

# THE EDUCATION FOCUS

FOR THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE OKLAHOMA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

April/May 2011



## Rallying for Education

*In loving memory of Becky Felts*



# A tribute to excellence

This issue of the *Education Focus* is full of stories about winners – people dedicated to improving public education, protecting teacher rights, showcasing artistic talent, and making the learning experience better for students.

**Page 2** Enid's Rhonda Harlow lead a local effort to stop an anti-OEA bill with determined at-home lobbying.

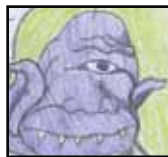


**Page 3** Take a look back at the career of former president Becky Felts, who passed away April 22.



**Pages 4-6** Winners of OEA's 2011 awards are highlighted, including Tulsa CTA, Broken Arrow's Greer Nichols, Moore's Elise Robillard and more.

**Page 8** Check out the winning drawings from the OEA's Read Across America Poster contest.



**Page 9** See all of the results from OEA's spring elections, including the re-election of Lori Burris as NEA Director.

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## On the cover

*Nearly 1,000 teachers and support professionals gave up a day of Spring Break to attend the RED Rally (Republicans, Educators and Democrats Must Work Together) on March 15. Following the rally, many of the attendees entered the capitol and lobbied their local legislators. (Photo by Doug Folks)*

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## Join the conversation with OEA!



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- Oklahoma Education Association
- Student Oklahoma Education Association
- Oklahomans for Great Public Schools

On Twitter –

- [twitter.com/okea](https://twitter.com/okea)

## Need help? Call us.

Do you need assistance with a personnel matter? Would you like to invite an OEA Teaching and Learning Specialist to provide professional development in your building? Does your Association need organizing help? Call your regional office and ask for help.

### Oklahoma City Metro and Southwest Teams

800/522-8091 or 405/528-7785

### Northeast and Tulsa Metro Teams

800/331-5143 or 918/665-2282

### Northwest Team

800/439-0393 or 580/256-0071

### Southeast Team

800/563-4230 or 405/275-4060

# The Education Focus

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## Join today!

*Membership in the OEA provides security, symbolizes professionalism and brings with it a wealth of benefits.*

*Visit [www.okea.org](http://www.okea.org) for more information, and call 800/522-8091 to find out how to join today.*





# Continuing the legacy

*By Linda Hampton  
President*

OEA has a strong, proud history and legacy. Teachers met on Christmas Day 1889 – the only day they could – and the Oklahoma Education Association was born. To me this exemplifies the determination and dedication of our founders. It is the legacy they began, and we continue today.

This Association has been here through the Great Depression, wars and the Dust Bowl. We have gone from the day of the horse and buggy to a day of rockets into outer space. We have gone from classrooms with slate boards to SmartBoards. To borrow from Dr. Seuss, “Oh, the places we’ve been!”

We have seen and been a part of the changes in the way people all over this great state treat and

respect each other. OEA was here during the Women’s Rights and Civil Rights Movements. Many of the simple things we currently don’t give a second thought to were once hard fought battles – from the right of women to wear slacks in school to the right of children of all colors to attend classes together. OEA has – and always will be – a strong voice in Oklahoma’s history.

I’ve given our history and our goals a great deal of thought as I step into the presidency of the OEA. I have some big shoes to fill. We have had 95 Presidents in our 122 year history. The most important thing I have noted is that we always listen to our members, find the right thing to do, and then do it right. Our voice has sometimes been a whisper and sometimes a roar, but we have always been a strong, tenacious voice



*President Linda Hampton*

for public education.

As we move forward, I am proud of the part we are playing in creating a legacy which will be talked about by future generations. We are in the fight of our lives for our profession, public education and Oklahoma’s children. To those who have labeled and bullied us, we say we are not giving in or giving up. To our supporters, we say Thank You! To our forefathers, we say we are making you proud. To Becky Felts, we say thanks for being part of our legacy.

