FALL 2016

PLC PRESIDENT'S LEADERSHIP CLASS ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

# IT'S NO HOLDS BARRED WHEN PLC WELCOMES A VISIT FROM "FLASH POINT" COMMENTATORS

They are smart, funny and knowledgeable, and when they are the President's Leadership Class' guest speakers, the session could run all night.

Mike Turpen, former Attorney General of Oklahoma, a Democrat, and Kirk Humphreys, former Mayor of Oklahoma City, a Republican, are the combative co-hosts of "Flash Point," the highly rated Sunday morning political commentary show on KFOR-TV. For the past 10 years, they have made a fall visit to PLC to talk politics, leadership, civic responsibility, giving back and paying forward.

A 1972 OU business graduate, Humphreys is currently an OU Regent, while Turpen, a University of Tulsa graduate and father of Patrick Turpen, PLC 2009, and Sarah Turpen, PLC 2010, serves on the State Regents for Higher Education. The evening was full of their far-ranging opinions, sprinkled with a lively wit, keeping their audience thoroughly engaged:

What do you know about politics and elections? What's important to you in a candidate for president? For whom are you going to vote? Why should you vote even if you don't like either candidate? Whom would you rather have on the ballot? What are your dreams?



"Flash Point's" Mike Turpen and Kirk Humphreys with PLC '16-'17.

"If you are interested in someday running for office," Turpen advised, "be willing to risk it all. Be a giver, not a taker. Takers eat better, givers sleep better."

While Turpen urged the PLCers to "be involved in the process," Humphreys urged them to "stay in Oklahoma, get involved in the community." He recounted terms served on the Putnam City school board and as OKC mayor and an unsuccessful run for the U.S. Senate—and Turpen's failed bid for governor. Still, he advised, "If a door opens, don't close it before looking through it. Make the most of your opportunity."

Turpen commented on the diversity of this year's PLC, the most in their decade with the Class. "Get to know each other," he quipped. "You can't antagonize and persuade a person at the same time."

But Humphreys issued the most practical appeal, inviting those PLCers who could to join him for dinner. About 20 took him up on the offer, and the discussions continued nonstop.



**THE 2016-17 DAVID A. BURR SCHOLARS**, upperclass mentors to the PLC Class of '16, in alpha order, are: Benjamin Bevilacqua, Tulsa; Cameron Burleson, Colleyville, TX; Christa Cherian, Mustang; Preston Choi, Edmond; David Doshier, Verdigris; Michael Fedell, Tyler, TX; Elizabeth Kornfeld and Jacob Nguyen, Oklahoma City; Bond Olivo, Highland Park, TX; Anna Lee Painter, Norman; Visha Patel, Mustang; Lindsey Patterson, Edmond; Parker Randels, Blanchard; Nicholas Scott and Sarah Stagg, Tulsa; Hayley Struck, Coppell, TX; Jonna Vanderslice, Weatherford; and Amelia White, Tulsa.

PLC
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# PLC '16 PLEDGES TO "DARE GREATLY" WITH TRADITIONAL KICK-OFF EVENTS

The 56th edition of the President's Leadership Class began its OU journey with events mirroring past years' but peopled with 128 new faces, eager to employ their talents and personalities to make the most of their college experience. Gathering in the Oklahoma Memorial Union's Molly Shi Boren Ballroom on the Friday before beginning the fall semester, the PLCers introduced themselves and their parents and guests to each other and the assembled OU support staff who will be a part of their freshman year.

The Class of 68 women and 60 men is composed of 109 new students from Oklahoma, 11 from Texas, and one each from Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota and Missouri. Two international students, both United World Colleges' Davis Scholars, one from Egypt and another from Zimbabwe, are Class members. This year's student advisers are Oklahoma City sophomores Faith Wolfard from Christian Heritage Academy and Michael Thomas from Putnam City North High School.

