Hill-Wooten *— Board of Directors, Idabel, Oklahoma*

Invocation

Dr. Raushan Ashanti-Alexander *— Board of Directors, Chickasha, Oklahoma*

Dinner/Menu

Grand Casino Catering

Marinated Beef Tenderloin & Herb Roasted Chicken • Country Style Green Beans • Roasted Red Potatoes • Cognac Demi • Parmesan Roasted Tomato • Seasonal Bundt Cake — Whipped Cream & Berry Sauce • Classic Crème Brulé — Vanilla Bean Cream & Marinated Berries

Our Mission /Video Presentation

Claudette Goss – Board of Directors, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Master of Ceremony

Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr. – President, OAAE HOF, Clearview, Oklahoma

E.M. "Nat" Watson Jr. Athletic Scholarship

Presenter: Dr. Markus S. Smith – Board of Directors, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Educational Scholarship for Teachers

Presenter: Jimmie White – Board of Directors, Langston, Oklahoma

Honorary Lifetime Membership

Presenter: Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr. – President, OAAE Hall of Fame, Clearview, Oklahoma

2026 Induction Ceremony

Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr. –Induction Ceremony, President, Clearview, Oklahoma

Closing Remarks

Mrs. Bobbie Allen Booker – Board of Directors, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Ceremonial Photography

William Raines Photography – Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

2026 Board of Directors

President
Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr.

Vice-President	**Secretary**	**Treasurer**
Sharon Hill-Wooten	*Shirley A. Nero*	*Jimmie White*

Dr. Raushan Ashanti-Alexander, Dr. Gloria Anderson, Mrs. Bobbie Allen Booker, Dr. Deena Fisher, Ms. Claudette Goss, Dr. John Hargrave, Mr. Orlando E. Hazley, Mrs. Henrietta Hicks, Ms. Sharon Hill-Wooten, Mr. Clayton Nolen, Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr., Dr. Markus S. Smith, Mr. Jimmie White, Mr. Timmy Young

EMERITUS: *Dr. Harold Aldridge Jr., Eunice Edison, Bruce Fisher*

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: *Diane Anderson, Rita Cooksey, Tom Fisher, Marilyn Jackson, Shirley Nero*

***Oklahoma Historical Society Liaison*: Dr**. *Michael Pearce: Oklahoma State Historian*

Life-Time Members
Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame, Inc.

Mrs. Hilma L. Barnes - Paterson, NJ (deceased)
Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr.-Clearview, OK
Mr. Albert Johnson Sr. - Lawton, OK (deceased)
Mrs. Eunice Edison - Lawton, OK
Mrs. Shirley A. Ballard Nero - Clearview, OK
Mr. Don Shaw, Esq. - Idabel, OK
Dr. Jack Paschall—Ada, OK
Mr. Orlando E. Hazley - Tulsa, OK
Mrs. Kay Hargrave - Ada, OK
Dr. John R. Hargrave - Ada, OK
Mr. Michael Carolina - Edmond, OK
Dr. Freeta Jones-Porter - Oklahoma City, OK
Mrs. Joy Hill - Idabel, OK
Citizen State Bank of Okemah, OK - Corporate Life
Dr. Wanda Pollard Johnson - Oklahoma City, Ok
Mrs. Colleen Venters - Boley, OK
Dr. La Verne Ford Wimberly - Tulsa, OK
Dr. Gloria Anderson - Oklahoma City, OK
Mr. Eugene Earsom - Oklahoma City, OK
Ms. Claudett Goss - Oklahoma City, OK
Mrs. Joyce Jackson - Midwest City, OK
Ms. Esther King - Warner, OK
Mrs. Carolyn Kornegay - Guthrie, OK
Mr. Art Williams - Tulsa, OK
Mr. Harold Jones - Oklahoma City, OK
Ms. Melba Jackson - Sperry, OK
Mrs. Tanya Nero Blades - Glenpool, OK
Dr. Jolly Henderson Meadows - Tulsa, OK
Mrs. Gale Parker - Oklahoma City, OK
Mrs. Ruby J. Peters - Lawton, OK
Mrs. Dorothy Bradley - Lawton, OK
Mr. Jimmie White - Warner, OK
Ms. Sharon Hill-Wooten - Idabel, OK
Mr. Samuel Combs III - Tulsa, OK
Mrs. Rita Combs - Tulsa, OK
Dr. Deena Fisher - Woodward, OK
Dr. Anquanita Kaigler-Love - Lawton, OK
Dr. Harold C. Aldridge Jr. - Tahlequah, OK
Ms. Lou Eddie Goodlow Burris - Broken Bow, OK
Mr. Eugene DePriest Jones III - Oklahoma City, OK
Rep. Kevin Cox - Oklahoma City, OK
Mrs. Helen Franks Miner - El Reno, OK
Mr. & Mrs. William & Nancy Ford - Shawnee, OK
Mrs. Delois McGee - Checotah, OK
Mrs. Marilyn Bernice Jackson - Clearview, OK
Mr. Ben Harris - Nichols Hill, OK
Dr, Regina DeLoach - Lawton, OK
Ms. Rita Cooksey - Oklahoma City, OK
Ms. Anita Arnold - Oklahoma City, OK
Mr. Sherman Lewis - Edmond, OK
Mrs. Adell Thomesene Withers Cudjoe - Oklahoma City, OK
Dr. Raushan Ashanti-Alexander - Chickasha, OK
Mr. Carl King - Watonga, OK
Dr. Caroly Kornegay - Guthrie, OK
Mr. Tom Fisher - Woodward, OK
Mr. Clayton Nolen - Enid, OK
Mrs. Carolyn Harris – Oklahoma City, OK
Ms. Nancy Calhoun – Oklahoma City, OK
Dr. Wennette Pegues, Tulsa, OK
Mrs. Tanya Rachel Nero Blades – Glenpool, OK

OAAE HOF
Induction Ceremonies

2011 Inaugural Induction

Mr. Curtis Brackeen - Muskogee
Mrs. Willie Mae Etheridge - Warrior
Dr. Henry Kirkland Jr. - Atoka
Mr. Willie B. Parker - Spencer
Dr. Meshack M. Sagini - Langston
Mr. Eddie Walter Warrior - Muskogee
Mrs. Jimmie Beatrice White Williams - Idabel
Dr. La Verne Ford Wimberly - Tulsa

2012 Second Annual Induction

Mr. Harold C. Aldridge Sr. - Taft
Dr. Chalon E. Anderson - Oklahoma City
Dr. Loretta Brown Collier - Tulsa
Mrs. Gladys Marie Forshee - Sapulpa
Mr. Willie Frank Hurte - Oklahoma City
Dr. Mendell L. Simmons –Norman
Mr. Albert Johnson Sr. - Lawton
Mr. Herbert Clarence King - Lawton

2013 Third Annual Induction

Mrs. Eva Gallimore Boyd - Chickasha
Mrs. Lou Eddie Goodlow Burris - Broken Bow
Dr. Ada Sipuel Fisher - Oklahoma City
Mr. Charles L. Henry - Lawton
Mrs. Lettie Ruth Hunter - Oklahoma City
Dr. Freeta Jones-Porter - Oklahoma City
Dr. Betty G. Mason - Oklahoma City
Dr. Willard G. Parker - Muskogee
Ms. Thelma Reece Parks - Oklahoma City
Dr. Wanda Pollard-Johnson - Oklahoma City

2014 Fourth Annual Induction

Dr. Charles E. Butler - Oklahoma City
Mrs. Valerie Inez Carolina - Wewoka
Mrs. Lola Parker Dean - Porter
Mrs. Juanita Lewis-Hopkins - Tulsa
Mr. Millard L. House - Tulsa
Mr. Jesse "J. D." Johnson - Altus
Ms. Mary "The Fox" Johnson - Ardmore
Mr. Charles B. McCauley - Oklahoma City
Mrs. Violet A. Patterson - Tulsa
Dr. Willa Allegra Strong - McAlester

