



great graduates

BROKEN ARROW HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



2015 HONOREES



great graduates

HISTORY OF THE GREAT GRADUATE HALL OF FAME PROGRAM

The Broken Arrow High School Alumni Association honors a select group of “Great Graduates” who have exhibited – throughout their adult lives – strong leadership and good citizenship, which the Broken Arrow Schools helped develop during their formative years of schooling. The recipients are individuals who exhibit through a variety of activities a purposeful drive that helps them remain dedicated to service within their community and compassionate towards others. Each one has proven to have personal integrity, courage and has achieved in both his or her personal and professional life. As they continue to soar and live a commitment to excellence, they serve as role models to all of us. Nominations are solicited throughout the community of Broken Arrow and in the media for alumnae who have modeled a selfless life of achievement and service to others for at least 20 years. The Broken Arrow High School Alumni Association was revived in 1999, starting the tradition of the Great Graduates. The very first Great Graduates class was formally honored as part of the Broken Arrow Public Schools Foundation Banquet festivities in the spring of 1999. In 2001, the Alumni Association began to host their own event, specifically honoring the Great Graduates and their guests. This tradition continues to the present.

Great Graduates 1999

Jim Brewer, Class of 1956 (Posthumously)
John Hudson, Class of 1966 (Posthumously)
Virginia Watts Johnson, Class of 1948
Dr. Alan Keller, Class of 1965
Millie Marshall, Class of 1955

Great Graduates 2000

Ed Cobb Jr., Class of 1943 (Posthumously)
Howard Fisher, Class of 1935
Carl Martin, Class of 1943
Max E. Smith, Class of 1950
Roy Sturgeon, Class of 1959

Great Graduates 2001

Robert Eskridge, Class of 1944
Herb Karner, Class of 1934
Doug Lanier, Class of 1968
Frances McNeely Leonard, Class of 1953
Dr. Jeff Lester, Class of 1964

Great Graduates 2002

Brad Gahm, Class of 1977
Richard Gilliland, Class of 1956
Letha Phillips Nichols, Class of 1931 (Posthumously)
Floy C. Pepper, Class of 1934
Bill Perry, Class of 1948

Great Graduates 2003

Max Brissey, Class of 1948
Larry Deonier, Class of 1964 (Posthumously)
Luke Garrett, Class of 1977
Dr. Gary Gerber, Class of 1968
Janice Worthington Lisko, Class of 1975
Rick Medlin, Class of 1963

Great Graduates 2004

William C. Chapman, Class of 1938
Arnold Kunze, Class of 1946
Major William H. (Hank) Miesner, Jr., Class of 1957 (Posthumously)
Lieutenant Colonel Rowdy Williams, Class of 1958
Johnnie Parks, Class of 1965

Great Graduates 2005

Dr. Jack L. Griffin, Class of 1940
Maxine Layton Dark, Class of 1944
Bob Henry, Class of 1948
H. Delbert Frieze, Esq., Class of 1961

Great Graduates 2006

Paul Hayes, Class of 1940
Onis Lemon, Class of 1956
Mitchell Wilson, Class of 1970
Rebecca Righter Bluestone, Class of 1972
Russ McKinnon, Class of 1977

Great Graduates 2008

Bert Kennard, Class of 1940
Nile Clark, Class of 1955 (Posthumously)
Elmo Johnston, Class of 1943

Great Graduates 2012

Kristin Chenoweth, Class of 1986
Ivan Brown, Class of 1919
Nick Aston, Class of 1963
Dr. Amy Sturgis, Class of 1990
Dennis Sagely, Class of 1992

Great Graduates 2013

William T. Autry, Class of 1925
Dr. Robert A. Rosser, Jr., Class of 1959
Dr. Jill Edwards Steeley, Class of 1968
Tim Lynn, Class of 1984
Dr. Denise E. Dutton, Class of 1990

Great Graduates 2014

Archie Pennington, Class of 1922 (Posthumously)
Ina Lynn Dilldine, Class of 1956
Joseph Lester, Class of 1963
Philip Tucker, Class of 1975 (Posthumously)
John Lindsay, Class of 1979

Rev. Bill COUCH, Jr.

Class of 1956

Friends say our Great Graduate from the Class of 1956 had considerable trouble pronouncing a simple two-letter word.

When asked to go above and beyond the call of duty in spreading the word of God, or take in a needy child or helping people suffering from substance abuse, Rev. William L. (Bill) Couch, Jr. found that simple little word “no” somehow always came out as “yes” or “I’d be delighted,” or “thank you for asking.”

