

## Synesthesia

What is synesthesia and why should we care?  
Read more on page 4.



## Softball

Softball has six home games left.  
Read more on page 12.



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# NORTHWESTERN NEWS

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## 'Little Shop of Horrors' opens Thursday

By **BRAXTYN TURNER**  
Student Reporter

The lights begin to dim inside Fellers Family Auditorium. A faint hum of anticipation fills the room.

As the curtains open, a strange green plant at center stage begins to move. Within moments, the audience isn't just watching a production; they have been transported into the comedic and magical world of "Little Shop of Horrors," where love, hope, a beat of darkness—and a man-eating plant—take center stage.

With its original debut in 1982, "Little Shop of Horrors" began as a low-budget Off-Broadway production. With its rise to fame, and movie adaption, it quickly grew into a cult classic. The musical blends dark comedy, music, romance and sci-fi into an entertaining theatrical experience. The story follows its main character, Seymour, as he discovers a mysterious plant that promises him fame and fortune—at a cost.

"The movie is a cult classic, and with that, people have their expectations," said Kimberly Weast, co-director of the production and director of the theatre arts program at NWOSU. "But truthfully, we're just trying to tell the story. I'm not really worried about what they're doing with this in New York right now."

Bringing a production of this scale to life is not simple, it's filled with elaborate sets, props,



type of show.

Co-director and instructor of technical theatre Mickey Jordan explained the challenges of working with the ever-changing focal point of the set.

"From the front door of the flower shop to the edge of the pit, there's only 9 feet," Jordan said. "With the plant, it grows four times, and so, having to work around how we will have room for that and how the audience will see it, it's been a lot of fun."

Weast also commented on the large prop and its challenges. She explained that the theatre department chose to rent the plant instead of creating their own in order to save time and resources.

"It would've cost us more money to make our own prop than to rent it," Weast said. "We rented the plant from a theatre production company who rents the prop to go all over the nation. The plant and all its parts came from a company in California, but it was actually shipped to us from Pennsylvania. When we are done with it, we will send it to wherever it needs to go next."

The show itself follows Seymour, a shy florist who stumbles upon a mysterious plant that begins to change his life in unexpected ways. As the plant grows, so does Seymour's confidence. It draws him into a world of ambition and complicated choices. The story blends humor and heart with a touch of the unexpected, giving the actor behind Seymour the challenge of portraying both his awkward charm and his evolving determination.

Lucas Wood, a sophomore business major from Enid, was cast as Seymour. He said his biggest struggle in taking on this character was channeling the energy that comes with the heavier themes throughout the show.

"As an actor, you have to be able to think of sad things from your life and apply them to that scene," Wood said. "I think that has got to be the hardest thing because if it's too sad, then you'll break down on stage and it just won't be good."

See **THEATER** on Page 5



Above, Audrey II, a puppet, is the star character in "Little Shop of Horrors." Left, cast members perform a dress rehearsal on Tuesday night in preparation for the Thursday opening.

Photos by  
Ingrid Maldonado

choreography and technical elements.

A show like this requires significant funding, time and talent. Through this production, NWOSU Theatre gives audiences the opportunity to experience a well-known classic close to home.

One of the most demanding aspects of the production is the complex sets and designs. The show's centerpiece is a growing, man-eating plant.

The effect involves several puppets, coordinated movement and contributions from both the performers and crew. Timing and stage design is critical for this

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# NEWS

## Mural Fest 2026 brings art, to downtown Alva

By **CORKY HALL**  
Senior Reporter

Mural Fest 2026 will bring two days of live mural painting, music, food and family-friendly activities to downtown Alva on April 24-25.

A highlight of this year's event is the debut of the Alva Futurity, a stick horse race for children in fifth grade and younger.

The race begins at 5:30 p.m. April 24 in front of Alva Beer Co., with stick horses provided for all participants.

"We just wanted something fun for the kids," Dana Roark, instructor of business at Northwestern Oklahoma State University and event organizer said. "I think hearing all those stick horses going at once is going to be a highlight."

The evening continues with a mural presentation at 6 p.m., followed by the Mural Fest 5K fun run at 6:15 p.m.

The race routes participants past many of Alva's murals, a feature organizers say is intentional. "We try to route the 5K so par-



Photo by Corky Hall

"Statehood Day," a mural on the side of the Professional Building painted by Roger Cooke in 2007, captures the artist's interpretation of Alva's celebration when Oklahoma became the 46th state on Nov. 16, 1907.

Participants go by as many murals as possible," Roark said. "It's just a fun way to see the artwork around town."

Registration is \$25 and available at the Alva Chamber of Commerce or Schuessler Insurance Agency. Featured artists this year

include Kortny Miller, known as Red Dirt Rosie, and Tox Murillo. Visitors can watch both painters work in real time on the west wall

of Alva Beer Co. and the south wall of Sanctuary Day Spa.

"We want people to come down and watch the artists paint," Norville Ritter, vice president of the mural society said. "They're there to interact and engage with the community."

Additional activities are scheduled throughout downtown, including live performances by Boss Music, inflatable attractions from Nam & Pop and a street chalk mural contest open to all ages. Food vendors and local businesses will round out the festival atmosphere.

"Mural art is something everyone can enjoy," Ritter said. "There's something here for everyone."

The Alva Mural Society, which organizes the event, was founded by Fred and Betty Waininger and Wayne and Beverly Kinzie after the group visited Toppenish, Washington, a community recognized for its extensive public mural program. Since its founding, the society has overseen dozens of murals across Alva, helping establish the city as a regional destination for public art.

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# NEWS

## WHAT'S UP

### April 24

- Last day to drop classes
- Alva Murial Fest April 24-25 @ downtown Alva
- Make & Take @ Graceful Arts 3:30 p.m. - 4 p.m.
- Little Shop of Horrors production 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.
- Honky Tonk PhD album release listening party w/ Krislyn Arthurs @ Alva Beer Co. 7 p.m. - 8 p.m.

### April 25

- Alva MS walk @ Wellness Center 10 a.m. - 11 a.m.
- AllTown @ Alva Beer Co. 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

### April 27

- Northwespy's student athlete recognition @ Percefull Fieldhouse 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

### April 28

- NWOSU employee retirement reception @ Student Center Ranger room 3 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- Writers Roundtable meeting 5:30 p.m. - 6 p.m.
- Alevian Crumpton senior voice recital @ First Presbyterian Church 7 p.m. - 8 p.m.

### April 29

- International dance day

### April 30

- Chi Alpha night @ Student Center Ranger room 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.

## Students work refreshes campus

By JOHN STOWERS  
Student Reporter

NWOSU had a campus wide day of beautification on Tuesday afternoon.

Tuesday afternoon, at 2:00 p.m., students, staff and members of the community got together to help beautify the campus as the school year starts winding down, and the staff begin to prepare for the many summer activities hosted by Northwestern.

The beautification process included planting flowers — which the horticulture class donated — replacing old mulch in the garden beds, picking up trash, removing decorations and a little bit of painting.

These are all things that make the campus look clean, which is very important for any institution.

“It gives the kids a chance get out and be outside and see different parts of our campus that they may not always venture to,” said Lisa Vermillion, director of purchasing and organizer of Campus Beautification. “Our science classes, our ag classes, grew all of the flowers and I think it gives them a chance to give back.”

Not only does having a clean campus help get students outside, and give them community service hours, but it also helps with academics.

A clean campus is essential when several courses hold class in NWOSU’s outdoor classroom.



Photo by Ingrid Maldonado

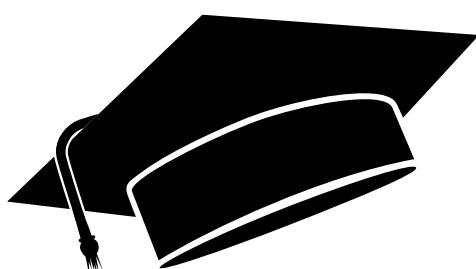
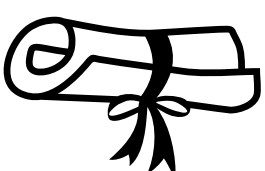
Northwestern students participated in Campus Beautification by planting new flowers in the garden beds and flower pots on campus.

According to a study done by Chinaza Uleanya from the University of Johannesburg’s department of educational management and leadership, having a clean campus promotes a positive attitude in students, which helps to facilitate learning.

“Further findings of the study suggest that cleanliness has impact on teaching and learning activities, the learning abilities of high school learners in various ways, consequently, their academic success,” the study says.

“Celebrate how far you’ve come, then step boldly toward what’s next.”

