

THE DIGITAL  
EDUCATION

# FOCUS

FOR THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE OKLAHOMA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION – December 2017

Come in  
and meet  
the OEA  
staff

*Find out what makes them tick  
and where they were  
before joining the association*



# CONTENTS

## Meet the Staff

2  
**Get on Board with Reading**  
Oklahoma students are invited to enter OEA's 2018 Read Across America poster contest.

3  
**Awards Season is Approaching**  
Nominations for all OEA Awards are due January 19, 2018. Do you know who you want to honor this year?

4 - 21  
**Meet the Staff**  
Here's your chance to find out a little bit about every member of the OEA staff.

6  
**Management Team**

7  
**Staff Attorneys**

8  
**Professional Staff**

17  
**Associate Staff**

20  
**Confidential Staff**



## This staff is truly dedicated to the vision and mission of OEA

By Alicia Priest  
OEA President

Welcome to our first-ever, *Digital Education Focus* magazine. This edition is an introduction to our staff, but in all honesty, as incredible as our Communications Center and editor are, the words on these pages are no comparison to the joy of getting to know and work side by side with them!

Our staff is truly dedicated to the mission and vision of the OEA. They all bring their own special gifts and graces that enhance community spirit at work and help accomplish our goals – while having a good time.

While I would LOVE to dish a special story on each of them, I am limited in word space. So, I will tell a few stories that exemplify the whole.

Kim Holley, Southeast team assistant, can talk to the most resolved members, who have called to drop their membership, and flip them back to being dedicated members who have recruited a teaching partner to be a member by the end of the call. She believes in the value of membership and relates to our members in such an honest way, they can't help but become believers, too!

Teresa Davis in Membership Processing has a smile that goes on for days, a heart of gold and a love of planning a party and ping-pong. Then, there's Kevin

Winstead in the business office who, besides reworking vendor contracts and saving us tons of money, is a meat-smoking master who plays a MEAN game of Guitar Hero (and he's got the scars to prove it).

If you know Cal Ware, Southeast advocacy specialist, you know he plans life around food – or food is life. Either way, he knows all the good places to eat. If you ever eat with him, make him leave his phone in the car and have his wallet in hand. He is so dedicated to our members that he will answer advocacy calls mid-bite.

Student OEA Coordinator Kim Littrell has the fire and passion that will pull you in and fill your spirit. Ivy Riggs, one of our lobbyists – so even-keeled and down-to-earth – is a huge asset as a political organizer. Seriously, just thinking about being at the Capitol every day makes my blood pressure elevate. Yet, she keeps it real for our cause.

Let's talk Tulsa Advocate Linda Hendrix for a moment. So nice, empathetic, knowledgeable and a work ethic that goes far beyond contracts. I thought I would never get over her leaving the Northwest Region as our advocate when I was a leader in Yukon! You MUST read about our Focus editor, Doug Folks, who has won countless awards for his articles, photographs and the magazine.



President Alicia Priest

### DID YOU KNOW:

- Five of our professional staff served on the OEA Board of Directors (Kim Littrell, Sheri Childress, Mike McIlwee, Rhonda Harlow and Stacy Bullard).
  - Only three of our professional staff didn't come from a school career before joining the OEA.
  - The staff who came from a school setting were local leaders, including Executive Director David DuVall and Associate Executive Director David Williams.
  - Chief General Counsel Richard Wilkinson has argued – and WON – a case in front of the U.S. Supreme Court.
- Again, I am sorry there is not space for me to talk about each and every one of our incredible staff.

If you ever have an opportunity to call or come by OEA Headquarters in Oklahoma City or the Tulsa Regional Office, take a minute to get to know our staff a little better. If you haven't had the opportunity to have them out to your school district, let's make a plan to get together. They are, quite frankly, the best staff in the nation! Our association is blessed and better because they are a part of us. Have fun getting to know them.

## The Digital Education Focus

Volume 1, No. 1

The Education Focus is a production of the Oklahoma Education Association's Communications Center.

Alicia Priest, President  
Katherine Bishop, Vice President  
David DuVall, Executive Director  
Amanda Ewing, Associate Executive Director  
Doug Folks, Editor  
Bill Guy, Communications  
Carrie Coppernoll Jacobs, Social Media  
Jay Williams, Center Assistant

### Need help? Contact your regional team.

Oklahoma City Metro, Northwest, Southeast and Southwest Teams  
323 E. Madison, Okla. City, OK 73105  
800/522-8091 or 405/528-7785  
Northeast and Tulsa Metro Teams  
10820 E. 45th, Suite. 110, Tulsa, OK, 74146  
800/331-5143 or 918/665-2282

### Join the conversation.

okea.org  
Facebook – Oklahoma.Education.Association and Student.Oklahoma.Education.Association  
twitter.com/okea (@okea)  
instagram.com/insta\_okea  
pinterest.com/oeaedupins

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# Get on Board with Reading

## 2018 OEA RAA Poster Contest

### The Assignment

Draw a picture featuring transportation from your favorite book. A stagecoach from a western, a rocket ship from science fiction, a carriage from a fairy tale – the list is endless.

All Oklahoma public school students are eligible to enter.

Entries must be submitted on white, unlined 8 ½ x 11 paper. DO NOT FOLD ENTRIES.

- **Each entry must include the following information on a label attached to the back of the drawing:**

- o Title of Entry
- o Student's Name
- o Grade
- o School
- o School District
- o Teacher's name (homeroom or art teacher)
- o School phone number

Entries must be hand-drawn or painted. Computer-generated art will not be accepted. Pictures will be judged on creativity, use of color and content.

### Deadline

All entries must be received by 5 p.m. Wednesday, January 31, 2018. Mail, hand-deliver or overnight entries to OEA Focus on Reading, OEA Headquarters, 323 E. Madison, Okla. City, OK, 73105. (Entries received after the deadline will not be judged.)

*All entries will become the property of the OEA and must meet all contest rules to be eligible for prizes.*



### Prizes

An **Award of Excellence** and an **Award of Distinction** will be given in four categories, as well as an overall **Best in Show**:

- Kindergarten through 2nd grades (\$25 and \$10 gift cards)
- 3rd-5th grades (\$50 and \$25 gift cards)
- 6th-8th grades (\$50 and \$25 gift cards)
- 9th-12th grades (\$50 and \$25 gift cards)
- Best in Show (\$100 gift card)
- Up to three entries in each category will be named honorable mention (certificates only).

**Winners will be announced on Friday, March 2, 2018.** Prizes for the winning entries will be delivered in March; honorable mention certificates will be mailed to the student's school.



For more information, contact Doug Folks at 800/522- 8091, 405/528-7785, or [dfolks@okea.org](mailto:dfolks@okea.org).



# Awards season is approaching

## Who will you nominate this year?

**M**ark your calendars! The deadline for submitting nominations for the Oklahoma Education Association's annual awards is Jan. 19, 2018.

Each award is listed separately on the OEA website ([okea.org/awards](http://okea.org/awards)), and each nomination form can be filled out online before printing and mailing.

