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COLLEGIAN

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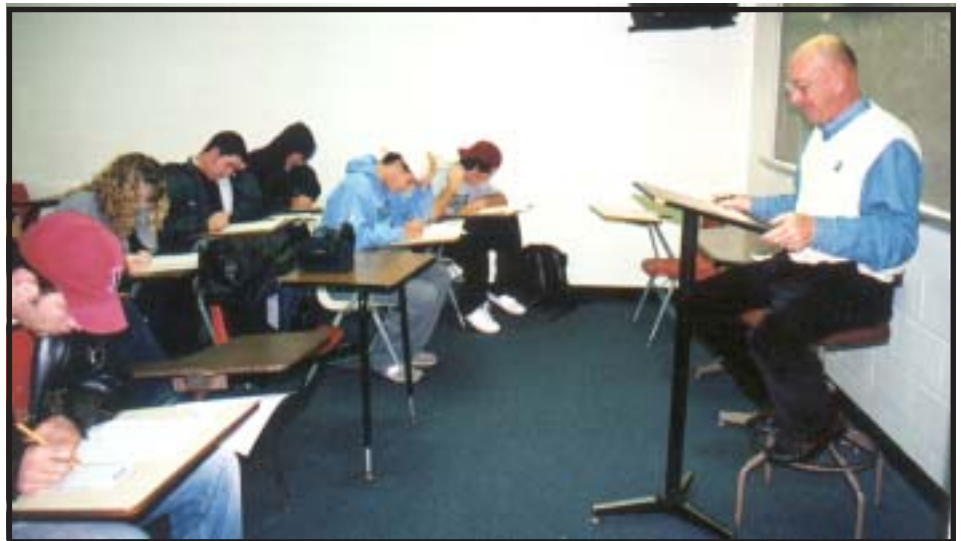
Long-Time SSC Instructor Retires

He was captain of the Seminole High School football team – in fact he was the “Oklahoma Lineman of the Year,” an “All-American” and was recognized by the Jim Thorpe Award Committee as one of the “All-Time Greats of Oklahoma.” Some folks say he was the most decorated football player Seminole High School ever produced. He went away to college, married his high school sweetheart and came home to Seminole to begin a career in collegiate athletics that has spanned nearly three decades.

As the end of the fall term, Dr. Thurman Edwards concluded his tenure as a full-time member of the Health, Physical Education and Recreation Division.

Edwards came to Seminole “Junior” College in 1975 to serve as the young college’s first athletic director. Although established in 1931, the College had only been separated from the local high school since 1969. Edwards spent his first 19 years at SSC as athletic director, coordinating various sports programs and supervising the coaching staff.

See Edwards, Page 3



Dr. Thurman Edwards gives his last final as an instructor for Seminole State College. Edward’s will retire at the end of the fall semester with a collegiate athletic career that has spanned nearly three decades. Over the years, Edwards has served the College as athletic director, division chair, golf coach and instructor.

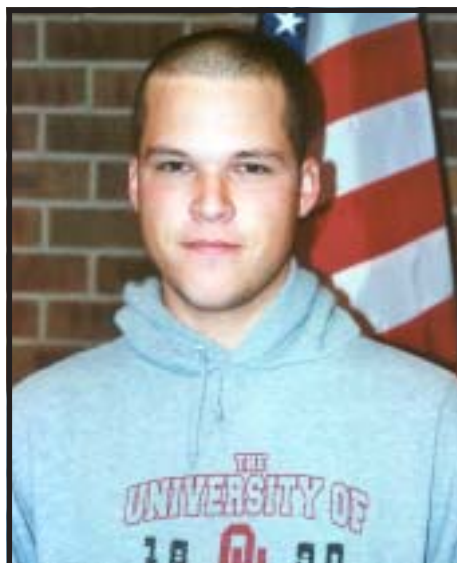
Two SSC Students Report for Active Duty

At the end of the fall semester, many students looked forward to finishing their tests and going home for the holidays, but for two Seminole State College students, the biggest test of their lives was just beginning.

Instead of going home and unwrapping presents for the holidays, Jarrod Johnston, 19, of Okemah and Brian Rivers, 20, of Stuart, Okla., packed their bags and prepare to go to Ft. Sill before departing to Iraq as members of the Army National Guard. Both serve as E4 Specialists for the Guard and the trip to Iraq will be the first time both have ever been out of the country.