Maybe that explains why in 40 years as a minister he built a resume that includes director and developer of Career Effectiveness Training for Word Processing Service in Oak Ridge, Tenn.; chairman of the Campus Ministers Council at the University of Tennessee; president of the Tennessee Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors; director of Knox County Metropolitan Drug Commission, board chairman of Lutheran Services of Tennessee; vice chairman of Knoxville’s Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration Commission; chairman of the Knoxville Association of Christian Denomination Leaders, instructor of Biblical courses for Crossways, International; instructor for Southern Appalachian Lay Leadership Training in Greenville, Tenn., and chairman of both the Memphis and Shelby County chapters of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

In his spare time, Couch also authored a number of published



articles. And then there were times like the one when he was a minister in Memphis. He became aware of a boy from Little Rock, Ark. who had come to town to attend a school for the deaf but had no place to stay. Somehow it just seemed natural that Bill and his wife, Ruth, would do what they had done any number of times before - open their arms and welcome the youngster to be part of a family that already included a son and three daughters.

Long-time friend Ina Dilldine notes that Couch, who was president of the Class of 1956, didn’t originally have his sights set on the ministry. His aim in enrolling at Northeastern State University was to practice medicine. That changed abruptly during 1958-1959.

According to Bob Steinberg, that’s when Couch was seriously injured in a traffic accident that took the lives of his father and sister. After recovering, he answered a “calling” by enrolling in Concordia Theological Seminary in Springfield, Mo., where he received his Master of Divinity Degree in 1963 and was ordained a Minister of the Gospel in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. Later, he earned both state and national certification in alcohol and drug abuse counseling.

Today, Bill and Ruth are living the good life as retirees, comfortably settled in Knoxville, Tenn. where he devotes himself to maintaining a showplace lawn and flower garden and joining his wife in spoiling the bratches off their eight grandchildren.

Without question, Couch says God has been good to this proud former Tiger.



Jeff ROBERTS

Class of 1980

Students in Broken Arrow High School's Class of 1980 who selected Jeff Roberts as "Most Likely to Succeed" would surely have received A-plus grades if the school had offered a class in Nostradamus Predictions.

Since graduating as co-valedictorian, Roberts' life has been a seemingly endless array of successes, beginning with his time at the University of Oklahoma where he was one of the top 10 students in his freshman and sophomore classes, selected to membership in Gamma Gamma Honor Society and was named an Outstanding Graduate of the university.

Moving on to Boston, Roberts earned a Master of Business Administration degree from the prestigious Harvard Business School while being one of only 24 members of his 800-person class to be admitted directly from an undergraduate college.

This same trend of successes continues to mark Roberts' professional life beginning with his service as an investment professional who helped grow regional business from \$6 million to more than \$35 million at Goldman Sachs and Co. in Miami, Fla.

As Regional Manager for Florida, he oversaw accounts of the region's largest customers while handling regulatory functions and serving as a member of the firm's Divisional Strategic Planning Committee.

Roberts' next step up the corporate ladder came with his appointment as Regional Manager for Florida and Latin America. During this time, he managed a 70-person team serving clients in Florida, Latin America and the Caribbean while implementing a



number of strategic initiatives that transformed the business from brokerage to asset management.

Today he carries the title of Vice President and is the senior member of a team responsible for \$4 billion in client assets. Additional responsibilities include new business development and service on the firm's Advisors Council.

Friends and former teachers recall Roberts' quest to serve others. That drive continues with a 10-year history of service on the board of directors of Ransom Everglades, one of the top private schools in the country. During his term as board chairman, he headed a fund-raising campaign to build a large swimming complex that is now being used by a number of area schools.

Additional community service continues to come in the form of being a long-time member of the board of Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Greater Miami; time as a director of Informed Families of Miami; service on the advisory board of the University of Miami Law School Center for Ethics and as a veteran trustee of the New World Symphony—all of which led to his being named a Rising Star by the South Florida Business Journal.

Roberts' newest success story began when the long-time director was named president and chairman of the Orange Bowl Committee. Impressive certainly, but very much in keeping with the accomplishments that have made him the success his classmates predicted he would become.

Amy Anne WALLER FORD

Class of 1982



This year's Great Graduate from the Class of 1982, Amy Anne Waller Ford, is one of the most highly involved individuals anywhere.

After graduating from high school and Oklahoma State University, she owned and operated NEON, Inc., an emergency physician staffing company that employed more than 100 physicians and had operations in Oklahoma, Texas and Arkansas. Today, she is a partner in RedAnt, LLC providing comprehensive business development, management, messaging and strategic public relations consulting services.