Each year, OEA honors those who promote and support public education, members who exemplify greatness in the classroom and local affiliates who excel for their members.

Nominations must be received at OEA Headquarters by 5 p.m. Jan. 19. Send nominations so that they arrive by the deadline to OEA Awards, PO Box 18485, Okla. City, OK, 73154; or overnight or hand-deliver them to the OEA at 323 E. Madison, Okla. City, OK, 73105.

The following is an overview of OEA's many awards.

## Board of Directors Awards

Nominations for the following awards must come from a current member of the OEA Board of Directors.

**Friend of Education** – OEA's highest award, the Friend of Education, honors a person who has made significant contributions to the betterment of public education.

**Claude A. Dyer Memorial Award** – Given to an Oklahoma educator who has worked to bring about legislative action for equitable salaries and desirable working conditions, and has rendered leadership and direction in efforts to protect and advance the civil and human rights and responsibilities of educators.

**Political Activist Award** – Given to an individual or organization who exhibits a willingness and determination to promote the goals of the OEA through activities in the political arena.

**Outstanding Legislator** – Presented to legislators for outstanding support of public education and education employees.

## NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence

NEA's most prestigious award is designed to recognize, reward and promote excellence in teaching and advocacy for the profession. Five awardees are selected for The Horace Mann Awards for Teaching Excellence and receive \$10,000 each. One of the five will be selected to receive The NEA Member Benefits Award for Teaching Excellence, an additional \$25,000 cash prize and a commemorative gift.

All current members of an NEA local affiliate or bargaining unit are eligible for nomination, including teachers, education support professionals and higher education faculty and staff.

## Human and Civil Rights Awards

**Kate Frank Award** – Presented to the OEA member and/or local association rendering outstanding and significant service to advancing the cause of member welfare, rights and professionalism.

**Tuskahoma Brown Miller Award** – Presented to a business or group that has contributed significantly to the improvement of education.

**F.D. Moon Educational Award** – Presented to the person who has contributed significantly to the advancement of education for students.

**Glenn Snider Human Relations Award** – Presented to the school district, individual or organization best exemplifying the practice of effective human relations and concerns for human rights.

## Instructional Excellence in Education

**Teachers Teaching Teachers and Teachers Teaching Students**

– To recognize individual OEA members for outstanding contributions in instructional excellence, both with students and colleagues. The awards acknowledge the fact that the quality of education in this country can rise no higher than the quality of teaching.

## Miscellaneous Awards

**Advocate For Academic Freedom** – Honors a person or organization whose contribution to the safeguarding of academic freedom has had a significant impact on the public schools in Oklahoma and the nation.

**OEA Collective Bargaining Award** – Presented to an individual or group making a significant contribution to the advancement of education through the collective bargaining process.

**Education Support Professional Award** – Honoring an individual ESP member whose activities reflect the contributions of an educational support professional to public education.

## Communications Awards

**Marshall Gregory Awards** – Recognizing Oklahoma reporters and broadcasters and their newspapers, radio and television stations for significant efforts to provide continuing and accurate coverage of public schools, current education issues and the OEA. Categories for professionals and for high school journalists are offered.

**Golden Apple Awards** – Recognizing OEA local associations for their consistent efforts to provide quality communications to all of their audiences, including members and other education personnel, local school administration, parents and the community in general.

## Local Affiliate Awards

**5 Star Local Awards** – The OEA 5 Star Local Program is intended to strengthen local association programs and to recognize locals who meet the criteria in each program area. Application deadline for recognition at Delegate Assembly is March 15. The application deadline is June 15 for recognition at a summer leadership event.

# Meet the Staff

If there is one thing that sets the Oklahoma Education Association apart from other education associations, it is the staff. The passion and dedication to the members of OEA, as well as to public education, and the teaching profession are unmatched.

Our professional staff drive thousands of miles a month to work with OEA members before school, during planning times and after school. It's not uncommon for a staff member to leave his or her house before seven in the morning and pull into their driveway at home after seven that night.

The associate staff puts all of its creativity and best ideas forward to help local associations and payroll clerks reconcile membership and overcome obstacles. They support the work of the teams and centers, providing invaluable assistance.

The OEA legal team is by far the best. OEA lawyers are experts in education law, representing members all the way from a board hearing to the U.S. Supreme Court. Some of Oklahoma's education law has been written by OEA attorneys.

The association's management team sets the standard, coordinating programs and services of the OEA and helping members lead their local associations.

In this first issue of *The Digital Education Focus*, we give you glimpse of every OEA employee. You'll read about their background, what drives them and what they see as important about their jobs.

## What is a UniServ?

As you read through this issue, you may notice that the titles of the OEA professional staff all include the term "UniServ." This is a common title among NEA state affiliate staff, more commonly referring to UniServ directors in other states.

Most state affiliates provide services to members through a UniServ system in which a staff person works with locals in a designated area (usually several counties or a number of districts in a designated area). A UniServ director is a generalist, helping locals bargain, providing member rights support, coordinating local lobbying, conducting professional development, assisting with communications and media relations – whatever the local associations need.

Oklahoma followed the UniServ

model until 1995, when we moved to the current model of centers (or departments) and teams. The idea is that every team has a staff member from each of the various centers – Advocacy, Communications, Legislative and Political Organizing, Organizing and Leadership Development and Teaching and Learning.

When OEA first moved to the team concept, each center had six professional staff, allowing for each team to have a member from each center. Today, some center members assist multiple teams.

OEA receives UniServ grants from NEA based on membership numbers. Those grants help pay the salaries of OEA professional staff, hence the use of the term UniServ in our titles.

## OEA Staff

### David DuVall, Executive Director

Rheta Kennedy, Administrative Assistant

Maureen Peters, Administrative Assistant

### Center for Advocacy

#### Richard Wilkinson, General Counsel

Heath W. Merchen, Associate General Counsel

Tim Melton, Associate General Counsel

#### Advocacy Staff:

Annetta Hein, OKC Metro

Jay Owens, OKC Metro

Sheri Childress, Southwest

Rhonda Harlow, Northwest

Melissa Kaltenbaugh, Northeast

Linda Hendrix, Tulsa Metro (TCTA)