“I’m not sure exactly what to expect,” said Johnston. “I’m both nervous and excited at the same time. I know that this will be a life-changing experience for me.”

Rivers comments echoed those of Johnston’s, “This is going to be a good experience for me,” he said. “I’m going to have the opportunity to truly



Jarrod Johnston



Brian Rivers

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Regents Convene for December Meeting

The Seminole State College Board of Regents convened Dec. 11, for the last time in 2003. As part of their agenda, the Regents accepted an audit closure report, approved the purchase of equipment and heard reports on various campus activities.

During his report to the Regents, SSC President Dr. James Utterback informed the Board of their 2004 meeting dates, the site visit of the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges, campus activities, personnel, economic development specialized training, a special allocation for the Enoch Kelly Haney Center operations and federal funding.

Utterback told the Regents that the Higher Learning Commission gave the College a "thumb's up" in its assessment progress. The committee was on the SSC campus Nov. 17-18. The team evaluated the progress SSC has made on its program of assessment of student learning since the college was awarded the maximum 10-years of continuing accreditation in 2000.

"I am very pleased with our progress regarding student assessment," noted Utterback. "The North Central team's visit reaffirmed the outstanding job our faculty and staff are doing on assessing course outcomes to ensure educational excellence for our students," he said.

Next Utterback updated the Regents on the College's personnel and campus activities.

Utterback reported to the Regents that according to a recent salary study by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, the SSC faculty ranks as the highest paid compared to the College's sister rural institutions across the state.

"This is a dramatic improvement," Utterback said, "In 1997, according to salary data from the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, our faculty members were the lowest paid instructors among all two-year rural colleges in the state.

"In an effort to continue our tradition of academic excellence, we set a goal to make our faculty salaries a funding priority. Despite working on a shoestring budget, in just seven years, we have

reversed the picture. Our average full-time faculty salaries are now the highest among rural two-year community colleges," he said.

Utterback continued, "It is important to the future of Seminole State College to recruit and maintain the best people. As a result, we have some of the top instructors around the state and nation teaching students in Seminole, Oklahoma."

Next Utterback informed the Regents of SSC Admissions Counselor Cynthia Yerby's recent win in the World Armwrestling Competition in Canada. With the win, Yerby garnered her tenth gold medal in the sport. She defended opponents from Russia, Belgium, England, Sweden, Uzbekistan, Canada and Israel.

Utterback commended Yerby for her commitment to the sport and her work as a counselor on the SSC campus.

Utterback then informed the Board about the retirement of long-time SSC Instructor and Women's and Men's Golf Coach Dr. Thurman Edwards.

Edwards came to Seminole "Junior" College in 1975 to serve as the young college's first athletic director. He spent his first 19 years at the College as athletic director, coordinating various sports programs and supervising the coaching staff, as well as served 23 years as a Division Chair. Edwards will continue on a part-time basis at the College coaching golf. *(See story on Page 1)*

Next, Utterback reported to the Regents some of the College's activities, including the recent campus visit of Democratic Presidential Candidate John Edwards, the annual high school counselor and administrator workshop and the Open Meetings and Open Records Seminar conducted by Attorney General Drew Edmondson.

Utterback also informed the Regents of the College's efforts to help recruit an inbound/outbound call center to Seminole.

Utterback told the Regents that the College had been working with the Seminole Economic Development Council to recruit the Kiamichi Development Company as a prospective employer to Semi-

nole. As an effort to promote local economic development, the College offered to provide specialized training for the company as well as a temporary incubator site for the startup of the business while employees are receiving training.

"The College has been a key player in this recruitment effort," Utterback said. "As part of our mission as a community college, we are constantly looking for ways to help improve the economic climate of our service area. This opportunity to help the community and many of the recently dislocated Wrangler workers is a good example of what can be done when community leaders, elected officials and our great staff work together."

Next, Utterback told the Board of that the College received recent notification that the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education approved a one-time \$50,000 supplemental appropriation to assist with the College's new Haney Center.