The following weekend, the group left for the annual PLC retreat, held for the second year at Cross Point Camp on Lake Texoma. There they were joined by the 18 David A. Burr Scholars, upperclassmen who serve as Class mentors, and 18 OU staff group leaders, most of whom are PLC alumni.

The staff, led by PLC adviser Nanette Hathaway, introduced the theme for the year, "Dare Greatly," taken from a Theodore Roosevelt quotation, urging the Class members to be authentic, be brave, be vulnerable, have grit, be kind and be grateful. After dividing into 12 small groups that will be maintained throughout the year, each with a Burr Scholar mentor, the freshmen explored six areas of opportunity designated: Learn about Leadership from Great OU Leaders; Serve Others; Form Life-long Friendships; Campus Involvement; Study Aboard; and Mentorships.

Less serious activities involved identifying their personality styles through the U Zoo and engaging in Olympic-themed games. At the end of the weekend the PLCers wrote sealed letters to themselves, each containing their aims for the first semester, to be returned and opened in December.

## DARE GREATLY

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while DARING GREATLY, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."

**—Theodore Roosevelt**

# PLC LUNCHEON KICKS OFF NEW YEAR FOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY



Sue Mayhue and Neil and Jane England, seated, and Marilyn Foster, standing left, friends and family of the late Jane England, PLC '62, meet the 2016 recipients of the Jane England Intern Scholarships, Emma Hutchison, left, and Allie McManus.



JP Audas, right, attends the PLC luncheon with his daughter, Lexi, and Riley McGill, both freshmen members of the new Class from Norman High School.

# RETREATING TO LAKE TEXOMA

Following the first weekend tradition, the 2016-17 PLC Class boarded buses for Cross Point Camp on Lake Texoma for a three-day retreat devoted to forming friendships and understanding the theme of "Dare Greatly,"as well as the basics of leadership and what it means to be a part of the President's Leadership Class and the University of Oklahoma family.



Looking every bit the part of campers headed for a weekend of leadership and bonding experiences are new PLCers Chris Coronado, left, Southeast High School; Kevin Duong, Piedmont High School; Zack Frye, Del City High School; and Bradyn Fikes, Grandfield High School.



Ada is well represented in the 2016-17 PLC Class by Chad Whittington, left, and Daniel Carpenter, right, both from Ada Senior High School, and Noelle Vargas, center, from Latta High School.



The 128 PLCers broke into small groups at the retreat for several of the exercises. Here are Hayley Traxler, left, Tuttle; Jaycie Thaemert, De Soto, KS; Kim Pham, Oklahoma City; Kelsey Norton, Byars; Meredith Rasnic, Norman; and Allison Gillis, Owasso.



PLC Student Advisers Michael Thomas, Putnam City North, and Faith Wolfard, Christian Heritage Academy, both Oklahoma City sophomores, here dressed for the "Retreat Olympics," will be guiding the freshmen in Class activities.



Sporting their new PLC T-shirts are, from left, Samantha Basave, Harding Fine Arts Academy; Blessing Chirimbani, Davis UWC Scholar from Zimbabwe; Goya Arredondo, U.S. Grant High School; and Nate Bullock, Northwest Classen High School.

PLC
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# *A Letter from President Boren*

Dear PLC Alumni,

During their annual visit to the President's Leadership Class this fall, one of the first things Mike Turpen and Kirk Humphreys – hosts of "Flash Point" – noticed was the vibrant diversity of this year's PLC class. These 128 students represent the best of the University of Oklahoma's largest, most diverse, and highest academically ranked freshman class in its history.

These students are diverse in their cultural backgrounds and ethnicities, academic pursuits and social interests, personalities and political outlooks, lifestyles and geographic origin – including two international students. This class is united in their passion for leadership, commitment to service and interest in strengthening the OU campus community.

For their time at OU, this class will be the leaders of OU's student body. After they graduate, they will go on to leadership positions in their communities and in their careers. This group of students will carry on the tradition of excellence that has united PLC members for more than 55 years – a tradition that has made PLC one of the most recognized freshman leadership programs in the nation.

