



May Graduation

Proud friends and family applauded as 170 students walked across the OWU platform as graduates on May 6, 2006. There were 57 traditional students and 113 Adult & Graduate Studies (AGS) students who finished with a coveted degree. This was another milestone in the graduating seniors' lives, and one of which the University is proud to be a part.

On Friday, May 5, OWU incorporated the traditional senior communion service into the evening Baccalaureate celebration. This was an opportunity for the seniors to look back and acknowledge where Christ led them on their academic and spiritual journeys. Dr. Mark Weeter and the Religion division majors led the service.

Also on Friday, AGS held a special Alpha Sigma Lambda Honor Society induction. Alpha Sigma Lambda is an honor society that partners with colleges and universities to celebrate the scholarship and leadership of adult students in higher education. OWU's Pi Alpha Chapter consists of more than 62 members inducted since May 2005. Graduates who wore maroon and gold cords were May 2006 inductees into the honor society.

On Saturday, May 6, the university held two commencement services. Honorary degrees were awarded to Sara Ehlers and Andy Booth, two students who were tragically killed in a car accident on January 7, 2004, as they were returning to OWU

after Christmas break. Sara and Andy made an impact on OWU, especially on the Class of 2006. The honorary degrees celebrated their lives and honored their contributions to the University. Seats of honor in the Chapel auditorium were established in their memory as well.

President Everett Piper spoke at both commencement ceremonies. The Class of 2006 was the first to start and graduate under his presidency. This was the first class to be "brought up" under the revitalized Mission and Cornerstones of the University.

For his commencement message, Piper focused on "the fact that the most important thing they [the graduates] have learned over the past four years is to pursue Truth with confidence. A healthy mind is one that is grounded in orthodoxy, i.e. right ideas."

It is under this premise that OWU formed the following mission statement, "As an evangelical Christian university of The Wesleyan Church, Oklahoma Wesleyan University models a way of thought, a way of life and a way of faith. It is a place of serious study, honest questions, and critical engagement, all in the context of a liberal arts community that honors the primacy of Jesus Christ, the priority of Scripture, the pursuit of Truth, and the practice of Wisdom."

Action comes along with the ideals of the mission statement. "A healthy body is one that embraces orthopraxy, i.e. right behavior. A liberal arts education is one that liberates the learner from the consequences of bad ideas. It frees us to live in the context of something so much bigger and better than personal opinions and political fads," Piper asserted. "When we pursue Truth as an objective reality, we have the wonderful freedom to consider any idea and all ideas. For in the end," he said, "Truth gives us the confidence to keep the good and discard the bad. The truth will set you free."

Many completed their undergraduate careers with outstanding overall GPAs. Those graduates who received a 3.90 or higher were honored with summa cum laude. They were Jill Boyle, Beth Cheney, Larissa Christman, Kendra Dwight, William Kallhoff, Rachel Peterson, Gretchen Powers, Julie Shively, Bill Bradley, Corinne Franks, Debbie Galbraith, Teresa Gambill, Melissa Hammer, Theresa McCord, Jonathan Minami, Catherine Smith and Diane Vancil.