2015 Fifth Annual Induction

Mrs. Nancy Ola Randolph Davis - Spencer
Mr. Manyles B. Gaines, Jr. - Tulsa
Dr. Ernest L. Holloway, Sr. - Boley
Mrs. Marilyn Ballard Jackson - Clearview
Mr. James Roy (J.R.) Johnson - Muskogee
Mrs. Clara Mae Shepard Luper - Hoffman
Dr. Gloria Joan Pollard - Spencer
Dr. Jimmy V. Scales, Sr. - Idabel
Dr. Virginia L. Schoats - Muskogee
Dr. Valree Fletcher Wynn - Lawton

2016 Sixth Annual Induction

Mr. Jerry Lee Belton, Sr.- Boynton
Dr. Karen M. Clark - Oklahoma City
Dr. Leon Edd, Jr. - Oklahoma City
Mrs. Jo Ann Goodwin Gilford - Tulsa
Ms. Claudette Goss - Oklahoma City
Mr. Cedric Johnson - Muskogee
Dr. Anquanita Kaigler-Love - Lawton
Mr. Wallace Owens, Jr. - Guthrie
Mr. Herman Cornelius Robbins - Tulsa
Mrs. Lena Lowry Sawner - Chandler

2017 Seventh Annual Induction

Mrs. Olive Ruth James - Wewoka
Mr. Calvin Rob Johns Sr. - Seminole
Mrs. Helen Louise Franks Miner - El Reno
Dr. Cecelia Nails-Palmer - Tulsa
Dr. Henry Ponder - Wewoka
Dr. Dennis L. Portis III - Oklahoma City
Mr. Nathaniel Quinn Sr. - Boley
Mr. E. M. "Nat" Watson Jr. - Edmond
Mrs. Mildred Tilford –McAlester
Mrs. Charlotte J. Walker - Clearview

OAAE HOF
Induction Ceremonies

2018 Eighth Annual Induction

Mrs. Amelia Louise Swain Alford - Tulsa
Dr. Ann Marie Allen - Oklahoma City
Mrs. Marilynn Frances Duncan - Wilburton
Mrs. Emma L. Jones Freeman - Oklahoma City
Mr. James L. Furch - Tulsa
Mrs. Joyce Ann Henderson - Oklahoma City
Mr. Benjamin Harrison Hill –Tulsa
Mrs. Judith Ann Carter Horton - Guthrie
Dr. Delois Ann McGee - Checotah
Mr. James A. Senter - Oklahoma City

2019 Ninth Annual Induction

Mrs. Montecella Lucinda Driver -Tulsa
Mr. Joe B. Gordon - Wagoner
Mr. John Edward Haney - Guthrie
Mrs. Gertrude Marie Lewis - Broken Bow
Mr. Lee Virgil Patterson Sr. - Tulsa
Mr. Leander "Lee" Roland - Spencer
Mr. Louis Irving Ryan Jr. - Vinita
Mrs. Joyce Ann Stripling - Oklahoma City
Dr. Goldie V. L. Thompson - Oklahoma City
Mrs. Mildred Nadine Wallace - Wewoka

2020 Annual Induction - COVID YEAR

2021 Tenth Annual Induction

Mrs. Captoria Wells Aldridge - Taft
Mr. Leroy H. Alfred - Tulsa
Dr. Raushan Ashanti-Alexander - Chickasha
Mrs. Ycedra Daughty – Oklahoma City
Mr. Orlando Hazley - Tulsa
Ms. Shirley Hurd - Idabel
Mrs. Marsha Akins Jordan – Oklahoma City
Mr. Jimmie L. White Jr.- Warner
Mr. Marvin R. Williams – Oklahoma City
Mrs. Ardell E. Drake Withers – Clearview

2022 Eleventh Annual Induction

Mr. Samuel Harper - Eufaula
Mr. Malcolm Hilburn - Chickasha
Ms. Dolores Del Rio Jones - Seminole
Dr. Mautra Staley Jones – Oklahoma City
Mr. Opal Willard Lee - Idabel
Mr. Robert I. Mayes Sr. - Tulsa
Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr. - Clearview
Mrs. Shirley Ann Ballard Nero -Clearview
Mr. Clayton Eric Nolen - Enid
Dr. Wessylyne Alford Simpson - Langston
Mrs. Juanita Williams - Tulsa

2023 Twelfth Annual Induction

Mrs. Bobbie Allen Booker – Broken Arrow
Mr. Jason Douglas Brown – Oklahoma City
Mrs. Vernetta J. Dunford-DeMartra – Midwest City
Mr. Lawrence E. "Train" Lane - Tulsa
Mrs. Karen Knauls Pittman - Tulsa
Dr. James Allan Simpson - Langston
Mr. William Sulcer - Tulsa
Dr. Melvin Todd - Langston
Mrs. Collene M. Venters - Boley
Mr. Jimmie L. White Sr. - Langston
Dr. Art S. Williams Jr. - Tulsa

2024 Thirteenth Annual Induction

Ms. Mildred Hemphill-Burkhalter - Rentiesville
Mrs. Melba Lois Caddy Jackson - Tulsa
Dr. Ruth Ray Jackson - Langston
Mrs. Danne L. Johnson, JD – Oklahoma City
Dr. Jason Johnson – Oklahoma City
Mr. Carle Lavon King Sr.-Watonga
Mr. Harold G. Jones, M. Ed.- Oklahoma City
Mr. Tracy McDaniel Sr.- Oklahoma City
Dr. Terry E. Spigner – Oklahoma City
Mrs. Lucille Hooks Turner - Colbert

OAAE HOF
Induction Ceremonies

2025 Fourteenth Annual Induction

Ms. Tobytha Battle - Luther
Mrs. Georgiann Seals Belton - Boynton
Dr. John K. Coleman – Boley
Mrs. Carolyn Gay Harris - Chicago
Mrs. Andrea M. Luster - Okmulgee
Dr. Anthony Lynn Marshall - Tulsa
Dr. Jolly Henderson Meadows - Idabel
Dr. Markus Shintaro Smith – Oklahoma City
Dr. Sandra D. Thompson – Ponca City
Dr. Melvin B. Tolson - Langston

A

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ORGANIZATION

Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame, Inc.

In 2010, the vision for the Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame began to take shape. The organization was established to recognize and honor Oklahoma African American educators who had dedicated their professional lives to teaching, guiding, and preparing young people for the future.

The first nine individuals came together to form the organization in 2010. In 2011, six additional members were added to complete the Board of Directors. That same year, the organization held its first induction ceremony, beginning a tradition that continues in 2026 with the Fifteenth Induction Ceremony.

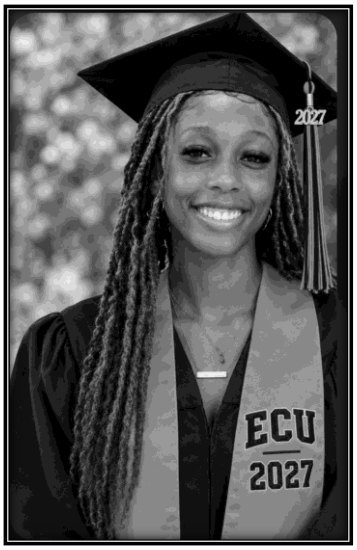
Founding Group — 2010

Sharon Hill-Wooten • Terry Bennett • Jimmie White • Joan Josephine Giddings • Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr. Orlando Hazley • Dee Richardson • Bobbie Allen Booker • Dr. Melvin Todd

Board Members Added in 2011

Eunice Edison • Joyce Henderson • Henrietta Hicks • Dr. Earnest L. Holloway • Albert Johnson • Thelma R. Parks

The Hall of Fame continues its work of recognizing excellence, preserving history, and honoring Oklahoma's outstanding African American educators.