— Amira Caldwell



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# OPINION

## New summer, new you

By ECE OZDEMIR  
Opinion Editor

It is time to set aside the dark, cold, and weary winter days and surrender ourselves to the warm energy of spring. I know this winter was particularly harsh throughout the United States, but the weather is gradually warming up. Spring is coming. Just like nature, would you like to be reborn? Every winter, we experience the true meaning of “fatigue” and “insomnia” firsthand—juggling classes, exams, professional obligations and social lives. Just as some animals hibernate and wake up for the spring, let us enter this summer differently. Here is a guide to feeling more vibrant with a few simple steps and innovations:

Acquiring a new hobby—or restarting one you once loved but set aside—will lead to a more positive life. I can anticipate the thoughts crossing your mind: “Easier said than done,” “I wish I had the time,” or “I have no energy left at the end of the day.” You are absolutely right. Between the hustle of daily life, work hours and studies, feeling exhausted is natural.

However, don't we deserve to carve out time for ourselves at least once a week? The specific hobby doesn't matter; as long as it is something you love that makes you feel good, it is worth the time. Believe me, it will help you forget the week's fatigue. The human brain is programmed to be active. We've all felt that strange restlessness after a day spent only sleeping, thinking, “The whole day went

to waste.”

Consistent hobbies—whether it's sports, writing, cooking a new recipe, dancing, drawing, playing an instrument or even joining social activities at school—provide a sense of fulfillment. Whether you are hiking, cycling, photography, redecorating your room, or camping with friends, you are adding something new to your soul and meeting new people along the way. It may sound cliché, but the importance of healthy eating and a sleep routine cannot be denied. Consuming nutritious foods and avoiding fast food will lead to a healthier mind and higher energy levels. Similarly, excessive sleep can make you feel just as sluggish as too little sleep. Experts suggest seven to eight hours of sleep is ideal for an adult. Those who consistently sleep fewer than six hours or more than 10 hours face increased health risks over time. While “force majeure” situations like exam weeks or work deadlines can disrupt this, chronic sleep deprivation leads to serious issues:

Increased risk of obesity and heart disease.

Reduced immune system response.

Declined mental activity and increased stress.

Imbalanced blood sugar levels and risk of Type 2 diabetes.

How we start something often dictates how it ends. Therefore, starting the day well is crucial. The first step is a healthy breakfast. While no one enjoys rushing to prepare a meal in the morning, breakfast significantly lowers stress levels.

Additionally, your first morning activity

matters. While experts emphasize outdoor walks, many of us lack the time or energy for that before work or school. For now, focus on the basics: wash your face, eat breakfast, and brush your teeth. These three acts alone will make you feel more centered.

How you leave the house is equally important. Many people choose “five more minutes” of sleep over getting ready, but taking the time to groom yourself—combing your hair, wearing clothes that make you feel beautiful, and wearing your favorite perfume—will make you feel more valuable when you look in the mirror. Do not start your day with sleepy eyes and messy hair. Who knows? You might receive a wonderful compliment today!

Living in the moment is not about being reckless; it is about recognizing that life is short. We often live ten steps ahead, missing beautiful moments and sacrificing true happiness.

Time is our most valuable asset because we cannot control or stop it. You will never be a child again, running freely in a park. You will never be as young as you are today. Every stage of life—childhood, youth, old age—has its challenges, but they are unique and fleeting.

The Past: Thinking of the past triggers regret and guilt.

The Future: Obsessing over the future creates anxiety.

Let the past stay in the past, and let the future bloom with your hopes. We never truly know what tomorrow holds. Let us live today as if it were a lifetime.

## What synesthesia feels like

By ECE OZDEMIR  
Opinion Editor

Have you ever caught yourself wondering what gender Monday is, what scent the painting in your home would have, or what your favorite song would taste like if it were a meal?

As with many things, we are divided into two groups based on the answer to this question. Introducing the concept of synesthesia this way might have caught some of you off guard, but there is no need for concern. Why should even those who answered “no” become acquainted with synesthesia through this article? There are two main reasons. First, most people around you use synesthesia in daily conversation without realizing it; understanding this is essential to knowing what your friends are talking about. Second, if you answered “no,” it is highly likely that you simply aren't aware of it yet.

Synesthesia is a sensory state we experience at every moment. Whether we are chatting with friends, grabbing coffee between classes, or daydreaming during a lecture, we are surrounded by it. We often turn these associations into games with our friends, trying to make the same connections for fun, usually without much thought. We have been doing this since childhood, yet we often fail to name it. While this is happening, we remain unaware that this condition—sometimes labeled a “disorder”—is actually the subject of deep scientific study.

For instance, how many of us chose our school notebooks based on how the color felt for a specific subject? When we hear the theme music of a favorite cartoon, or when a specific color fills our mind during a scene,

how many of us knew this was synesthesia? When we hear the word “car,” depending on our mental leanings, we might see a photo, draw a picture, or visualize the letters one by one. That “car” has a different shape and color for everyone. Letters have their own colors and personalities, too.

We perceive weeks and months in different ways. When we smell vanilla or coconut, we might feel the presence of our mother. When we hear a song tied to a memory, we might feel warm or cold depending on the atmosphere of that moment.

So, what exactly is synesthesia? Let's take a closer look.

Synesthesia can be defined as a union of the senses, and it is associated with the left hemisphere of the brain. Beyond its surprising foundation, one interesting aspect is that it shares the same root as “anesthesia,” which means a lack of sensation. Famous figures such as the painter Wassily Kandinsky, author Vladimir Nabokov, composer Duke Ellington, and singer Pharrell Williams are some of the most well-known examples of people with this condition.

While it is more common in women and believed to be hereditary, it can also emerge later in life due to other conditions. Despite the many experts studying this topic, accessible information is unfortunately scarce. Given that it is thought to exist in a large portion of the population, the lack of information on such a common experience can be unsettling.

Since this is not a condition we can stop, it is more productive to focus on examples and artworks inspired by it rather than worrying about it.

As mentioned, Wassily Kandinsky is famous for his work in this area.

The Moscow-born painter, a pioneer of abstract art, strengthened his connection to synesthesia through his work. He saw colors while listening to music and heard melodies while painting. To him, the color red sounded like a violin, yellow like a trumpet, and blue like an organ.

This is why it is easy to feel these overlapping sensations when looking at his art. One can guess the volume of a sound or the emotional weight of a melody through his choice of shapes and colors. According to Kandinsky, black represents silence, while orange represents alto tones.

While synesthesia is sometimes called a “disorder,” it exists on a spectrum. Since the experiences of a visual-auditory synesthete like Kandinsky are far beyond our daily examples, we should not try to force every association.

Exploring the lives of these artists reveals that synesthesia is more than just a neurological trait; it is a profound source of inspiration that reshapes the creative process. By experiencing the world through multiple senses at once, these individuals can capture nuances that others might overlook. This sensory blending allows for a unique translation of emotion into tangible art, whether through a musical composition or a vibrant canvas.

However, this fascinating topic will likely continue to occupy our minds. So, what is your answer now? Yes or no? To what extent do you experience synesthesia? Do you find yourself making comparisons when describing people, or have you realized that synesthesia exists in your own work, much like a modern-day Kandinsky? Regardless, this topic is an entertaining field of research that is truly everywhere.

# NEWS



Photos by Ingrid Maldonado

Lucas Wood, as Seymour, stars in the spring musical “Little Shop of Horrors” on Thursday, Friday and Sunday.

## THEATER performs spring musical

Continued from Page 1

Wood said he was excited to take on a production that college students are more aware of.

“I haven’t really seen it as pressure that this is something a lot of people know,” Wood said. “I’ve seen it as, ‘let’s see how we can change this up to surprise them in a completely different way.’”

Music plays a large role in the energy and storytelling of “Little Shop of Horrors,” and the show combines many different genres to bring the story to life. Cast members move seamlessly between dialogue and song, requiring precision and strong chemistry as the music shifts between upbeat group numbers and intimate duets.

Justus Durham, a freshman speech and theatre major from Brighton, Colorado, plays Orin—who is also known as “the dentist.”

He spoke about the vocal challenges of his role. He explained that the character has a much lower voice than his, so singing in a lower range was something he really had to focus on for the role.

“I always need a drink of water and a small break after singing the last song he has,” Durham said.

As Seymour navigates the world with this strange plant, his relationship with Audrey becomes the focal point of the story. Audrey is a kindhearted character



During the Tuesday dress rehearsal, Lucas Wood as Seymour consoles Jaden Matthews, who plays Audrey in the musical “Little Shop of Horrors.” Student admission tickets are \$5.

who longs for a life beyond the walls of the flower shop.

Her connection adds emotional depth to the story and helps balance the darker elements with moments of hope.

“When I was cast as Audrey, I just felt so honored to be able to take on the iconic character,” said Jaden Matthews, a senior speech and theatre major from Hennessey.

“There’s definitely a lot to live up to, dealing with this character that is so iconic, while still trying to put my own spin on it. I’m just very excited to show people how I see Audrey.”