## *A celebration of reading*

Reading took a front seat on March 2 – Dr. Seuss’s birthday – as teachers and students across Oklahoma celebrated Read Across America. The Cat in the Hat and friends showed up across the state, from McAlester to Broken Arrow, from the Boys and Girls Club in Oklahoma City to Durant.

President Linda Hampton dressed as the Cat (center, left photo) and joined Principal Lisa Cobb (right) and Counselor Judy Chaffin at Wilson Elementary in Seminole.

Katy Cook, Libby Van Dolan and Greer Nichols (below, left to right) performed Green Eggs and Ham at all of Broken Arrow’s elementary schools.

*See winners of OEA’s RAA Poster Contest on Page 8.*

*Photos by Doug Folks*



# At-home lobbying at its best

## Harlow leads efforts to kill anti-OEA bill

By Kandis West

In a society filled with high-powered, deep-pocketed lobbyists, it seems that one person can no longer make a difference. After all, recent legislation granted corporations and special interest groups the power to make unlimited campaign contributions.

A few teachers' impassioned pleas only amounts to a drop in the bucket, right? But wait, you haven't met Enid teacher Rhonda Harlow.

The seven-year teaching veteran and literacy coach is akin to a honey bee. Aggressive enough to motivate the whole swarm to attack, but gentle enough to pollinate the opposition with her views.

Perhaps the most common trait Harlow shares with honey bees is her way of seeing the world. Honey bees have compound eyes, which are

hundreds of little eyes each producing different images put together in the insect's brain to give it a very different way of seeing the world. It is Harlow's empathetic view of the world that helps her relate to everyone around her, even those with opposing views.

"She is empathetic without sacrificing her beliefs. She is able to see the point of the other person and find ways for that person to adopt her point of view," said OEA Teaching and Learning Specialist Mike McIlwee.

All of these skills came into play when Harlow led the efforts to kill House Bill 1651, authored by Enid Rep. John Enns. The bill would have eliminated the Association's ability to automatically deduct dues from members' paychecks.

"This was a direct attack on our Association. In Tulsa, nearly 90 organizations are able to payroll deduct and this bill just targeted us. Our members are the heart and soul of OEA and Rhonda is a perfect example of what our members are able to accomplish," OEA President Linda Hampton said.

Fueled by repeated instances of teachers being stretched to the max and asked to go a step further, by their best never being good enough, by continual threats and no words of praise, by the sheer insanity that has enveloped public education, Harlow took personal responsibility for changing Enns' mind on behalf of the Association.

"As president of the EEA (Enid Education Association), I felt I had to talk to him directly. Initially, we found some common ground. The one thing I kept asking was, 'how is this bill going to help my fourth grade students where there are 28 in a class?'" Harlow said.

She believes Enns truly wants to help public education, but needed to quit targeting educators.

"We agreed to set aside our differences and move toward our common goal of educating our children to the best of our abilities, not working against each other as enemies," she said.

Through a barrage of personal emails and phone conversations by  
*See "Harlow reaches out" on Page 11*

## Moore ACT, OKC Zone B win political awards

The Moore Association of Classroom Teachers (MACT) has earned the OEA Political Activist Award for its work in the State Question 744 campaign while Oklahoma City Metro Zone B has repeated as the Stan Bryant Political Action Award winner.

During the SQ 744 campaign, MACT conducted 14 separate events to inform members, school patrons and the general public about the need to better fund Oklahoma schools. With Sharletta McLaughlin as MACT's legislative and political action committee chair, MACT passed out "744 fans" at home football games, conducted door-to-door canvassing, staffed site phone banks, and raised more than \$1,100 for the campaign.

OKC Zone B Director Jan Sands and Erik Winkle, the zone's Fund for Children and Public Education chair and president of the Putnam City ACT, organized events that raised \$9,961, an average of \$9.73 per zone member.



Moore West Jr. High teachers and Moore ACT members (from left) Stephanie Higley, Shar McLaughlin and Amanda Deemer spread the word about SQ 744 during the Red Ribbon Parade.





