

# THE BAJA OKLAHOMAN

*Newsletter of the OU Club of Austin*

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*From the president*

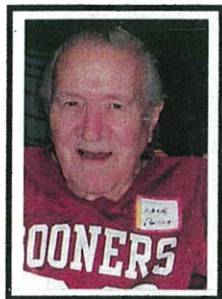
## Celebrating a life well lived

By FRED DUPY, President

A remarkable life was celebrated last weekend when a number of OU Club of Austin members and other friends of Mack Palmer gathered at a south Austin home.

Mack, a longtime member of the OU Club of Austin, died on May 1 at age 86. He left a legacy of fond memories for those whose lives he touched.

Mack was never afraid to remind Oklahoma and Texas fans that UT had named its football stadium for an alumnus of OU.



Mack Palmer

"If not for me, Darrell Royal wouldn't have graduated from OU," Mack enjoyed saying of his former classmate, not meaning a word of it.

His irrepressible humor knew few bounds, certainly not those of political correctness.

His loyalties, unshaken through nearly nine decades of life, were firmly ordered in his mind: God, family, the United States, OU.

Everyone who knew Mack was sure they were his best friend. He made you feel that way.

He was among those instrumental in the founding and nurturing of the OU Club of Austin the last quarter century, serving on our board and otherwise offering his energy, wit and talent to us.

His optimism and humor never failed Mack. Not long after turning 80, he said he was battling a mid-life crisis. But he added, he had found great comfort in the purchase of a snazzy white Mustang — somehow, it was not a convertible — which he drove until illness forced him to sell the beloved car last December.

I won't forget the day when Mack and I discovered that one of my uncles had been a teacher of his at Classen High School in Oklahoma City.

"I had him for a teacher," Mack exclaimed. "I hated him!" We shared a good laugh at that.

No phone call with Mack ever ended without his reading one — and most likely more — of the jokes he kept piled near the phone.

It was good to meet some of Mack's family last weekend — sons Stu of Alpine, Tex., and Grif of Granada Hills, Calif., Grif's fiancée Jacqueline Santiago and Mack's niece, Melanie Palmer, in whose home the celebration of Mack's life was held.

Burial was in the family cemetery at Chickasha, back home in Oklahoma.

Rest in peace, my young friend.

## More OU \$\$\$ lifts club's scholarships to \$5,500 a year

A recent action by the University of Oklahoma will add another \$1,000 a year to each scholarship the OU Club of Austin awards annually. That will mean a grant of \$5,500 to each of three students entering OU this fall.

In years past the club has given \$2,000 scholarships, half from the club, half from OU.

This spring, the club's board of directors decided to increase the club share to \$3,000, figuring that would produce another \$1,500 from the University.

However, it was learned last week that the OU regents recently raised their level of support so that the club's \$3,000 will produce \$2,500 from the University, making a total grant of \$5,500.

Eleven scholarship applications were screened by the OU Club of Austin board this spring, under the guidance of Alisa Macy, scholarship chair.

An announcement of this year's recipients is expected in June.

### Pool party being planned

Plans are being made for a pool party and picnic the OU Club of Austin will host for its families this summer.

Details still are being worked out but it appears the gathering will be held in Round Rock. We'll keep you posted.

### Next board meeting may be moved

The club's next board meeting probably will be held in a local restaurant rather than its recent home at 3rd and Congress.

The date of that meeting is pending. Probably, it will be held sometime in July.

Again, once a decision is made, we'll let you know, via email, the website or the *Baja*.

### Inside . . .

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Dog a big hit at OU-Tulsa  
commencement [Page 3](#)

OU buys 16th century  
Italian monastery [Page 4](#)



# 'NEATH A WESTERN SKY: OU-Tulsa confers its first dogtoral degree on Samson, who begins service in June

A standing ovation erupted when Samson, a two-year-old Labrador retriever, trained at OU-Tulsa, received his degree after two years of training.

Samson, the first to receive his diploma at the ceremonies, began training at the Tulsa campus when just eight weeks old. He was under the guidance of Mary Isaacson, an occupational therapist and assistant professor of occupational therapy at OU-Tulsa.