Opening night is Thursday and Northwestern’s theatre program has worked nonstop to prepare.

From long rehearsals, to detailed technical work, cast and crew are prepared to bring a fresh perspective to a well-known story.

Weast said she hopes that the audiences will see the fun and passion behind the program telling this story.

“We spent many Mondays and Saturdays, many afternoons and evenings, just trying to create a flower shop set in the 1950s,” Weast said.

Northwestern’s productions of “Little Shop of Horrors” will take place at 7 p.m. on Thursday and Friday and 2 p.m. on Sunday in Fellers Family Auditorium. Tickets are \$5 for students and seniors, \$10 for Northwestern employees and \$15 for general admission.

## Retirement reception scheduled Tuesday

By EMILY WRIGHT  
Student Reporter

Northwestern will be hosting a Retirement Reception for 10 faculty and staff retiring during the 2025-26 school year.

The event will take place 3-4 p.m. Tuesday in the Student Center Ranger Room. Three people retired earlier during the year: Dean Kilgore, custodian; Juanita Dotson, Upward Bound director; and Matthew McGuire, maintenance.

Those retiring at the end of this semester or in the summer include Dr. Kaylene Armstrong, professor of media and communication; Dr. James Bell, vice president for academic affairs; Dr. Roger Hardaway, professor of history; Markangela Kinnett, secretary and health/safety assistant for maintenance; Natalie Miller, assistant certification officer for the Division of education; Dr. Venkata Moorthy, professor of biology; and Kimberley Weast, professor of theatre arts. Together they have served 233 years at NWOSU.

“We tell our students that it’s the professors and people that make Northwestern great, and that is absolutely the truth,” Armstrong said. “It is what is wonderful about Northwestern, and I will miss that.”

Armstrong has been a professor of media and communications at Northwestern for 11 years. During this time, she has taught various journalism and media classes, and worked as the adviser to the Northwestern News and RangerPulse website.

Kinnett has worked at Northwestern for 20 years. She served as a custodian for about six years before moving into her maintenance position. The people and her coworkers have been her favorite part about working at Northwestern. Kinnett said she looks forward to spending more time with family.

Miller has been with Northwestern for 34 years. Miller has served in several positions on campus in that time. Miller worked as the secretary for the education and psychology departments before becoming the secretary to the Dean of Professional Studies. In 2006 Miller took on the position of assistant certification officer and has worked there since. She has assisted many of Northwestern’s student teachers in their efforts to become educators through this role.

“I thoroughly enjoyed my job, and I look forward to taking it easy,” Miller said.

Her favorite memories have been meeting faculty and students.

See more retirement stories on pages 6 and 7

## Outstanding students



Photo provided

The Math and Computer Science Department recently named the outstanding students for the 2025-26 school year. Left, Caleb Bevens, senior computer science major, NWOSU football player and resident advisor from The Villages, FL, Right Ashlan Light senior math education major from Enid. Light will become a teacher and coach at Drummond high school in fall 2026. Bevens plans to return to NWOSU to start on a Master’s Degree.

### Castle Players and Gambino’s Fundraiser

Time: 5-10 p.m.

Date: Tuesday, April 28

Place: Gambino’s Pizza

Proceeds will supplement the cost of the Theatre for Young Audiences production in November. The Castle Players fundraiser has been a tradition for more than 40 years.



Photo by Ingrid Maldonado

Kimberly Weast watches rehearsal Tuesday for "Little Shop of Horrors."

## Weast: Kid's theater is favorite at NWOSU

By CORKY HALL  
Senior Reporter

After more than two decades of shaping NWOSU's theater program, Kimberly Weast is taking her final bow.

Weast, who joined Northwestern in 2002, is retiring after 24 years at the university and more than 36 years in higher education. Over the course of her career, she has directed or produced nearly 90 theatrical productions, not including pageants, concerts and other events she has designed and directed.

She will be leaving behind a legacy measured not just in performances but in the students she inspired along the way.

For Weast, the heart of theater has always been the process.

"I really do like the process of getting the production ready," she said. "Working together as a theater company to bring something to the public, I'm going to miss that."

Those who worked alongside her say her dedication never wavered. Jesse Schroeder, assistant professor of communication and NWTV adviser, has watched Weast's impact on the program firsthand.

"Her passion for theater has never dropped," Schroeder said. "She really helped push for improvements to the auditorium, and her expertise played a big role in what we see today."

Throughout her time at Northwestern, Weast witnessed both growth in the program and transformation in her students. While advancements in lighting, audio and production technology elevated performances, she says the most meaningful changes were always personal.

"I love seeing students who maybe didn't have many opportunities before falling in love with theater," she said. "Watching their eyes light up when something clicks and the pride they feel when a show comes together. That's what I'll miss most."

That transformation is something her former students remember well. Alica Hall, coordinator of printing services and a Northwestern theater alumna, saw the program evolve under Weast's leadership.

"I got to see what the program was before and everything she's done to move it forward," Hall said.

She emphasized the hands-on nature of the training Weast provided.

"You didn't just learn one thing; you learned every part of theater," Hall said. "At a small school, everything can fall on your shoulders and she prepared us for that."

Some of Weast's favorite memories include late nights with students filled with hard work, laughter and plenty of coffee. Among standout productions, she recalls directing "Oklahoma!" during the state's centennial celebration and the department's annual Theatre for Young Audiences shows as especially meaningful.

"That's probably my favorite," she said. "Directing and producing those productions for young audiences—it's just special."

Beyond the productions themselves, Weast built something lasting in her students. Hall said the program felt like more than just an academic department.

"It was always a team, but it was also a family," Hall said. "She treated her theater students like her children. We were her family."

Weast also played a central role in the physical transformation of Northwestern's theater facilities. Helping to see the theater renovation through to completion was a goal she had carried since the day she was hired.

"When I was hired, that was one of the things we talked about," she said. "To see that come to life after all these years, it's a major accomplishment."

Mickey Jordan, director of technical theater, has known Weast for 11 years, first as a student in 2015 and now as a fellow faculty member. His introduction to her was not quite what he expected.

"The first time I talked to her on the phone, I thought, 'This lady is going to eat me alive,'" Jordan said. "But when I met her in person, she was one of the kindest people I'd ever met."

That kindness, Jordan says, extends to every student who has come through the program.

"She saves every student's name, hometown and birthday in her phone so she can check in on them," he said. "Not everyone does that."

From first-year students learning the basics to seniors completing capstone productions, she watched generations grow in confidence and skill.

"There are so many proud moments," she said. "Seeing students overcome challenges and succeed. That's what it's all about."

# 10 retirees have 233 combined years

## By the numbers

**Roger Hardaway**  
36 years  
+

**Natalie Miller**  
34 years  
+

**Venkata Moorthy**  
31 years  
+

**Dean Kilgore**  
30.5 years  
+

**Kimberly Weast**  
24 years  
+

**Markangela Kinnett**  
20 years  
+

**Juanita Dotson**  
18 years  
+

**Matthew McGuire**  
14.5 years  
+

**James Bell**  
14 years  
+

**Kaylene Armstrong**  
11 years

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**233 Years**

## Bell: Teaching always career focus

By MEGAN SPRAY  
Senior Reporter

After more than four decades in education, Dr. James Bell, vice president for academic affairs, is preparing to step away from his role at Northwestern and begin a new chapter in retirement.

Bell said his career in education began in 1986 as a high school teacher before transitioning into higher education. Over the years, his work has included teaching English, teaching courses and serving in administrative roles.

"I've been in education for 40 years," Bell said. "I'm looking forward to seeing what the next adventure is."

Bell has spent about 15 years living in Alva and serving Northwestern. He said the university and community became a place that felt like home, leading him and his family to remain in Alva even after retirement.

"I have loved the fact that we are in a community of 5,000 that has that hometown feel," Bell said. "I can go to an NCAA basketball game and be home in 5 minutes. It's the accessibility of everything."

Bell described his time in education as divided into three major stages: teaching high school, teaching college courses and serving in administrative leadership. He said teaching has remained a consistent part of his work, even while managing administrative responsibilities.

At Northwestern, Bell previously served as an English professor before moving to his administrative position. He continued teaching courses, including film and leadership classes, throughout his time in administration.

President Dr. Bo Hannaford, said Bell's dedication to teaching was visible throughout his entire career.

"He always is teaching even in his administrative role," Hannaford said. "He's always been a passionate teacher whether it was when he was an English chair, when he was the dean, or when he was teaching film classes and now leadership classes. He loves being around the students."

Hannaford said Bell played a key role in several academic initiatives, including accreditation efforts, the enrollment and retention forum, and department developments. These responsibilities often require extensive work that isn't always seen by others.