Deeply involved in community and civic activities, she dedicates her energies to a number of philanthropic endeavors, including economic development, education and sustainable water policy. She is a strong advocate for the protection of children in our schools but is perhaps best known for her leadership on a number of local, statewide and national water policy issues, a topic she has championed for more than a decade.

In 2012 she was appointed to serve on the Oklahoma Public/



Private Water Task Force by Gov. Mary Fallin, Chickasaw Nation Governor Bill Anoatubby and Choctaw Nation Chief Gregory Pyle with the charge of facilitating meaningful dialogue about Oklahoma's current water management policies and challenges.

Ford serves on the boards of directors for the Southeastern Oklahoma State University Foundation, the Oklahoma Academy for State Goals and Citizens For the Protection of the Arbuckle Simpson Aquifer. She is a graduate of Leadership Oklahoma's Class XXVIII, was recently selected for the Journal Record's "50 Making a Difference" recognition and is a 2015 finalist for Woman of the Year.

Ford represented Oklahoma's Second Congressional District on the State Board of Education and the Oklahoma State Board of Career and Technology. At the same time, she served as chairman of the Oklahoma Standards Setting Steering Committee.

Closer to her home, she serves as a director of the Durant Partners in Education, the Durant Crisis Control Center and is a Court Appointed Special Advocate volunteer.

She and her husband, Dr. Jim Ford, have one daughter, Erin, a physician's assistant who lives in Keller, Texas with her husband.

Our Great Graduate said she has faced a number of challenges in her life, beginning with the physical demands of being a Tigette and the academic skill required to master physics during her days at Broken Arrow High School. But no matter how complex the issue might be, she said a lesson she learned then continues to guide her activities:

"You just wade in, learn all you can about the subject, and start splashing around until you come up with the right solutions," she said.

John WOLFKILL

Class of 1993

Over the years, John Wolfkill has collected an impressive array of awards, but they are not the reason two Tulsa business leaders took the time to write the Broken Arrow High School Alumni Association recommending him for consideration as a Great Graduate from the Class of 1993.

For Andrew McRae, a leader at KIPP Tulsa College Preparatory which Wolfkill serves as executive director, it is a “relentless passion to serve others and to invest himself in improving quality of life and quality of opportunities for some of Tulsa most underserved students” that made Wolfkill an ideal candidate.

Don Parker, a Bank of Oklahoma executive who serves as KIPP’s Board Chairman, agreed, adding: “Problem-solving and quick learning are two skills innately ingrained in John’s character.”

After graduating from high school, this former Tiger earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English and Secondary Education at the University of Tulsa and set out on a path that would make him one of the community’s most active volunteers at organizations ranging from KIPP to Life Church, All Nations Fellowship, Tulsa Day Care for the Homeless and City of Tulsa Human Rights Committee.

While on the West Coast working toward a Master’s Degree from



the University of Southern California, Wolfkill accepted a position as an urban planner with the Watts Labor Community Action Committee. Later, he assumed the role of Associate Director of the PLF Bresee Foundation. Returning home, he became Program Manager for the Community Action Project of Tulsa County; Director of Administration and Donor Partnerships for the Tulsa Community Foundation and, in 2011, the head man at KIPP.

Eager to share his expertise while furthering his passion for helping those who need it most, he has served as a consultant for a variety of organizations, including a number of City of Los Angeles agencies, QuikTrip Corp., Bank of Oklahoma, Tulsa Economic Development Corp., WriteGirls Alliance for Communities and Families, Kendall Whittier Inc., and Mustard Seed International.

While Wolfkill is a self-professed “incurable people person” friends and colleagues point out his accomplishments at KIPP provide clear evidence that he is also a savvy educator who employs unusually high levels of dedication and creativity to make sure the seventh and eighth grade boys he lovingly calls the “Wolf Pack” receive the college-aligned academic instruction, character-infused school culture and social support they need to prosper in college and business world environments.

For most people, trying to explain Wolfkill’s strategies and tactics in a few words would constitute an almost impossible mission. Andrew McRae, however, says it is actually a relatively simple task. In fact, he notes, they can be summarized using only seven words: “On earth as it is in Heaven.”



Dave ALEXANDER

Class of 1974

When Willie Nelson penned his Western tune “On the Road Again” marveling at the joy of making music with his friends, he could well have been writing about his relationship with this year’s Great Graduate from the Class of 1974.