Becky had the opportunity to visit with Vice President Al Gore during her tenure as an NEA Director.



President Becky with Vice President Linda Hampton at the 2010 Advocacy Conference.

## Education loses a champion with Becky Felts' passing

**B**ecky Felts spent almost her entire professional career working for the Oklahoma Education Association, rising from a building-level volunteer to become the top governing official of the state's largest education employee association.

That dedication will be sorely missed by the Association, its members and education employees across the state with Becky's passing. She lost an incredibly courageous battle with cancer on April 22, just three weeks after retiring as OEA's 95th president.

"Becky was always an incredible champion for public education, students and education employees," said Linda Hampton, OEA president. "She faced her health issues with the most positive attitude you can imagine. Her leadership and her enthusiasm will be greatly missed, but I'll miss her friendship the most."

It was Becky's dream to serve as president of the organization she loved dearly and to which she dedicated her talent and boundless energy. Becky achieved that dream when she was elected president in 2009 after serving six years as vice president.

During her career, she also served as an NEA Director, on the OEA Board of Directors and on various statewide committees. She accepted many leadership roles for her local, the Tahlequah Education Association, including the office of president.

Becky began her career in the classroom at Peggs, Okla., a small rural school in northern Cherokee County, before moving to Tahlequah Public Schools. She taught elementary school for 27 years and was recognized as



Read Across America was one of Becky's favorite annual events.



Becky worked closely with Rep. Mike Synar, maintaining a friendship with the late congressman until his death.

Photos provided.

Cherokee County Teacher of the Year and Tahlequah's Cherokee Elementary Teacher of the Year.

She taught various subjects and grade levels, including transitional first grade, Title I remedial reading and math, and fourth grade math and science.

In addition to her work for the OEA, Becky served two years as a commissioner on the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation following an appointment by then-Speaker of the House Larry Adair. She is a graduate of Leadership Oklahoma Class XVII and is a member of Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, an organization for women educators.

# TCTA helps lead district changes

By Doug Folks

When Lynn Stockley points out the rapid change coming at public education, she insists that teacher associations must be "...at the forefront of that change."

Those words from the current president of the Tulsa Classroom Teachers' Association (TCTA) symbolize the true leadership and legacy of the largest local affiliate of the Oklahoma Education Association.

In 2009, TCTA was faced with change barreling down on it at the speed and weight of a bullet train. Tulsa Public Schools had accepted the challenge to vie for a Gates Foundation Grant and established the Teacher Effectiveness Initiative (TEI). TCTA saw its responsibility and opportunity to be part of the coming change and jumped on board without hesitation.

TCTA joined Tulsa Public Schools (TPS) and the Gates Foundation in a series of collaborative meetings, looking at how to improve the educational experience for Tulsa children in an



Photo by Marty Bull

*TCTA Vice President Patti Ferguson-Palmer, President Lynne Stockley and OEA Advocacy Specialist Linda Hendrix have been important players in developing a new teacher evaluation system for the state's second largest district.*

effort to win the grant. In the end, TPS did not receive the Gates grant, but the relationship continues to foster improved education. The association is part of monthly steering committee meetings that include TPS executive staff, the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, several Foundation representatives, and other collaborators.

In recognition of its profession-

alism and advocacy of members' rights during the TEI process, TCTA has been awarded the 2011 Kate Frank Award. The honor is presented to an OEA member or local Association for "...rendering outstanding and significant service to advancing the cause of member welfare, rights and professionalism."

*See "Professionalism" on Page 11*

## Nichols forever tied to Broken Arrow history



Photo by Marty Bull

**Greer Nichols**

It would be difficult to talk about Broken Arrow Public Schools without mentioning Greer Nichols.

Nichols, a fifth grade teacher at Vandever Elementary, served as the Broken Arrow Education Association (BAEA) president for several years and has been a member of the bargaining team and its chief negotiator for more than 10 years.