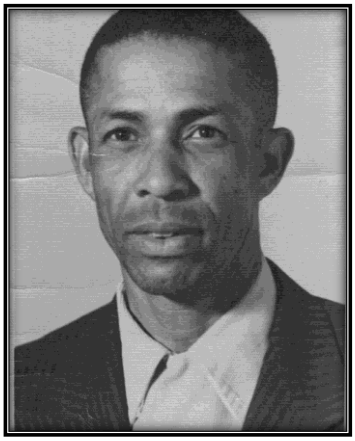


2026 First OAAE HOF Teacher

Jordan Marie Blades

Jordan Marie Blades is a proud native of Glenpool, Oklahoma, and a 2023 graduate of Glenpool High School. She is currently a senior at East Central University, majoring in Psychology with a minor in Education, with the goal of becoming a school psychologist. Jordan maintains a 3.3 GPA and was selected for ECU's President's Leadership Class in 2023 - 2024. A dedicated student-athlete, she competed on the ECU Women's Track & Field team for three years and previously lettered four years in track and basketball, including a state championship in the 4x100 relay. Her work experience has strengthened her communication, time management, and interpersonal skills. Jordan is committed to supporting Oklahoma students and helping them develop confidence, self-esteem, and reach their full potential. Her dedication to education, athletics, leadership, and service reflects her desire to make a positive difference in the lives of others.

E. M. "Nat" Watson Jr. Scholarship



Mr. William "Bill" Ford, along with associates from Shawnee, Oklahoma, generously contributed funds to establish the E. M. "Nat" Watson Jr. Scholarship. Mr. Watson had served as both teacher and coach at Dunbar, Shawnee's segregated Black school. Upon the school's closure, only his coaching role was transferred to Shawnee High School. Bill Ford, a former player on Coach Watson's football team, described him as genuine, caring, and an exceptional leader. Watson's profound influence inspired Ford to initiate a scholarship in his honor.

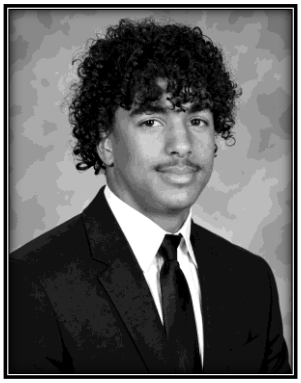
Following E. M. "Nat" Watson Jr.'s induction into the 2017 OAAE Hall of Fame, Mr. Ford formally established the scholarship to demonstrate gratitude and continue Coach Watson's legacy of positively impacting young athletes' lives. This scholarship is awarded to outstanding athletes in Oklahoma.

Eligibility for this scholarship extends to male and female athletes graduating from an Oklahoma public school who plan to attend a college or university accredited in Oklahoma. Preference is given to African American students. Award amounts are contingent upon available funds and may vary annually. Recipients are recognized each year at the Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame Ceremony, held on the last Friday of September.



Da'Monica Jochae Baker – Haworth High School

Throughout high school, Da'Monica demonstrated academic dedication and developed teamwork, discipline, leadership, confidence, and perseverance through cheerleading and school activities. Da'Monica planned to attend East Central University to become a Registered Diagnostic Medical Sonographer and continue cheerleading at the collegiate level. The E.M. Nat Watson, Jr. Athletic Scholarship would ease her financial burden on her family while supporting continued academic, athletic, and professional development.



Isaiah Fields – Broken Bow High School

Isaiah Fields of Broken Bow High School graduated as class valedictorian with a 4.413 GPA and a 29 ACT score. He participated in football and track for four years and basketball and powerlifting for two years. He earned recognition through the Superintendent's Honor Roll and membership in the Oklahoma State and National Honor Societies, while also volunteering with his family to restock a community Blessings Box. Isaiah plans to study computer science at the University of Central Oklahoma and play football for the UCO Bronchos, reflecting leadership, commitment, and work ethic praised by his coach.



Quintasia Johnson – Idabel High School

Quintasia Johnson graduated as Idabel High School's 2026 valedictorian with a 4.12 GPA, leading multiple sports teams—including the 2024 state basketball championship roster—while serving as National Honor Society president. Deeply involved in her community and church, she consistently mentored younger students and held numerous district leadership roles. She will attend the University of Oklahoma to major in biology, leaving behind a legacy of academic excellence, leadership, and exemplary character.

2026 OAAE HOF HALL OF FAME, INC. INDUCTEE



Mrs. Tanya Rachel Nero-Blades

Glenpool, Oklahoma

"Empowering Generations"

A LIFE DEDICATED TO EDUCATION, HEALTH & SERVICE

Tanya Rachel Nero was born December 12, 1972, in Okemah, Oklahoma, the youngest child of Donnie and Shirley Ann Ballard Nero. From childhood, her passion for teaching was evident. She graduated from Sapulpa High School in 1991 as an All-State basketball player and received a basketball scholarship to Northeastern State University. At NSU, she played for four years for the Lady Reds and was recognized as the second-leading scorer and third-leading rebounder. She received the National Girls and Women in Sports Award and later earned a master's degree in health & human performance while serving as a graduate assistant for the women's basketball program.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE & IMPACT

For more than 30 years, Mrs. Blades has taught or coached in Sapulpa, Tulsa, Garland, Texas, Shawnee, and Glenpool, Oklahoma. She has served as both a head and assistant coach in basketball and track and has taught seventh- and eighth-grade Literature, Title I Reading, Elementary Physical Education, Health and Nutrition, and Mind Relaxation Meditation classes. Currently at Glenpool Middle School, she serves as head track coach and teaches seventh- and eighth-grade Health and Nutrition. She is also assistant track coach at Glenpool High School and administrator on duty for middle and high school athletics, overseeing school events.

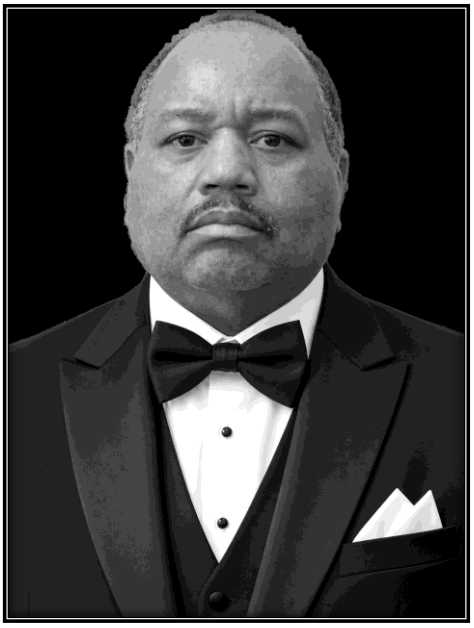
Her dedication extends beyond the classroom through extracurricular activities, driving a bus route, and working with students and parents to promote healthy lifestyles. Mrs. Blades has secured TSET grants for Health/PE equipment and action-based learning and collaborates with TSET and the City of Glenpool on a Street Safety Community initiative. Her creative teaching has earned the GMS Traveling Creative Teacher Award, and she was named Glenpool Middle School Teacher of the Year in 2024.

Her honors include Team Leader and Teacher of the Year at Greeley Elementary, a Tulsa Public Schools Award of Excellence, the Girls and Women in Sports Role Model Award from the University of Tulsa, Shawnee Middle School Teacher of the Month, Glenpool Middle School Teacher of the Month, Glenpool Middle School Teacher of the Year, and Glenpool Creative Teacher recognitions. Her professional affiliations include the Oklahoma Education Association, PEG-District Education Association, National Education Association, OAHPERD, GPS Safe and Healthy Schools Team, GPS Superintendent's Advisory Committee, Northeastern State University Alumni Board, Oklahoma Coaches Association, Golden Family Reunion, and HOPE Squad. She is also an active member of the Church of Christ, collaborating with the Ladies Committee and teaching a youth Sunday School class.

