

SUMMER 2016

# HERITAGE

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION OFFICE OF GIFT PLANNING







# HERITAGE SOCIETY

## *Spring Celebration*



### **Greetings from Stillwater!**

The OSU Foundation recently hosted its annual Heritage Society celebration on campus. Guests toured the new Bert Cooper Engineering Lab as well as the Charles & Linda Cline Equine Teaching Center, and learned more about both facilities and programs from students and faculty. A Homecoming presentation was followed by a special lunch at the Training Table in Boone Pickens Stadium. Even Bullet made a guest appearance at the end of the day for an impressive photo opportunity!

The student experience at Oklahoma State is enhanced through the generosity of Heritage Society donors and others who have made OSU a part of their philanthropy. The stories in this newsletter are examples of such commitment.

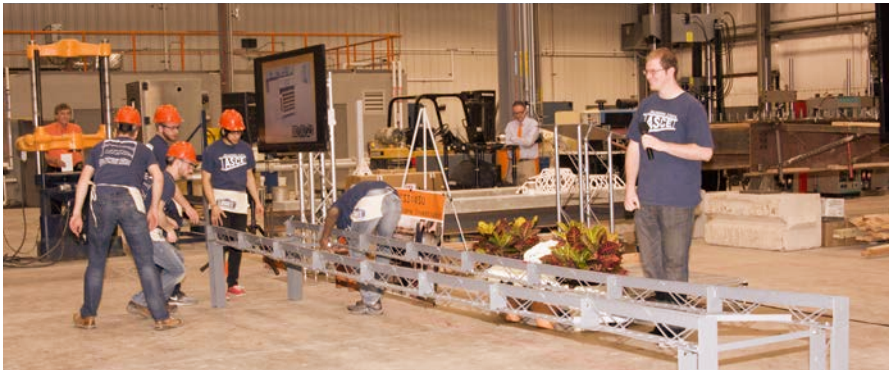
If you want to explore opportunities to include OSU in your charitable planning, please know the Office of Gift Planning is here to help and

can provide information to assist you and your professional advisors. For more information, we invite you to call us at 800-622-4678 or visit [OSUgiving.com/estateplanning](http://OSUgiving.com/estateplanning).



*Pictured above from LEFT to RIGHT: Diana Lasswell, Nina Floyd, Melinda McAfee, Rebecca Underwood and J. David Mays. Also pictured is Pete's Pet Posse member, Elsa the OSU Foundation pet therapy dog.*





*A bridge-building competition demonstration in the Bert Cooper Engineering Lab and student remarks about the impact of the Charles & Linda Cline Equine Teaching Center were just some of the day's activities.*



*Heritage Society members are greeted at Boone Pickens Stadium by members of the OSU Cowboy Marching Band.*

## OSU on his MIND

*Melot is interested in everything that happens at his alma mater*

**R**ichard Melot says he thinks about his alma mater nearly every day. He is always thinking of ways he can help OSU.

“OSU gave me so much, so I wanted to give back,” Melot said. “It gave me an education and put me on track for a successful career. During college I made great friends for life and have always appreciated the great professors I had. **It gives me great pleasure to see our university soar to greater heights, and it’s always wonderful to come back to campus for special events or athletic events.**”

Melot grew up in the tiny south central Oklahoma town of Wanette before graduating from OSU in 1965 with an agricultural education degree. While in school, he worked in quality control for Green Giant in Belvedere, Illinois. After college, he moved to Iowa and taught high-school agriculture for five years before returning to Oklahoma. He earned a master’s in education at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, and taught another eight years in Owasso, Oklahoma. He then became a counselor at CareerTech’s Moore Norman Area Vo-Tech.



“A counselor does everything – anything that comes in the door,” Melot said. “You did financial aid, personal counseling and career counseling. You had adult programs and testing. I would give the tests to the students going into our licensed practical nursing program, for example.”

That was when he bought a cattle farm in Lexington, Oklahoma, 17 miles south of Norman and 20 miles west of Wanette.