His work at the bargaining table to improve the salary and working conditions of the teachers in Broken Arrow has earned Nichols the 2011 Collective Bargaining Award. The honor is presented to an individual or group making a significant contribution to the advancement of education through the collective bargaining process.

Nichols' work for BAEA, specifi-

cally the negotiations team, has generated a great deal of trust between the association and the administration and school board.

"... Greer worked tirelessly to advance teacher wages and their terms and conditions of employment," said Cheryl Kelly, Broken Arrow Board of Education board clerk, in her letter recommending Nichols for the award. "He constantly advocated processes which lend trust between district officials and the association, thus creating more productive results.

Kelly added that Nichols' "experience and understanding" of Broken Arrow's history was a benefit to both the teachers and the district administration.

Through the years, Nichols has

*See "Nichols' leadership" on Page 11*



# NFIE award winner immerses her students in French

*By Doug Folks*

Walking into the first day of Elise Robillard's French class is like taking your first swimming lesson in the Mediterranean south of Marseille. You are totally immersed in the language, but your lifeguard, Madame Robillard, is right next to

you, helping you learn to navigate the seas of a foreign language.

Robillard does not just teach French at Westmoore High School in south Oklahoma City, she brings French culture to her classroom and takes her students to France on Spring Break. She invites profession-

als who use French in their jobs to speak to the class, like a chef or a Canadian military officer. She has established partnerships with schools in France and Morocco.

This dedication to her teaching is exactly how Robillard approaches the teaching profession and her professional association memberships. She is rarely just a member, accepting leadership

roles from the local to the national level. As an Oklahoma Education Association member, Robillard has held several leadership roles in the local, served on OEA committees and on National Education Association caucuses.

It is in recognition of this commitment to education that Robillard has been named the OEA's nominee for the NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence. The NEA and the Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE) annually present the award in an effort "to recognize, reward and promote excellence in teaching and advocacy for the profession."

Each NEA state affiliate is allowed one nominee. Five national finalists are honored at the Salute to Excellence in Education Gala in Washington, D.C.

A National Board Certified Teacher, Robillard founded the Oklahoma Soldiers Project. She and her students

*See "Soldiers adopted" on Page 11*



*Elise Robillard*

Photo by Doug Folks

## Turney's literary lesson assists all learning levels

A review of state test scores indicated students in Elk City were struggling with the identification of basic literary genres. Randy Turney, a sixth grade special education teacher at Grandview Fifth and Sixth Grade Center, developed a lesson that helped all students develop a better understanding of the various genres found in literature.

Turney's "Literary Genres Defined" unit has earned him the Oklahoma Education Association's Instructional Excellence Award, Teachers Teaching Students. Turney was named one of Oklahoma's Rising Stars at the Teacher of Year Ceremonies in 2009.

The unit was designed and implemented with the Elk City's sixth graders, teaming general education with special ed students to work co-

operatively. This allowed students to not only be taught by the classroom teacher, but also to learn through peer instruction and modeling.

Students were asked to meet four objectives:

- 1) Learn the basic characteristics of fiction and nonfiction writings
- 2) Learn the characteristics of common subgroups of fiction
- 3) Learn the characteristics of common subgroups of nonfiction, and
- 4) Develop skills needed to identify a writing's literary genre based on the characteristics of the written work, title, author or brief summary.

After a PowerPoint presentation on a SmartBoard, students were placed into cooperative learning groups and given a packet with 27 cards that featured pictures of popular books. The groups then raced to



*Randy Turney*

Photo by Doug Folks

be the first group to sort the cards by genre and win a prize.

On their own, students completed a review packet which included a crossword puzzle and a word search, followed by a test that was appropriate to each student's learning ability.

# Monts' dedication is an inspiration

A quick read of Cheryl Monts' resume and one wonders when the city of Lawton added extra hours to the standard 24-hour clock.

From her work as an administrator with Lawton Public Schools (LPS) and on the executive board of the Professional Educators' Association of Lawton (PEAL), to her church activities and civic involvement, Monts surely must need more time in the day that what mere mortals are already given.

