



COMMENCEMENT 2023



It's that time of year again—time to honor and celebrate another ORU graduating class! The May 6 ceremony will begin at 1:00 p.m. (CT) in Mabee Center. This will be ORU's 56th Commencement. Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt will be the keynote speaker. You are invited to join us. You can also watch the ceremony on ORU's TV network, GEB, including DIRECTV (channel 363), KGEB-TV53/Cox HD (in Tulsa), and all affiliates. You can view GEB on Amazon Fire, ROKU, Apple TV, GEB.TV, or the GEB app as well. And, the event will be livestreamed on ORU's [website](#), [Facebook page](#), and [YouTube channel](#).

COMMENCEMENT

NEWS

NEW RESEARCH CENTER

Dr. Wonsuk Ma, Dean of the College of Theology and Ministry, has been named Executive Director of the new ORU Center for Spirit-empowered Research. He will assume this role on May 1, and ORU will begin the search for a new dean. With additional academic research, publishing, and global networking, the center is tasked with enhancing ORU's global leadership status as a Spirit-empowered university. It will also provide oversight for Theology Ph.D. programs and partner academically with Empowered21. The Holy Spirit Research Center will get a new name as well—Holy Spirit Resource Center—and will focus on archives and publications.



Dr. Wonsuk Ma



FIRST MILE 5K RUN

They came... they ran... they finished the course! Congratulations to all of the First Mile 5K Run participants. The Alumni Association also wants to thank everyone who sponsored the April 1 race itself, sponsored a runner, or made a contribution. Funds raised are going to bless students who receive the Quest First scholarship, and will also go toward

Whole Leaders for the Whole World campaign projects.

ORU GIVING DAY

We want to thank everyone who participated in ORU's Giving Day by making a gift to support favorite colleges and programs. Because of your generosity, **we met AND EXCEEDED our goal!**

Together, we raised **\$204,425** from a total of **692** individual gifts!



CHECK OUT THE RESULTS



ALUMNI



Dr. C. Denise Okafor '07 is one of four chemists who received the 2023 Marion Milligan Mason Award. This award provides a \$55,000 grant that will support her research, impact her in the area of leadership development, and offer mentoring opportunities. The award was created “to advance women in the chemical sciences.”

DENISE

Rod Penner '86, a Texas-based, photorealist artist known for painting landscapes of small Texas towns, is currently the featured artist at the Louis K. Meisel Gallery in New York. His paintings are on display in the gallery's first solo exhibit of his work, called “Small Town Meditations,” through April 29. His work has also been collected in a book, “Rod Penner: Paintings, 1987-2022.”

ROD



Wendy (Beltzner '88) Pitts has been named Director of Leadership Development and Training Strategy by the Manufacturers Resource Center, a nonprofit serving counties in eastern Pennsylvania. She is leading the center's training and education services in leadership development and customized training strategies.

WENDY

Mark Tennant '84 has been inducted into the Bedford (PA) Area School District's “Hall of Excellence” for his positive impact on, and contributions to, the community. Mark founded Arrow Child & Family Ministries in 1992, a Christian-based foster care and adoption

organization. He received ORU's 2014 Alumni Award for Distinguished Service to the Community.

MARK



Rachel Wegner '06 has served as a breaking news reporter at The Tennessean in Nashville since 2020. She has now been appointed to the post of children's reporter and is covering education, health, and welfare, along with other topics.

RACHEL

Dean Wooten '85 is now the Chief Financial Officer for The Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore. Previously, he served as the Foodbank's Director of Finance.

DEAN



EVENTS



MIKE CARTER ATHLETIC CENTER

We will celebrate the ribbon-cutting and dedication of the Mike Carter Athletic Center on April 19. We hope you can join us. This is the building that became possible when a generous donor was inspired by the men's basketball team and their success in the 2021 NCAA Tournament. Now, it will be serving all of ORU's student-athletes. If you are not in town, you can watch the livestream on ORU's [website](#), [Facebook page](#), or [YouTube channel](#).

LEGACY BREAKFAST

ORU Legacy families are invited to attend the complimentary Alumni Parent & Legacy Student Breakfast on Commencement Day--May 6, from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. It will take place on Skyline 60 at CityPlex Towers. What's a Legacy family? It's where the parents are ORU alumni whose children are ORU students. This breakfast is for Legacy parents and their Class of 2023 graduates. RSVP deadline is April 27.



BREAKFAST RSVP

ATHLETICS



NEW MEN'S BASKETBALL COACH

On March 24, ORU Athletics held a press conference to formally introduce the new head coach for men's basketball, [Russell Springmann](#). He has been serving as the program's assistant coach since 2018. His resume includes 14 years as an assistant at Texas (13 NCAA Tournament appearances, five Sweet 16 showings), where he was key in helping to recruit two future National Players of the Year—one of whom was Kevin Durant. For ORU, he saw future greatness in a player named Max Abmas and helped make him a Golden Eagle.

COACH SPRINGMANN

GOLF TEAM TAKES FIRST—TWICE

The men's golf team was two-for-two in recent weeks. They finished first at the March 13-14 Bash at the Beach (North Myrtle Beach, SC), beating runner-up UConn by six strokes. At the Missouri State Intercollegiate (March 20-21), Brandon Hoff was the individual champion. The team topped second-place finisher Wichita State by two strokes. The latter victory marked ORU's fourth top-five finish of the spring season.



GOLF WINS



HOGAN SCORES AWARDS

ORU Baseball outfielder [Matt Hogan](#) has been excelling on the diamond lately, racking up three honors in March. He was named a Collegiate Baseball National Player of the Week and the TicketSmarter Summit League Baseball Peak Performer of the Week. In five games, he had three home runs, a double, a triple, and 18 runs batted in. He was also named the Dick Howser Trophy National Co-Hitter of the Week, presented by The Game Headwear. This was a National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association honor.

MATT

ETC.

ORU's Development and Alumni Relations office has gone paperless. That means when you make a gift to ORU, your receipt will come via e-mail. You can still choose a paper receipt, though, by filling out [this form](#).

DID YOU KNOW?



The Development and Alumni Relations team gathers every Monday morning to pray for those who have shared their prayer requests with us. If you would like us to pray for you or for someone else that God has placed upon your heart, just fill out [this form](#) and tell us your concerns. Feel free to say, "Just pray for me!" if you'd rather not include a specific need.

We also celebrate answered prayers, so be sure to tell us what God has done for you!



ORU

DEVELOPMENT & ALUMNI RELATIONS

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