FAMILY & LEGACY: Tanya and Marvin Blades, Jr. reside in Glenpool, Oklahoma, with their three children, Makia, Jordan, and Jada. Her special interests include working with children and adults in health education, crafts, interior decorating, and following her children in their sports events.

PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY: *"There are no failures in life, only life lessons!"* This belief has guided Mrs. Blades throughout her career, encouraging students and athletes to view challenges as opportunities for growth. She strives to build confidence, resilience, and healthy habits that will serve them well beyond the classroom.

2026 OAAE HOF HALL OF FAME, INC. INDUCTEE



Dr. Rodney L. Clark

Tulsa, Oklahoma

"Visionary Arts Mentor"

EDUCATOR • PLAYWRIGHT • FILMMAKER • MENTOR

Rodney L. Clark, a native Tulsan and descendant of the 1921 Race Massacre, was born October 1, 1959, the first son of Jim Chaney and Beverley Clark. He attended Dunbar Elementary, Roosevelt and Gilcrest Middle Schools and developed an early interest in the fine arts and acting. At Booker T. Washington High School, he won second place in Humorous Duet in an Oklahoma State competition, strengthening his speaking and writing talents. He graduated in 1977 and attended Southwestern College on a Drama Scholarship. He also earned an athletic scholarship after becoming a starter on the football team. Clark later studied at the Black Theatre Project at the University of Washington and earned a Bachelor of Theatre degree in 1983. During graduate studies at Howard University, he wrote, directed, produced, and filmed plays. He earned an MFA in Film from Howard University in 1991 and an Educational Doctorate in Higher Education Administration from Oklahoma State University in 2005.

A CAREER IN EDUCATION & THE ARTS

Dr. Clark has more than thirty years of experience as an educator, including service as an Assistant Professor of Theatre at Tulsa Community College and Berea College and as an administrator with Tulsa Public Schools. He is a playwright, filmmaker, producer, entrepreneur, and rancher, and is the founder and former Superintendent/Principal of Langston Hughes Academy. He taught Video Production at Muskogee High School for four years and has worked extensively with Theatre North in Tulsa. He directed several plays, including the 2018 Tulsa Awards for Theatre Excellence production of the year, *Seven Guitars* by August Wilson.

TELLING STORIES & PRESERVING HISTORY

Dr. Clark's theatrical works include *Devious*, *All We Ever Do Is Talk About It*, and *Black Wall Street (The Musical)*. Through his Telling Our Stories series, he explores the history and lasting impact of Tulsa's 1921 Race Massacre, Greenwood, school integration, and urban renewal. His directing, ensemble, and film work has earned recognition from the Kennedy Center's American College Theatre Festival, the Barebones International Film Festival, and the Capital City Black Film Festival.

TEACHING, MENTORSHIP & COMMUNITY

Dr. Clark teaches Speech, Drama and Debate, Film, and Technical Theatre at Tulsa's Central High School. His teams have advanced to state competition, earning regional recognition in One-Act Play and state championships in Dramatic Interpretation and Dramatic Duet. His honors include awards from the North Tulsa Heritage Foundation, Greenwood Chamber of Commerce, Lacy Park Foundation, 100 Black Men of Tulsa, and Black Liberated Arts Inc.

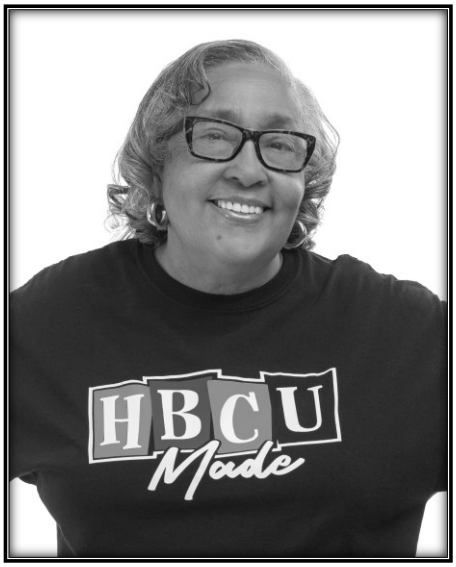
FAMILY & LEGACY

Rodney and Shelia Clark have been married for thirty-eight years and reside in North Tulsa at the Clark-Asberry Homestead Ranch. They raise crops and animals, provide workshops, and have operated dinner-theatre productions.

THE STUDENT'S "AHA MOMENT"

"When my students reach that 'Aha Moment.' This is generally when the light bulb comes off and they feel like they no longer need my guidance. This is a reiteration for me that learning occurred." — Dr. Rodney L. Clark

2026 OAAE HOF HALL OF FAME, INC. INDUCTEE



Dr. Emily Patterson Harris

Tulsa, Oklahoma

"A Campus Visionary"

A 44-YEAR LEGACY OF HIGHER EDUCATION & SERVICE

Dr. Emily Patterson Harris was born in Okemah, Oklahoma. Growing up in a large extended family where education was impressed upon them by their elders, she knew the significance of higher education. Her maternal grandmother, Emily Dunlap Alford, and her parents, Lee Virgil Patterson, Sr. and Violet Alford Patterson, modeled the values of education and service. She attended Boley Elementary School followed by Carver Junior High in Tulsa, Oklahoma. While attending Booker T. Washington High School in Tulsa, she was a stellar student who excelled academically. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and History in 1971 from Central State University, Wilberforce, Ohio. She began working at the Tulsa City-County Library in Special and Community Programs. She earned the Master of Library and Information Studies from the State University of New York at Buffalo, where she was inducted into the Beta Phi Mu Honor Society. She then accepted a position at Houston Community College.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE & IMPACT

Harris began her 44-year career at Langston University as a Librarian at the Tulsa campus, serving as librarian for all academic programs. She later served as Interim Director of the G. Lamar Harrison Library on the main campus. In 1984, she became Academic Counselor and Coordinator for the Department of Social Sciences at the LU-Tulsa campus. She later served for 12 years as Associate Director of Teacher Education, where she was a professor, mentor and advisor who worked tirelessly to ensure student success. She also supported colleagues through several rounds of accreditation and university initiatives. During this period, she earned her Doctoral degree in Higher Education Administration from Oklahoma State University in 1989 and completed additional coursework in Behavioral Sciences.

Dr. Harris held senior leadership roles at Langston University's Tulsa campus, directed college-access programs with Tulsa Public Schools, chaired the Psychology Department, and became Dean of Education and Behavioral Science in 2019. She retired in June 2025 as Associate Professor and Dean Emerita.

COMMUNITY, FAMILY & FAITH

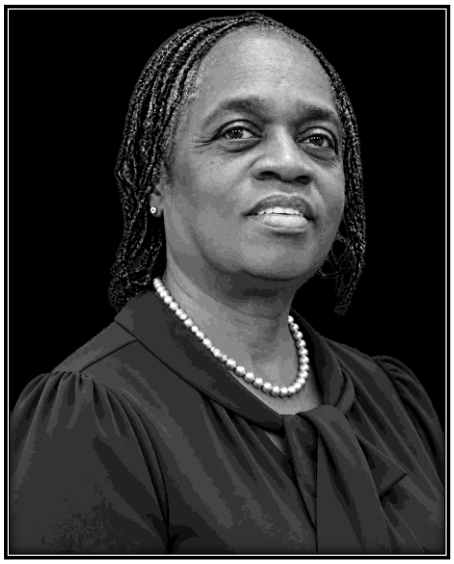
Dr. Harris's community and civic work included the Central State University Alumni Association (Life Member), Rotary Club, League of Women Voters-North Unit, League of Women Voters Metropolitan Tulsa, Work Force Tulsa Youth Council, Tulsa Regional Chamber Education & Workforce Task Force, and the Financial Aid Committee of the United Steelworkers of America, District 12. As a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Alpha Alpha Alpha Omega Chapter, one of her proudest achievements was receiving the "Violet A. Patterson Pearl Award," 2025.

