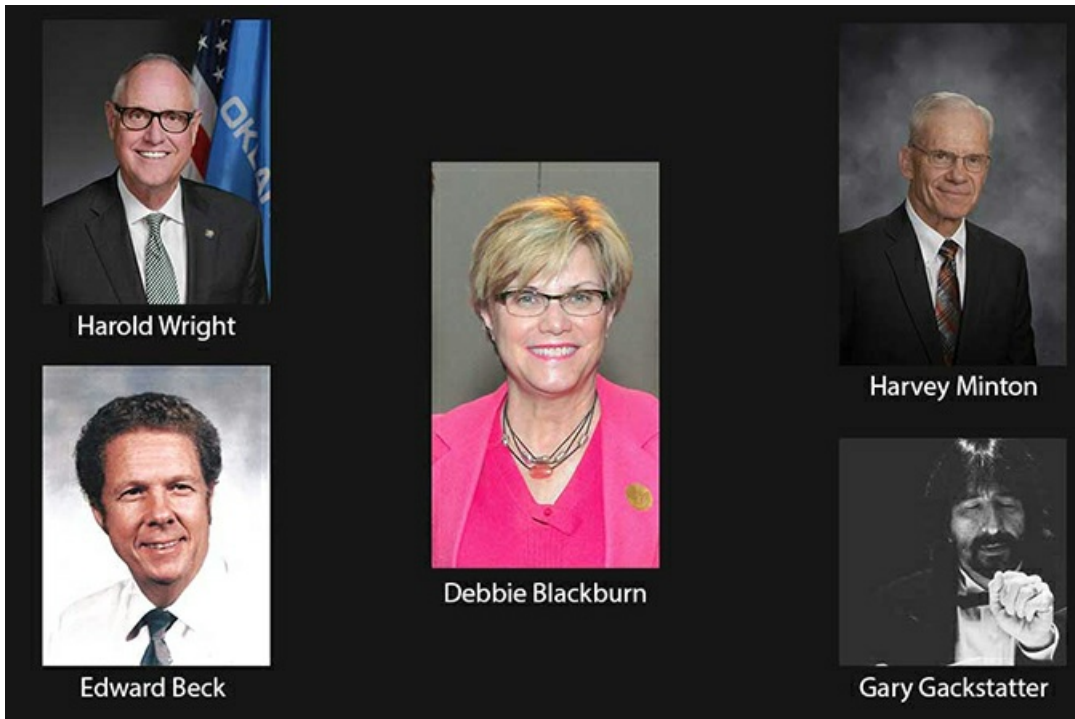




20 April, 2020

Five Being Inducted into SWOSU Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame



Five individuals are being inducted into Southwestern Oklahoma State University's Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame in 2020.

They are:

- Debbie Blackburn (Class of 1973)
- Gary Gackstatter (Class of 1981)
- Harvey Minton (Class of 1964)
- Harold Wright (Class of 1971)
- The late Edward Beck (Classes of 1959 & 1974)

Debbie Blackburn served in the Oklahoma House of Representatives from 1994 to 2006. During her time in the Oklahoma Legislature, Blackburn chaired the Education Appropriations Committee and the Banking & Finance Committee. Blackburn led the legislative efforts that created the Oklahoma College Savings Plan and the Joint Committee on Water Planning.

Prior to her election to the Legislature, Blackburn taught in the Altus Public Schools. Since leaving legislative service, she has served as co-founder and president of the Paseo District Redevelopment Corporation. Blackburn is a trustee of the Oklahoma Housing Finance Authority and sits on the MAPS 3 Streetcar Subcommittee.

Blackburn has received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Neighborhood Alliance, Treasure For Tomorrow Award from the Oklahoma Health Sciences Foundation, and is the 10th inductee into the SWOSU Presidential Order of Merit. A native of Woodward, Blackburn is married to 2010 SWOSU Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame inductee Dr. Bob Blackburn (SWOSU Class of 1973). The Blackburns enjoy spending time with their son, daughter-in-law and grandson.

Gary Gackstatter is an active artist, composer, conductor, clinician, performer and teacher, teaching at St. Louis Community College-Meramec since 2007 as coordinator of music and conductor of the Symphonic Band and Meramec Orchestra. He has served as conductor at Cowley College, Southwestern College and Wichita State University, all in Kansas, and has 12 years of public school teaching experience. He holds degrees from SWOSU and Wichita State University.

Gackstatter is a two-time Kansas Governor's Arts Award Winner and is the 2017 Missouri Humanities Council Excellence in Education Award winner. His published compositions (with C. Alan Publications) are performed internationally and his vision to combine the various arts genres in performances has gained national attention. Gackstatter has composed six symphonies, each combining music with other arts. He has arranged symphony debuts for Sam Bush, R. Carlos Nakai, Laura Love, Trio Globo, Three Dog Night, Kansas, John Gorka, Barbara Higbie, John McCutcheon, Tom Chapin and the Paul Winter Consort.