Like Nelson, Dave Alexander is a veteran entertainer and one of the most honored performers in the country music world. Among the awards he has received are induction into the Texas Western Swing Hall of Fame, the Sacramento Western Swing Hall of Fame, the Seattle Western Swing Hall of Fame, the Ft. Worth Cowtown Hall of Fame and the Oklahoma Country Music Hall of Fame.

Then there are his four Grammy nominations, as well as Entertainer of the Year and Vocalist of the Year awards.

Over the years, this former Tiger has performed and recorded with some of the biggest names in the entertainment industry – folks like George Strait, Toby Keith, LeAnn Rimes and, of course, his pal Willie. But before all those miles on the road were logged and all those awards filled his trophy case, former Broken Arrow High School teacher Jeanne Johnson remembers an “exemplary student who was always kind, considerate and helpful to others.”



Alexander’s career can be traced back to fifth grade where even then he was a standout trumpet player. He attended schools in Perry before moving to Broken Arrow in time to begin his sophomore year and leave behind a legacy that includes being voted Most Talented Student, outstanding jazz band performer and football and wrestling athlete. When it came time for his class to graduate, it was Alexander who was tapped to play the trumpet solo of “Auld Lang Syne” that many of his classmates still fondly remember.

Following college at Oklahoma State University and the University of North Texas, he created Dave Alexander Productions, a contracting service specializing in providing music and musicians for special events in the Dallas-Ft Worth area. Later, he joined the Dallas Cowboys as trumpet soloist and became Music Director for the National Football League team.

Throughout the 1980’s, he was an award-winning music teacher. A highlight of his career at that time was an invitation to perform at Ronald Reagan’s presidential inauguration. Later, he created Dave Alexander and the Legends of Western Swing and toured with the band which featured former members of the Bob Wills Texas Playboys.

Space doesn’t permit a full review of Alexander’s other accomplishments. Just let it be said that few people come close to measuring up to his contributions to the industry he loves. Even fewer can measure up to the respect he has earned from a group of long-time pals who are proud to call him a classmate and friend.





Broken Arrow High School
Alumni Association
GREAT GRADUATES OF 2015
Recognition Ceremony and Reception

Varsity Club, Broken Arrow High School
Friday, October 30, 2015, 5:15 p.m.

Master of Ceremonies

Justin Rosser
Broken Arrow High School Choir Director
Class of 1995

Dinner

Welcome

Dr. Jarod Mendenhall
Superintendent of Schools

**Greetings from the Broken Arrow High School
Alumni Association**

Charles Gann
Class of 1955

Invocation

Ina Edwards Dilldine
Class of 1956

**Recognition of Former Great Graduates
School Board Members and Special Guests**

**Introduction of Great Graduates
Class of 2015**

Rev. William L. "Bill" Couch Jr., Class of 1956
Presented by J.C. Duensing
Class of 1956

Jeff Roberts, Class of 1980
Presented by Dr. Kara Gae Neal

Amy Waller Ford, Class of 1982
Presented by Erin Yarborough

John C. Wolfkill, Class of 1993
Presented by Kirk R. Wester
Class of 1992

Dave Alexander, Class of 1974
Presented by Roger Love
Class of 1974

Closing Remarks

Derek Blackburn
Class of 1990

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Broken Arrow Public Schools

Dr. Jarod Mendenhall
Superintendent of Schools

BAPS Communications Department

Ken Ellett
Director of Athletic Operations

Bob Lewis
Writer and Editorial Consultant

Adam J. Foreman
Graphic Artist/Publications Specialist

Printing by Royal Printing

Photography by Derek Young

Felix DeGeyter
Vintage Automobiles for Homecoming Parade

Broken Arrow High School Vocal Jazz Choir

Michelle Lewandowski
BAHS Multi-media Instructor
Program Logo

Great Graduates Escorts
Broken Arrow High School Honor Society

Caitlyn Rollins	Jared Hughes
Katrina Klempa	Brady Price
Devyn Polk	Charzelle David
Sara Alfaro	Hannah McGrath
Precious Okoruwa	Alyssa Holden

GREAT GRADUATES COMMITTEE

Derek Blackburn, Class of 1990
Gwynta Blissit Buchanan, Class of 1970
Carla Dobbins Crow, Class of 1970
Charles Gann, Class of 1955
Carolyn Vaughan Hodges, Class of 1970
Steve Schwab, Class of 1982
Max Smith, Class of 1950
Rowdy Williams, Class of 1958
Glenn Wimpee, Class of 1990