“My son, John, wanted to play sports, and Norman High was a really big school,” Melot said. “They had 65 kids come out for basketball. At Lexington, he played basketball, football and golf.”

John later attended OSU, earning an agricultural economics and pre-law degree in 1990.

“**I’m always on board with OSU. It’s not just about sports. I’m interested in everything that happens here – the whole university, whatever it is ... it’s really important to me.**”

It was around that time that his father found his career calling when he opened a Texaco station, which he ran for about 25 years before retiring 11 years ago. Melot certainly enjoyed the financial success that came from the job, but he also enjoyed the opportunities it provided to help others.

“If someone was stranded with a flat tire, I would go help them,” Melot said. “It was my business, but it was also an aspect of the business that I liked.”

**Melot also likes helping people through his alma mater. That’s why he has made many gifts to the OSU Foundation. When the university created the Proud & Immortal Society last spring to recognize high-level donors, Melot was one of the inaugural members.**

His two largest donations to OSU are both planned gifts, with one benefitting athletics and the other a scholarship for drama students.

Melot’s passion for the performing arts dates back to attending shows in New York City. He noticed when the arts became an emphasis of the university under the leadership of President Burns Hargis, and he utilized a scholarship gift matching opportunity funded by Boone Pickens.

He has also long been a fan of sports. He regularly attends OSU football, women’s basketball and baseball games. He has also been a season-ticket holder for wrestling and men’s basketball in the past.

“I’m always on board with OSU,” Melot said. “It’s not just about sports. I’m interested in everything that happens here – the whole university, whatever it is ... it’s really important to me.”

Melot is very proud of his alma mater, but he didn’t emphasize that at his gas station.

“Obviously when you’re in business, you don’t talk politics, religion or schools,” Melot said. “People get to know you and then they know what side you’re on, and that’s OK.”

But when not working, Melot does everything he can to promote OSU, starting with his choice of wardrobe. “Orange is my favorite color,” Melot said.

He helped establish and lead the Cleveland/McClain County Chapter of the OSU Alumni Association, which established a scholarship for local students. It has grown to the point that it awarded three scholarships last year.

“I do a lot of OSU stuff with my time,” Melot said. “It all started when the OSU Foundation invited me to play golf at Karsten Creek. **I’ve always had a passion for OSU, but the Foundation gave me a way to be actively involved. They helped me make a difference at OSU.**”

He also greatly enjoys spending time with his son and daughter, Lisa, as well as his grandchildren, Meagan and Zackery.

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*If you are interested in joining Melot in supporting OSU through a planned gift, please contact the Office of Gift Planning at 800.622.4678 or [giftplanning@OSUgiving.com](mailto:giftplanning@OSUgiving.com).*



# THE HEART OF AN AGGIE

## *The Houston & Mable Ward Story*



**T**hose who experienced the Great Depression, many of whom are gone now, typically lived their lives focused on daily struggles to pay rent and put dinner on the table. A solid work ethic might ensure keeping your job or your ability to pay the bills. Parents like the Wards preached the value of higher education to their children. That diploma was the ticket to a better life.

For Oklahoma natives Mable Rhoten and Houston Ward, attending Oklahoma A&M was not a given during their late teens, as money was scarce. Unlike the abundant lives of today's students who enjoy cars, checking accounts and financial safety nets provided by parents, trust funds and student loans, the late Rhoten and Ward were

grateful to have living quarters and three square meals a day. Today, their five children remember their parents' dedication to the family. At the heart was the expectation their children would seek higher education. And they did: One is a registered dietician; two are medical doctors; one is a computer systems project manager; and one has enjoyed a career as an Army officer.

Houston Ward Jr. agreed to represent himself and his four siblings — Dixie, Jewell, John and Marilyn — in the creation of a named endowed fund at Oklahoma State University Foundation honoring their late parents. Now a resident of Stillwater and retired from the Army, he recounts his parents' first meeting in Stillwater eight decades ago.

"Dad worked for the OAMC Dairy Department delivering milk. His route in Stillwater included the house where my mother worked as a nanny and a live-in housekeeper. They met on the back porch one morning," he said with a smile.