During her 38 years in the Lawton district, Monts has been a teacher, coach, counselor, principal and now director of Adult Services and Professional Development. In each capacity, she has given unselfishly of herself, dedicated to the needs of the students and teachers under her care.

Monts is the 2011 recipient of the Oklahoma Education Association's Glenn Snider Human Relations Award, which is presented

to a school district, individual or organization best exemplifying the practice of effective human relations and concerns for human rights. The honor includes a monetary award, which is paid for from the interest of the Glenn Snider Fund. That prize is \$404.50 this year.

At each step in Monts' career, she has made a significant impact.

An English teacher at Tomlinson Junior High, she was a very caring and compassionate teacher dedicated to meeting the needs of her students.

As director of Adult Education for LPS, she established a permanent location for adults classes.

As Director of Professional Development, Monts organized a "Rookie Club" for new hires in the district. The group meets regularly to lend support to new teachers and help them become successful, seasoned teachers. Monts always encourages new teachers to place their students'

needs above their own.

She is a sponsor of the Epsilon Delta Kudos, a youth group for boys in grades nine through 12. Each year she mentors 30 boys, helping them realize their dreams of becoming college educated, professional men with an emphasis on giving back to their communities.

"We are so blessed to have someone with such noble character and great integrity as Cheryl," said Judy Runnels, PEAL president. "She has a knack for inspiring others to reach for their dreams and achieve success, regardless of the obstacles they have to overcome."



*Cheryl Monts*

*Photo provided*

## Wheeler serves as benefactor for Zone SW D

The first Friday in March is always set aside as a day of professional development for most of the districts in the Oklahoma Education Association's Southwest Zone D, in south-central Oklahoma.

While OEA Zone Days are almost all but extinct, SW-D continues to provide engaging professional development through enlightening yet entertaining guest speakers and networking for teachers and support professionals from Ardmore, Plainview, Pauls Valley, Durant, Dickson, Elmore City-Pernell and other communities in the zone.

Val Wheeler, president of Southern Financial Group Inc., has become SW-D's benefactor and a key reason for the continued success of the Zone Day.

Wheeler's generosity and commitment to the members of SW-D



*Val Wheeler*

*Photo by Dong Folks*

has earned him the 2011 Tuskahoma Brown Miller Award, which is presented to a business or group which has contributed significantly to the improvement of education.

Becky Munholland, OEA's SW-D zone director, says Wheeler's involvement with the zone day began by underwriting the cost of donuts,

coffee and soda for the participants. He added hosting of a breakfast for Teachers of the Year from districts in the zone, to purchasing a sound system to be used during zone day, to providing lunch for guest speakers and the zone day executive committee, and contributing thousands of dollars in door prizes.

For the last few years, Wheeler has paid the Zone's rental fee for the Ardmore Convention Center on Zone Day.

Wheeler's involvement doesn't begin and end on Zone Day.

"Val provides excellent service to members in retirement planning and as a financial advisor," Munholland said. "He will conduct retirement seminars at any meeting of OEA members ... (and) he encourages teachers to join the OEA."



# A little paint goes a long way

Nearly 200 future teachers from universities across the state gave Adams Elementary a new look during March 4's Outreach to Teach.

The Student Oklahoma Education Association (SOEA) made improvements to the Oklahoma City school by painting murals in the hallways, a U.S. map on the playground black-top, installing tether ball poles and soccer nets.

Adams Elementary has 99 percent of its children on free or reduced lunch.

Not only did the improvements enhance the schools' outside beauty, but also improved student and teacher morale.

