

# SWOSU Foundation Receives \$50,000 to Establish C.B. Graft Rule of Law Endowment

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Southwestern Oklahoma State University Foundation recently received a \$50,000 contribution from 1963 SWOSU graduate C. B. Graft (fourth from left), Roger Mills County Associate District Judge F. Pat VerSteeg (second from left), and Mark and Chaille Walraven (right) of the Clinton law firm Graft & Walraven for the establishment of the C.B. Graft Rule of Law Endowment to fund scholarships at SWOSU. Accepting were (left) Lynne Thurman, executive director of the foundation, and SWOSU President Randy Beutler (third from left).

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Graft, VerSteeg, and Walraven said the donation is the result of the contributions of several people. The \$50,000 is part of an unclaimed amount from the settlement of a class action lawsuit involving mineral right owners in Custer and Dewey counties against ExxonMobil.

The company settled to pay the royalty owners or their heirs over \$31 million in the settlement. After all attempts were made to distribute the funds to the rightful parties, \$401,632.68 was still unclaimed. The whole unclaimed amount could have easily been allocated to the Oklahoma Bar Foundation which is commonly done in such cases, but instead, Judge VerSteeg and Graft exercised the option to allocate the monies to schools and community service organizations in the counties involved in the case. They researched where the money was needed and determined the distribution of the funds.

“We are incredibly grateful for the support and generosity of everyone involved with this donation,” said Lynne Thurman, executive director of the SWOSU Foundation. “Mr. Graft has helped us with several of our endowments and we appreciate his support and loyalty to the university.”

Thurman said the impact of the scholarship funding will be wonderful for students in need. One of the provisions of the C.B. Graft Rule of Law Endowment is the scholarship shall be awarded to students who have already completed a full-time semester.

Thurman said the SWOSU Foundation works with donors to establish donation plans which will help them “leave a legacy” in their own name or the names of their loved ones for future SWOSU students. Thurman said some donors set annual donation amounts designated to be spent each year and others establish endowments, such as the C.B. Graft Rule of Law Endowment, which stay in perpetuity and pay from investment earnings.