



Media Contact

MaryAnn Martin, Ph.D.
Director of Communications
(405) 325-5372
mas@ou.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Gaylord College honors four distinguished alumni
Fort Worth native Sarah Hill named Distinguished Young Alumni

Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Oklahoma honored four distinguished alumni Friday, October 20, 2017 at the Evening of Celebration in Headington Residential College on the Norman campus.

Sarah Hill, CEO of New York City-based Bookstr, received the award for Distinguished Young Alumni.

Patti Dennis, vice president of news and director of recruitment for TEGNA, was one of the recipients. Oklahoma football great Dewey Selmon and OU Athletics Director of Media Debbie Copp were the other two recipients.

“With more than 10,000 living graduates of OU’s Gaylord College, Dewey Selmon, Debbie Copp, Patti Dennis and Sarah Hill epitomize alumni with successful and diverse careers who are now leaders in their fields,” said Lee Reynolds, Gaylord College director of development and alumni relations. “We are proud of all 117 Distinguished Alumni who have been recognized with this award since it was first given in 1984.”

Sarah Hill, Class of 2010

Sara is the chief executive officer of Bookstr, responsible for the rebranding of the company from the Reading Room, which she joined in 2012 as their first American employee.

Sarah has extensive experience in media and technology. Before Bookstr, she worked as a vice president of produce and as a community manager for the Reading Room. Here, she wrote and managed the app launching this fall. She also grew their Facebook audience organically from forty thousand page likes to over one million in just over a year.

Sarah has also held positions with MetLife Stadium, Jess3, Urban Dealight and al Jazeera English. At MetLife Stadium, she was tasked with managing social strategy and reporting during the Super Bowl. At Jess3 she was able to work with brands like Twitter, Nike, AMEX, HBO and more on their digital projects. While she was the e-commerce site, Urban Dealight, Sarah grew their editorial department from one to ten people and created the company voice.

Patti Dennis, Class of 1979

Patti is based in Denver, where she is the vice president of news and director of recruiting for TEGNA Media.

Patti has served in a leadership position since 1996 with what was then known as Gannett Media. As regional news director, Pattie travels on a regular basis to other television stations, working closely with their news and promotional departments to better their product company-wide.

Her 32-year career at KUSA-TV in Denver included serving as a newscast producer, Discovery Channel producer, executive producer and her current role as vice president and news director.

Patti was named the 2012 news director of the year by Broadcasting and Cable. In 2011, she was honored as one of the Outstanding Women in Business by the Denver Business Journal and was a finalist for GANNETT Manager of the Year in 2012. She has been

Inducted into the National Television Arts and Sciences Silver Circle for her contributions during more than 25 years of broadcast excellence. Also, Patti was presented the 2011 Alfred I. DuPont Columbia Award for her teams' investigative work.

Under her leadership, KUSA-TV has won hundreds of Emmy Awards, as well as the Colorado Broadcasters Station Excellence Award for 14 years in a row.

Dewey Selmon, Class of 1976

Dewey Selmon and his brothers were members of the legendary football defensive line that brought OU four consecutive Big Eight championships in the 1970s and two consecutive national championships. He was named an All-America in 1974 and 1975.

After a career in the NFL, Dewey returned to Norman. In addition to chairing the campaign that raised funds for the building of the Sam Noble Museum of Natural History, he served as commissioner of the Norman Housing Authority, which raised funds for the community's food shelter. He also served as a United Way volunteer,



basketball coach, and Sunday school teacher. His legacy has continued through his children, who started the Shine Foundation, a group that has done mission work in war-torn areas of West Africa.

Debbie Copp, Class of 1978

Debbie has served as director of publications in the University of Oklahoma Athletic Department since 1990. She was named the recipient of the 2008 Bob Kenworthy Community Service Award by College Sports Information Directors of America and in 2012 she was inducted into the CoSIDA Hall of Fame.

In the words of Dewey Selmon, Debbie has contributed to the success of student athletes both on and off the field. “When Debbie is in your corner, she is in your corner for life,” Dewey said.

Debbie has been an advocate for OU’s student athletes, evident in her award-winning publications and media guides that have taken top honors and competitions at the national level.

About Gaylord College

Ranked in the top ten of all journalism programs in the nation, Gaylord College offers undergraduate majors in journalism, creative media production, public relations, advertising, and professional writing as well as a master of arts, master of professional writing and a Ph.D. Housed in over 100,000 square feet with state-of-the-art technology, the College began in 2000 after a generous gift from the Gaylord family and takes pride in providing its 1,200 students and graduate students with cutting-edge learning experiences inside and outside of the classroom.

About the University of Oklahoma

The University of Oklahoma (OU) is a Carnegie-R1 comprehensive public research university known for excellence in teaching, research, and community engagement, serving the educational, cultural, economic and health-care needs of the state, region, and nation from three campuses: Norman, Health Sciences Center in Oklahoma City and the Schusterman Center in Tulsa. OU enrolls over 30,000 students and has more than 2700 full-time faculty members in 21 colleges.

In 2014, OU became the first public institution ever to rank No. 1 nationally in the recruitment of National Merit Scholars, with 311 scholars. OU ranks No. 1 in the nation among all public institutions in the number of National Merit Scholars enrolled, with more than 800. The 277-acre Research Campus in Norman was named the No.1 research campus in the nation by the Association of Research Parks in 2013. Norman is



a culturally rich and vibrant town located just outside Oklahoma City. With outstanding schools, amenities, and a low cost of living, Norman is a perennial contender on the “Best Places to Live” rankings.

Attachment: Picture, Sarah Hill receives her award from Gaylord College Dean Ed Kelley at the Evening of Celebration in Norman, Oklahoma on the University of Oklahoma campus.

###