

SEMINOLE  
STATE COLLEGE

*COLLEGIAN*

VOL. XLX • ISSUE NO. 5

FEBRUARY 2021

DIGITAL EDITION

SEMINOLE, OKLA.



**YEARS OF BELLES BASKETBALL**

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## Submitting to The Collegian

"The Seminole State Collegian" is published during the fall and spring semesters by the Seminole State College Office of Media Relations, under the direction of Josh Hutton. The staff reserves the right to edit submitted material for spelling and style. Consideration is given to all submitted material, but submission does not ensure publication. No anonymous material will be considered. All views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of Seminole State College. "The Collegian" is distributed on the SSC campus and mailed to more than 300 friends of the college.

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## Library Hours Extended at SSC



Seminole State College's Boren Library has extended its hours of operation to serve students in the evening two nights per week. Beginning in January, the Boren Library will be open 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Mon-

days and Thursdays and 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. By extending hours, students have access to computer labs, Wi-Fi and another safe place to study

## Trojans Release Video to Kickoff Season



Seminole State College released a video to launch the 2021 Trojan baseball season on Jan. 29. The video features interviews with returning players and Head Coach Mack Chambers, alongside footage taken at practices and scrimmages. Traditionally, the baseball team holds an

annual banquet before the beginning of a season, inviting alumni, boosters and community supporters. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the banquet was cancelled this year and the video was produced in its stead. The video can be viewed at: [www.sscok](http://www.sscok).



Stay up to date with campus COVID-19 safety precautions at SSC's Coronavirus Response page.

Here you'll find important updates, CARES Act scholarship information, mental health resources and links to Centers for Disease Control data.

Explore the Response Page [here](#).

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# Employees Recognized at Statewide Conference



SSC President Lana Reynolds (center) congratulates SSC's 2020 Outstanding Professional Staff Member of the Year Britney Honsinger (left) and Outstanding Faculty Member of the Year Brad Schatzel (right) as part of the 53rd annual Oklahoma Association of Community Colleges Conference.

Two Seminole State College employees were honored at the 53rd annual Oklahoma Association of Community Colleges Conference, held virtually this year on Jan. 29. During the event, SSC Recruitment Specialist Britney Honsinger was recognized as Professional Staff Member of the Year and Assistant Professor of Business Brad Schatzel was named Faculty Member of the Year for the College.

Honsinger has been employed by SSC for two years. She is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma. Her responsibilities include recruitment, advising and building relationships with high schools in the College's service area. She currently serves as

the 2020-2021 Professional Staff Association Chair on campus. She is currently pursuing an MBA and enjoys painting in her spare time. She and her husband Nat reside in Earlsboro. They have three children and one granddaughter.

Schatzel has worked at SSC for nine years. He received his bachelor's degree in history at the University of Oregon in 2002 and his MBA from the University of Central Oklahoma in 2010. Aside from teaching courses, he is also the founder and faculty sponsor of SSC's Future Business Leaders of America chapter, the Chair of the Global Studies Committee, Faculty Senate President Elect and previously served as

the Chair for the Business and Education department. In his spare time, he enjoys reading and playing the guitar. He and his wife Lauren reside in Seminole with their three children.

The event featured several breakout sessions and a keynote address given by Anne Grady, an author and two-time TEDx speaker. Her presentation was titled "Resilience Reset."

Every year, OACC's 13 member institutions select three employees to honor – a support staff member, a professional staff member and a faculty member. SSC's Support Staff Member of the Year, Susan Shumaker, was recognized at a separate event on Nov. 5.

## College Partners With Health Department for COVID-19 Vaccinations



COVID-19 vaccinations were administered by the Seminole County Health Department on the Seminole State College Campus on Jan. 15. Pictured: registered nurses Melissa Parker Sorrell (left) and Kimberly Ramsey (right) prepared early Friday morning to assist patients.