"In the past, the State Regents have made a practice of allocating portions of state appropriations to institutions based on the need for operating funds for new, major educational and general facilities. However, since the statewide budget cuts in education, the Regents have made no allocations to support increased operating costs. The \$50,000 supplemental funding is one-fourth of the amount initially planned to be given to the College for the new facility," Utterback said.

The College president also told the Regents about recent funding for the "Peek Into Engineering" Grant for \$22,050 and a partnership in the East Central University Title III grant program for \$206,969 to assist with student transferability.

"I received noticed from the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education that our 'Peek Into Engineering' program has been approved for funding in 2004," Utterback said.

The summer residential program, designed to stimulate interest in engineering among students in grades 8 to 10, was first funded in 2003.

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Seminole State College COLLEGIAN

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Edwards, from Page 1

Edwards attended Kansas University in Lawrence, where he lettered in football. He graduated from KU in 1967. He received a master's degree from Northeastern State University in Tahlequah in 1969, and completed his doctorate in education from Oklahoma State University in Stillwater in 1974.

During his 28 years at the College, he has worked for four different Presidents, been involved in the hiring of coaches, and helped Seminole State College develop nationally-recognized sports programs. Edwards' reflections on the years are marked by memories of outstanding athletes, great coaches and championships.

Three men's basketball coaches hired by Edwards moved on to national prominence after successful stints at Seminole. Jim Kerwin, now retired, coached at Western Illinois University. Riley Wallace is at the University of Hawaii and Phil Johnson is now at the San Jose State in California, after serving as an assistant for the Chicago Bulls.

His pride extends to his association with others such as women's basketball coaches Dixie Woodall, who brought home a national championship to Seminole, and Billy Green and Brad Walck, and men's basketball coach Phil Ingersoll.

Edwards also worked alongside legendary SSC baseball Coach Lloyd Simmons, who arrived at the College the same year as he did. During his reign, Simmons garnered more wins than any other collegiate baseball coach in the nation, made 13 appearances in the JUCO College World Series, and was named to the NJCAA Hall of Fame.

"We set the standard for other schools. A lot of them caught up over the years, but our coaches and our teams did some extraordinary things in those early years. It was kind of a paradox that you can become so successful that some people would

like to see you fall.

"We almost got 'too good' and 'too successful,' but, I don't apologize for the success of our programs. We were able to build a reputation that has continued to help us recruit good players and good coaches," Edwards said.

The Seminole State College sports programs were successful largely due to tremendous support from the community, according to Edwards.

"We have been blessed with great community support from the town and from the high school, as well as parents and fans. We were able to raise money and support from businesses and individuals that wanted to see our programs be successful. People helped with every aspect of supporting our athletes and our programs," Edwards said.

Current SSC Athletic Director Rusty Beene said Edwards played an integral part in the development of the College's sports programs.

"Dr. Edwards served as the College's AD while our programs built the tradition we are so proud of today. Although he would credit much of our success to others, those of us on the inside know that his leadership was the driving force that put Seminole State's programs on the map.

"His counsel and advice over the years has been invaluable to all of us. He has been an outstanding mentor for me and all of the coaches that have been a part of Seminole State Athletics," Beene said.

Over the years, Edwards has also given a lot of his time and effort back to the community. He is a former member of the Seminole Park Board and served on the Seminole Golf Course Foundation during the public course's expansion to 18 holes. He is an active member of the Seminole Church of Christ and the Seminole Chamber of Commerce.

For the past 26 years, he has kept the official time clock at Seminole High School home football games.

In addition to his duties as an athletic director and instructor, Edwards served 23 years as a Division Chair, helping shape the academic policies and procedures for the College. He helped plan an

addition to the gymnasium in 1982 which included a natatorium with an olympic-size indoor swimming pool, a racquetball court, steam room and weight room.

Edwards was also instrumental in developing the curriculum to establish senior citizen exercise and aquatics classes at the College.

Edwards said the growth and development of the College he has observed during the past three decades has been phenomenal. He is particularly proud of the new residential learning center, which opened for student housing in 2001. (He remembers the times when student athletes were housed in trailers across the highway east of the main campus.)

He and his wife of 41 years, Beverly, plan to spend more time with their daughters Kim Pope of Houston and Suzanne Young of McAlester and their families – which include six grandchildren.