When challenging situations arise on a college campus, the most effective response includes both decisive action from the administration and active involvement of student leadership. At OU, a number of our student leaders are PLC alumni. The diversity in their backgrounds and perspectives adds to their growth as they learn to address challenges and lead in an effective and constructive manner using the leadership skills they gain through their participation in PLC.



The OU Family cares for each other and works to make the campus community home for all members of our university. We count on PLC students to serve as leaders and advocates of promoting awareness and understanding of the importance of diversity and inclusion efforts here at OU. As you read this edition of the *PLC Alumni Newsletter*, I hope that you share in my pride of the remarkable accomplishments of this year's class and our PLC alumni and the contributions they have made to our university, our state and society.

Sincerely,

David L. Boren
President of the University of Oklahoma



President David and First Lady Molly Shi Boren host the 2016-17 President's Leadership Class at Boyd House.

## THE WILLIAM D. ROE SCHOLARSHIPS CARRY ON THE LEGACY OF AN EARLY PLC

The diagnosis was devastating to Bill Roe's family and friends, in particular his younger brother Harvie. Pancreatic cancer was likely to take the life of this remarkable man whom Harvie had idolized and followed from Shawnee to the University of Oklahoma in the late 1960s.

Neither Roe brother had any expectation of attending OU. Making it to college—any college—would fulfill their parents' dream for them, but a lot of outside help would be needed. Bill was set on a basketball scholarship to Northeastern A&M Junior College when an offer to join a new program at OU—the President's Leadership Class—changed both brothers' lives.

Bill was a member of the second PLC in 1962, married his OU sweetheart, Peggy, at Wesley Foundation on the campus, went on to graduate school at the University of Texas, and joined a major accounting firm in Houston, where the Roes raised their three children, Price, Haise, and Taylor. Harvie, now president of a trust company in Tulsa, came to OU five years later, and although not in PLC, his student job with OU administrator Paul Massad was to coordinate the PLC activities. He and his OU graduate wife, Jane Anne, sent their three daughters to OU, two as PLC members.

Harvie knew what OU and PLC meant to Bill, and he started almost immediately to make sure that a lasting memorial to his brother would honor both. "I wanted him to know that there would be a legacy long after he was gone," Harvie says. Bill's involvement with the OU Alumni Club of Houston was deep—president in 1997 and for at least 15 years chairman of its successful scholarship and student recruitment program. He and Peggy were also active in a host of other Houston organizations.

When alumni and friends learned of Bill's illness and Harvie's effort to build a $100,000 scholarship fund, they jumped in to join the Roe family and within weeks exceeded the original goal. After Bill's death on July 2, 2012, memorial gifts sent the fund over $200,000. Bill was able to attend the first annual OU Club of Houston luncheon honoring the inaugural recipients and their families.



The late Bill Roe, a member of the second PLC Class in 1962, is remembered by family and friends with endowed scholarships for Houston area members of the President's Leadership Class coming to OU.

The income from the William D. Roe PLC Scholarship Endowment in the OU Foundation, where Harvie is now a trustee, is divided among the outstanding Houston area high school graduates headed to OU and selected for the President's Leadership Class. Each scholarship is matched by fee waivers up to $2,500 from the OU Alumni Association.

A total of 18 Bill Roe scholarship recipients have followed in his footsteps to OU with a little help from his friends. The four new members of the 2016 PLC are Hannah Pike, Evangeline Carson, Jonathan Simmons and Meredith Prado.

## ADAIR AWARD RECIPIENT CHOSEN BY PLC CLASS VOTE

The passing of long-time PLC adviser and OU Vice President for Student Affairs Anona Adair in September 2015 was a time of reflection for decades of President Leadership Class alumni and the wider University community who had known and worked with her. For her former colleague and friend, Sandy Kinney, it was more than that. Kinney wanted to bring home to the 2015-16 PLC Class, who never knew Adair, what a unique person her mentor was. She wanted to go a step beyond the scholarship endowment PLC alumni had established at the 50th Anniversary Reunion, which is producing $7,500 in PLC support each year.