"I don't think people really understand



Photo by Ingrid Maldonado

Dr. James Bell, vice president for academic affairs, said he plans to travel with his wife after retiring.

the role and behind-the-scenes work that you have to do when you're the final person that's in charge of doing all of the things," Hannaford said. "He's done a lot of great things for us."

In addition to academic responsibilities, Hannaford said Bell maintains a strong presence at campus events and activities and regularly attends athletic competitions, concerts and performances across the university.

"He's been all in as a Ranger," Hannaford said.

Bell said one word that best describes his time at Northwestern is "family." He said the sense of community among students, faculty and staff created lasting relationships throughout his career. He said that Alva provides opportunities for everyone to pursue.

"It's the kind of place where you choose to stay when you've lived there for 14 years," Bell said.

As retirement approaches, Bell said he

looks forward to spending more time on his hobbies and personal interests. He said gardening, walking, reading and cooking are part of the activities he plans to fill his time with.

Bell also said traveling is a firm part in his retirement plans. He and his wife already have a trip planned for October.

"We're going to go through and go to the balloon festival in Albuquerque and spend a couple nights, go to Sedona, then go to the Grand Canyon and camp a couple of nights," Bell said.

He said he also hopes to spend additional time with family members, including his grandchildren.

As Bell prepares to step into retirement, both he and university leadership have had a fulfilling reflection on his contributions to campus life and academic development. His career, built on teaching and leadership, leaves a lasting mark on the university and community.

## Longest serving professor will still teach after retiring

By CORKY HALL  
Senior Reporter

Dr. Roger Hardaway has been the cornerstone of the history department at Northwestern Oklahoma State University, teaching and shaping generations of students. After 36 years, he's finally retiring, but don't expect him to disappear.

Arriving at NWOSU in 1990, Hardaway built a reputation as both a dedicated educator and historian. Over the years, he taught courses ranging from the American West to Native American history and 20th-century studies.

Throughout his career, Hardaway has witnessed significant changes in higher education, especially in technology. When he first arrived, there were no computers on desks, no cellphones, and email was virtually nonexistent.

He taught a variety of courses, including American West, Native American History, and 19th- and 20th-century history. He also created new courses to meet students' needs, such as African-American history and Latin American history, ensuring that the curriculum reflected both faculty expertise and student interest.

Beyond academics, Hardaway has made a lasting impact through mentorship. Many of his former students have gone on to become teachers, coaches and professionals across Oklahoma and beyond. His influence is measured not just in lectures, but in lives shaped over decades.

That impact is something his colleague Eric Schmaltz knows firsthand. Schmaltz is chair of the social sciences department, a posi-

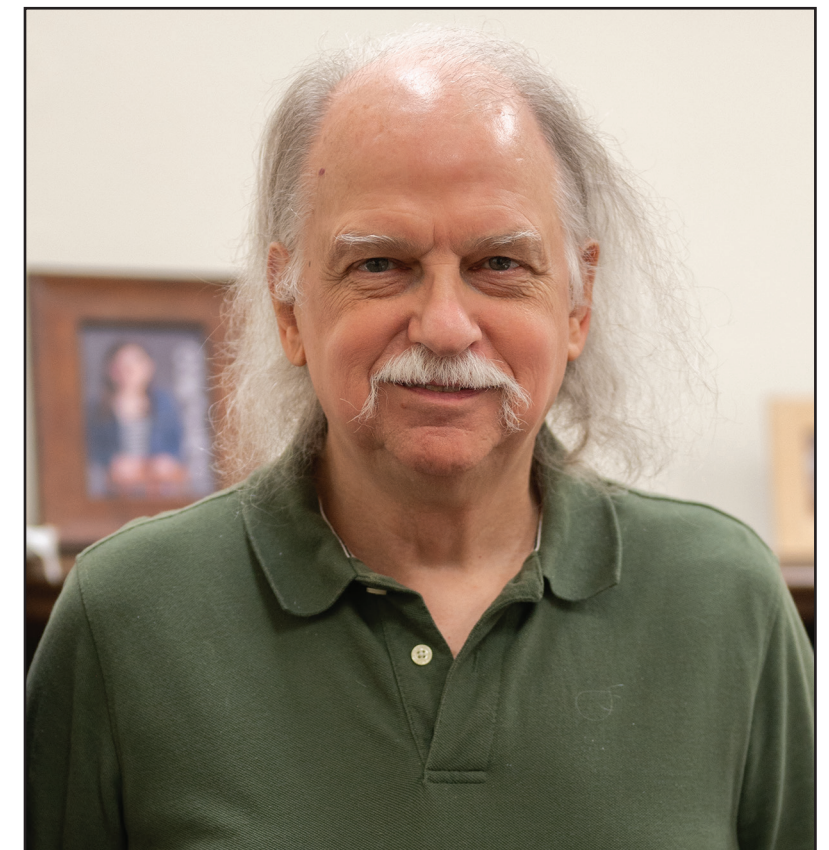


Photo by Ingrid Maldonado

Dr. Roger Hardaway may be retiring, but he will still teach a class a semester.

tion he might not have held without Hardaway's influence. "I'm very grateful to Dr. Hardaway for hiring me; that decision changed the course of my life," Schmaltz said.

Schmaltz, who has worked alongside Hardaway for more than 20 years, also noted his role as a leader and mentor within the department, from helping hire faculty to guiding younger professors through the realities of academic life.

Outside the classroom, Hardaway immersed himself in campus life, attending athletic events and worked football games for nearly two decades.

He also built an impressive scholarly record, publishing books,

journal articles and research. He is recognized in the field of the American West, specifically African Americans in the West. He is also in his 16th year of writing a weekly column for the Alva Review Courier.

Even in retirement, Hardaway does not plan to step away entirely. He will continue teaching one course per semester and remain active on campus.

"I would never trade it for any other career," Hardaway said.

As he transitions into this next chapter, Hardaway leaves behind not just a long career, but a legacy defined by dedication, mentorship and a deep passion for history.

## Science department will miss Moorthy's potluck dishes

By INGRID MALDONADO  
Senior Reporter

Dr. Venkata Moorthy has been a professor of biology at Northwestern since 1995 and will be retiring after this semester.

Moorthy is originally from India and began his career there where he went to S. Philomena's College, got his bachelor's in biology and then taught at Joseph's College in Bangalore, India for 12 years. He got his master's at University of Mysore in India, and his Ph.D. at the University of Oklahoma while teaching there.

"My goal is, I know a lot, yes, and I want my students to learn what I know," Moorthy said. "And after they learn what I taught, I want them to learn more than what I know."

Moorthy has had students excel not only in

his classes but in their overall careers. He's had students become doctors, physical therapists, dentists, nurses and some academics. One is the chair of the microbiology department at the University of Arkansas Medical Sciences.

"I have contacts with all of these amazing students," Moorthy said. "I taught a lot of them, and they give so much respect to me because they learned a lot, and I recommended them."

Many of his past students are in many different states, he said, some in Florida and one teaching in Colorado, but many of them are still around. His current ophthalmologist in Enid was once a student of his, as well as another eye doctor in Cherokee. Moorthy named many more past students like Shane Hansen, the Health and Sports Science Education department chair, and Kent Martin, an assistant professor of agriculture.

"It's hard replacing someone that's done as

much in the biology department as he's done," said Jason Wickham, professor of chemistry.

Wickham said Moorthy has always been a big part of the science fair, does a lot of the paperwork and makes sure all the projects meet the requirements. For about 10 years, Moorthy was the academic affairs committee chair, where he approved many course modifications and new courses.

"Something you may not know about him is he is an excellent cook, and he makes an Indian dish called samosas," said Jenny Sattler, the chair of the department of natural science. "I've never known how to make them, and he made fresh samosas for me and then gave me the recipe so I can make them when he's gone."

Sattler said it is amazing what he brings to the end of the semester potluck. She said Moorthy is a vegetarian and people never know what he is going to bring. As a favorite personal memory of

Moorthy, Sattler said the samosas make her the happiest even though she has loved seeing what he has brought to the department and students.

"People forget that professors are people too, so to think that they have an outside life is kind of interesting too," Sattler said.

Moorthy at one point taught yoga classes at the Wellness Center. He enjoys gardening and many people know about his extraordinary yard.

He said he is not going to miss teaching, but he feels accomplished and happy with what he has done. In his career he said he never spent much time on himself, and now he will spend time on himself, his family and his home.

"He's had a spectacular career, but the thing I think he's most proud of is his family," Sattler said. "I'm so happy he's going to get to spend time with his family; he deserves that."



Photo by Ingrid Maldonado

Dr. Venkata Moorthy, after 31 years of teaching, still keeps in touch with some of his students all over the country. Some have become doctors, dentists, nurses, physical therapists and even college professors.