As Samson was undergoing his training on campus, he was in the company of two-footed fellow physical therapy students, who learned much from watching him being trained.

Thanks to his training at OU, he now can assist mobility-impaired people in a number of ways.

He can open and close doors, push buttons, retrieve items such as keys, phones and remote controls, and turn lights on and off. He can even load a washing machine.

**Graduation rate soars** As more than 7,200 University of Oklahoma students received their degrees this month, President David L. Boren announced a record-high graduation rate of 64.5 percent for the freshman class that entered the University in 2004.

The graduation rate has increased more than 20 percent since 1990.

Even more impressive is the five-year retention rate of almost 71 percent (70.8) for the 2005 freshman class, an indicator that the six-year rate for the '05 class could again set a record high.

## Campus notes



—The Tulsa World

**Samson, who has been in training the last two years at OU-Tulsa as a service dog, is congratulated by Dean Kevin Rudeen during graduation ceremonies this month.**

"By every standard, the University of Oklahoma is taking its place among the leading universities in the nation," Boren said.

Each year, OU continues to enroll the most academically talented student body in state history at a public university. The Class of 2014 entered OU with a record-high ACT average of 26.

**Gates addresses grads** U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates drew widespread laughter in addressing the Class of 2011 this month.

Speaking at Owen Field, Secretary Gates, who resigned as president of Texas A&M to join the cabinet of President Obama, recalled the last time he was at Owen Field — a 77-0 OU win

over the Aggies in 2003.

"Tonight is a much happier occasion," Gates joked.

He was presented with a football signed by OU football coach Bob Stoops and promised to put it in an appropriate place.

Wherever *that* is.

**OU ex visits** Screen star Ed Harris, who made his acting debut in Oklahoma City while attending OU, served recently as co-master of ceremonies at the 50th annual Western Heritage Awards at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in OKC.

Harris, while studying drama at OU in 1971-72, played King Arthur in Oklahoma City's Jewel Box Theatre production of "Camelot."

During his recent visit, he recalled fondly his three-week summer visits to his grandparents in Oklahoma while growing up in his native New Jersey.

Those trips were, he told *The Daily Oklahoman*, "just part of my life, part of my identity, part of where I felt my roots were."

**New York mayor in Norman** This year's awards banquet of the Oklahoma Fdn. for Excellence was addressed by keynote speaker Michael Bloomberg, New York City mayor.

The foundation, established in 1985 by OU President David Boren, recognizes academic achievement in Oklahoma's public schools. The foundation has awarded some \$3.8 million in scholarships and grants.

**OU students eye project** A group of graduate students in OU's Urban Design Studio is working these days on a project intended to boost redevelopment of a north Tulsa neighborhood.

Their target is the former Northland shopping center. The students have been meeting in recent months with community leaders and residents to develop a plan to revitalize and greatly expand the center.

The center includes OU's Waymon Tisdale health clinic, now under construction.

The clinic is named for a former OU basketball star and jazz musician from Tulsa.



# 5th statue unveiled for OU's Heisman Park

*Sam Bradford honored at fund-raiser for new athletic dorm*

"I never thought I'd be standing here giving a speech in front of a statue of myself."

So spoke Sam Bradford, former OU quarterback this month. The occasion in Oklahoma City was the Sooner Spectacular Saturday, convened as a fund raiser for the new \$75 million athletic dormitory planned where McConnell's Irish Pub used to stand.

At the event, OU President David Boren announced that fund raising for the new dorm already has passed the \$20 million mark.

To show the statue in public for the first time, Bradford tugged briefly on a golden rope that dropped a crimson veil from the 10-foot statue.

The statue, by sculptor Jack Nortz of Oklahoma City, will be dedicated at Heisman Park before a football game this fall.

**Kruger's contract OK'd** Regents of the University gave their approval recently for the \$16.6 million, seven-year contract for new men's basketball coach Lon Kruger submitted by Athletic Director Joe Castiglione.