*See more photos of Outreach to Teach in the Photo Gallery section of [okea.org](http://okea.org).*

## OKC Elementary receives SOEA's makeover



Photos by Doug Folks

# RAA poster contest draws talent galore!

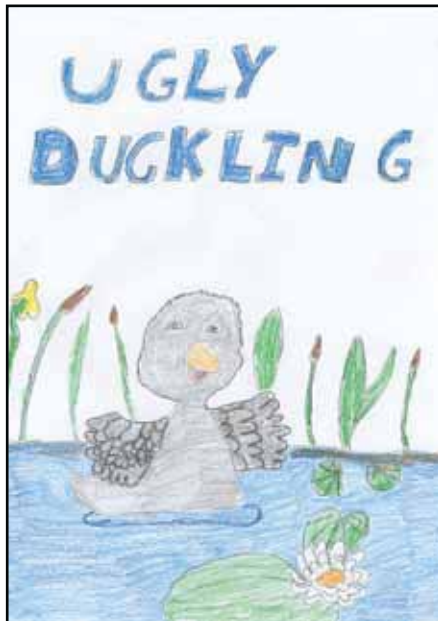
Nearly 1,000 Oklahoma students put their best creative efforts into some amazing drawings, making judging for the Oklahoma Education Association's 2011 Read Across America poster contest a tough assignment.

Contestants were required to draw a scene inspired by their favorite book. The result is a tremendous display of the talent in Oklahoma's public schools.

The posters printed on this page are the first place winners in their various age categories. They each will receive a \$75 VISA gift card and a certificate. Runners-up will receive a \$50 card and a certificate, while honor mention artists will receive a certificate.

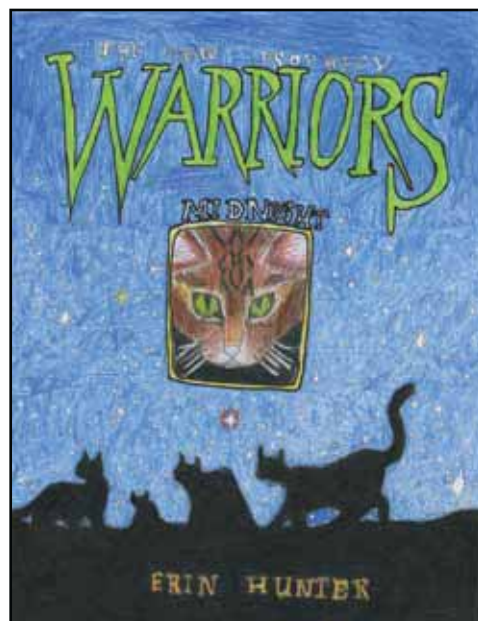
*See all of the winning posters in the Photo Gallery section of okea.org.*

"The Ugly Duckling,"  
by Reese Lugafet,  
2nd Grade,  
Washington Irving  
Elementary,  
Edmond.  
Charlotte Jackson,  
teacher



"Even Monsters Need Haircuts,"  
by Drake Wells, 6th Grade, Thackerville  
Elementary. Janet Thomason, teacher

"Warriors: The Prophecy  
Midnight," by Jamin  
Rose, 5th Grade, Mustang  
Centennial Elementary.  
Max Fletcher, teacher



"Shakespeare's Hamlet."  
by Kristin Stalcup, Senior,  
Tulsa Memorial High School.  
AJ Kokorich, teacher



# Burris re-elected NEA Director

Lori Burris won a second term as NEA Director for the Oklahoma Education Association while Okemah's Amy Duncan won a race for the Southeast Zone B seat on the OEA Board of Directors during the Association's 2011 elections.

Following are the official results of all races.

## NEA Director

Lori Burris, Mid-Del ACT  
(unopposed)

## OEA Board of Directors

### Zone SE-B

Amy Duncan, Okemah EA	63*
Lawrence E. TRAIN Lane, Checotah EA	28

### Zone SW-E

Connie Jensen, Newcastle ACT  
(unopposed)

### Zone SE-C

Brenda Calahan, McAlester ACT  
(unopposed)

### Zone TM-B

Shawna Lyn Mott-Wright, Tulsa CTA  
(unopposed)

### Zone TM-D

Linda Walker, Union CTA  
(unopposed)

### Zone OKC-B

Rene Allen, Putnam City ACT  
(unopposed)

### Zone OKC-D

Teri Gray, Choctaw-Nicoma  
Park CTA  
(unopposed)

### Zone NW-B

Joanne Minor, Ponca City ACT  
(unopposed)



Photo by Kelly Fry.