"This school and community have been nothing but great to me. That's why the success stories have happened. It's kind of tough to walk away from spending a 35 to 36-year career in education. I always planned to retire while I was in my 50s, and I made it. I have been truly blessed," Edwards said.

Edwards' retirement was recognized this week on campus with the presentation of an engraved clock from the College and a gift from his colleagues in the SSC Faculty Senate.

SSC President Dr. Jim Utterback expressed public appreciation to Edwards for his contributions to the College.

"In his career at Seminole, Dr. Edwards has been a teacher, friend and mentor to scores of students, as well as his colleagues.

"He has been a source of wisdom and a voice for fairness. I know that the campus community joins me in expressing our appreciation to him for his dedication and service to Seminole State College. "We wish him the best for the future," Utterback said.

Active Duty, from Page 1

help people, to help them rebuild their lives, to make a difference."

Both students say they originally joined the National Guard right out of high school in order to help pay for college. Johnston signed on for eight years and Rivers for six.

"I come from a big military family," Rivers said.

"My dad was in the Army, and I have two brothers who serve in the armed forces, one in the Navy and the other in the Air Force.

"I knew it would teach me responsibility and would help pay for my college expenses."

Johnston, a freshman general education major, and Rivers, a sophomore criminal justice major, received special permission to take their final exams early in order to depart for Ft. Sill.

"This has been my first semester of College," Johnston said. "I cannot thank my teachers enough for working with me to help me complete my courses before leaving. It means a lot to not have to take 'incompletes' while being so close to finishing the semester."

Rivers agreed, "The teachers have been extremely understanding and helpful. They have really worked with me through all of this. It has been hard to pack your bags while studying. I appreciate everyone's support."

Both say their families are not looking forward to them leaving, especially during the holidays.

"It is going to be hard to leave during the holidays," Johnston said. "Especially since we don't know exactly how long we will be overseas," he said.

"My mom is really nervous and doesn't want me to go," Rivers said. "My dad hasn't said anything,

so I can tell he is nervous too.

"But my brother just returned from Iraq and has let me know what to expect, so that helps a little," he said.

Johnston will leave behind his parents Jerry Johnston of Okemah and Joni Johnston of Texas and his brother and sister, George Johnston of Okemah and Jacline Johnston of Texas.

Rivers family includes his parents Bill and Wanda Rivers of Stuart and three brothers and one sister, Jeff Rivers of Texas, David Rivers of Kansas, Kim Howell of Muskogee, Okla., and Jerrad Rivers of Florida.

Both students plan on continuing their education once their return from active duty. Until then, Rivers says he will follow some of the best advice he has received "keep your head down, watch your back and come home safely."

Johnston agreed, "I plan on doing just that."

Regents, From Page 2

"The program was a tremendous success – thanks largely to the leadership of Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Rebecca Kennedy and science instructor Richard Walcott, who served as director for the program. The prospect of duplicating the program next summer with this new \$22,000 grant is very exciting," he said.

Utterback also recapped federal funding the College has received through the Suzie Brewster and Associates contract period. Brewster and Associates provide consulting services for the College in Washington D.C.

Utterback told the Board that the company has been successful working on behalf of the College to secure supplemental federal funding totaling over \$1,000,000. Such funding includes the \$200,000 Congressional Award for Technology in 2002, the \$173,862 Congressional Award for Technology in 2003, the \$49,675 Congressional Award for Nursing in 2003, and the \$651,400 Department of Health and Human Services Nursing Grant in 2003.

As the first item of business, the Regents accepted an audit recommendation closure report. The Board's audit committee was composed of Regents Dale Nichols of Wewoka, William Harrison, Jr., of Justice and Roger Nansel of Seminole.

Next the Regents approved the purchase of a forklift from Sooner Lift, Inc., of Oklahoma City at a cost of \$15,872. The forklift will be purchased utilizing Federal technology grant monies and will be used for specialized training through the SSC Business and Industry Training Program.

The Board then approved the purchase of a computer server for instructional support software from Educational Systems Products, Inc., of Tulsa, Okla., at a cost of \$43,293.10. Utterback informed the Regents that this was a planned purchase utilizing federal funds allocated through the SSC Title III program.