The vaccines were administered in the Utterback Ballroom located inside the Enoch Kelly Haney Center. SSC will serve as a vaccination site for the next three Fridays for members of the community. The Health Department estimates 600 people will receive the vaccine each Friday at the College. To register for the vaccine, visit [vaccinate.oklahoma.gov](https://vaccinate.oklahoma.gov). If you have any questions, you can reach the Seminole County Health Department at 405-382-4369.

# SSC Belles Basketball Celebrates 50th Season by Jentry Holt

Tradition, loyalty, pride, success and family – these are just a few words surrounding the history of Seminole State College's Belles. In 1971, the Blue Bell sewing plant donated \$10,000 to start a women's basketball program at then Seminole Junior College. This was one year before Title IX was mandated, ensuring young women the right to participate in collegiate athletics. This revolutionary act set in motion a program that would change lives for years to come.

The Belles were the first junior college program in Oklahoma to award basketball scholarships to female athletes. Previously, women attended junior colleges and took part in athletics, but not with scholarship money dedicated to their sport. Women could only participate if they were able to pay or qualified for work scholarships. The Belles provided young women the chance to obtain their education while playing the game. The Blue Bell company colors were Columbia blue and white. As the basketball team selected uniforms, it was only right they kept the mascot and colors of the organization that gave them their start. Wearing a Columbia blue and white uniform was a privilege. It soon became a symbol of honor and opportunity for the athletes who were chosen to wear it.

It did not take long for the program to earn a winning reputation. All-American player and Hall of Fame coach, Dixie Woodall, played a pivotal role in building the Belles' legacy that lives on today. The name Woodall means "Wood Craftsman" and a craftsman she was. When she arrived at Seminole there was no gym, no housing for her players



*Former Belles Coach Dixie Woodall received the Distinguished Service Award from Seminole State College in 2013 at the SSC Educational Foundation's Spring Banquet. Pictured (l-r): SSC President Emeritus Dr. Jim Utterback, former Belles player and manager and current co-owner of TS&H Advertising Specialties Sue Snodgrass, former Belles Coach Dixie Woodall, and current Belles Coach Rita Story-Schell.*

and no way to feed them. Woodall worked diligently to find host families for her team until she was able to raise enough money to provide for them.

Even with limited resources, Woodall amassed a combined record of 390-97 in 14 seasons as the head coach at Seminole Junior College. She also captured a junior college national championship title at Seminole in 1976 with national runner-up finishes in both 1975 and 1977. To date, the Belles are the only team sport at Seminole to have brought home a national championship. Woodall, a true pioneer for women's basketball, paved the way for female players and coaches across the nation.

"We changed it for everybody. It was a man's world, and we broke into it," said Woodall. Not only did Woodall garner remarkable accolades during her career but she also made an impact on women's basketball at a personal, regional, and national level. "The best years of my life were in Seminole," said Woodall. "Any gal with the chance to be a Belle would be lucky."

Countless lives have been touched by the influence of this program. Former player and manager for the Belles, Sue Snodgrass, is one of many with fond memories of the team. Snodgrass played for the Belles during the season of 1970-71 and served as manager the following year. During the early 70s, they

could not find a place that would house the team's Native American, and African American players. Under Coach Woodall's leadership, the team set to work on a rent house where all players could find solace. "Every Belle went to work, and we made them a very nice place to live," said Snodgrass. "From then on we were tied together."

Snodgrass exemplifies the true meaning of being a Belle as she has continued to give back long after her athletic career. Since her playing days, Snodgrass has provided countless resources for the team. As co-owner of TS&H Advertising Specialties, located in Seminole, Snodgrass supplies the team with customized gear and equipment. For this special year, her graphic team designed Columbia blue travel suits to commemorate the Belles' 50th season. She has also contributed to the program by hosting 10 different Belles throughout the years. Snodgrass responded, "This program changed lives. The Belles helped give me my family." She has remained in touch with the young women she hosted and continues to be involved in their lives. Snodgrass said she now has a generation of "Grand-Belles" since her girls have grown up to have families and children of their own.

