HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PAST YEAR - 2006

Kenneth McKinley, President

2006 marked the first full year that the OSU Emeriti Association functioned on a twelve-month, calendar year basis. This new format, with its accompanying governance structure, fulfilled a change in the Association’s by-laws, enacted during the 2004-05 membership year. The Association is governed by a 15-member executive council, which meets monthly to consider issues, policies and procedures regarding the welfare and education of the membership. The executive council consists of a president, past president, president-elect, vice-president for activities, secretary, and treasurer who serve annual terms and nine members-at-large who serve rotating three-year terms. This President is deeply grateful to all those who served on the Association council this past year and ably represented the membership and to all those who served on committees or gave of their time and talents in other ways. Without these contributions, your Association could not function.

The OSU Emeriti Association experienced a very successful program year in 2006. The Association membership totaled 560 at the end of 2006, with approximately 70% being Life members. The following describes some of the major activities enjoyed by the membership:

First Friday Dinners: Nine dinner programs were held at the Kerr-Drummond cafeteria throughout the year on the first Friday of each month. Two were held at other locations on or near campus. These programs were arranged by Sharon Brown, Vice-President for Activities and her committee. Attendance ranged from 65 to 115. A variety of interesting topics and programs were presented, including bluegrass music, travels to Germany and the Far East by current and future members, a children’s museum planned for Stillwater, state legislated retirement benefits, fraudulent practices relative to senior citizens, etc. were presented. The January meeting was held in the new ConocoPhillips Alumni Center and featured pizza, ice cream and a program on kite making and flying by Richard Dermer. A near “sell-out” crowd of nearly 150 attended. The June meeting was held at the OSU Botanical Gardens. After a potluck supper, tours of the Gardens were led by OSU Master Gardener volunteers. The December meeting, which was to have been a Christmas music program led by Marilyn King was cancelled because of inclement weather. We hope Marilyn will return in December 2007.

SALL/OLLI: The Stillwater Academy for Life Long Learning (SALL) commenced in the fall of 2005 led by a board of Emeriti members including Ed Arquitt, Cara Beer, Sydney Reding, Lynn Sisler, and Esther Winterfeldt. This SALL board collaborated with the OSU College of Education Office of Education Outreach to plan, develop and launch the first semester of educational offerings. Short-duration (six-week), high-intensity courses on a variety of topics were presented at the Stillwater Public Library during the fall and spring of 2005-06. During the spring 2006, the SALL board and the College of Education submitted a joint proposal to the Osher Foundation of Los Angeles, CA to support and sustain a more in-depth lifelong learning program in the Stillwater, Tulsa,
and Oklahoma City (OKC) communities. Announcement of funding was received in early June and planning began immediately to: 1) develop a comprehensive program of informal, but high interest educational courses in Stillwater; 2) develop contacts in and begin planning for similar programming in Tulsa and OKC; 3) hire a director and site coordinators; and, 4) locate and establish office space on the OSU campus for the administration of the program. Now known as OLLI at OSU (the Osher Life Long Learning program at Oklahoma State University), the grant project provides $100,000 per year for three years to support program development and administration in the three (aforementioned) Oklahoma locations, and, assuming the program goals and milestones are met at the end of three years (2009), a $1 M endowment to sustain the program, with other planned revenues, for many generations to come. The OLLI-sponsored fall 2006 program in Stillwater was deemed to be a huge success. Programs in Old Testament history, genealogy, geology, archeology, Japanese art and architecture, one-hour lecture/presentations on current events in a “town-hall” format, and out-of-state study tours were planned for the spring 2007 program slate in Stillwater. Several planning meetings with OSU-OKC and OSU-Tulsa officials were ongoing as of this writing to initiate programs in those communities.

White Woods Retirement Campus: Planning for the development of an upscale, quality retirement living facility in the Stillwater community continued in 2006, led by several OSU Emeriti Association members: Ron Beer, Bill Brown, Mary Frye, Bob Henrickson, Milt Morris, Larry Perkins, and Esther Winterfeld; and, representatives of banking, real estate, and construction interests in Stillwater. The WWRC board met with selected companies from Texas to hear and review proposals for the development, construction and occupancy of a comprehensive, five-tier (independent cottages, independent apartments, assisted-living apartments, memory-support units, and full-care nursing) retirement center at 19th and Range Road in southwest Stillwater on land graciously donated by the White/Morris family. As of this writing, the WWRC board has entered into serious deliberations with the WindRiver Corporation of Duncanville, TX, a family-owned company with extensive experience in this field to assist with equity financing, design, construction and management the envisioned facility. The timeline for build-out and occupancy are uncertain as of this date.