NEA Director Lori Burris

## 2011 OEA Delegate

### Assembly

**Administrator Delegate-at-Large**  
Todd Crabtree, Byng EA  
(unopposed)

### Ethnic Minority Delegates-at-Large

Amy Castro-Braun, Moore ACT	333
Denise Rhodes, Quapaw CTA	325
Tom Osburn, Cave Springs EA	322
Lawrence E. TRAIN Lane, Checotah EA	299
Bambi Rogers, Moore ACT	285
Mattie Mae Smith-Broom, Sapulpa UE	282
Twytinna S. Gardner, Union CTA	243

*(The OEA Constitution and Bylaws provide for Ethnic Minority Delegate representation at the annual Delegate Assembly to achieve proportional representation. For the 2011 Delegate Assembly, the number of credentialed Ethnic Minority delegates at the local level exceeds the required percentage. Therefore, no Ethnic Minority Delegates-at-Large will be seated at this year's Delegate Assembly.)*

### Retired Delegate-at-Large

Jane Mershon, Lawton\*  
Don Favor, Tulsa\*  
Shirley Nero, Warner\*  
Theo L. Crawley, Weleetka\*  
*(There were six open positions, so all four candidates are elected.)*

## 2011 NEA Representative Assembly

### Category I Delegate-at-Large, OKC Metro Region

Amy Castro-Braun, Moore ACT	167*
Bambi Rogers, Moore ACT	133*
Rebecca Edmondson, OEA OKC	125

*(Two open positions)*

### Category I Delegate-at-Large, Southeast Region

Lawrence E. TRAIN Lane,  
Checotah, SE-B\*  
Sharon K. Hill-Wooten,  
Idabel, SE-C\*  
*(Two open positions)*

### Category I Delegate-at-Large, Tulsa Metro Region

Jennifer M. Thornton, TCTA,  
Tulsa Metro A/B\*  
David Ballard Gould, TCTA,  
Tulsa Metro A/B\*  
*(Two open positions)*

### NEA Retired Delegate-at-Large

Joy Dennis, Enid	309
Don Favor, Tulsa	197
Marilyn Jackson, Clearview	155
Shirley Nero, Warner	144
Theo L. Crawley, Weleetka	133

*(Successor delegates only)*

\* -- Indicates winning candidates.

# Remember – continuing contract date has been moved to June

*By Richard Wilkinson  
OEA General Counsel*

Most OEA members were familiar with the old continuing contract law and the requirement that a local board of education notify a regular contract teacher that there exists a recommendation for the nonrenewal of their contract before April 10 or a continuing contract was binding upon the teacher and school district for the succeeding school year.

## *From Your Counsel*

However, the date for notifying a regular contract teacher of a recommendation for nonrenewal changed last year to the “first Monday in June.” The change in statute also extends the date for a teacher to submit a resignation to a local board of education to “fifteen (15) days after the first Monday in June,” in order to avoid a binding contract between the affected teacher and the school district for the ensuing school year.

The notice requirements contained in the continuing contract law are applicable to nonrenewal recommendations for probationary and career teachers and are required for any recommendation for nonrenewal, regardless of the reason(s) proffered for the recommended nonrenewal.

These changes also impact the timing of due process hearings before local boards of education to consider any recommendations for nonrenewal. Due process hearings before a local board of education are required to be scheduled “not sooner than twenty (20) days or later than sixty (60) days after receipt of notice by the teacher.” As a result, due process hearings before local boards of education to consider recommendations for nonrenewal will now be held later in the summer months, possibly compounding the already difficult problem in convening a quorum of a local board for meetings during this period.