Susan Stowe, Tulsa Metro

Cal Ware, Southeast

### Center for Business and Finance

#### David DuVall, Executive Director

James Gilkerson, Comptroller

Kevin Winstead, Accounting Specialist

### Center for Communications

#### Amanda Ewing, Associate Executive Director

#### Communications Staff:

Doug Folks, Communications Specialist

Carrie Coppernoll Jacobs, Social Media Specialist

Bill Guy, Communications Specialist

Jay Williams, Center Assistant

### Center for Facilities and Program Operations

#### David Williams, Associate Executive Director

Rheta Kennedy, Administrative Assistant

Brenda Snider, Membership Consultant

Teresa Davis, Membership Consultant

Lilia Ocampo, Morning Receptionist

Mary Robison, Afternoon Receptionist

### Center for Legal & Corporate Services

#### Richard Wilkinson, General Counsel

Heath W. Merchen, Associate General Counsel

Tim Melton, Associate General Counsel

Melanie Engh, Administrative Assistant

Jaquita May, Legal Assistant

### Center for Legislative & Political Organizing

#### Amanda Ewing, Associate Executive Director

#### LPO Staff:

Trent Ratterree, West

Ivy Riggs, East

Jay Williams, Center Assistant

### Center for Organizing and Leadership Development

#### David Williams, Associate Executive Director

#### Organizing Staff:

Bill Guy, OKC Metro

Bruce Treadaway, Southwest

Patti Serio, Northwest

Jeff Savage, Northeast

Marty Bull, Tulsa Metro

Stacy Bullard, Southeast

Kim Littrell, Student Organizer

Lilia Ocampo, Center Assistant

#### Team Assistants:

Debbie Moore, OKC Metro

Mary Robison, Southwest

Tina Townsend, Tulsa Metro & Northeast

Kim Holley, Southeast

Lilia Ocampo, Northwest

### Center for Teaching and Learning

#### David DuVall, Executive Director

#### T&L Staff:

Mike McIlwee, Northwest & Southeast

Jeanne Owens, Northeast & Tulsa Metro

OKC Metro & Southwest, Vacant

Center Assistant, Vacant

### Center for Technology

#### Heath W. Merchen, Associate General Counsel

John Stapleton, Network Administrator

Debbie Moore, Computer Tech Assistant



# Management Team

## David DuVall

**Executive Director – OEA Tenure: 27 years**

David returned to the Oklahoma Education Association in January 2015 for his second stint as executive director.

He first joined the OEA in 1981, through the years serving as a UniServ manager, bargaining director, research director, communications manager and associate executive director before being named executive director in 1997. He left Oklahoma in 2005 to become executive director for the Colorado Education Association, and assumed the position of NEA Western Region Director in 2008.

As executive director at OEA from 1997-2005, David was instrumental in the creation of the Oklahoma Education Coalition, which unified 12 large public education advocacy groups. Under his leadership, the OEA and other coalition members successfully lobbied the Oklahoma Legislature to pass the largest single teacher pay raise in state history (2000) and to provide state-paid single premium health insurance for all full-time public education employees in Oklahoma (2004).

Before joining the OEA in 1981, David taught English and journalism in the Chickasha and Norman school districts. During his teaching career, David served as president of the Professional Educators of Norman.

## David Williams

**Associate Executive Director  
OEA Tenure: 23 years**

David wears a number of hats as an associate executive director for the OEA. He manages the association's largest department – the Center for Organizing and Leadership Development, which includes six professional staff and six support staff. He's also responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the OEA headquarters and the Tulsa Regional Office buildings.

His passion for collective action comes from his time as a local leader in Edmond, where he taught middle school geography, U.S. history, civics and journalism for 17 years. He also coached golf and basketball.

David joined OEA in 1994 as a UniServ director, later working as an instructional advocacy specialist and an advocacy specialist. He has been part of the management team for nine years now. As an advocacy specialist, he became an expert

at reading pay checks.

Through the years, he has found mistakes on public school paychecks totaling more than \$1 million.

"We are the biggest proponents of public education and public education employees," David said. "We work to empower teachers and support professionals to have a voice regarding working conditions and pay at both the state and district levels. My experience has been that public employees, organized as one voice, have and can have in the future, a tremendous impact on the terms and conditions of their employment."

What few people know is that during the summers when he was a teacher, David caddied on the PGA Tour for pro golfer David Edwards. The two Davids grew up together in Edmond.



## Amanda Ewing

**Associate Executive Director and Chief Lobbyist – OEA Tenure: 5 years**

Amanda is responsible for the Legislative and Political Organizing and Communications centers. She loves that, at its core, everything OEA staff does is associated with the goal of providing Oklahoma's kids with a quality public education.

"Every day is something different," Amanda said, "from lobbying at the Capitol, to meeting with coalition partners, to training members to advocate for their students."

Before coming to OEA, Amanda worked on the Oklahoma State Senate staff as a budget analyst and then co-created and served as the first executive director of the Oklahoma Corrections Professionals, representing employees of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections.

The proud stepmom to two sons and one daughter, all in elementary school, she likes to cook, go to concerts and travel, the latter evidenced by undergraduate study in Spain and law school in The Netherlands.



# Staff Attorneys

## Richard Wilkinson

**General Counsel –  
OEA Tenure: 33 years**

Richard has practiced in the area of education law, public sector labor and employment law, constitutional law and civil rights litigation with the OEA since 1984.

He is admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court; the United States Courts of Appeals for the Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Circuits; and the state and federal courts of Oklahoma and Arizona.



## Tim Melton

**Associate General Counsel  
OEA Tenure: 1 year**

Tim earned his bachelor's degree from Oklahoma State University and his law degree from the University of Oklahoma. He has been admitted to the U.S. Supreme Court, the Oklahoma Supreme Court, the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals and all Oklahoma federal district courts.

Tim came to OEA in 2015, and he said he loves working with professional educators. To him, the protection of the Constitutional and contract rights of our members is the critical part of his work every day. Outside of work, Melton enjoys cycling.



## Heath Merchen

**Associate General Counsel –  
OEA Tenure: 15 years**

Heath graduated with honors from Seattle University School of Law in Washington state and is admitted to the U.S. Supreme Court, the Oklahoma Supreme Court, the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals (where he recently argued and won an appeal on behalf of Oklahoma teachers) and all Oklahoma and Washington State and federal district courts. Heath has been with OEA since 2002 and believes strongly in fighting for the rights of education employees across the state. In his spare time, he teaches jiu jitsu.



## Center for Legal and Corporate Services

OEA's three attorneys provide legal services to members and the state association. The attorneys, all experts in education law, are assisted by a paralegal and a legal secretary. The Center assists members directly when their jobs are on the line, coordinates NEA benefits related to legal services and conducts intake for the Personal Legal Services Program.

PLSP is a benefit of membership, not through a referral service. Many of the PLSP services are free, while others come with five hours of free consultation. The White, Weddle Law Firm in Oklahoma City administers the program.

Members may also receive limited free legal advice and discounted legal services through the NEA Attorney Referral Program. This program allows members to have two free 30-minute consultations per membership year and a 30 percent discount off the attorney's regular hourly rate for personal legal matters that are not job-related.



# Professional Staff

## Marty Bull *Organizing UniServ Specialist, Tulsa Metro Team – OEA Tenure: 29 years*

As an organizer, Marty Bull works with local affiliates in the Tulsa Metro to recruit and retain members, identify new local leaders and to keep their members engaged with the association.

Members who have attended Delegate Assembly would recognize Marty as the person “running the show” from the audio-visual desk at the back of the room. She is the staff liaison to the Education Support Committee, working closely with ESPs not only in the Tulsa Metro but across the state.

It is the wide variety of tasks that she enjoys most about working for the OEA. Marty started as a UniServ director before moving into communications when the association changed from the old UniServ system to the current configuration of teams and centers. She also shared Student OEA organizing duties for a year. She became an organizer when OEA established the Center for Organizing and Leadership Development in 2011.