Gackstatter has authored three books: *Your Musical Journey* (Kendall-Hunt), a music appreciation textbook; *Pen and Ink*, a book of his writings and drawings, and, most recently, *The Spark: Notes from the Podium*, a series of short meditations on teaching music. Also a pen and ink artist, Gackstatter's work has been featured at several shows including the St Louis Art Fair.

Harvey Minton is a native of Oakwood. Minton completed graduate studies at the Pennsylvania State University Executive Management Program in 1973 following his undergraduate studies at SWOSU.

Minton's career in tax function with Conoco, Inc., took him to Ponca City; Stamford, CT; Pittsburgh, PA; and Wilmington, DE. Minton's professional timeline encompassed 1983-87 when he served as vice president of tax for Conoco, Inc. From 1987-89, Minton served as director of business services of polymer products for DuPont & Nemours & Co. And, from 1990-2000, he was vice president of tax for DuPont & Co.

Minton has been an active member of the American Coal Association Tax Committee, Federal Income Tax Study Group, American Mining Congress, and the National Association of Manufacturers Tax Committee. Minton served over 14 years as a trustee of the SWOSU Foundation, Inc., and is a Founder-level investor in the SWOSU Bulldog Angels Fund. He is the 35th inductee into the SWOSU Presidential Order of Merit. Minton and his wife, Jean, enjoy spending time with their children and grandchildren.

Harold Wright is serving his 12th year in the Oklahoma House of Representatives and his fourth year as Speaker Pro Tempore, which is one of the three elected leadership positions in the Oklahoma Legislature. He has served four years as chair of the Higher Education Committee in the Oklahoma House.

Wright, a native of Weatherford, is also the chairman and founder of Wright Broadcasting Systems, Inc. in Weatherford. He attended Oklahoma State University and graduated from SWOSU in 1971 with a BA degree in speech and political science. His interest in radio broadcasting began while working at university and community radio stations while in college.

Wright worked in programming and sales at KWEY Radio in Weatherford. He was sales manager at WMBR radio in Jacksonville (FL) before moving back to Oklahoma in 1975 to become part owner and general manager of KRPT Radio in Anadarko. Wright fulfilled a dream when he purchased his hometown radio station KWEY and moved back to Weatherford in 1991. Since then he has added stations in nearby Clinton, Cordell and Elk City and now operates five radio stations in western Oklahoma.

Wright was mayor of Anadarko from 1985-87/ He was president of the Oklahoma Association of Broadcasters in 1986. Wright has been an active member of Rotary Club for over 40 years, serving as president two years (once in Anadarko and once in Weatherford). Wright has served on the board of directors for many organizations and has been very active with the local and state United Methodist Church.

Wright served as president of the SWOSU Alumni Association from 2003-2004. He and his wife Carol have two children: Angela with husband Bobby Marsee, Heston with wife Claudia and two granddaughters Abby and Ruby Wright.

The late **Edward Earl Beck**, commonly known as "Mr. Beck" or "Eddie", was born on the home farm between Fay and Oakwood on July 29, 1935. He passed away at St. Anthony's Hospital in Oklahoma City on April 10, 2004 after a long battle with cancer.

He was one of Oakwood's first two students to earn his Junior Master Farmer Degree. He graduated from Oakwood High School as salutatorian in 1953 and later obtained his undergraduate and graduate degrees from SWOSU. Beck served his country in the National Guard in 1957-1958. While on his 6 months of active duty at Fort Jackson (SC), he received an honorable medical discharge for an injury received during advanced infantry training.

Beck married Freida Mae Hamar in Thomas and to this union was born a son, David E. Beck, and a daughter, Lora J. Beck. Beck taught school at Fay, Oakwood, Watonga and Thomas. He served as assistant principal at Watonga Junior High and later served as elementary principal at Fay and Thomas. Beck served as state president and in many other capacities for the Oklahoma Association of Elementary School Principals and as a federal legislative coordinator for the National Association of Elementary School Principals from 1990 to 1993.

Beck was an active member of the First Christian Church of Thomas and served as an officer of the District 8 Christian Men's Fellowship for southwest Oklahoma. He served on the Western Plains Library System governing board and as an officer of the Oakwood Alumni Association.

The 2020 SWOSU Distinguished Alumni honorees will be recognized during the rescheduled SWOSU Convocation activities tentatively planned for December 12, 2020, on the Weatherford campus.

For more information please visit swosu.edu or call the SWOSU Office of Institutional Advancement at 580-774-3267.

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