Since the date for a teacher to notify a local board of education of their desire to not be re-employed by a local school district for the ensuing year has also changed to “fifteen (15) days after the first Monday in June,” a larger “window of opportunity” is created for teachers who want to consider employment opportunities with other school districts in Oklahoma. This change helps avoid the dilemma of whether to submit a resignation from employment past the deadline contained in the continuing contract law in order to later accept an offer of employment with another school district only if the current board of education approves the resignation from employment. These later dates also provide more time for teachers to consider any retire-

ment options contemplated during the current school year.

In summary, the date for “automatic renewal” of a contract has been changed from April 10 to the first Monday in June and the date for “automatic resignation” for the ensuing school year has been changed from April 25 to fifteen (15) days after the first Monday in June. These changes extend the period of time that a local school district

has to consider employment decisions; but also extend the period that a teacher has to consider other employment opportunities without having to invoke the discretion of a local board of education to accept such employment.

If you have further questions about the changes in the continuing contract deadlines, contact your OEA Regional Advocacy UniServ Specialist.



*Richard Wilkinson*

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- ✓ Free preventive service visit
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- ✓ \$5 copay for certain prescription tobacco cessation medications
- ✓ Increased number of well child/preventive visits



*Supporting Oklahoma's Public  
Employees for More Than 20 Years*



# “Professionalism through attitude, action”

*Continued from Page 4*

TCTA’s work within the Initiative as well as day-to-day work in the district meets all the criteria of the award, but particularly by its “professionalism through attitude and action” and by its promotion of “the improvement of the profession by efforts within the education community and the general public.”

As part of it the TEI, TCTA was asked to lead a committee of district personnel and teachers to design a new teacher evaluation system. After a year of meetings and development of a rubric, the system is being piloted this year. TCTA and the district will make adjustments to the evaluation system after this school year and then fully implement it for 2011-12.

Tulsa’s cutting-edge system is being closely watched as the State Department of Education develops a statewide evaluation system as required by passage of HB 2033 last spring.

Gene Kleindienst, a consultant for TPS working closely on the Initiative, has high praise for TCTA.

“The keystone of success in this multi-year project and process has been the Tulsa Classroom Teachers Association,” said Kleindienst, who has 40 years of education experience including 17 years as a school superintendent in Ohio.

“TCTA exemplifies the words of James K. Zaharis when

he presented the following thought: ‘A leader needs to know when to bend like bamboo and when to stand erect like a tree. The challenge that comes with leadership is to be deep-rooted in a sense of purpose and vision, but flexible like bamboo so that you can bend and then return to lead.’”

## Harlow reaches out to legislators

*Continued from Page 2*

EEA members, Rep. Enns withdrew the bill. The battle was won, yet the war continues on. Not able to rest on her laurels, Harlow still reaches out to all of her Enid area legislators. Last month, she invited Rep. Mike Jackson to come into Enid classrooms and see what teachers do day in and day out.

“I believe if they see with their own eyes what teachers do on a daily basis, it would truly have an impact on the way they decide on these bills,” she said.

In fact, Harlow believes that building a relationship with your legislators is not a matter of convenience; it’s a duty of Oklahoma citizenship.

“You are the ones putting them in these positions. They work for you. They represent you. It’s about establishing common ground and moving forward from there. It’s about keeping the lines of communication open. It is truly the democratic process in play,” she said.

## Nichols’ leadership is key

*Continued from Page 4*

placed his stamp on the negotiated agreement. Specifically, language he wrote for longevity pay and outlining leave benefits have been big successes for BAEA members. His ability to broker that kind of language in the agreement lies in his skills as a leader.

“Greer has been so instrumental in the negotiations process and history in BAEA. He’s successfully advocated for our members through some very difficult times,” said Katy Cook, BAEA president.

## Soldiers adopted through project

*Continued from Page 5*

adopt American soldiers who died during one of the two World Wars and who are buried in France. Using resources at the Oklahoma History Center and the Internet, they research the soldiers’ lives and how they died.

The information gathered is shared with the History Center and uploaded to the Oklahoma Soldiers Project Wikispace. On cultural visits to France, she and her students visit the grave sites and later share what they’ve learned with the soldiers’ families.



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