Marty earned a bachelor’s and a master’s at Oklahoma State University, and then a Certificate of Clinical Competence from the America Speech-Language-Hearing Association. She was a speech pathologist at Waurika, Wewoka and Shawnee public schools before joining the OEA in 1988.

## Stacy Bullard *Organizing UniServ Specialist, Southeast Team – OEA Tenure: 1 year*

Stacy joined the OEA in April 2016 after 11 years as a public school teacher. She taught seventh grade math for 10 years at Henryetta Middle School and served as the district’s STEM coordinator for a year.

While she has only been with the association for a short time, her passion for members and the work of the OEA shines brightly.

“The most important work I do at the OEA is help teachers communicate their needs with one another and their communities,” she said. “I enjoy working with our members to find their

collective voices and affect change for public education in Oklahoma.”

Stacy has a bachelor’s in elementary education from Northeastern State University and a master’s in educational leadership from Southern Nazarene University. Her favorite TV show is “The Walking Dead” and when she’s not at work, she loves live music and chasing her teenage son and daughter to all of their extracurricular activities.



## Sheri Childress *Advocacy UniServ Specialist, Southwest Team – OEA Tenure: 11 years*

Sheri has a bachelor’s in special education, a master’s in reading education and a minor in music education. Before joining OEA, she taught in Oakdale, Noble and Norman Public Schools. She was president of the Professional Educators of Norman and served on the OEA Board of Directors.

As an advocate, Sheri assists members with rights issues such as grievances, discipline and evaluations. She works closely with local bargaining teams, helping them prepare for negotiations and researching contract language.

## Doug Folks *Communications UniServ Specialist OEA Tenure: 21 years*

Doug brought a career’s worth of experience to the OEA when he joined the communications staff in 1996. After earning a bachelor’s degree in journalism/public relations from the University of Central Oklahoma, he worked as a sports writer for the Edmond Sun, sports information director for UCO, communications specialist for Southwestern Bell in St. Louis, vice president of communications for the United Way of Central Oklahoma and account executive for Hays and Associates, a public relations firm in Oklahoma City.

His position at OEA has been one of the most rewarding.

“It has always been important to me to work for a company I believe in,” Doug said. “That became very clear while working for a huge corporate telecommunications company. I believed in public education before I came to the OEA, and that’s what makes it easy to get up and come to work every day.”

Doug has to wear many hats in his job – editor, media relations coordinator, publications designer – but one of his favorite roles is photographer.

“I really enjoy taking photos of our members in the classroom, watching them interacting with students and practicing their craft.”

Doug enjoys playing golf, watching way too much television and traveling. He also loves music and nearly always has something playing in his office.



## Bill Guy *Communications/Organizing UniServ Specialist, Oklahoma City Metro Team OEA Tenure: 10 years*

Bill Guy has enjoyed a career in education that reads more like a travelogue than a resume – two continents, four states, public school and junior college.

He has nearly 28 years of service with four different NEA state affiliates. He started his association career with the OEA in 1991 before leaving for the editor’s job with the Massachusetts Teachers Association in 1997. He later worked in communications with the Tennessee Education Association and the California Teachers Association before returning to his home state and the OEA in 2013.



Prior to joining the Association in 1991, Bill taught in Holdenville and El Reno Public Schools (mostly English), spent four years teaching in Australia and three years as director of public information and an instructor in composition, technical writing and public address.

“It was difficult for me to leave teaching because I loved it so much,” he said, “but by working for OEA and other education associations, I have been able to support the education profession in four different states (and two countries). I believe public education to be the cornerstone of our democratic republic, and working to help support that is more important now than ever.”

A tragedy in Bill’s personal life has inspired him to help parents whose children suffer from the disease of addiction. He recently became qualified as a parent peer coach under a program facilitated by the Partnership for Drug-Free Kids that provides free telephone support to parents and grandparents dealing with substance abuse issues with their children and grandchildren. Earlier this year, he testified before a congressional committee on the opioid crisis in Washington, D.C.

In his spare time, Bill enjoys, “Playing with the grand kids, taking photos and creating digital art in Photoshop with filters, reading good books, making my garden grow and learning about family dysfunction going way back on genealogy websites.”

## Center for Teaching and Learning

From small groups in a building to entire faculties, the OEA Teaching and Learning UniServ Specialists are your go-to experts for professional development. Many of OEA’s trainings are free as long as OEA members are involved. Trainings can be as short as one hour or take several hours for more complex professional development, all of which is available to districts of all sizes.

The center’s complete offering of professional development can be found at [okea.org/professionaldevelopment](http://okea.org/professionaldevelopment). Popular trainings include True Colors, I Can Do It! (classroom management), Bullying Prevention and Degrees Not Debt. In addition, members can find an archive of professional development webinars in the Members Only section of [okea.org](http://okea.org).





**Rhonda Harlow**  
**Advocacy UniServ Specialist, Northwest Team – OEA Tenure: 6 months**

Whether it’s the bargaining process or an individual issue, Rhonda said she wants the members she works for to know she’s ready to serve them.

“It is important to me that members realize OEA is a phone call away,”

Rhonda, who started for OEA in May of this year, said it’s her honor and privilege to work with education employees.

“There are incredible things happening in public education across the state of Oklahoma, and being able to witness it is one of the best parts of this job,” she said. “I also enjoy working with my colleagues. OEA truly has the greatest people working daily to do what is best for public education, its educators and the children of Oklahoma.”

Rhonda earned a bachelor’s in journalism and public relations from Oklahoma State University and a master’s in education and reading from Northwest Oklahoma State University. She’s working on her doctorate in education and social foundations from OSU and has National Board Certification in literacy.

She spent seven years at Hillsdale Christian School and then 12 years in Enid Public Schools as a Title I reading specialist for elementary and middle schools, a literacy coach and a district-wide instructional coach. Rhonda was active in her local, serving as president of the Enid Education Association and was a member of the OEA Board of Directors.

Outside of work, Harlow enjoys spending time with her sons, reading, cooking, music and is admittedly “... a certified nerd. My fan-girl adoration includes, but is not limited to, Star Wars, Star Trek, Dr. Who, Walking Dead, Stranger Things, Harry Potter, Lord of the Rings, X-Men, Batman ...you get the idea!” she said.

**Did you know?**

OEA’s professional staff and associate staff are members of organized labor unions. The Oklahoma Professional Staff Organization (OPSO) and the Associate Staff of Oklahoma (ASO) bargain contracts with OEA management and the OEA Board of Directors and are active participants of the National Staff Organization, which is comprised of staff unions of all NEA affiliates.



**Annetta Hein**  
**Advocacy UniServ Specialist, Oklahoma City Metro Team – OEA Tenure: 9 months**

“OEA members need to know that we are there for them at all times,” Annetta said. “Whether it’s for advice, to accompany them to a meeting or just to listen, representing members is the most important work I do. I enjoy being able to help answer teacher and support employee questions regarding their negotiated agreements, contracts and laws that pertain to schools and their work.”