# FEATURE

# Thunder win game one

By **JESSICA SCHIEBER**  
Editor-in-Chief

The Oklahoma City Thunder is in the NBA playoffs, to no one's surprise, this team has had an amazing season. They are playing the Phoenix Suns.

The Thunder starting lineup was Luguentz Dort, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, Chet Holmgren, Jalen Williams and Isaiah Hartenstein.

They went against the Suns starting lineup Jordan Goodwin, Dillon Brooks, Oso Ighodaro, Evin Booker and Jalen Green.

The jump was against Ighodaro and Holmgren, Goodwin gained possession of the ball.

Brooks missed a three-point shot that was rebounded by Hartenstein.

Jalen Williams went on to miss a two-point shot.

The first points on board went to the Suns at 11 minutes and 11 seconds when Brooks made a three-point shot.

This was quickly followed by Booker making dunk at ten minutes and 42 seconds.

Dort made a three-point shot after that to bring the game to 5-3.

At exactly 10 minutes left in the first Gilgeous-Alexander got fouled and made both free throws which tied the game.

That didn't last long as Booker made a jump shot, bringing the Suns back in the lead.

With nine minutes and two seconds left Holmgren makes a jump shot.

Collin Gillespie makes a three-pointer for the Suns, bringing them back in lead a few seconds later.

Hartenstein makes a dunk at eight minutes and 22 seconds left.

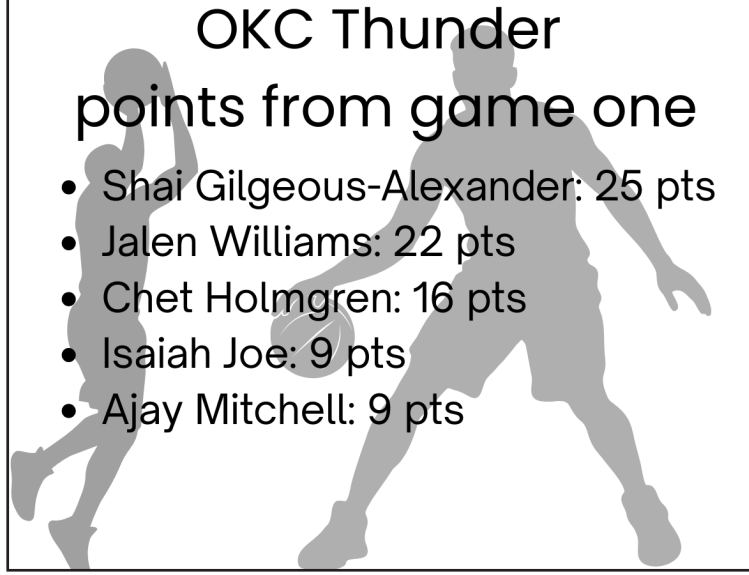
Green follows that with a layup for the suns.

Jalen Williams makes his own three-pointer at seven minutes, and 51 seconds left in the first and then he makes a dunk less than 20 seconds later bring the Thunder in the lead for the first time as 12-14.

The next shots to happen were

## OKC Thunder points from game one

- Shai Gilgeous-Alexander: 25 pts
- Jalen Williams: 22 pts
- Chet Holmgren: 16 pts
- Isaiah Joe: 9 pts
- Ajay Mitchell: 9 pts



free throws made by Holmgren making the game 12-16.

At six minutes and 47 seconds left in the first quarter Holmgren makes two more free throws.

Booker follows with two free throws bringing the game to 14-18.

With six minutes and 12 seconds left Hartenstein makes a layup.

At five minutes and 52 seconds Alex Caruso gets put in playing with Dort, Gilgeous-Alexander, Holmgren, and Jalen Williams.

Caruso is quick to make a layup followed by Gilgeous-Alexander making a layup.

There is a line up change for both teams at four minutes and 53 seconds. The Suns play Haywood Highsmith, Brooks, Gillespie, Booker, and Green. The Thunder play Caruso, Dort, Ajay Mitchell, Gilgeous-Alexander and Holmgren.

Scores don't change until two minutes, and 54 seconds left in the first quarter with Holmgren making a dunk.

Green follows that with a three-pointer.

Holmgren returns the favor with another dunk.

The next comes from the Suns as Booker makes a jump shot.

With 46 seconds left Gilgeous-Alexander makes a layup. He follows himself up by making two free throws with 25 seconds left.

As the period comes close to an end Green makes two free throws with two seconds left and as the buzzer sounds Holmgren makes a three-pointer making the end of the first period come to 20-35.

The second quarter starts with a dunk made by Hartenstein.

Gillespie makes a three-pointer with ten minutes and 48 seconds left.

Royce O'Neale makes two free throws for the Suns.

At nine minutes and 54 seconds Mitchell makes a three-point shot which he follows with another three points for Thunder.

Cason Wallace follows his scores with a dunk bringing the score to 24-45.

Jaylin Williams makes his own two points following that with eight minutes and 39 seconds left.

With seven minutes and 50 seconds left Jalen Williams makes two free throws.

Goodwin scored two points making the score 26-49.

Wallace makes a dunk followed by Booker making a jump shot for the Suns.

The Thunder set on keeping their lead makes it 28-53 with a jump shot made by Jalen Williams.

Brooks made a three-point shot, making it 31-53.

Gilgeous-Alexander makes his two free throws.

Brooks makes another

three-pointer trying to close the gap between the Suns and the Thunder, bringing the score to 34-55.

Brooks made a free throw.

Gilgeous-Alexander makes a free throw shortly after.

Green makes a layup.

Gilgeous-Alexander makes a jump shot.

Brooks makes both free throws with two minutes, and 56 seconds left in the second.

Jalen Williams makes a jump shot.

Green makes both of his free throws.

Holmgren makes a three-pointer.

Booker makes a three-point shot with 58 seconds left.

With one second on the clock Gilgeous-Alexander makes a layup.

The third quarter had the Suns making the first score of the period. Green made a jump shot.

Booker follows Green's goal with his own jump shot making the score 48-65.

Hartenstein makes a jump shot after those two.

Booker gets free throws and makes them.

Gilgeous-Alexander follows with a free throw of his own.

Green gets three points on the board with ten minutes and seven seconds left.

Gilgeous-Alexander makes both free throws after he is fouled by Ighodaro.

Jalen Williams makes a layup with eight minutes, and 48 seconds left in the third.

Booker scores three points with seven minutes and 43 seconds left in the third period making the score 56-72.

Dort gets a dunk after that score.

Jalen Williams scored three points with six minutes and 46 seconds left.

Royce O'Neale scored three points 19 seconds later.

Jalen Williams makes a layup. Brooks follows that and makes one bringing the game to 61-79.

Dort makes a three-pointer followed by Brooks making a layup.

Gilgeous-Alexander makes two free throws.

With three minutes and 13 seconds left in the third quarter Mitchell makes a three-pointer.

Gilgeous-Alexander brings the game to 63-89 with a layup.

Gilgeous-Alexander makes three free throws before the Suns score again.

Booker makes his jump shot followed by Wallace making a layup with one minute and 16 seconds left.

With nine seconds left, Booker makes one of two free throws.

At one second until the third quarter buzzer Jaylin Williams makes a three-point shot.

The fourth quarter starts with Isaiah Joe making a three-pointer.

Green makes a jump shot with nine minutes and 52 seconds left making the score 68-100.

Jalen Williams dunks at eight minutes and 35 seconds left.

Brooks makes a jump shot followed by Jalen Williams making his own for the Thunder.

Rasheer Fleming makes a three-pointer followed by Jared McCain making a jump shot.

Gillespie makes a jump shot.

Joe made a three-point shot to bring the score to 75-109.

With five minutes and 55 seconds left, Fleming makes another three-pointer.

Aaron Wiggins makes a jump shot with five minutes and two seconds left in the fourth quarter.

Joe makes a three-pointer. McCain makes a three-pointer with three minutes, and 55 seconds left in the fourth.

With two minutes and 57 seconds left Jamaree Bouyea makes a layup.

Fleming makes a three-pointer to bring the game to 83-117.

The last score from Thunder came with 51 seconds left in the game as Kenrich Williams made a layup.

Bouyea got fouled by McCain and made one free throw to end the game with the final score of 84-229.

Game two will also be at the Paycom Center. If the series goes to a game five they will return.

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## NEEDOH



Graphic by Ingrid Maldonado

ABCnews.com

## Expect Fentanyl & Test First

### What is fentanyl?

- Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is up to 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine.
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# ENTERTAINMENT

## Superhero stories and movies

By KEVIN KAUMANS  
Entertainment Editor

Growing up as an introverted child who spent most of his free time behind a TV screen, I had this fascination with superheroes. Although, I suppose that is a given. After all, I am pretty sure most of us as kids were enamored with the idea of someone out there fighting the bad guys with powers that are beyond the line of reality.