FAMILY & LEGACY

Dr. Harris is the mother of two sons: Erick (Melissa) W. Harris, Esq., and Dr. Christopher (Amreen) D. Harris, and four grandchildren—Inayaah, Carter Lee, Olivia, and Erick William Lee. She is a longtime member of Morning Star Baptist Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma, where she has served in many capacities, including Youth Director and Director, Christian Education.

NOMINATION TRIBUTE: "*Throughout her many years of service, Dr. Harris has developed a reputation as someone people can go to for insight and advice, colleagues, and students alike. She is a creative problem solver and always willing to try something new." — Dr. Ruth Ray Jackson, President, Langston University*

2026 OAAE HOF HALL OF FAME, INC. INDUCTEE



Ms. Doris Elaine Johnson

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

"Heart of Education"

48 YEARS OF TEACHING, COACHING & SERVICE

Ms. Doris Elaine Looney was born on July 2, 1952, in Oklahoma City, the fifth child of Clifford and Sadie Looney. She and her siblings spent their early childhood in south Oklahoma City near the fairgrounds before the family moved to Spencer. Doris attended Rose Hill School and Jones Middle School, where she excelled in academics, basketball, and track. She graduated from Star Spencer High School in 1970. As a student who loved sports and wanted to teach and coach, Doris pursued a career in education. With help from her high school counselor, she received a full scholarship through the "Training Teachers to Teach" program at Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and a Master of Education in Behavioral Science through Teacher Corp, followed by certification in Physical Education and Principal Certification in Oklahoma and a Master of Education in School Administration from the University of Central Oklahoma.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE & IMPACT

Ms. Johnson's 48-year career began as an intern-classroom teacher in the Oklahoma City Public School District at Willow Brook Elementary School. She taught for two years in the Lubbock Independent School District in Texas before returning to Oklahoma City Public Schools, where she served as a teacher and physical education teacher at Tel Star, Eugene Fields, and Hawthorne Elementary Schools for a total of fourteen years. She spent the remaining 33 years in the Mid-Del Public School District at Pleasant Hill Elementary School in Forest Park. She taught Science, Physical Education and Health and coached girls' softball, basketball, volleyball, track, gymnastics, and flag football. Many of these years did not include additional pay. When the district considered ending sports programs, she fought to keep programs she believed students needed.

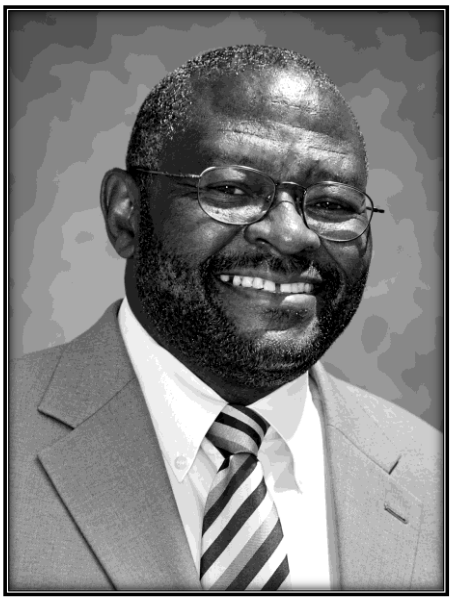
Her impact included a partnership with the University of Central Oklahoma through the afterschool "Gymboree" program. Students received enrichment instruction in traditional step routines, performed for the community, and visited UCO to experience a college campus. The program grew into a district-wide annual event. For more than 30 years, she also volunteered as an ambassador for the American Heart Association's "Jump Rope for Heart" fundraiser, helping raise thousands of dollars. Ms. Johnson's proudest moments came when former interns secured employment and invited her to see them in action. Her last intern was hired to fill her position as P.E. teacher at Pleasant Hill. She was recognized as "Teacher of the Year" at Pleasant Hill Elementary several times, most recently in 2018, when she was also a finalist for Mid-Del District Teacher of the Year. She received special distinctions for her work with "Jump Rope for Heart" and "Gymboree."

COMMUNITY, FAITH & FAMILY

Ms. Johnson is a member of Kappa Delta Pi Honor Society and a 50-year-old member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Throughout her career and retirement, she has faithfully served her community and church. Her church service has included youth director, vacation Bible school director, Sunday school teacher, usher, Sunday school secretary, and work with the missionary society. As a member of People's Church in Midwest City, she has remained a dedicated worker and served every Sunday in the Children's ministry until an illness required her to take a break. Ms. Johnson's greatest accomplishment is having a personal relationship with God. She is the proud mother of her sons, Keith, Sr. and Stanley, Jr., daughter Standra, and grandmother to Lakia, Keith, Jr., Stanley, Shilo, Abagail, Isabella, and Ethan.

HER PHILOSOPHY & LEGACY: "*I hope my legacy will be commemorated by the lasting; meaningful difference I made in other's lives. "A former student shared: "Through fun activities and introducing new sports, she helped form my foundation of all-around athletics and I have loved sports ever since."*

2026 OAAE HOF HALL OF FAME, INC. INDUCTEE



Dr. Alexander O. Lewis

Langston, Oklahoma

"Educational Trailblazer"

OPENING THE DOOR TO GRADUATE EDUCATION

Dr. Alexander Oremekeh Lewis, the eldest of six children born to Walter B. Lewis and Rita A. Lewis in Freetown, Sierra Leone, was raised in a close-knit communal family environment that developed values of responsibility, discipline, and service. He attended Sierra Leone Grammar School, founded in 1845, where he developed a deep respect for discipline, scholarship, and service. After learning about Langston University through the United States Embassy in Sierra Leone, Lewis traveled to the United States in 1969 to begin his studies. He majored in History and Social Studies, studied under the mentorship of Dr. Ada Lois Fisher, worked two jobs as an international student, and graduated early in 1972 with a Bachelor of Arts in Social Studies.

EDUCATION, LEADERSHIP & SERVICE

Dr. Lewis earned a Master of Arts in Public Administration and Policy Analysis from the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs and a Ph.D. in Educational Policy and Planning from the University of Minnesota. He worked with the Minnesota State Planning Agency and later the Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Board, focusing on post-secondary education trends, demographic forecasting, and institutional planning.

In 1989, at the insistence of Dr. Ada Lois Sipuel-Fisher and with the approval of Dr. Earnest Holloway, he returned to Langston University to help build the foundation for the university's Graduate School. He led the Master's degree program in Education and spearheaded academic opportunities at Langston University. He was also involved with the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, Oklahoma, and the Oklahoma Council of Graduate Deans. His work was instrumental in establishing the School of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Counseling programs.

A LEGACY OF STUDENT ADVOCACY

Dr. Lewis championed first-generation, working, and underserved graduate students through exceptional personal support, flexible teaching, and a firm belief in their potential. He visited students' homes to help with coursework and welcomed working parents to bring their children to class rather than miss instruction. The first graduate class completed its studies in 1991, and many alumni went on to earn doctorates and serve as educators, scholars, and community leaders. He taught across Langston University's three campuses, used decades of research to strengthen institutional and teacher-education planning, and served as Graduate School Dean and professor until retiring in 2016. Named Professor Emeritus in 2025, he continues mentoring former students pursuing doctoral degrees.

FAITH, COMMUNITY & FAMILY

As an active member of First AME Church in Oklahoma City, Dr. Lewis teaches Sunday School, serves on the Steward Board and Board of Trustees, and is a guest lecturer at National Christian Education Leadership Conferences and multiple church and civic organizations. He is the proud father of Dr. Juanita Steward, Executive Director of Community Voices Heard in Newburg, New York. He is a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. and has been recognized by the Central Council Oklahoma Chapter of Top Ladies of Distinction as the African American Young Men and Humanitarian Leader.