With a bachelor’s in elementary education, Annetta began working at OEA last winter following a teaching career that included three years at Western Heights Middle School and 14 years teaching various elementary grades in the Yukon school district.

She loves the outdoors, hiking to remote mountain lakes or sitting by the ocean. Riding bikes with her family, working in her flower beds, reading and traveling are also enjoyable past times.



**Linda Hendrix**  
**Advocacy UniServ Specialist, Tulsa CTA OEA Tenure: 21 years**

Linda says her work with teachers in Tulsa Public Schools is exactly where she’s supposed to be.

“I’m in the perfect role for me because I truly like the advocacy part of OEA,” she said. “I like working with teachers and helping them when they have a problem or an issue they are trying to resolve. At the end of the day, it is gratifying to know that the work I do is something that truly matters. I believe in what I do.”



Linda joined the OEA in 1996 as the advocacy specialist for the Northwest Region. She has been the OEA advocate for Tulsa Classroom Teachers Association for almost 18 years.

Before joining OEA, Linda taught fifth and sixth grade at Enid’s Coolidge Elementary for 14 years. She earned a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from Cameron University.

Outside of work, Hendrix enjoys gardening, reading and spending time at home. She and her husband also love spending time with their children and their five grandchildren.

Growing up, Hendrix’s family moved around because of the military. They spent six years in Germany, where her youngest brother and sister were born.

“We spent many weekends packing a picnic basket and visiting the wonderful castles, churches and gardens throughout the country,” she said. “We even traveled across the Swiss Alps in our Opal station wagon!”

**Carrie Coppernoll Jacobs**  
**Social Media Organizing UniServ Specialist OEA Tenure: 9 months**

Carrie is a native of Mountain Home, Ark., and she earned her bachelor’s degree in journalism from the University of Arkansas. During college, she worked as an intern for *The Oklahoman*, and returned to the paper after graduation to continue working as a columnist and a reporter. She’s covered everything from the state prison system to the nonprofit sector to the zoo. Carrie spent the last several years writing about education in Oklahoma City and across Oklahoma.

She left reporting to teach journalism at Putnam City North High School for two years and then worked two years in digital marketing before joining OEA this year.

“I love working for OEA because it combines my skill set with my passion for education,” she said. “If I’m spending the day away from my family, I want to spend that time at work doing something really worthwhile, and that’s what my job at OEA is to me. I feel so proud to say where I work and what I do.”

Carrie is a member of the Oklahoma City Public Schools Board of Education, representing District 3 in western Oklahoma City. She and her husband, Leigh, have two daughters, ages 8 and 3. When she’s not at work or doing school board work, Carrie enjoys spending time volunteering for the Vilakazi Foundation, a nonprofit she and her husband founded to help children in South Africa.



**Kim Littrell**  
**Student OEA Coordinator OEA Tenure: 9 years**

Kim brings unmatched energy and enthusiasm to her position as coordinator for the Student Oklahoma Education Association, traveling across the state to serve the many Student OEA chapters.

She earned two degrees from Northeastern State University – a bachelor’s in English education and a master’s in teaching. Before joining OEA, she spent 10 years in the classroom, teaching language arts at Jay High School, Wagoner High School and Tahlequah High School. She earned National Board Certification in English Language Arts/Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood in 2006.

Before taking the assignment of Student OEA coordinator, Kim spent nine years as a teaching and learning specialist based in the Northeast and providing training across the state.

“I love the daily creativity and challenges of this work,” she said. “No two days are the same, and the interactions and relationships with people make the work very fulfilling. I love the enthusiasm of our student members and the ability to help them become professionals.”

Kim describes herself as an introvert, which many would find questionable, but is apparently true. She loves “gardening and junking” for fun.



**Center for Advocacy**

Advocacy UniServ Specialists provide a wide range of support for members. Whether it’s representing a member during a meeting with a building administrator, counseling a member on how to respond to an evaluation or representing members during a reduction-in-force hearing, OEA advocates are the first line of support for members facing difficult issues.

Local associations that negotiate contracts receive assistance from our advocates while preparing to go to the table and during the bargaining process. Advocates also provide a wide range of training, geared toward the needs of local associations as well as the protection of individual members. Trainings include Responding to Evaluations, Effective Bargaining Practices, How to Read Your Paycheck, Grievance Processing, Teacher/Support Legal Rights and Personal Learning Focus.



Melissa Kaltenbaugh  
Advocacy UniServ Specialist, Northeast Team – OEA Tenure: 4 years

Melissa loves advocating on behalf of OEA members.

“I have always had a big heart and desire to help and protect the underdog – both two- and four-legged,” she said. “And in today’s climate our teachers, kids and schools appear to be the underdog.”

Melissa earned her bachelor’s degree from Pittsburg State University and her master’s from Northeastern State University. Before joining the OEA, she was a classroom teacher for 21 years at Fairland Public Schools and Vinita Public Schools, teaching middle school math, American History and technology.



Mike McIlwee  
Teaching and Learning UniServ Specialist OEA Tenure: 10 years

Mike learned about the OEA from an early age and then became a local and state leader in the association before joining the staff in 2007.

“I am passionate about the mission of the OEA and the NEA. My father was a local leader in the association as I was growing up and instilled in me and all my siblings the idea that we can’t stand by and let things just happen to us,” Mike said. “We must take an active role in determining our futures. We are responsible for ourselves as well as those that will follow.”

Before joining OEA, McIlwee spent 34 years teaching math and science – one year at Garber Elementary and 33 years at Ch-



isholm. During those years, he worked in his local association and served two different times on the OEA Board of Directors, once in the 1980s and again in the 90s.

In his role as a trainer and as a first contact for his schools in the Northwest Region, McIlwee said he enjoys meeting others who want to be the very best educators they can be.

“I really enjoy spending time in schools among our state’s best and brightest,” he said.

Mike earned a bachelor’s degree in elementary and science education from Phillips University and a master’s in education administration from Northwestern Oklahoma State University.

After work, he loves to read fiction novels, especially by authors John Grisham and James Patterson.

Jay Owens  
Advocacy UniServ Specialist, Oklahoma City Metro Team – OEA Tenure: 6 years

Jay didn’t teach before joining the OEA, but he brings a unique skill set to his position as an advocate. He received a bachelor’s in interpersonal communication from the University of Oklahoma and a master’s in counseling psychology from Southern Nazarene University.

In addition, he is a candidate to become a licensed professional counselor. He used his training in human resources, employee relations, conflict resolution and student services in the corporate and educational arenas before joining OEA. It is those same skills that make him a good advocate.

“I enjoy working with individuals who are experiencing difficult circumstances and need guidance through the process,” Jay said. “I also enjoy working with small groups, who are working together for a common purpose, as well as individuals and small groups who are experiencing conflict and need help finding common ground.”

He believes his work at OEA is important. “It matters,” he said. “It matters that all children, from all walks of life, have the right to a great public education. I believe this is best achieved by employing the best teachers, support employees and administrative leadership. I also believe it’s more important to teach kids how to learn, as opposed to what to learn. OEA contributes to these ideals and strives to advance the importance of education.”



