

Gerald D. Daugherty Memorial Scholarship Established at SWOSU Foundation

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It is scholarship season at the Southwestern Oklahoma State University Foundation in Weatherford and among the newest scholarships established is the Gerald D. Daugherty Memorial Scholarship Fund, which will benefit SWOSU students who graduated from Watonga Public Schools.

“Gerald Daugherty led a remarkable life, and we are so grateful to his family and friends that they have chosen this very special, lasting way to honor his memory,” said SWOSU Foundation Executive Director Garrett King.

Daugherty’s story began humbly on a farm in the Oak Ridge Community southeast of Watonga, where he rode his horse to school and back daily. During his time as a student at Watonga Public Schools, Daugherty bonded with his football coach, Dean Wild (SWOSU Class of 1935). Wild was a role model and father figure to Daugherty, who tragically lost his own father at the age of 8, and Daugherty credited Wild with inspiring him to become a teacher and coach.

After graduating from Watonga High School at 16, Daugherty went to work in the Wyoming oil fields and was preparing to enlist during the Korean War when Wild encouraged him to try out for the football team at Southwestern Oklahoma State College in Weatherford. The rest, as they say, is history. Daugherty arrived on the Southwestern campus with \$1 in his pocket, but thanks to work he had as a lifeguard and janitor, along with a scholarship arranged by SWOSU President Dr. Al Harris, Daugherty was able to enjoy a successful football career as a Bulldog center and linebacker under Coach Joe Bailey Metcalfe and Assistant Coach J .W. Cole.

Daugherty earned his Bachelor of Arts from SWOSU in 1954 and a Master’s degree in Education in 1965. Following the end of his undergraduate years at Southwestern, Daugherty coached at Weatherford under Coach Steve Graham (SWOSU Class of 1947) and followed Graham to a coaching role in Clovis, N.M., which is where Daugherty was in 1962 when he received an offer he called “irresistible,” the chance to return to Watonga to coach the Eagles football team.

Daugherty coached at Watonga from 1962-1974, departing the football field to serve in educational administration for over a decade. Daugherty’s first major administrative role was as superintendent of Seiling Public Schools, where for 10 years he led the Dewey County school district. Notably, during his time at Seiling, Daugherty established special education programming and led the district to be named an All-American School.

He retired in 1991 after serving a successful three year-tenure as superintendent of Watonga Public Schools.

During his record-setting time leading the Watonga football program, Daugherty led the Eagles to their second-ever state football championship. This was particularly satisfying to Daugherty who had played on the school’s first-ever state football championship

team. Daugherty was named High School Coach of the Year by the *Daily Oklahoman* in 1971 after winning the state championship, and during his coaching career was one of only eight football coaches in the United States honored by the National High School Athletic Coaches Association.

He was inducted into the Oklahoma Coaches Association Hall of Fame.

After his retirement from public education, Daugherty enjoyed volunteering with the Watonga Church of Christ, reading history, drinking coffee with his usual early morning group, making stained-glass art, and traveling with his family and friends. Daugherty passed away in October 2015 and is buried at Watonga.

The Gerald D. Daugherty Memorial Scholarship Fund was established by Daugherty's wife, Veva Tolbert Daugherty, at the request of many of Gerald's neighbors and former students who wanted to honor their late friend, colleague and role model. The fund will provide much-needed scholarships to SWOSU students with a preference given to those students who, like Gerald, graduated from Watonga Public Schools.

Tax-deductible gifts to the fund may be made by visiting www.GivetoSWOSU.com and designating gifts for "Gerald Daugherty Memorial;" contributions may also be made payable to "SWOSU Foundation" with "Gerald Daugherty" in the memorandum, and mailed to: SWOSU Foundation, Burton House, 100 Campus Drive, Weatherford OK 73096.

The SWOSU Foundation was established in 1977 to promote philanthropy and distribute funds to support the activities and programs of SWOSU. Located on the Weatherford campus in the historic Burton House, the Foundation currently stewards over \$20 million in assets for the benefit of SWOSU. For more information please call 580-774-3267 or visit www.SWOSUFoundation.com.