

Retired Col. James Wilhite to share Success Story in Building Afghanistan University

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Retired Col. James Wilhite

Retired U.S. Army Colonel James Wilhite will share his story of accomplishing what many might think is an impossible task: building a four-year university in Afghanistan with no funding and no full time staff-a mission he accomplished in 10 months.

The presentation will be held this Tuesday, March 8, at 7 p.m. at the SWOSU Conference Center on the campus of Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford. Admission is free, and the public is invited. A book signing will follow his talk.

The presentation will offer first-hand knowledge for anyone curious about the Afghan people and the U.S. military's role in reconstruction and humanitarian efforts in Afghanistan. The information presented will be very insightful for any college student currently serving with the U.S. military or those individuals pursuing careers in education, business, management or leadership.

Wilhite will discuss the support and cooperation provided to him by the faculty of West Point Military Academy and how he set goals for accomplishing this task, managing personnel, and acquiring building resources. He will also share the story of how he became known as "The American Father of the National Military Academy of Afghanistan."

Colonel Wilhite currently serves as Liaison Officer to the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York and professor emeritus at the Northeastern State University (OK) College of Education. He has served nearly 40 years in the U.S. Army Reserves. In 2004, he was deployed to Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom where he served as Chief of the National Military Academy of Afghanistan, Implementation Team. During his military service, Wilhite has earned the following decorations, service medals and badges: Bronze Star (Operation Enduring Freedom), Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Army Achievement Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal with five Oak Leaf Clusters, National Defense Service Medal with Bronze Service Star, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with Ten-Year Device, Army Service Ribbon, Army Reserve Overseas Training Ribbon, Expert Infantry Badge and Drill Sergeant Badge.

For more information about this Al Harris Library Showcase event, contact Jason Dupree, head of public services, SWOSU Libraries, at 580...) 774-3031 or email jason.dupree@swosu.edu.