Jeanne Owens  
Teaching and Learning UniServ Specialist OEA Tenure: 5 months

Jeanne earned both her degrees from the University of Oklahoma – a bachelor’s in English and a master’s in education. After college, she went on to teach for 34 years. She spent 20 years teaching middle school language arts in Norman, and then she spent another 14 teaching English IV and AP Literature at Muskogee High School and working as an instructional coach. Owens earned her National Board Certification in 2002.

Jeanne said she loves serving OEA members and being part of the association’s efforts to improve education for teachers and students statewide.

“I like being out in districts and getting to see what public education looks like across the state,” she said. “More than anything, I love meeting and working with teachers throughout the state. They have been amazing!”

Outside of work, Jeanne is a certified Tai Chi instructor and is working toward certification as a life coach. She and her husband enjoy camping, walking their dog and attending classic rock concerts. She also has two obsessions: getting in 10,000 FitBit steps every day and the television show “Survivor.”



Trent Ratterree  
LPO UniServ Specialist, Southwest Team OEA Tenure: just hired

Trent is the association’s newest employee, joining the staff on November 27.

Most recently, he was a policy analyst with the Oklahoma State Department of Health, conducting research and writing briefs and reports relating to policy issues. He also helped develop legislation for the agency.

Trent was an intern for the Oklahoma Policy Institute, assisting with legislative outreach. His other experience included that of legislative assistant to two state representatives; teen program coordinator and youth development professional for the Boys and Girls Club of Oklahoma County and as house parent for the Norman Adolescent Group Home.

Trent has a bachelor’s in multi-disciplinary studies from the University of Oklahoma and is nearing completion of a master’s in public administration from the University of Central Oklahoma. Sooner football fans will remember him as a four-year letterman as a walk-on tight end, winning the Derrick Shepard Most Inspirational Walk-On award three times.

Outside of work, he is an active volunteer, including serving as an executive board member of Let’s Fix This, a nonprofit that encourages voting and citizen lobbying; and as an administrative volunteer for El Sistema Oklahoma, an after-school orchestra program serving children ages 8-15.



### Center for Communications

OEA’s communications specialists share the association’s message on a variety of platforms. *The Education Focus* magazine and digital editions serve as the flagship communications vehicle. The center also produces the OEA Connected blog, Legislative Updates and Alerts, and monitors and posts to social media, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and now Snapchat.

Communications also works with advertising and public relations agencies in the production of advertising and videos, populates and edits the website (okea.org), coordinates with local, state and national media wanting to interview OEA officials on education issues and legislation; and coordinates the association’s Read Across America celebration.

At the local level, the center provides communications trainings, logo and brand development and publication design.



**Ivy Riggs**  
*LPO UniServ Specialist, Southeast Team*  
**OEA Tenure: 5 years**

Ivy earned her bachelor’s degree in physical education from the University of Central Oklahoma. After graduation, she taught science for 15 years at Mustang Middle School, serving as the president of the Mustang Education Association for several years before joining the OEA in 2012.

“I really believed in what we did as the OEA,” Ivy said of why she wanted to work for the association. “I was ready for a change from the classroom, and this was a natural progression to continue to make a difference for public education.”

She splits her time between legislative duties and organizing for the Southeast Region. In her legislative role, she tracks bills, lobbies lawmakers and shares updates with members.

“I find the legislative process fascinating,” Ivy said. “I love being part of that and truly advocating for what is happening in classrooms across the state. I love being able to share what’s going on at the Capitol with our members and helping them engage.”

Outside of work, Ivy and her husband enjoy riding motorcycles. She also likes to read and spend time with her family. Both her son and daughter serve in the Navy – her daughter is stationed in Hawaii, and her son is stationed in Cuba.



**Jeff Savage**  
*Organizing UniServ Specialist, Northeast Team – OEA Tenure: 21 years*

“Working for the only real advocate for public education in Oklahoma,” is how Jeff Savage describes what is most important to him about working for OEA.

Jeff started with OEA in the fall of 1996 as an Organizational Development Specialist. He later worked in the Center for Communications before joining the Center for Organizing and Leadership Development in his current position.

“What I enjoy most about my work with the association is meeting and working with our great members,” he said. As an organizer, Jeff helps locals develop plans for membership recruitment and activities that keep members engaged and active in the association.

Jeff earned a bachelor’s in science education at Southwestern Oklahoma State University and a master’s of education from the University of Central Oklahoma. Before joining the OEA, he spent 12 years at Waller Junior High School in Enid where he taught math, computer lab, physical education and health and first aid. He also coached football and boys track and field.

In the summer of 1995, Jeff and his family spent three months coordinating volunteers in Bosnia during that country’s war. When he’s not working with members in the Northeast Region, Jeff enjoys spending time with his wife and family, traveling, riding his motorcycle and watching football.



**Patti Serio**  
*Organizing UniServ Specialist, Northwest Team – OEA Tenure: 16 years*

Patti has had three different assignments during her career at OEA, but it has always been the members she works with who inspire her.

“I like working with people,” said Patti, who earned a bachelor’s in elementary education from Oklahoma State University. “OEA members are the best of the best. Working together to better the education of Oklahoma’s educational professionals and students is incredibly rewarding.”

She believes her work at OEA helps teachers and support professionals beyond their jobs.

“Making a difference, no matter how large or small, is what’s important to me,” Patti said of her work at OEA. “Knowing that because of this organization, someone has had their profession and their life bettered.”

Patti’s first position with OEA was that of a dual role as a small school specialist helping local associations in rural schools throughout the state and in communications. In 2011, she moved into the Center for Organizing and Leadership Development. Prior to joining the association, she taught for 21 years with stints in Woodward, Mustang and Piedmont. Her teaching assignments included middle school language arts, math, social studies and fifth grade.

Anyone who has met Patti has seen her big smile and heard her easy laugh. Away from the office, she enjoys playing golf and anything that makes her laugh.



**Bruce Treadaway**  
*Organizing UniServ Specialist, Southwest Team – OEA Tenure: 26 years*

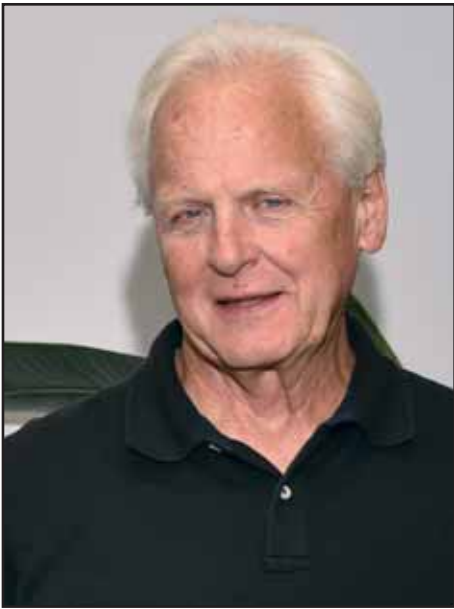
Bruce believes helping members organize themselves to face the opponents of public education is the most important aspect of his work with OEA, Student OEA and Retired OEA groups.