Though many calls him overrated, my favorite superhero as a kid was and still is Batman. Even now, as a 21-year-old man, I cannot fully explain why that is. If I were to take a shot in the dark, however, I would say it is because of the contrast he has with most superheroes in modern-day media.

See, while most children's show heroes are portrayed as upbeat and even comedic, Batman is stoic and brooding. Which makes sense, considering his backstory.

A young boy watching both his parents get gunned down right in front of him is not exactly going to grow up cracking

jokes and throwing one-liners like Spider-Man or the Flash. In this way, the writers are able to give Batman a good reason for being more dark and edgy than most crime-fighters we know without coming across as forced.

That being said, there is nothing wrong with superheroes who are lighter in tone. Some might call them tropey and cliché, and while that may be true, it is not without good reason.

It is a simple fact of reality that humans enjoy watching things that are happier than the reality they are currently living in. It only makes sense, therefore, that superheroes like Superman and Captain America attract such large crowds of fans.

Another complaint I hear concerning a lot of superheroes is that their comics and movies tend to be formulaic, often ending the same way: With the "good guy" defeating the villain and saving the day. Again, this seems like a nitpick to me.

Most people go to superhero movies to be happy. Why then, would directors make a movie where the villain wins and all the

world goes into ruins?

It is one thing when you have a bad ending in a drama or horror movie. No one expects those genres of movies to be light-hearted.

It can even make your movie more memorable for years to come. With superhero movies, however, there is a very one-note expectation. People want to feel uplifted. Movie producers know this; this is why the ending is always the same.

Luckily, superhero comics tend to be more creativity flexible. Comic authors tend to add a lot of serious themes, from addiction to prejudice to sexual violence to even child abuse. Sometimes these themes involve the superheroes themselves, other times they involve other characters in a story.

Now, it is important that, when writing these kinds of stories, that they are approached with the caution and seriousness they deserve. If not, then these said themes come across as forced or even disrespectful to those who have gone through them.

That being said, if you want to create

your own superhero, with elements darker than what you would see on Saturday television, go ahead. There are many authors out there who set their heroes in worlds filled with violence, sex and other R-rated material, just as "Invincible" and "The Boys", both of which are becoming just as if not more popular than "DC" and "Marvel".

The only problem I have with R-rated superhero stories is that they occasionally tend to include dark material just for the sake of shock value. To be fair, this is not the case for all comic books of this type, but more than enough.

I feel like a lot of people who read me assume I am a snobbish literary prude who hates anything with a shred of debauchery in it, I do not; I enjoy violent movies, I play gory video games whenever I get the chance, I read books in my free time with graphic themes.

I do not hate authors who write about the uncomfortable, what I hate is when there is no substance to it. But I digress, this is my piece on superheroes.

## How writers use environmental storytelling

By KEVIN KAUMANS  
Entertainment Editor

Tell me, fellow reader, when you open a book and start reading it, to you ever take in the surroundings of your setting? What I mean by that is have you ever wondered how the author uses the environment to tell their story?

Take "Lord of the Flies" by William Golding, for example. The book is about a group of young boys who are stranded in

an unnamed island in the Pacific Ocean.

The island, it can be argued, can be used as a representation for isolation. The boys are hundreds of thousands of miles away from civilization, with no adults around to guide them. We also see themes of being in an alien environment.

Afterall, there is nothing more we as humans fear than the unknown. Imagine being stranded with a small group on a foreign planet with no idea of what is out

there or how you can survive; that's what the boys in the story are probably feeling.

But it is not always with using a distant land that writers can add symbolism to their stories.

For example, "Twin Peaks" is about an FBI agent who teams up with a small-town Washington sheriff in order to solve a string of murders. The fictional small town of Twin Peaks has a vibe to it that is both homely yet uncanny in a way that is hard to describe.

By setting the series in this small town, the writers of "Twin Peaks" made sure their fans are giving this uneasy feeling throughout the show.

Sure, there is some comedy and absurdism sprinkled in every now and then to keep things from getting to the point of being too

much, the main vibe of the show is like watching a pack of skinwalkers act out a theatrical play.

If you have a story in your head, but do not know where to put your setting, just ask yourself: What kind of story are you trying to tell?

If you, say, want to tell a story about an addict who pushes away everyone who tries to help them, maybe your setting should take place in a dark, dirty apartment.

Maybe you should go further; make your walls yellow from cigarette smoke, make the apartment rug wet with split liquor, have the air have a smell of marijuana and meth.

Okay, okay, maybe that is going a bit too far. But you get the point: a picture can paint a thousand words. Think of Heming-

way's Iceberg Theory. You do not always need to write pages upon pages of detail in order to get your point across.

In fact, it is said that it is a sign of intelligence and good writing if one is able to get their audience to know what they are trying to convey with as little words as possible.

Imagery can also help your audience paint a hundred different pictures and interpret them in millions of ways.

It is the reason we have some many schools of thought concerning literary theory. No two people think the exact same all the time, and will eventually come to their own conclusions with your writer, regardless if you agree with it or not.

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performance

by Jessica Schieber

Why should we be forced to perform?  
We wear our mask pretending no one can tell.  
Our acts don't even convince ourselves.  
We do our song and dance again and again.  
Performance feels like life, life feels fake.



Tear off your mask.  
Live life unashamed.



# SPORTS

## Transfer portal reshaping sports

By **KENNEDY MCGEE**  
Student Reporter

The moment a player enters the transfer portal, everything changes – opportunity expands, but so does the uncertainty.

As college athletics continues to evolve, the transfer portal has become one of the most influential forces in recruiting. Designed to give athletes more control over their careers, the portal has opened doors for some while creating new obstacles for others. From current players navigating the process to coaches adjusting their recruiting strategies, the transfer portal is reshaping how opportunities are earned and who gets them.

The NCAA transfer portal, introduced in 2018, allows student-athletes to declare their intent to transfer and be recruited by other programs. In recent years, rule changes allowing immediate eligibility have made the portal even more appealing. Combined with the rise of name, image, and likeness (NIL) opportunities, the system has transformed college athletics into a faster-moving and more competitive environment.

For Harrison Stapleton, who ran track and played football the transition wasn't just about switching schools; it was about starting over.

Stapleton, a sophomore from Pond Creek, transferred from Northwestern Oklahoma State University to Tulsa University, forcing him to quickly adapt both on and off the track. The move placed him in a new system with new expectations, requiring immediate adjustment.

"Transferring pushed me to adjust fast and prove myself again, which made me tougher as an athlete," Stapleton said. "It also forced me to be more disciplined in school since I had to stay on top of everything in a new environment."

Adjusting to a new program meant more than just learning plays. It required rebuilding relationships, earning trust from coaches, and finding his role on the team and all while maintaining academic responsibilities, he said.



NWOSU Sports photo

Defensive end Brayden Darrell went into the transfer portal after the 2025 football season. He was picked up by Seton Hill in Pennsylvania.

While the opportunity brought growth, it also came with challenges he said he didn't expect.

"The hardest part was how much waiting and uncertainty there is," Stapleton said. "You don't always hear back right away, so you just have to stay patient and keep working."

That uncertainty is something many athletes underestimate when entering the portal. The process is not automatic, and exposure is not guaranteed.

"I thought schools would come to me once I entered," Stapleton said. "But it's really on you to reach out and market yourself. It felt more like a job search than I expected."

For others, the decision to transfer comes more quickly and with fewer doubts.

EJ James, a freshman football player from Muskogee, Oklahoma, transferred from the University of Central Oklahoma to Northeastern State University after feeling his previous situation was not the right fit. For him, the decision was straightforward.

"The coaches didn't like me at

my other school, and I figured it would be better for me to transfer," James said.

Unlike Stapleton's experience of waiting and uncertainty, James said he received immediate interest once entering the portal.

"Five colleges texted me about coming to their school," James said.

Even with that attention, the process still requires athletes to make quick decisions that can impact their long-term careers. For James, however, had little hesitation.

"Yes, it was a very easy decision for me," James said.

His experience highlights how different the process can be depending on the athlete's situation, performance and timing.

While players experience the portal firsthand, coaches are seeing its impact from a broader perspective, especially at the high school level.

Prentice Joseph, a defensive line coach and recruiting coordinator at Broken Arrow High School, said the transfer portal has made recruiting more com-

petitive for high school athletes.

"The transfer portal has definitely tightened the window for high school athletes," Joseph said. "College programs are leaning more toward proven production instead of projection."

In the past, many college programs were willing to invest in developing high school talent over time. Now, coaches often look for players who can contribute immediately, giving transfers an advantage.

As a result, Joseph said expectations for younger players have increased significantly.

"It's not enough to have potential anymore," Joseph said. "You have to show consistency, production and maturity on and off the field."

This shift has changed how he prepares and promotes his athletes, starting earlier in their development.