International Relations Committee (IRC): The OSU Emeriti Association IRC continued its work in 2006. The purpose of this group is to promote and support the continuous flow and interchange of international students to the OSU campus and faculty exchanges to/with the many countries represented by international students enrolled at OSU. One primary activity of the Committee has been to pursue and garner financial support for academic scholarships for undergraduate students from foreign countries. Partial academic scholarships for individual students from Thailand and Ethiopia have been funded. Brochures and promotional material to continue this fund-raising effort for students from Japan, Jordan, Malaysia, South Korea and the United Arab Emirates have been developed and distributed. The Emeriti members on this Committee include Ron Beer, Cecil Dugger, Conrad Evans, Jim Halligan, Larry Jones, Ken McKinley, Ron Noyes, and Glade Presnal. Able assistance to this committee is rendered by Tim Huff and David Foster of the OSU Office of International Students and Scholars.
Bridge Club: Two separate Emeriti member groups play monthly at the Emeriti Suite in the ConocoPhillips Alumni Center. Hilda Waller is the coordinator and contact person for this activity. 372-7226.

Investment Club: Interested Emeriti members meet monthly on the third Monday to pool their money, investment savvy, experience, and knowledge. A. B. Harrison is the contact person for this group. 372-8554.

Technology Interest Group: This ad hoc group was formed in spring 2006 under the leadership of Glade Presnal. Emeriti members with questions and issues regarding the use of technology (e.g., personal computers, peripherals, digital photography, the Internet, wireless communications, etc.) meet at the OSU Institute for Teaching and Learning Excellence (formerly Educational Television Services) once a month. A staff member of the Institute leads the discussion and helps the group solve practical problems regarding the use of their personal communication devices. 377-6388.

Travel Club: Travel to “behind-the-scenes” tours of Stillwater and Oklahoma landmarks, both old and new, continued in 2006. Visits to the new Oklahoma Historical Museum, the Oklahoma City Art Museum, the Langston Fish and Goat Research Institute (plus shopping in Guthrie) were examples of outings enjoyed by members this past year. In November, a large contingent traveled to Branson, MO for an enjoyable pre-Christmas outing of shows, shopping and dining. Jack and Jodelle Stout are the long-time and excellent coordinators of this always-popular Emeriti activity. 372-6966.

Other developments/activities during 2006:

1. Under the leadership of President-elect, Robert Swaim, the OSU Emeriti Association gained 501(c)3 status from the Internal Revenue Service during 2006. This allows the Association to receive and use gifts, donations and bequests for the good of the mission of the Association from private donors, foundations and other groups who wish to have their contribution treated as a tax-free event. Also, the Association, with this new financial structure is gradually moving its financial assets from the OSU Foundation to the University and Community Federal Credit Union.

2. The President attended the triennial conference of the Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education (AROHE) in Tempe, AZ in October 2006. Retirement organizations from approximately 100 colleges and universities in the United States were represented at the conference. Several interesting and informative workshops and keynote speakers were presented. From the observations of your President (this writer) at the 2006 AROHE conference, the OSU Emeriti Association is a vibrant, comprehensive and growing organization serving the needs of its membership in keeping with the guidelines and recommendations of AROHE.
3. The Emeriti Association Executive Council made a request to the OSU administration to lower the number of years of consecutive service (20) for a retired employee campus parking pass to five. Although we were not successful in that initiative, members of the Council who do not qualify under those regulations may receive an annual pass while serving in office.

4. Under the leadership of Natalea Watkins, the Emeriti Association has produced two newsletters in 2006 to inform the membership, near and far, of the activities of our organizations, past, present, and future. Also, Natalea has done an excellent job of streamlining and updating our Emeriti website. It may be found at: http://www.okstate.edu/emeri/

5. An updated membership directory was produced, published and distributed to the Emeriti membership and University administration in spring 2006. Many thanks are extended to Max Craighead, Zona Noyes, and Jim Stritzke for coordinating this effort.

This ends the report of the major activities of the OSU Emeriti Association in 2006. We are a vibrant, growing and comprehensive organization which provides exciting activities and opportunities for its members. We look forward to another productive year in 2007.