The pact makes Kruger the Big 12's third highest paid men's basketball coach in the Big 12.

Regents also approved a \$500,000 payout to the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, where Kruger last coached.

**Two other pacts approved** The contracts of two other newly hired OU

## Sports notes



—The Daily Oklahoman

Former OU quarterback Sam Bradford speaks to the crowd in Oklahoma City this month at the unveiling of a statue honoring his winning of the Heisman Trophy in 2008. The statue will join four others in Heisman Park just outside Owen Field.

coaches also were given the green light by regents.

Wrestling coach Mark Cody's contract is worth \$140,000 a year with a provision for performance bonuses that are as much as \$15,000 if OU wins a national championship.

And Pam DeCosta, new women's basketball assistant, has received a \$100,000 contract.

**Football schedule set** It took awhile but it now seems all the dangly threads

incidental to drawing up this fall's football schedule have been snipped.

The most recent change was to move the Iowa St. game from Nov. 12 to Nov. 26.

This was done at the urging of coach Bob Stoops, who didn't want an open date the week before

the OSU game in Stillwater.

The OSU game has been moved to Dec. 3 by the Big 12, to give the conference an important game on the day other conferences are holding their championship games. Also to be aired that day is Texas at Baylor.

The revised OU schedule:

Sept. 3, Tulsa; Sept. 17, at Florida St.; Sept. 24, Missouri.

Oct. 1, Ball St.; Oct. 8, Texas (in Dallas); Oct. 15, at Kansas; Oct. 22, Texas Tech; Oct. 29, at Kansas St.

Nov. 5, Texas A&M; Nov. 19, at Baylor; Nov. 26, Iowa St.

Dec. 3, at Oklahoma St.

Kickoff times for all games still are unannounced.

**Griffin NBA's top rookie** OU's Blake Griffin became just the third unanimous choice as rookie of the year in the NBA this year.

The others were David Robinson (1990) and Ralph Sampson (1984).

**The Baja Oklahoman** is a publication of the OU Club of Austin, a non-profit organization of University of Oklahoma alumni and friends of the University in Austin and Central Texas • Members are encouraged to submit material for publication. • An application for club membership appears on the club's website. Membership is \$25 a year; \$35 for a family.

**Club website:**

<http://www.ouclubofaustin.com>

Webmaster: Craig Likes

Club email:

[austin-club@ouclubofaustin.com](mailto:austin-club@ouclubofaustin.com)

## Club officers 2010-11

President	Fred Dupy
Vice president	Dan Hodges
Secretary	(pending)
Treasurer	Jessica Benedict
Membership	Janet Atwood
Watch parties	Lee Lanham
Communications co-ord.	(pending)
Scholarship chair	Alisa Macy
Student recruitment chair	(vacant)

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**OU Club of Austin  
1905 Shadow Brook Circle  
Round Rock TX 78681**

**Forwarding services requested**

### Calendar of events

Event/(TV channel)	Day/date	Time	Where
Sooner Caravan*	June 2 Thurs.	6:30 p.m.	Dallas (Addison Conference Ctr.) 15650 Addison Road
Board meeting (all club members welcome)	TBA (prob. in July)	6 p.m.	TBA (a new site other than 301 Congress Ave. may be used)
Pool party	July or August	TBA	TBA
Pre-season kickoff dinner	Sept. 1 Thurs.	TBA	TBA
Season opening football game: Tulsa @ OU	Sept. 3 Sat.	TBA	Owen Field Norman

**\*Note:** The Sooner Caravan also will be in Tulsa on Wednesday, June 8, and in Oklahoma City on Monday, Aug. 1.

## OU buys Italian monastery

The University of Oklahoma has bought a 16th century monastery in Arezzo, Italy, for use as a campus.

When fully restored the structure will serve as a European OU campus for more than 250 students and faculty on a year-found basis.

The new college will coordinate study abroad, offer international work and study internships. Eight new faculty posts will be privately funded.



## CLUB OF AUSTIN

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Areas of interest \_\_\_\_\_

Membership dues: \$25 a year • \$35 for a family  NEW  RENEWAL

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