Most recognitions at OU are made by committee through an application process. Kinney wanted the one-time $1,500 Anona Adair Scholarship she was creating also to be unique. The PLCers were asked to nominate the member of the Class who they felt had made a lasting impact on them as individuals and on the Class as a whole. At the annual year-end picnic in David A. Burr Park in April 2016, Kinney was on hand with Adair's family for the presentation to McKenzi Ormsbee, a biochemistry/pre-med major from Stillwater.



Anona Adair Scholarship recipient McKenzi Ormsbee, PLC '15, third from right, meets with donor Sandy Kinney, left, and Adair's family—Caryn Hickman Short, PLC '87, Addison Short, Bill Short, and Cretha and Roy Hickman. Not pictured is Colin Short, PLC '15.

Kinney, who earned two degrees from OU, worked for Adair in the Office of Student Affairs before joining Southwestern Bell Telephone. She retired as President-Industry Markets for SBC. She lives in Norman and has played major roles with OU support groups and as a donor, with husband Mike Sugg, to numerous OU projects. She now serves on the OU Foundation Board of Trustees.

# JAKE BASDEN PROMOTING CAREERS OF MANY OF MUSIC'S BIGGEST STARS

When eagerly awaited new albums are released, newcomers are being propelled into the public eye, or hot acts are shooting for superstar status, success can depend on the promotional campaigns spearheaded by a rising star in the public relations industry, OU Alumnus Jake Basden. The Vice President of Publicity and Corporate Communications at Big Machine Label Group, the Nashville-based Basden joined Big Machine in 2011 and has helped raise its profile from a leading independent music start-up to the #1 independent record label in the world and a leader in entertainment media and content.



Jake Basden, PLC '02, left, waits backstage at the 2015 Academy Awards with Tim McGraw, one of the biggest stars represented by his company, Big Machine Label Group.




OU Alumnus Jake Basden, at the 2016 Academy of Country Music Awards, left, helped launch the career of hot newcomer, Thomas Rhett.

At the label that is home to stars such as Taylor Swift, Tim McGraw, Reba McEntire, Steven Tyler, Martina McBride, and Rascal Flats, Basden has boosted the careers of Florida Georgia Line and Brantley Gilbert and helped launch newcomers like Thomas Rhett and Maddie & Tae. Most recently he led the media relations campaign for the critically acclaimed documentary "Glen Campbell . . . I'll Be Me," which won four Grammy Awards and an Academy Award nomination. He oversees all publicity for the group's five music labels, including Big Machine Records, The Valory Music Co., BMLG Records, Dot Records and NASH Icon.

Basden came to OU in 2002 as a member of the President's Leadership Class. While earning his 2006 BA in journalism (public relations), he participated in Crimson Club, Pi Kappa Phi Fraternity, and Public Relations Student Society of America and was named Big Man on Campus. As a senior, he developed a campaign for Royal Caribbean Cruise Line that earned him *PR Week's* designation as "Top 5" public relations student. In 2008 the same publication named him "Young PR Professional of the Year."

Before joining Big Machine, Basden was an assistant account executive with Oglivy Public Relations Worldwide, then a director in the sports and entertainment practice of Edelman, the world's largest public relations firm in New York City. Basden's four-person team at Big Machine has twice been a finalist for *PR Week's* "In House PR Team of the Year."

Basden remains heavily involved with his alma mater, mentoring OU public relations students and recruiting them for internships at Big Machine. To those graduates interested in relocating to Nashville, Basden is their "OU connection." In 2011 he was presented the JayMac Distinguished Alumni Award by the Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication and in 2016 received the University of Oklahoma Regents' Alumni Award. He serves on the Gaylord College Board of Visitors.