"Houston and Mable quietly married in 1935 in Arkansas, as she was a Webb City school teacher, and he a student finishing his degree at OAMC. I say quietly because in those days teachers were subject to cultural pressure to remain single, especially if they were women. Our parents brought five children into the world, all of whom were encouraged to do their best work."

The family always lived in Oklahoma, was connected to agriculture, and was guided by a mother proficient in skills learned through her studies in home economics. Houston spent 21 years in Oklahoma County Extension and then steered the family back to Stillwater in 1956.

**"Dad earned his master's degree in 1959 and a doctorate in 1968 in agricultural economics at OSU. Mother, who had begun her college studies at the young age of 16, and who came from Osage County oil fields, took courses year-round to attain her home economics degree as well as majors in dietetics and early childhood education. She finished in three years. Oldest daughter Dixie followed in her footsteps. They were a 'first' in that mother and daughter both graduated from the OSU College of Home Economics.**

"Dad accepted a position in the Agricultural Economics Department at OSU. Mother possessed livestock business acumen learned from her father. She set about amassing a number of rental properties — about 15 of them — near campus. A family endeavor, OSU students were either renters or hired as maintenance workers for the properties — all under the watchful eye of mother who remained in tune with campus life. Houston's career first as an associate professor and then in 1970 as a full professor kept OSU and the Ward family in the middle of university life. In fact,

Dr. Ward served on the selection committee for President Robert E. Kamm.

**"We think we have honored the spirit of their lives with this scholarship," states Houston. "Both mother and dad were always avid Cowgirl and Cowboy sport fans, season-ticket-holders and they raised their children to be competitive in work and in play. The Ward Scholar is a full-time College of Agriculture student maintaining a B average or above, and who studies animal science with an agribusiness minor, or who aspires to a major in agricultural economics with an animal science minor, with preference for food science fields."**

College of Agriculture students' dairy routes are in the past. The Dairy Building no longer exists to serve ice cream and other products, and college students no longer fear cultural pressure to hide a marriage during their school years or employment as teachers. But one common thread remains: The charge to aspire to higher education and a life of accomplishment is underlined in the Ward Scholarship. To be a Ward Scholar, one must aspire to do one's best.

One must aspire to achieve. That's at the heart of the story.

*Whether created through an estate plan, pledge, outright gift or other vehicle, an endowed scholarship can provide a powerful way to leave a legacy or honor a loved one.*

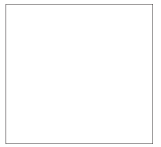
*For more information about how you can create an endowed scholarship or other fund benefitting OSU, please contact the Office of Gift Planning at 800.622.4678 or [giftplanning@OSUgiving.com](mailto:giftplanning@OSUgiving.com).*



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# BE LIKE PETE!

**PISTOL PETE DIDN'T WORRY ABOUT  
REQUIRED MINIMUM DISTRIBUTIONS...**

**The IRA Charitable Rollover is Now Permanent!** Take advantage of the **new IRA charitable rollover legislation** by making your gift to the OSU Foundation.

IRA charitable rollovers are now **permanently** available! If you are 70½ or older and own a traditional or Roth individual retirement account, you may distribute up to \$100,000 tax-free directly to the Oklahoma State University Foundation and support the area(s) most important to you.

**BENEFITS INCLUDE:**

- » The gift generates neither taxable income nor a tax deduction on the federal income tax return, so you receive the benefit even if you don't itemize on your tax returns.
- » The rollover to OSUF may be in addition to or fulfill any charitable giving pledges you have already planned.
- » These gifts can be used to support your favorite college, department or program.
- » You can witness the good that comes of your generosity.

**To learn more details, visit [OSUgiving.com/IRARollover](https://OSUgiving.com/IRARollover) or look for the IRA Rollover button on our website. Contact the gift planning department at 1.800.622.4678 or [giftplanning@OSUgiving.com](mailto:giftplanning@OSUgiving.com).**