DR. LEWIS'S LEGACY

"I would like to be remembered as the one who helped open the door to graduate education for students who never believed it was within their reach, and who showed them that the path to advanced degrees was not only possible but meant for them too."

2026 OAAE HOF HALL OF FAME, INC. INDUCTEE



Mr. Marvin E. Mack

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

"Legacy Builder"

37 YEARS OF EDUCATION, COACHING & LEADERSHIP

Mr. Marvin E. Mack was born on February 3, 1950, to David and Opal Mack in Guthrie, Oklahoma. He attended Page Elementary and Favor Junior High Schools. As his basketball skills developed, he became a varsity starter at Guthrie High School, lettered for three years, and led the team to a State Championship title in 1968. As a teenager, he was entrusted with teaching a Sunday school youth class at Beebe Chapel CME Church in Guthrie. He also prepared and presented weekly finance reports, later serving as Assistant Superintendent and then Sunday School Superintendent.

EDUCATION & COACHING CAREER

After earning a basketball scholarship and a Bachelor of Science in Education from Langston University in 1972, Mack served two years as an assistant coach for the Langston Lions. He then taught physical education and coached basketball and track at Taft Middle School before beginning a 37-year legacy at Douglass High School in 1981. There, he coached girls' basketball, volleyball, and track, building programs grounded in discipline, accountability, leadership, and excellence. His honors included multiple Coach of the Year awards, coaching the 1992 All-State Girls Basketball Game, recognition as a Top Ten Male Educator, and induction into the Soul Bowl Classic Hall of Fame.

LEADERSHIP, MENTORSHIP & SERVICE

In addition to coaching, Coach Mack served as Vice Principal at Douglass High School and F.D. Moon Middle School in Oklahoma City and contributed leadership to KIPP schools in the Oklahoma City area. He retired in December 2010 after devoting 37 years to the education profession. His affiliations include the Oklahoma Coaches Association, American Federation of Teachers, and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. Following retirement, he served as a mentor and Transportation Coordinator for the OSU-Oklahoma City TRIO Upward Bound program. He builds relationships with students, provides guidance, encourages them to recognize their potential, and serves as a trusted confidant.

His service has also included security work with the Oklahoma City Thunder and the Women's College World Series, as well as recognition from ESPN highlighting his impact on students and athletes. A 16-year prostate cancer survivor, Coach Mack turned personal adversity into purpose. In 2020, in partnership with OU Health Stephenson Cancer Center, he helped establish the Men's Health Awareness Summit, focused on promoting men's health, education and awareness.

FAMILY, FAITH & LEGACY

Coach Mack is married to Cheryl and is the father of four daughters—Dehrone Mack, Niki Hall, Shakara Isaac, and Nicole Hayes—and son Dion Smith. They have 19 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. They attend New Zion Baptist Church in Oklahoma City.

A LEGACY THAT REACHES BEYOND THE COURT

"His legacy is not one found in awards and accomplishments, but in the countless people who are better because they crossed paths with him. Coach Mack is proof that true educators never stop answering the call to serve." — Briana Flatley, Letter of Recommendation

2026 OAAE HOF HALL OF FAME, INC. INDUCTEE



Dr. Charolette Myles-Nixon

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

"Legacy of Empowerment"

30 YEARS OF TEACHING, SERVICE & EMPOWERMENT

Dr. Charolette Myles-Nixon was born on November 20, 1953, the second of six children of Dorine and Willie Myles in Enid, Oklahoma. Her parents emphasized keeping their children engaged and active. Her family participated in both Seventh Day Adventist and Methodist church communities, where she took part in youth groups and choirs. She also played violin and was a member of the Drum and Bugle Corps. After graduating from Enid High School in 1972, she enrolled at Central State University, now the University of Central Oklahoma, where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Speech, Hearing, and Mental Retardation in 1976 and a Master of Science degree in Learning Disabilities and Emotional Disturbance in 1979. She earned a Ph.D. in Special Education and Faculty and Curriculum Development from Oklahoma State University in 1993 and a Licensed Professional Counseling certification in 2016.

EDUCATION, SPECIAL EDUCATION & STUDENT EMPOWERMENT

Dr. Myles-Nixon began her professional career at Enid State School, teaching individuals with diverse learning needs while simultaneously providing special education instruction to secondary students at Jones Public Schools. Working with marginalized students who were already struggling academically required learner-specific lessons. Her results-based teaching balanced efficacy with creativity, using real-life examples, wit and out-of-the-box instruction to engage students and empower them to become successful learners.

At the University of Central Oklahoma, her 300-question exam became her trademark. She served as a faculty member for 30 years while concurrently working as a School Psychologist for Millwood Public Schools in Oklahoma City. She retired in 2017 and immediately returned to the classroom, serving in multiple capacities in Oklahoma City-area school districts. She currently volunteers at Millwood Public Schools as a Manifestation Determination Hearing Officer in the Special Education Department.

PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP & SERVICE

Her professional service at the University of Central Oklahoma included work as SCEC Faculty Advisor, CAEP Team development member for Special Education, Tenure Committee member, Council on Teacher Education member, Multicultural and Globalization Committee member, Chairperson of the Cohort Special Education Team, Chair of the Advisory Panel, Student Conduct Committee member and other university service. Her affiliations and memberships include the Council of Exceptional Children, International Association for Special Education, Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Disability Law Center, Board of Directors of Light House Workshop, State IDEA Oklahoma Metropolitan Alliance of Black School Educators, and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

FAMILY & LEGACY

Dr. Myles-Nixon is the wife of Alvin Nixon and mother to one son, Darrin. The family resides in Oklahoma City and attends the Seventh Day Adventist Church. She remains in contact with many former students who now work in public and private sectors as educators, psychologists, professors, physicians, and other esteemed professionals.

NOMINATION TRIBUTE

"Dr. Myles-Nixon's work has had a lasting multi-generational impact. Her classroom and clinical interventions produced measurable improvements in student outcomes." — Dr. Terry Spigner, Letter of Nomination

2026 OAAE HOF HALL OF FAME, INC. INDUCTEE



Dr. Wennette West Pegues

Tulsa, Oklahoma

"Beacon of Possibility"

A CAREER OF NURSING, HIGHER EDUCATION & SERVICE

Dr. Wennette West Pegues was born November 25, 1936, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to Wilbur and Mary West. She attended St. Richard's Elementary School and, after receiving an academic scholarship, attended St. Paul's Cathedral, an all-girls college preparatory high school where she was the only African American student. She enrolled at Mt. Mercy College, now Carlow University, in Pittsburgh and was one of two African American students during her four years. She was accepted into the Army Student Nurses Program, becoming the first collegiate nursing student in the tri-state area accepted into the program. After graduating and passing the state board examination, she was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Army Nurse Corps.

FROM NURSING TO HIGHER EDUCATION

After marrying Julius Pegues in Tulsa in 1958, Dr. Pegues completed Army Nurse Corps training and served at Valley Forge Army General Hospital in Pennsylvania. The couple later returned to Tulsa, where she taught nursing at Hillcrest Medical Center. She earned a Community College Specialist degree in Sociology and Counseling from the University of Tulsa in 1975 while working as a graduate assistant, then completed a doctorate in Educational Leadership in 1978 and received a College of Education research fellowship. She became the first Associate Academic Dean of the Langston University Center at Tulsa.

BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

In 1982, Dr. Pegues coordinated four universities offering upper-division courses at the University Center at Tulsa, enrolling more than 1,800 students within two months, and helping lay the foundation for OSU–Tulsa and Langston University's Tulsa campus. As Associate Dean of Students at the OSU College of Osteopathic Medicine, she prepared students for successful careers and continued mentoring after retiring in 2000. She also helped develop the OSU–Osher Lifelong Learning Institute and established a Carlow University endowment supporting African American nursing students.