“Public education is under attack on a number of fronts, and if we don’t stand up for ourselves, no one will,” he says.

Many OEA members know Bruce as the Association’s face of Read Across America and an expert on Dr. Seuss. He has actively promoted the reading initiative from the program’s beginning, often dressing up as Cat in the Hat or the unnamed yellow dog featured in Green Eggs and Ham.

Bruce previously taught speech and English and coached for seven years at Lookeba-Sickles High School and for 14 years at Minco High School. He also worked with the El Reno Community College (now Redlands Community College) Upward Bound Program. He earned a bachelor’s from the Oklahoma College of Liberal Arts (now University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma) and a master’s from Southwestern Oklahoma State University.

Since 1957, he and his brother have raised cattle on a 100-year-old ranch west of Minco. At a family retreat on Lake Fort Cobb, he enjoys playing with grandkids and watching them grow up. He has been known to make occasional visits to some of Oklahoma’s casinos.



## Center for Organizing and Leadership Development

OEA’s Organizing UniServ Specialists help local associations organize around issues, recruit and retain members and build strong foundations to support members on the local level. Most people join the association for local reasons and our organizers help locals provide value to their members. The New Educator Involvement campaign and OEA’s Together We’re Stronger campaign are just two of the programs our organizers bring to local associations. The center also hosts the annual Organizing Conference.





**Susan Stowe**  
*Advocacy UniServ Specialist, Tulsa Metro Team – OEA Tenure: 33 years*

Susan earned both bachelor’s and master’s degrees in early childhood education from the University of Central Oklahoma. After college, she worked as a kindergarten teacher for seven years in Putnam City Schools. She spent one year as the full-time release president of the Putnam City Association of Classroom Teachers. During her OEA career, Susan also worked in the Center for Organizing, the Center for Teaching and Learning and as a UniServ Director.

She is also a certified interpreter and a certified host with the National Association for Interpretation.



# Cal Ware

## Advocacy UniServ Specialist, Southeast Team – OEA Tenure: 5 years

Cal says “fighting the good fight” is what he enjoys most about his work as an advocate.

“It’s important that we convince legislators they represent and work for the citizens and children of Oklahoma and not special interest groups like Big Oil and Gas and large corporations. It’s just as important that we help our members bargain for working environments that are conducive to the most effective learning environments possible,” he said.

Cal joined the Center for Advocacy in 2012 after a 16-year teaching career. He taught kindergarten for six years and second grade for 10 years, with assignments in El Reno and Yukon. He earned a bachelor’s in early childhood education from the University of Central Oklahoma and a master’s in educational leadership from Southern Nazarene University.

His teaching background helps fuel his passion as an advocate. “I’m truly passionate about improving public education in Oklahoma because I know that good public education that has been fully invested in is the foundation of a productive and profitable society,” he said. “Every child in Oklahoma deserves the best we can give them, not simply packing them into schools in the cheapest manner possible.”

Away from the office, Cal enjoys spending time with friends and family at the Ware family cabin on Lake Texoma.

# OEA’s Organizational Chart

The makeup of the OEA, as well as all NEA state affiliates, is somewhat unique in the world of business. The president and vice president work full time for the OEA, but they do not manage the staff. The officers are elected by membership and can serve up to two, three-year terms. They are on leaves of absence from their home school districts, and their pay and benefits are determined by board policy.

OEA has four categories of employees (not counting governance):

- Management team** – led by the executive director and supervisors for all employees.
- Professional staff** – the first contact for OEA members. They coordinate all OEA programs and deliver services.
- Associate staff** – support for professional staff and team and center activities.
- Confidential staff** – at-will employees, including the attorneys, comptroller and administrative assistants.



# Associate Staff

## Teresa Davis

### Membership Processor

### OEA Tenure: 31 years

“Working with OEA members who do such challenging jobs in public education by providing them and our locals with the most current and accurate reports and information I can is both important and enjoyable,” Teresa said.

Her previous employment was as an office assistant in sales for Republic Supply Co., an oil supply and equipment company with stores throughout the region.

As a church youth director for six years, she spent several vacations as a volunteer camp counselor and helped organize a clown ministry.

“This gave me the skills and make-up techniques to support the association’s Read Across America programs,” she said. Teresa dressed as Thing 1 and participated in several RAA events sponsored by OEA through the years.

In her leisure time, she enjoys flower gardening, church activities, spending time with family and friends and her beloved rescue dog Bentley and cats Benny and Sissy. She also loves creative writing and thinks she may have a book in her heart that she’ll eventually put on paper.



## Kim Holley

### Southeast Team Assistant

### OEA Tenure: 26 years

Members across the Southeast know Kim. She has been the Southeast Team Assistant for 26 years, staffing the regional office in Shawnee until it was closed and now working out of the Oklahoma City headquarters.

Kim processes membership for locals in the Southeast and works with payroll clerks to reconcile their accounts. She also provides assistance to staff members on the Southeast Team.

Before joining the OEA, she was a mortgage lender at Bancfirst and First Federal Savings and Loan. Kim attended Oklahoma State University before starting her professional career.

The most enjoyable aspects of her job are “... my members, my team and my other coworkers. What’s most important to me about my work at OEA is supporting public education and taking care of my members when they need help.”

Away from OEA, Kim and her husband Lonnie own a small commercial construction company. They love watching any University of Oklahoma sport, playing with their three grandchildren, camping, dancing and visiting our state’s casinos.



## Jaquita May

### Legal Secretary – OEA Tenure: 4 years

Jaquita was a stay-at-home mother before joining the Center for Legal and Corporate Services in 2013.

She enjoys serving Oklahoma’s teachers by helping them connect with the Personal Legal Services Program. When she’s not working, Jaquita enjoys trying new restaurants and walking around downtown Oklahoma City.





**Debbie Moore**  
**Oklahoma City Metro Team Assistant and Computer Tech – OEA Tenure: 33 years**

A 33-year OEA employee, Debbie works as the Oklahoma City Metro Team Assistant and as a computer tech. She has an associate degree from Oklahoma State University and is a Cisco Certified Network Administrator. Before coming to OEA, she was an administrative assistant in the OU College of Dentistry. “I love my job because I get to work for OEA staff, helping them in their efforts to assist and represent OEA members,” she said. “I believe in the issues OEA stands for, so it makes me feel good that I can have a part in achieving those goals.” She enjoys reading, going to movies, travel and spending time with family and friends.



**Lilia Ocampo**  
**Organizing and Leadership Development Center Assistant, Northwest Team Assistant and Receptionist – OEA Tenure: 12 years**

Lilia started with OEA as a secretary in the Center for Legal and Corporate Affairs in 2005. She later worked as the administrative assistant in Teaching and Learning before moving into her current positions. In addition to her duties as an assistant to the Northwest team and the Organizing center, she is the morning receptionist and supports the Student OEA program coordinator. “I love seeing the dedication of our members for their profession and for their passion,” Lilia said. “My most important work is being able to help our members.” You could say Lilia has grown up at the OEA. She joined the association just a year after graduating from Putnam City West High School. She also has completed courses at City College.



