



## News

9 February, 2022

# SWOSU to Dedicate General Thomas P. Stafford Archives on March 11

Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU) with locations in Weatherford, Sayre and Yukon has scheduled the dedication of the General Thomas P. Stafford Archives for Friday, March 11, at 2 p.m. at the Al Harris Library at SWOSU Weatherford.

The archives will utilize the latest in preservation technology and techniques to house sensitive historical documents and papers and will highlight Stafford's lifetime of achievements.

"We are deeply honored that our longtime benefactor and partner, General Thomas P. Stafford, has designated the Al Harris Library here at SWOSU as the repository for his papers and historic documents," said SWOSU President Dr. Diana Lovell.

Lovell said the Stafford Archives are a splendid addition to SWOSU's rich heritage in aerospace and defense education and accomplishment.

"The General's vision, generosity and involvement have equipped us to build a facility that will serve as a world-class repository for researchers, historians and students to study the incredible work and events to which the General has been central over during his many decades of public and military service and scientific and corporate leadership."

A Weatherford native, Stafford established the Stafford Air & Space Museum in 1993 with two rooms near the Weatherford Airport (which is also now named for Stafford)—today, the museum is a Smithsonian affiliate and preserves over 63,000 square feet of historic information and educational resources.

"Stafford is a renowned Oklahoma Hall of Fame laureate who is the first NASA astronaut to ever become a General and was the first General to fly in space. His work was essential to the development of stealth technology and his longtime friendship with Soviet Cosmonaut Alexei Leonov stands out as a beacon of cooperation amidst the tensions of the Cold War. Our SWOSU students for generations to come will learn so much from General Stafford's life, work and example," said SWOSU Libraries Director Jason Dupree.

Stafford also established the Stafford Endowment at SWOSU in 1992 which was, at the time, the largest single gift ever made to the university. The endowment continues to provide a unique experiential learning program for SWOSU's prestigious Stafford Scholars, over 165 of which have been designated to date. The Stafford Scholars program represents a positive, valuable ongoing collaboration between SWOSU and the Stafford Air & Space Museum.

General Stafford, who received SWOSU's first-ever honorary doctorate in 2015, will make remarks at the dedication of the archives.

He will be joined by Oklahoma State Representatives Rhonda Baker, Mike Dobrinski and Anthony Moore, and Oklahoma State Senators Brent Howard, Darcy Jech, and Jake Merrick, all of whom represent the SWOSU service area which stretches from the Texas border in western Oklahoma to the western suburbs of Oklahoma City in Canadian County.

Regent Connie Reilly, chair of the Regional University System of Oklahoma Board of Regents, will address the participants as will Allison D. Garrett, chancellor of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

United States Senator Jim Inhofe (Oklahoma), who serves as Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Armed Services, and United States Congressman Frank D. Lucas of Cheyenne (OK-3), who serves as Ranking Member of the House Committee on Science, Space, & Technology, are also scheduled to speak.

Former SWOSU Presidents Dr. Joe Anna Hibler and Dr. Randy Beutler, along with Linda Hays, wife of the late former SWOSU President Dr. John Hays, will also be present along with longtime Weatherford Mayor and SWOSU alumnus Mike Brown.

Seating space at the event is extremely limited and due to ongoing public health concerns, the event is invitation-only.

For more information, contact [Kari Jones](#) in the SWOSU Office of Institutional Advancement at [580.774.3267](tel:580.774.3267).

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