The Belles' current head coach, Rita Story-Schell, also had special sentiments to share regarding the 50th year celebration. Story-Schell was a Belle herself and played for Woodall from 1982 to 1984. "Being recruited by Dixie was a surreal experience. I was overwhelmed and in awe that someone with her prestige would come to Bethel, Oklahoma, to recruit me," said Story-Schell. She had other offers to play college

## BELLES CONT.

basketball but suffered a knee injury her senior year of high school. Once word got out that Story-Schell had been hurt, many colleges halted their recruiting efforts. Dixie Woodall and the Belles did not. “Dixie has my ultimate respect because she did not stop pursuing me,” noted Story-Schell. This is a testament to the type of character and leadership that has comprised this program.

Story-Schell returned to her alma mater in the fall of 2000 to accept the position of head coach. “It is an honor and a privilege to coach here,” she said. “Like Dixie, I strive to love and care for my players both on and off the court.” For the last 21 years, Coach Story-Schell has done exactly that. She has demonstrated over and over what it means to be a strong female leader. Story-Schell recounted times when male coaches, from opposing teams, would not shake her hand after a Belle victory. She said she has encountered, “multiple forms of disrespect” but has never let that discourage her. Story-Schell has relentlessly pursued the development of her players and program while striving to break stereotypes surrounding female coaches. “It was a game-changer when women could play basketball. It gave us opportunities we would’ve never had,” said Story-Schell. “That’s why people should care about the Belles’ 50th year.”

Woodall, Snodgrass, and Story-Schell all reside in the Seminole State College Hall of Fame. An honor reserved for individuals whose personal and professional accomplishments have brought pride to the institution. These dynamic women embody the significance of being a Belle. There are many other unnamed individuals connected to this program, who have made



tremendous impacts. If you ask any one of them about their experience, you will likely get a similar response. Being a Belle is an opportunity of a lifetime.

Fifty years later, the 2020-21 squad is preparing to celebrate half a century of Belles’ basketball. In honor of the Belles’ original colors, the team will be wearing commemorative Columbia blue jerseys this season. Pandemic restrictions have caused some difficulty this year, but resilient, female athletes have overcome challenges many times before. Every chance the Belles get to take the floor this year, it will be, as Coach Story-Schell said, “An honor and a privilege.”



Players and coaching staff of the 2020-2021 Seminole State College Belles basketball team pose for a photo with former Belles Coach Dixie Woodall.

## Belles Basketball Coaching History

- **Kenneth Hull – 1970-71**
- **Dixie Woodall – 1971-77**
- **Pat Ramsey 1977-81**
- **Dixie Woodall – 1981-86**
- **Mike McGaha – 1986-89**
- **Billy Green – 1989-91**
- **Brad Walck 1991-99**
- **Don Dodd 1999-2000**
- **Rita Story-Schell 2000-Present**

# Traveling With The Belles by Jay McAlvain

Written by the late Jay McAlvain, who was a long-time speech instructor and athletic supporter at Seminole State College. This story originally appeared in *Memories Shared by Seminole Storytellers*, published in 1995.

There are many tales that could be told about the early days of the Seminole Junior College Belles basketball team and their coach Dixie Woodall. Our transportation was not the greatest, and we had many break-downs, but this particular one stands out above the rest.

I drove the bus and taught full-time during the early years of the college. On this trip in 1976 we had been to Arkadelphia, Arkansas, to play Ouachita Baptist University. We got up and headed for home early that morning, but we had not gone but about 15 or 20 miles when one of the girls yelled, "Coach, something on fire back here." I looked in the rear-view mirror and saw that the bus was filling up with smoke. When I looked down, the red light on the dash was flashing "No Air." I said, "Oh Lord, Dixie, our breaks are gone." We were just reaching the summit of a mountain and I sure didn't want to down it without any brakes. Dixie very calmly yelled, "Hang on girls; we're going to hit a tree." Not wanting to hit a tree, I took to the ditch and finally brought the bus to a halt out in the middle of the Ouachita Forest.