"It's forced me to be more intentional," Joseph said. "It's less about waiting to be found and more about positioning them intentionally."

That includes building relationships with college programs and making sure athletes are visible to recruiters.

"I make sure I'm advocating for my athletes consistently and getting them in front of the right programs," Joseph said. "It's not just about their film; it's about who they are as people."

At the college level, recruiting strategies are evolving just as quickly.

Kyle Buckner, an offensive analyst at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, said the transfer portal has become an essential part of roster building.

"The transfer portal gives you more options, and in my opinion, it helps make your [position group] complete," Buckner said. "If you have a really young group, you can go out and find experience."

Unlike high school recruits, transfer players often come with game experience, making them less of a risk for coaching staff.

"It is easier to know what you're getting through the transfer portal if they've played in games," Buckner said. "Most

freshmen need time to develop, but transfers are usually past that stage."

However, evaluating players goes beyond statistics and game film.

"You don't always know what you're getting," Buckner said. "You have to talk to their previous coaches and really try to understand their habits."

Finding the right fit within a team's culture is one of the biggest challenges coaches face when recruiting transfers.

"You have to be diligent in figuring out who they are," Buckner said.

He also said many athletes enter the portal with unrealistic expectations.

"One misconception is that it's not always greener on the other side," Buckner said. "If you don't have production, you may end up in the same position you were in before."

In some cases, staying at the current program may provide better long-term opportunities than transferring.

"At the end of the day, college football is a business," Buckner said. "You have to make smart decisions and talk to people you trust."

According to a sports recruiting analysis by Scarecruiting, the transfer portal has created both opportunity and instability. While it gives athletes more control over their careers, it also increases competition for roster spots and reduces guaranteed opportunities for high school recruits.

The growing influence of NIL deals has only added to that complexity, making decisions about transferring even more strategic.

For athletes considering entering the portal, preparation and awareness are key.

"Make sure you have a real reason and a plan before you enter," Stapleton said. "Stay ready, be proactive with coaches, and don't take things personally if it's slow."

In a system built on movement and opportunity, the transfer portal doesn't guarantee success, it simply opens the door, leaving athletes to decide what comes next.

### Transfer facts at NWOSU

**16%**

About 100 of 580 student-athletes have entered into the transfer portal since August, 2025

**15%**

of those 100 were picked up by another NCAA affiliated school. NWOSU does not know if any went to schools affiliated with other associations, such as NAIA or NJCAA. (Source: NWOSU Athletics)

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# SPORTS

## Rangers lose two to Ouachita

By MEGAN SPRAY  
Senior Reporter

Rangers drop series finale Sunday after splitting Saturday games with Ouachita Baptist making their conference record 14-16.

### Game 1 on Saturday

Northwestern opened the weekend with an 11-6 comeback win in the first game of the doubleheader.

Ouachita scored two runs early, but the Rangers answered in the second inning. Matthew Bailey drove in a run, and McCarty tied the game with a sacrifice bunt. Harris later gave Northwestern the lead with a hit to right field.

The game remained close, with Ouachita taking the lead again late and going up 6-3 in the seventh inning.

Northwestern responded with a strong rally. Goodfellow hit a double to bring in a run, Barton tied the game, and McCarty gave the Rangers the lead.

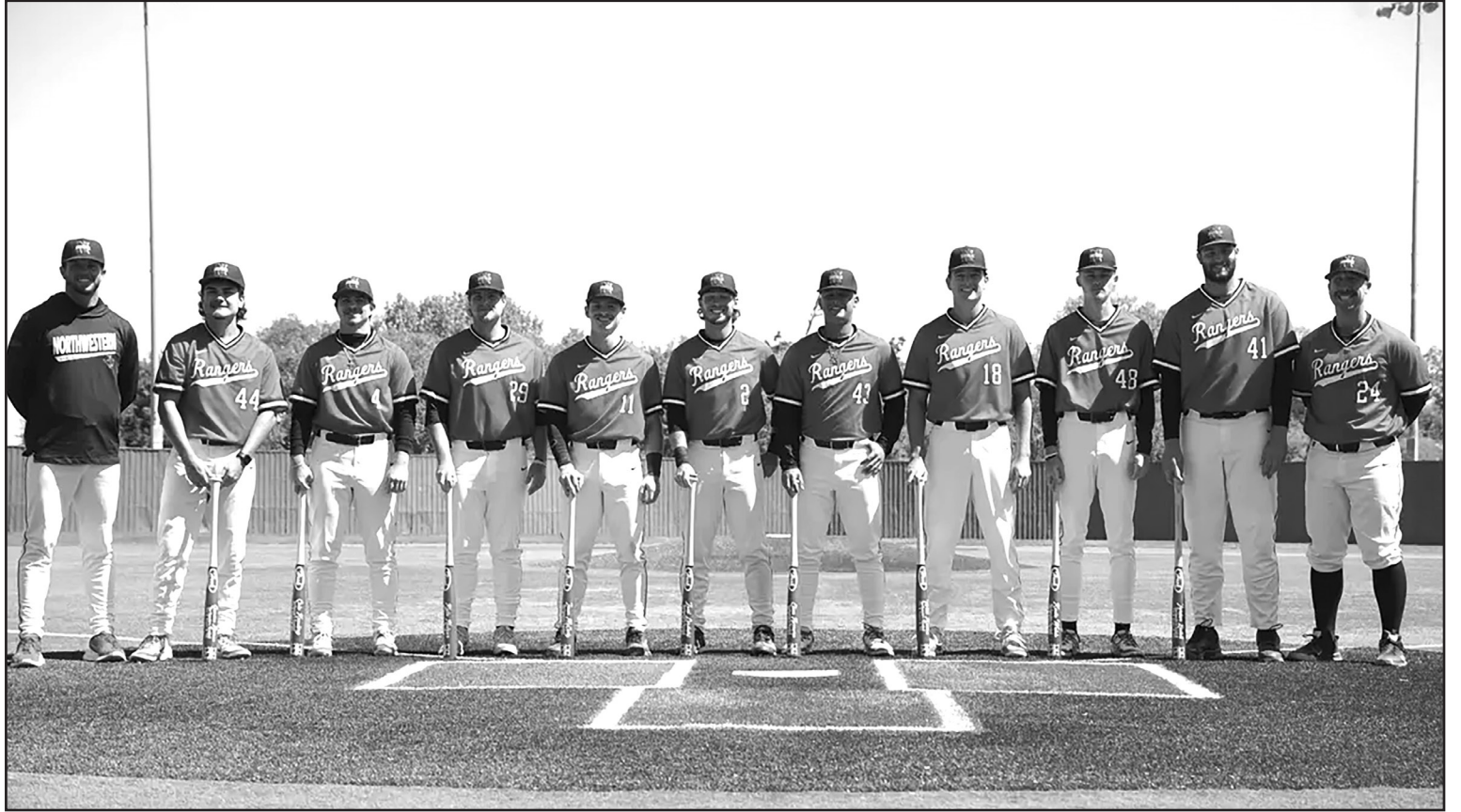
In the eighth inning, the Rangers added to their lead, including a three-run home run by Goodfellow to put the game out of reach.

Goodfellow led the team with three hits and four RBIs.

### Game 2 on Saturday

The Rangers came up short in the second game of Saturday's doubleheader, losing 6-4 after a late comeback attempt.

Northwestern scored first



NWOSU Athletics Photo

Northwestern Ranger seniors pose together with head coach Ryan Bowen and assistant coach Cade Phelps on Senior Day on Saturday versus Ouachita.

when Lindahl got on base and moved into scoring position and later scored on a wild pitch. The Rangers added another run in the fifth inning to take a 2-0 lead.

Ouachita responded in the sixth inning with six runs, quickly turning the game around.

Northwestern tried to rally in the bottom of the inning. Lindahl and Cole Barton got on base to start things off, and Jason McCarty brought in a run with a single. Harris added another hit to load

the bases, and Alex Dabrowski drove in a run with a sacrifice fly to make it 6-4.

The Rangers were unable to score again, and Ouachita held on for the win.

### Game 3 on Sunday

The Northwestern Ranger baseball team lost 10-2 to Ouachita Baptist on Sunday, falling short in the final game of a three-game conference series after splitting a doubleheader the day before.

Ouachita Baptist took control

early, scoring five runs in the first inning and putting the Rangers behind from the start.

Northwestern answered in the third inning. Brody Harris hit a double to begin the inning, and Blake Mattern and Joel Lindahl each earned a walk to load the bases. Jailon Goodfellow followed with a single to right field, bringing in two runs and cutting the lead to 5-2.

That would be the Rangers' only scoring of the game.

Ouachita added one run in the fifth inning and pulled away with four more in the ninth to secure the win. Goodfellow led Northwestern with two hits and two RBIs.