# PLC HOMECOMING ROYALTY

Homecoming was a clean sweep for PLC on-campus alumni with the queen's crown going to Sarah Stagg, a communications major from Tulsa, while David Doshier, an industrial and systems engineering major from Verdigris, was named Homecoming king. Both are seniors, members of the PLC Class of 2013, and David A. Burr Scholars.



# BECOME A PART OF PLC AND SEE THE WORLD



A side trip to Rome gave the touring PLCers the opportunity to see the Colosseum. From left are Storme Jones, Hayden Hanoch, Student Adviser Michael Fedell, Clay Bradshaw and Chase Bryer.

Since 2010-11, members of the President's Leadership Class have had the opportunity to end their freshman year with a 17-day trip to the OU study abroad center in Arezzo, Italy, with side trips to other sites throughout in that country. Upperclass PLCers have taken similar trips abroad to countries of their own choosing—central Europe, Rio de Janeiro, Ireland—and next spring to Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The groups are accompanied by OU staff and faculty who are experts on the areas visited. Last May 75 freshmen went to Arrezo and 19 upperclassmen to Ireland.



Nothing says Italian like pasta, especially if you have made it yourself, as fledgling chefs Christine Murrain, left, and Maddie Roper did on one memorable day.



Home base for the freshmen PLCers in Italy is the newly restored monastery in Arezzo, where the group gathered in the courtyard for their official picture.



During the Great Famine of 1845 in Ireland, the only group of people in the world who helped County Cork was the Choctaw Nation, who knew what it was like to be hungry, and sent $170. The PLC upperclassmen visited this new monument, composed of feathers in the shape of an empty bowl, that recognizes the Choctaw gift.




The smooth sand of this Irish beach was too tempting for the PLC on-campus alumni to resist leaving their mark—at least until the tide comes in. From left are: Cameron Robison, Sehrish Shahabuddin, Alexandria Williams, Brooke Havig and Kendall Hughes.

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This publication, printed by the University-Printing Services, is issued by the University of Oklahoma. 3,823 copies have been prepared and distributed at a cost of $1,660.00 to the taxpayers of the State of Oklahoma, 12/16.

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# PERSEVERANCE PAYS OFF FOR PLC ALUM SARAH KLEIN, MISS OKLAHOMA 2016

As a freshman member of PLC at the University of Oklahoma in 2010, Sarah Klein recorded her favorite quote—"Only a life lived for others is a life worth living"—and her wish for the future—"At any time, I could ask for a piano to be in a certain room, and it would be there." She faithfully followed these signposts, and six years later they guided her to the Miss Tulsa and Miss Oklahoma titles and a semifinalist finish in the Miss America contest.

When she received her Miss Oklahoma 2016 crown, it marked her sixth try and the last of her eligibility. A 2014 elementary education graduate, Klein substitute taught in Jenks schools before seeking a cosmetology license in Los Angeles where she became active with Makeovers that Matter Organization that benefits female veterans, the culmination of 11 years supporting U.S. Troops through various groups, the cause she adopted as her competitions' platform. She also has participated in mission trips to six different countries.

She didn't have to look far for a vehicle to exhibit her talent in the competitions. Classical piano has been her passion from the age of 4, successfully competing from the age of 8, and originally entering OU on a piano performance scholarship. The list of all her scholarships, community service activities and awards is a long one, as is her participation record at OU and recognition for academic achievement.

The Tulsa native intends to continue her world service travels after her reign as Miss Oklahoma ends, but until then she will go throughout the state promoting care for military men and women from deployment to employment and empowering students in Oklahoma schools.



*Jessie Wardarski/Tulsa World*

Sarah Klein, PLC '10, who competed as Miss Tulsa, screams as she is crowned the 2016 Miss Oklahoma. She went on to represent Oklahoma in the Miss America Pageant, where she made the semifinal round.

*PLC Alumni Newsletter* is published twice a year for former members of the President's Leadership Class by the University of Oklahoma Alumni Association, 900 Asp Avenue, Suite 428, Norman OK 73019.
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