The server will be compatible with the College's instructional support software and is provided as a sole source by the College's POISE software company. The POISE computer program is used across the SSC campus in academic, purchasing,

student records and enrollment areas.

Next, the Regents approved the renewal of an annual contract in the amount of \$3,500 per month with Suzie Brewster and Associates for consulting services in Washington D.C. During his report to the Regents, Utterback recapped the \$1,000,000 of federal funding the firm has helped secure for the College.

As their final action, the Board ratified the emergency purchase of training equipment for the Haney Center in the amount of \$84,974.23. The purchase used Federal technology grant monies.

"I authorized an emergency purchase of computers and technical support to establish this training program to meet the company's desire to begin training and operations by Dec. 15.

"We are utilizing funds from our federal technology grant to makes these purchases in order to work with the community to improve the economy in our service area," Utterback said.

Board Chair Dale Nichols commented, "This is just another example of the College working with the community. I think this is great."

Following ratification of the purchase, Regent David Wilson said that it was his understanding that the College's participation was a vital part of the decision of this company to come to Seminole.

"I've been told that this probably would have not been successful had the College not stepped forward. It's a big step for this community. We need these jobs," Wilson said.

Prior to adjournment, Regent Jon Flowers asked the President to comment on some additional matters. He said he had read that a Title IX civil rights violation lawsuit had been filed recently in Seminole. Flowers asked about Seminole State College's Title IX compliance.

Utterback responded that this matter has been an important matter for the College for many years.

He said that SSC Athletic Director Rusty Beene submits annual reports to the U.S. Department of Education in compliance with the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act. Beene also periodically prepares a Title IX analysis report for the administration's review. Utterback said he would forward copies of the report to Board members.

An additional inquiry from Flowers concerned a recent news article about the formation of a chapter of the American Association of University Professors on the SSC campus. Utterback said he had been informed that several individual members of the faculty were joining the national organization. He said the printed materials he had seen regarding AAUP indicated that its primary purpose is to advocate for faculty interests and concerns.

After a question arose regarding whether or not the organization operated as a union and handled collective bargaining on behalf of the faculty. Flowers commented that he had witnessed such activity in other systems with negative results. "Clearly, the faculty members have every right to organize. It just puts the Board in a situation of 'us' and 'them.' I would hope that could be avoided," Flowers said.

Utterback said he would obtain more information about the organization, and SSC faculty members' efforts to establish a chapter, in order to give the Board a better understanding of the AAUP.

Finally, Flowers said he had read about the College possibly being included in a sales tax renewal election. Utterback said it had been publicly stated that the College's future capital projects include the remodeling of the existing Sarkey's dormitory or the construction of a new residence hall and the development of a softball facility.

Utterback reported that he met with Seminole Mayor Billy Choate on Monday and heard of the Mayor's plan to possibly include \$200,000 for the College to build a residence hall in the economic development sales tax package being prepared for voters.

Utterback said he told the Mayor this amount of money would not have a significant impact on the financial structure of what will be a \$4 to \$5 million project. He said he also told the Mayor that he did not want the College to become embroiled in a potentially controversial sales tax election.

Regent Derrill Cody and Regent Flowers stated that they concurred with that decision.

SSC Board of Regents members present for the December meeting were Dale Nichols, Derrill Cody, Jon Flowers, William Harrison, Roger Nansel, Ben Walkingstick, and David Wilson.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 22, 2004.

Check Out These Remaining Home Basketball Games

| <u>Day</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Opponent</u> | <u>Men</u> | <u>Women</u> |
|------------|-------------|----------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Thur. | Jan. 22 | Eastern Oklahoma State | 6:00 | 8:00 |
| Thurs. | Jan. 29 | Northern Oklahoma-Tonkawa | 6:00 | 8:00 |
| Mon. | Feb. 2 | Murray State | 6:00 | 8:00 |
| Fri. | Feb. 13 | Western Oklahoma State | 6:00 | 8:00 |
| Mon. | Feb. 23 | Northern Oklahoma-Enid | 6:00 | 8:00 |
| Wed. | Feb. 25 | Redlands Community College | 6:00 | 8:00 |

Games are held in the Raymond Harber Field House on the SSC Campus. For a complete schedule and game scores, visit the SSC website at www.ssc.cc.ok.us