Dixie and I walked to several houses before we found anyone who would allow us to use a phone to call for help. We called a truck stop and were told a diesel mechanic would be right out. We walked back to the bus and waited for help to come and tell us the bad news. It was very chilly, and the girls kept dancing around

and running to keep warm. We decided to gather dead logs to start a fire. We had a good roaring fire in no time and were beginning to warm up when a truck came speeding toward us and stopped on the highway. The driver – a forest ranger – jumped out and started screaming at us, "What do you fools think you're doing? You're right in the middle of the national forest and there are no rites allowed." He kept ranting and waving his arms and yelling at us. We just laughed and tried to explain our plight. He didn't care who we were, or where we were from, or what our problem was. The fire had to go. Just as I started to put out the fire another man came walking up. He wanted to know what was going on so we ran through our tale again. He told the forest ranger to go back to his look-out post and leave us alone. He was a federal judge and he would be responsible for us.

After what seemed an eternity, the mechanic came. He looked at the engine and told us we had blown the air compressor, but he could fix it and have on the road within a few hours.

He took us in his pickup back to town where we checked into a motel. We had very little money, so one room was all we could afford for all 17 of us. We were cramped, but it would be for just a few hours and then we'd be on our way home. Wrong! The mechanic came and got me when he thought he had it ready to go, but when we tried it, it would not hold



*Players from the first SSC women's basketball team show off their travelling uniforms designed and donated by Blue Bell sewing plant in 1971. The photo originally appeared in the 1971 Seminole Junior College Yearbook.*

air, so we were back where we started. He finally suggested that he call a garage in Little Rock and have a new one sent down on the late evening bus. I told him that would be great, to order it and we could get on the road as soon as he replaced the old one. The late bus came, but there was no air compressor on it. The garage wouldn't send it until it was paid for. We were allowed \$3.00 a day to eat

on, so we sure didn't have the money to pay for a new compressor.

The mechanic assured us that he had a friend that could fix it overnight, and we could leave early the next morning. All 17 of us spent the night in one room. It was wall-to-wall bodies, but we managed.

The next morning the mechanic picked me up and we went back to the bus. When I fired it up. It again

## TRAVELING CONT.

failed to hold pressure, so after working on it all night he had not accomplished anything. When I got back to the motel, the girls were ready to strike out and hitchhike home. We had a home game that night and they were going to get back for it. They kept insisting that five of them could get home by game time. They were undefeated, and they were not about to forfeit a game, especially a home game against a team they could easily beat.

I looked in the phone book and saw there was a U-Haul rental store just down the street. I walked down there and rented a truck. They were ready to go when I got back, so we loaded up to head home. There was no light in the back and three girls refused to ride back there. They got in the front with me, and we took off.

They said when they needed a potty break they would beat on the truck and I was to find a restroom. We had driven only a few miles when the sign on the truck came loose and began banging. I didn't know if it was the sign or the girls banging, so I just kept driving. I remember there was one question Dixie always asked a recruit. "How's your bladder?" We don't make frequent stops while traveling, so I knew I wouldn't have to stop many times.

I drove from Arkadelphia to the Oklahoma state line before I pulled over to see if they were O.K. They were hurting the worst way and were ready to hurt me for not stopping. I had stopped along I-40 on the side of the road, but that didn't stop them. They would not have cared if we had been in downtown New York – when you have to go, you have to go.

We knew it was going to be close to game time before we got home, so I put the pedal to the metal and we headed for Seminole. It was get-

ting closer and closer to 6:00 and we still had several miles to go. I pulled into a station at Okemah for gas and Dixie called to report where we were and that we'd be there for the game.

Between Okemah and Seminole, the girls dressed for the game and she wrapped ankles. Keep in mind there was no light and it was pitch black in the back of the truck. When we stopped at the gym they began to climb out of the truck it was a sight to behold. Some had their suits on backwards, some were wrong side out, and the tape job Dixie had done would not have passed any first-aid test.