Northwestern will return to action April 24 when they travel to Weatherford to face Southwestern Oklahoma State and compete for a spot in the Great American Conference Tournament.

The Rangers sit 8th in the GAC standings.

## Rangers remain dominant in rodeo 2025-26 season wraps up for Northwestern golf

By JOHN STOWERS  
Student Reporter

The Northwestern Oklahoma State University rodeo teams had another dominant performance at the Ft. Hays State University 60th Annual Rodeo.

Riley Smith, Nathan Duvall and Tydon Tsoie ranked in the top five in steer wrestling, with Smith coming out in first place.

Smith ended his first go in

4.7 seconds, tying fellow Ranger Hazen Sparks and Southeastern Oklahoma State University steer wrestler Lucas Peterson for first place. Smith then ended his short go in 5.3 seconds, the second fastest time of the round. With a combined final score of 130, Smith ended the steer wrestling event with a 20-point gap between himself and Lucas Peterson, who got second place. Rodeo coach Cali Griffin said she thinks they can do even better.

"Everybody wants to finish as strong as possible," said Griffin. "We had some slip ups in the short run that probably cost us from winning the men's and women's team, but I think we need to slow down sometimes in the short go and think about the average versus thinking about in that moment winning first. I think we just need to really worry about finishing the job in the short round. Other than that, I couldn't be more happy with them."

By OAKLEE FIELDER  
Sports Editor

Both golf teams finished 5th in the Great American Conference Championships both located in the Tulsa area over the week.

The Lady Rangers finished 5th out of 11 teams. Gracie Doke finished off the Championships with

a 2nd place finish. Doke sat between two Arkansas Tech golfers.

Doke finished with a score of +7, just six strokes behind first place. Tess Linden was the second-best Lady Ranger, she finished 13th with a score of +17. Amanda Lane finished 23rd with a score of +22. Heather Hunkele had a score of +37, putting her in 43rd. Kelsey Hoy-Pollard had a score of +45 which set her in 49th.

The men finished 5th out of 10 teams. Chris Xiao was the top Ranger, putting him 8th.

An-chieh Tsai was just behind Xiao with a score of +9, putting him tied for 16th. Pierce Geminden finished the Ranger train as he had a score of +10. Geminden's score put him tied for 18th. Mathieu Zerwin finished 27th with a score of +12. Zac Farmer had a score of +15, putting the Australian in 31st.

This marks the end of the golf season for 2025-26. Both teams were always competitors worth keeping an eye on in their tournaments, just coming up short in some.

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# SPORTS

## Softball wins two of five

By **OAKLEE FIELDER**  
Sports Editor

Softball lost a three-game series against Ouachita Baptist 2-1 and split a doubleheader evening against Newman University with a tight game in the final meeting.

The Lady Rangers played the Ouachita Baptist Tigers while on the road on Thursday and Friday. Then after coming home, the Lady Rangers played the Newman University Jets on Tuesday in a doubleheader.

### Game 1

#### NWOSU 4-5 OUA

The Lady Rangers and the Tigers battled in a tight contest for game one. Jamie Molina had a great game in the batter's box, as she had a hit in every at-bat she had.

The Lady Rangers opened the game with a run scored in the first inning. Molina hit a single to center field, allowing Savannah Duran to run home and score. Ouachita responded quickly with a run scored in the bottom of the first.

The Lady Rangers scored the next runs in the third with another single from Molina, sending Kaylee Madden home from first base after an error from Ouachita's right field. Taygan Graham was next after Ouachita got a Northwestern batter out. Graham hit a sacrifice fly to left field, sending Molina home. The game continued to be mirrored, as Ouachita scored two runs to tie it at three in the bottom of the third.

In the fifth, Molina hit a sacrifice out to left field to send Madden home. The game continued to rhyme as the Tigers respond with a run to tie it in the bottom of the fifth. Jazmine Mikel hit a single to center field in the sixth, sending Graham home.

The Tigers failed to imitate the Lady Rangers this time in the sixth, giving the Lady Rangers the win by one run.

Molina had three hits in her three at-bats. She also had two



Photo by Oaklee Fielder

Lady Ranger pitcher Chloe Brown throws a pitch during game two against Newman University on Tuesday. The game ended with a loss for NWOSU.

RBI. Madden had two hits and had two runs scored. Grace Hulsey was the starting pitcher and had one strikeout. Madelyn Cason relieved her in the fourth inning. Cason had three strikeouts and only three hits against her.

### Game 2, 3

#### NWOSU 0-7 OUA

The Lady Rangers were shut out in games two and three, both ending with the Lady Rangers down by seven.

In game two, only three Northwestern players had hits. Kaitlyn Corn, Gabrielle Sanchez and Raelynn Sandlin were the only players to have hits. They each had one. Chloe Brown and Katelyn Bezdicek were the pitchers. Brown had one strikeout and seven hits against her. Bezdicek had three hits and two strikeouts in the two innings she pitched.

In game three, the Lady Rangers recorded no hits. The only Northwestern runner on base was Abby Baglin after she

was walked. Katy Jones was the pitcher for Northwestern. Jones had one strikeout and nine hits against her.

### Game 4

#### NEW 3-8 NWOSU

After two disappointing games, the Lady Rangers came home to get a win in their first game back.

The game remained scoreless until the fourth inning, where Sandlin made it to first after a hit. The Jet defender threw out Shannon Ayers at third, allowing Molina to run home and score. Then, Makanalei Lopera hit a single to right field to send Graham home.

The Jets took the lead by one after they scored three runs in the top of the fifth. In the bottom of the fifth, Northwestern scored four runs, giving them a large lead. Madden made a hit and the Newman first baseman made an error. Madden made it to second base and Duran ran home to score.

Delaynie Esterly, Graham and Mikel all made hits leading to Northwestern runs, giving the Lady Rangers a three-run lead. In the sixth, Sanchez hit a double to send Molina home. Then, the Newman catcher dropped the ball on strike three, allowing Sandlin to make an attempt to run to first. Sandlin made it to second and Sanchez ran home.

Sandlin, Mikel and Lopera each has two hits. Those three plus Esterly, Sanchez and Graham all had one RBI apiece. Jones, Hulsey and Cason all pitched against Newman in game one. Jones had the most strikeouts with one. She had five hits against her in four innings pitched, Hulsey had one with two innings and Cason had zero hits against her in one inning pitched.

### Game 5

#### NEW 5-4 NWOSU

The Lady Rangers were unable to score in game two of the doubleheader against Newman

until the bottom of the seventh.

The Jets scored five throughout the game. Then in the bottom of the seventh, Sanchez hit a grand slam, sending her, Molina, Madden and Duran home to make it a one-run game. Unfortunately, the momentum after the grand slam was not enough and the Lady Rangers lost by one in game two.

Corn and Sanchez each had two hits. Sanchez had four RBIs from her grand slam in the seventh. Brown started on the mound. She had one strikeout after two innings pitched. Ruby Nichols took over the mound in the third inning and had one strikeout. Bezdicek closed out the game in the fifth inning and had no hits against her in the two innings she pitched.

The Lady Rangers have six games left and they're all at home. They play Southwestern Oklahoma State on Friday and Saturday in a three-game series.

## Coaching changes challenges track and field

By **SHEALYNN PRATT**  
Student Reporter

The Track and Field team spent Sunday in Pittsburg, Kansas, at Pittsburg State University. It was the last meet before they leave for the Great American Conference Championships on April 27. Several members of the team continue to perform well after head jumps coach Tamaj Gordon

left the team weeks before the end of the season.

Harmonie Hughes, a sophomore from Blue Springs, Missouri placed fifth in the women's triple jump.

Madyson Organ, a freshman from Rockwell, Texas placed 5th in the finals of the 100-meter dash with a time of 12.04.

Amelia Nyambuka, a junior from Arlington, Texas, jumped 10.75 meters. This was her first meet back on the track since be-

ing injured with patellar tendinitis. She credits her mentality and teammates for making her return go smoothly.

"I wasn't too far off from my PR or the school record," Nyambuka said. "I have all this week to recover and get treatment before the conference, and I don't see anything stopping me."

Nyambuka said members of the jumps squad have been prioritizing recovery and have taken initiative to notify teammates of

practices since their coach left.

Head jumps coach Tamaj Gordon accepted a new position at Eastern Illinois University and was not in attendance at Sunday's meet. The team adapted by working together.

"The beautiful thing is that we had teammates all around," Nyambuka said. "I didn't struggle with finding someone to watch my mark or filming videos, which helped bridge the gap between not having our coach there

because the team stepped up."

Despite unexpected changes, the team continues its preparation for the Great American Conference Championships.

"We are combining all of what we have learned through this year to go out and be our best," Nyambuka said.

The team will compete at the Great American Conference Championship in Searcy, Arkansas. They will leave on April 27.