HONORS, SERVICE & LEGACY

Dr. Pegues received honors for scholarship, leadership, and service, including Outstanding Scholar in Oklahoma, Carlow College's Distinguished Alumni Leadership Award, Delta Sigma Theta's Outstanding Woman of the Year, The Oklahoma Eagle Distinguished Service Award, and Tulsa's Woman of the Year. In 2024, Langston University recognized her as the first Director of its Tulsa Urban Campus during the campus' 45th anniversary. Her professional and civic service included leadership roles in higher education, medical education, human services, and the Salvation Army, along with longstanding membership in Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

FAMILY & LEGACY

Dr. Pegues was married to Julius Pegues (deceased) for nearly 64 years. She is "MOMA" to Mary Pamela, Michael David, and Angela; grandmother to Micah Gabrielle and Toussaint Miguel; and mother-in-law to Sonya Pegues and Darrin Guillory.

A BEACON OF POSSIBILITY

"She helped build institutions that allowed working adults, nontraditional students, and Black students to imagine a different future for themselves and their families." — Michael Pegues, Letter of Nomination

2026 OAAE HOF HALL OF FAME, INC. INDUCTEE



Ms. Carole A. Thompson

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

"Builder of Believers"

EDUCATOR • ADMINISTRATOR • COMMUNITY LEADER

Ms. Carole A. Thompson was born on February 3, 1957, in Ansbach, Germany, to Flora M. and Henry C. Simpson. After her father finished his service with the United States Army, the family moved to Lawton, Oklahoma, and later settled in Oklahoma City. She attended Thomas A. Edison Elementary School and Taft Junior High School during the integration of Oklahoma City's public schools. Despite the hostility and discrimination, she faced, Carole continued to do well in school and build strong relationships. She graduated from Northwest Classen High School in 1974, a year early and with honors. She studied microbiology and chemistry at Oklahoma State University and joined the Theta Beta Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., in 1975. She later earned a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Northeastern University in Tahlequah and a Master of Education in Educational Administration from the University of Central Oklahoma.

A CAREER BUILT ON CONNECTION & LEARNING

Ms. Thompson began her education career in 1997, teaching science at Alice Robertson Middle School in Muskogee Public Schools. After relocating to Oklahoma City to care for her parents, she joined Northeast Academy for Health Sciences and Engineering (NEAHSE) in 1999. In addition to teaching grades 6–12, she served as science fair coordinator, class sponsor, and student council coordinator. Building relationships with students was central to her teaching. Through hands-on activities, inquiry projects, and creative approaches, she created inclusive learning environments that encouraged even shy students to ask questions. She believed every student should experience a sense of accomplishment.

In 2006, she became the first principal of the new Centennial Middle/High School in Oklahoma City. She led the school from its opening through the spring term of 2011 and was responsible for school operations, finances, federal programs, and reports to the Oklahoma State Department of Education. She also served in teaching and administrative roles at John Marshall High School, Hoover Middle School, and Taft Middle School.

CONTINUING THE CALL TO EDUCATION

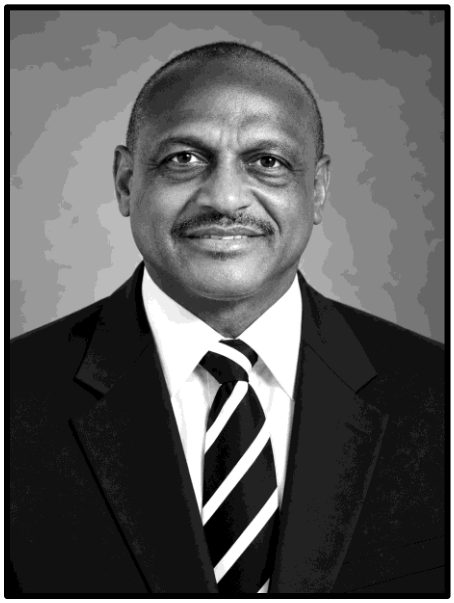
Ms. Thompson retired from teaching in 2018 after 27 years of education. In 2024, at the request of a friend, she returned to the classroom as a science teacher at Western Heights Public School. Her joy and love for teaching were reignited and reaffirmed, and she believes education is her true calling. Her honors include being selected by the NEAHSE faculty as Teacher of the Year in 2014, receiving a U.S. Air Force Excellence Grant, and presenting at Oklahoma Middle Level Educators Association and American Middle Level Educators Association conferences.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP & LEGACY

Ms. Thompson currently serves as a member of the OKCPS Board of Education. Her community service includes the CARE Center Board of Directors, Friends of NW Classen Board, Top Ladies of Distinction, Oklahoma Promise–OHLAP Community Partnership and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Her professional memberships have included the National Education Association, Oklahoma Education Association and American Federation of Teachers.

A BUILDER OF BELIEVERS: *"What made Ms. Thompson exceptional was her ability to balance high expectations with genuine care and understanding. She was firm but fair, and she deeply understood the community she served." — Rev. Rufus D. Howard, Former Student*

2026 OAAE HOF HALL OF FAME, INC. INDUCTEE



Mr. Jimmy Lee Walker

Taft, Oklahoma / Arlington, Texas

"Always, Student First,"

TRAILBLAZING EDUCATOR • COACH • MENTOR

Mr. Jimmy Lee Walker was born to Louie and Rita Walker in New Hope, Oklahoma, and raised in Taft, Oklahoma, where his family relocated when he was two years old. He was the tenth of twelve children. His parents instilled in their children the value of a strong educational foundation, faith, resilience, and sacrifice. He began his education in Moton Public School District, where his academic ability quickly became evident. He was promoted from first to second grade after only one semester, participated in school plays and Future Farmers of America, and developed a passion for basketball in fifth grade. At age 13, after his father died, his mother took on additional jobs to provide for the family. Inspired by her strength and sacrifice, Jimmy began delivering newspapers and continued working throughout high school. At Moton High School, he was a three-year basketball starter, team captain during his junior and senior years, earned all-state honors, and graduated as class salutatorian.

EDUCATION & ATHLETIC EXCELLENCE

Walker attended Connors State College in Warner, Oklahoma, where he was a two-year basketball starter and the leading scorer in Oklahoma, averaging 26 points per game. After earning an associate degree, he continued at East Central University in Ada, where he played a pivotal role for the ECU Tigers and was named Most Valuable Player during his senior year. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree and later a master's degree and administrative certificate from Northeastern State University. He was the first member of his family to graduate from college.

A TRAILBLAZING EDUCATOR & COACH

Walker began his professional education career at Byng Public Schools, becoming the first Black educator in the district. He returned to coach at his alma mater, Moton High School in Taft, where over the next ten years he transformed programs and created pathways for boys' track and girls' basketball. As head basketball coach, he emphasized discipline, faith, and perseverance. In 1982, the Moton Panthers won the State Championship.

He later became head coach at Muskogee High School, where he also taught psychology and sociology. He established strong expectations for students - to be present - be attentive - be respectful - and be leaders in class. During his tenure, his teams advanced to the state tournament three times in six years. He retired after 39 years in the education profession.

COMMUNITY SERVICE & MENTORSHIP

Walker has long served his community through organizations including the Kiwanis Club, Morning Optimist Club, Oklahoma Children's Center Advisory Committee, East Central University Alumni Association, Oklahoma Basketball Coaches Association, Oklahoma Basketball Board of Directors, and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. He founded Second Chance Hoops, a mentoring program for underserved youth, and helped establish the East Central University Black Alumni Association as its first president. His honors include the NAACP Mary McLeod Bethune Heritage Award, Martin Luther King Jr. Achievement Award, District III and Region III Coach of the Year, All-Star Coach in Texas and the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. Lifetime Award.

FAMILY, FAITH & LEGACY: Jimmy Walker and his wife have been married for 21 years. They are the parents of two children, Ceisha and Donovan. They are members of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Mansfield, Texas.