Claremore Junior College (our opponent) had already warmed up and had left the floor when we got here. After a couple minutes' warm-up, the game was started and the Belles played about the way they looked. The second half they got their balance and went on to win easily. Not only did they win this game, this group of girls also won the National Championships with a record of 35 wins and 2 losses. To date, this team is the only athletic team at Seminole Junior College to win a national championship. They were a great group of players and a great group of roomies for a long night in a motel.

## SSC Implements Safety Precautions As Spring Sports Begin



Spring sports are starting to kick off at Seminole State College, beginning with men's basketball on Jan. 22 women's volleyball on Jan. 23.

Last July the NJCAA Region II Presidential Advisory Council moved the majority of all sports to the spring semester in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic. To ensure student and spectator safety, the NJCAA established a number of guidelines for all sporting events. Social distancing will be encouraged at all times. Staff

will be limited to essential personnel. Capacity of sports venues will be limited to 25 percent. To meet this requirement, SSC's Raymond Harber Fieldhouse will accommodate no more than 250 people, with spectators seated on every other row to maintain social distancing. Face coverings will be required of all attendees.

All eight of SSC's sports — men and women's basketball, men and women's golf, women's volleyball, women's soccer, baseball, softball — will compete this spring.

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## SSC Board of Regents Renews President's Contract

The Seminole State College Board of Regents met Jan. 21 to consider a recommendation to hire a professional auditing service and to review the terms of President Lana Reynolds' employment.

The meeting opened with a review of the College's recent expenditures by Vice President for Fiscal Affairs Courtney Jones. Later in the meeting, Jones joined Ed Lemmings, Director of Physical Plant and Campus Safety, in presenting an update on deferred maintenance issues. The College is reviewing and exploring funding options to address high priority projects, including repairs to the roof on the Raymond Harber Field House, replacement of heat and air systems and parking lot renovations.

SSC President Lana Reynolds presented her President's Report, which included an update on the College's COVID-19 response, personnel changes, information about campus activities and an update on spring semester enrollment numbers. She also informed the Board about the formation of the System Innova-

tions Committee by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. The committee encourages higher learning institutions to find innovative ways to partner with businesses, non-profits and other higher learning institutions. She said the State Regents office had communicated that these efforts replace early discussion of forced mergers and consolidations of system colleges. The President's Report concluded with a presentation of the 2020 Year in Review, a publication that documents campus news over the span of a year. The Year in Review is available to the public online at: <http://www.sscok.edu/Regents/2021/YearReview2020.pdf>.

The first action item was the consideration to hire Hinkle & Company, PC for auditing services. As required by law, after five consecutive years with a firm, a change in external auditors has to be made for at least a two-year period. The College recently completed its five-year cycle with Finley & Cook, CPA in Shawnee.

The second action item was the re-

view of President Reynolds' employment. In accordance with Board Policy, the President is evaluated each year prior to the January meeting. The evaluation process is conducted according to the wishes of the Board Chair. It was reported that President Reynolds met with Board Chairman Curtis Morgan on Jan. 7 to review performance and discuss challenges and successes of the last year, as well as to establish goals for the coming year. The Board retired into executive session to discuss President Reynolds' evaluation and contract. When the Board returned to public session, President Reynolds' contract was renewed. Chairman Morgan noted that President Reynolds declined a salary increase, given that the College was unable to provide a raise to faculty and staff last summer when employee contracts were renewed. He added that when employee annuity contributions were suspended in July, 2020 due to budget concerns, Reynolds had voluntarily requested her contractually-guaranteed annuity contributions also be suspended until a time when those



*President Lana Reynolds*

could be restored to all employees.

"President Reynolds has done a tremendous job and will continue to do a tremendous job for this College," Chairman Morgan said. "In a year with no shortage of challenges, she put students and employees first. We appreciate her service and look forward to another year under her leadership."

Board members present at the meeting were: Curtis Morgan, Ray McQuiston, Kim Hyden and Ryan Pitts.

The next SSC Board of Regents meeting is set for Thursday, Feb. 18, 2021.