A LEGACY OF POSITIVE IMPACT: *"He had a natural talent for fostering positive relationships and supporting a supportive environment." — Former Congressman Dewey McClain (GA), Letter of Recommendation.*



(Photo: Currie Ballard Collection—Oklahoma Historical Society)

Association of Negro Teachers Association

In Oklahoma Territory, the first separate schools (schools specifically designated for African Americans only) opened in Oklahoma City and Guthrie in 1891 and in Kingfisher in 1892. Annual training institutes, conducted in Oklahoma City for Oklahoma County teachers and aspiring candidates who were preparing for teaching examinations, were at first racially mixed. Among the black group were professionals with powerful intellect, broad social commitment, and common interests, including their small, primitive, isolated schools, an avid interest in reading, and an intense racial pride.

The institutes led to the organization of the Ida M. Wells Teachers' Association in 1893. It included black teachers in fourteen counties and twenty-six communities of Oklahoma Territory. By 1900, these teachers had enrolled a total of 3,929 children in the territory's separate schools. The association struggled to secure improved in school facilities and to promote professional advancement for black teachers. Jefferson Davis Randolph served as the first president. The group later expanded into the Territorial Association of Negro Teachers. By 1907 statehood, Indian Territory had a similar association, and the two provided a nucleus for the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers (OANT).

In December 1907, one month after statehood, sixty-seven black teachers of the former Twin Territories met at Colored Agricultural and Normal University in Langston to reorganize their associations into the statewide Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers. Inman E. Page, then in his ninth year as university president, hosted the meeting. According to Evelyn Strong, OANT historian, both environmental and professional challenges contributed to the nature of the group's early leadership and to the development of its mission. Presidents between 1907 and 1924, with one exception, were school principals. J. H. Brazelton served as OANT's first president, elected in 1907. In 1908, Inman E. Page succeeded him.

In the early period leaders focused on expanding membership, developing leadership, acquiring knowledge of the state school system and of the educational environment in black communities, and improving professional competence through in-service training. Toward the end of its life, the organization primarily pursued legislation to relieve problems of separate school finance. This evolved because most black educators were acutely aware of the unfair, inequitable funding for separate schools. Children endured poor quality instruction, dilapidated buildings, and inadequate books and supplies. Smaller black communities had little or no representation in the decision-making at local or state levels.

By the 1920s, many of Oklahoma's 1,170 black teachers expressed a need for opportunities in leadership and self-expression, although older leaders desired to retain professional power. The membership compromised on a new constitution in 1924. Under it, the association improved its organizational and administrative procedures. It initiated new media of communication, new district and departmental divisions, a broader statewide educational program for black teachers, students, and communities, new leadership destined to impact OANT's future programs, and renewed interest in legislation to improve facilities. The 1920s shaped the association's educational and legislative activities for the next two decades.

OANT pursued a variety of activities in the 1930s. Cooperative ventures with the Langston University Alumni Association were led by Frederick D. Moon. A 1935 project resulted in legislation that provided tuition to send black teachers and others to out-of-state colleges and universities (blacks then could not attend any college or university in Oklahoma other than Langston, by state law). This measure operated until 1948, when Oklahoma schools began to provide graduate and professional training, and 1954, when public schools were desegregated. Another development was the re-establishment in 1935 of OANT's official organ, *The Journal*, edited by W. E. Anderson of Okmulgee.

The 1940s were OANT's most productive era. During World War II, the association directed an intensive effort toward revising the Oklahoma Constitution and statutes to broaden public education's financial base and provide equitable funding to separate schools. Consequently, in special referendum elections, Oklahoma voters approved constitutional amendments on July 2, 1946, and July 6, 1948. Between 1946 and 1953, these two measures brought about more than $18 million in appropriations for separate schools.

On November 5, 1946, the people approved four constitutional amendments for "Better Schools." This resulted from an initiative petition jointly sponsored by the Oklahoma Education Association (OEA) and OANT. One amendment brought additional financial support to separate schools through county levies of the "Moon mill," named by some blacks in honor of Moon, who had marshaled the drives to achieve voters' signatures for the initiative petitions that secured its inclusion as one of the four.

The U.S. Supreme Court decisions in 1954 and 1955 augmented the social changes of the 1940s. In response, OANT organized a program to prepare for transition to school desegregation and to protect black teachers' welfare. OEA also geared various activities to those purposes. Most notable were the development of research studies and communications designed to retain black teachers in desegregated school systems. On October 28, 1955, OANT decided to merge with OEA. Even as it disbanded, OANT worked untiringly to retain employment for black teachers after 1955. Nevertheless, as many as four hundred of them, many holding graduate degrees, were replaced by inexperienced white teachers who were recent college graduates.

OANT members had earlier begun to join OEA, and OANT was entirely dissolved by 1958. During its half-century of existence, OANT had commanded unswerving support. Records reflect that in 1955, 1,500 of Oklahoma's 1,622 black educators were members. Historically, the association's primary mission had been to raise the standards of education for black children. OANT achieved that purpose, while making a major contribution to civil rights.

Author: Dr. Melvin Todd (Oklahoma Historical Society)

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

June 25, 2010

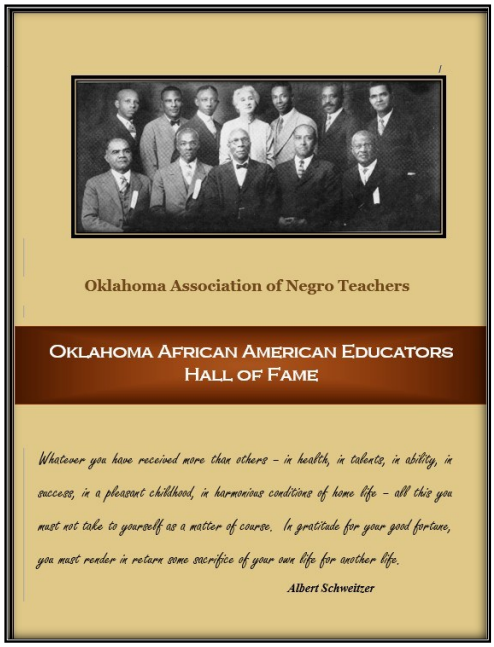
THE FOUNDING GROUP — 2010

FOUNDING GROUP PHOTOGRAPH



Pictured left to right: Sharon Hill-Wooten, Terry Bennett, Jimmie White, Joan Josephine Giddings, Dr. Donnie L. Nero Sr., Orlando Hazley, Dee Richardson, Bobbie Allen Booker, and Dr. Melvin Todd.

The first nine individuals pictured here came together to form the organization. In 2011, Eunice Edison, Joyce Henderson, Henrietta Hicks, Dr. Earnest L. Holloway, Albert Johnson, and Thelma R. Parks were added to complete the Board.



Historical Image 2011 Program

15 YEARS OF HONOR

2010–2026

2010 — Organization constituted and incorporated
2010 — Founding group begins the work
2011 — First induction ceremony
2011–2019 — Annual ceremonies continue
2020 — COVID YEAR
2021 — Tenth Annual Induction
2022–2025 — Continuing the tradition
2026 — Fifteenth Induction Ceremony

The Fifteenth Induction Ceremony provides an opportunity to honor the educators, families, board members, volunteers, supporters, and community partners who have helped sustain the Hall of Fame. It is also a moment to look forward—to continuing the work of recognition, preservation, and service.

OUR CONTINUING LEGACY - *Recognition • Preservation • Service*

RECOGNITION: Honoring educators whose professional lives have strengthened students, schools, families, and communities.

PRESERVATION: Documenting the stories and accomplishments of Oklahoma's African American educators so their contributions remain part of the historical record.

SERVICE: Continuing the work of the Hall of Fame through educational recognition, scholarships, community partnerships, and the preservation of history in Clearview, Oklahoma.

Acknowledgments & Supporters

The Oklahoma African American Educators Hall of Fame, Inc, gratefully acknowledges the organizations, businesses, foundations, individuals, and community partners whose support helps us continue our mission.

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