**Mary Robison**  
**Southwest Team Assistant, Receptionist OEA Tenure: 9 years**

Mary joined OEA after working on an education ballot initiative in 2008 where she fostered a dedication for public education and helping members. “I love the people I work with inside of and outside of the office,” she said. “I love what OEA represents. I like that we are always trying to do the right thing for the teachers and support staff and never give up on that.” Mary worked at C.R. Anthony’s department store in sales, accounting and, eventually, as an assistant manager. As a stay-at-home mom raising kids, she served as PTA president at Broadmoore Elementary in Moore before working on the ballot initiative. Today, Mary works with payroll clerks and local leaders in the Southwest, reconciling their membership records and assisting the team’s work in the zones. She also serves as the afternoon receptionist at OEA headquarters. The relationships she has built with payroll clerks, support staff and teachers are important to her work at OEA. “Being reliable, trustworthy and always willing to help our members resolve their issues or find someone who can is very important to me,” she said. “I like that the members and the team know they can trust me to get things done.” Away from the office, Mary is a big sports fan. Hockey is her favorite, but she enjoys football and basketball, too. Mary loves spending time with her three kids and her grandson.



**Brenda Snider**  
**Membership Processor OEA Tenure: 37 years**

Brenda has spent the last 37 years providing support related to the association’s Interactive Membership Services program. She helps create solutions to problems that OEA local associations, district payroll clerks and members encounter related to dues processing, membership records and data processing. Before joining the OEA staff, she worked as a receptionist in a doctor’s office and in medical records at Mercy Hospital in Oklahoma City. Something she takes special pride in is implementing the ability for OEA members to join the association online via credit card, electronic funds transfer or payroll deduction.

“Working at OEA has given me the chance to learn new programs, travel and work with membership staff in other states. Leadership opportunities to teach others new skills is the thing I enjoy most about my work.” Camping with her husband and three grown children, reading and teaching Sunday School are things Brenda enjoys outside of work.



**Tina Townsend**  
**Team Assistant, Tulsa Metro & Northeast Teams – OEA Tenure: 12 years**

The first voice members hear when they call OEA’s Tulsa Regional Office is probably Tina’s. She is the team assistant for the Tulsa Metro and Northeast Regional Teams. “I wear many hats working for the TRO,” Tina said. “Each hat I wear has given me the opportunity to meet many people in different positions.” In addition to providing support for the two teams housed at the TRO, Tina processes memberships for schools in those two regions. That means she talks not only with local association presidents, but also payroll clerks from across the region, reconciling membership numbers and troubleshooting issues. Tina earned a bachelor’s in business administration from the University of Arkansas. She also has professional certifications in Decision One Technical Support, Management Skills and FBI Security and Safety. Before joining the OEA, she worked in technical support at Sprint PCS. Tina and her husband have been married for 25 years and they have three adult daughters.



**Kevin Winstead**  
**Accounting Specialist OEA Tenure: 13 years**

Accounting Specialist Kevin Winstead will complete 14 years of OEA employment early in 2018. He has an associate’s degree in accounting from Oklahoma City Community College and previously managed a population of 100,000 recipients for Soonercare (Medicaid) at Heartland Healthcare of Oklahoma. He describes his job as “squeezing every last cent of every membership dollar and questioning every OEA expense like it’s my very own.” He says his job at OEA is the hardest job he has ever learned to love, but “there’s never a day I do not want to come in and work my eight hours.” He likes to smoke barbecue, play disc golf and travel.



**Jay Williams**  
**Communications and Legislative and Political Organizing Center Assistant OEA Tenure: 6 months**

Jay is the center assistant for the Legislative and Political Organization and Communications centers. He joined OEA this year because he said he wanted to be part of the mission. Williams earned his bachelor’s degree in anthropology from the University of Oklahoma. He served in the U.S. Army for 24 years. “I jumped out of airplanes, rappelled from helicopters and mountains, climbed mountains, was a door gunner in a Blackhawk attack helicopter in the Army, but I’m secretly afraid of heights,” he said. Outside of work, Williams said he enjoys reading and binge watching good TV shows with his wife.





# Confidential Staff

## Melanie Engh

**Paralegal/Administrative Assistant**

**OEA Tenure: 20 years**

Melanie received paralegal program training at Southwestern Oklahoma State University and the University of Oklahoma.

Before coming to OEA, she worked as an administrative assistant and clerk for Judges Monroe, Markum and Duncan at the Custer County Courthouse in Arapaho.

She says assisting OEA members is the most enjoyable part of her work for the association.



## James Gilkerson

**Comptroller**

**OEA Tenure: 5 years**

“Even though I do my part indirectly, I still get to make a positive impact on public education,” James says about his work for the association.

Before coming to the OEA, he worked in accounting departments at The Benham Companies (SAIC), the Hertz Corporation and American Fidelity.

“In those very large organizations, I mainly just saw segments of the business, but I really enjoy the opportunity OEA gives me to see and work with the whole picture.”



James is a graduate of Quincy University in Illinois, and earned his CPA in 2001. Doing things with his family is what he enjoys most, but he also likes to travel, watch movies, read and watch the Fighting Illini win basketball games. He says writing five minutes of stand-up and consideration of participation in an open mic night is something most people wouldn't know about him.

## John Stapleton

**Network Administrator**

**OEA Tenure: 7 years**

John was a professional horseman in the 1980s and 90s, “. . . until an information technology gig came along, paying enough to actually cover rent AND food.” He previously worked as an IT Systems Design Architect.

Stapleton enjoys opportunities to learn and grow in his job and the freedom to try new things. When asked his favorite thing about working at OEA, he first said, “the outstanding people I work with.”

Traveling, landscaping and running are pastimes he enjoys when not keeping OEA's computer network running smoothly.



plan OEA's annual Delegate Assembly and planning and attending OEA member participation in the National Education Association's annual Representative Assembly.

Enjoying time with her husband of 37 years, her daughter and grandson and her parents are special past times and she also enjoys camping in spring and summer months.

## Maureen Peters

**Administrative Assistant**

**OEA Tenure: 33 years**

“The variety of work and the people I work with at OEA are what I enjoy most about my work,” Maureen said.

Variety has been a constant in her 33-year career with the association. Maureen previously served as an assistant for the Communications and Teaching and Learning centers. She has also worked as a receptionist and as an assistant in the Affiliate Relations and Bargaining Departments whose responsibilities have been distributed to current centers.

Today, Maureen is the administrative assistant to OEA's elected officers. She maintains their calendars, assists with their travel plans and provides support for the OEA Board of Directors.

“I think it's important that I work for an organization that stands for and represents education for the future of our kids, and in my case, my grandkids,” she said.

Before joining OEA in 1984, she worked as an inventory and customer service representative for Evans Furniture. Outside of work, Maureen enjoys going to casinos, taking cruises, line dancing, swing dancing and spending time with family and friends.



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## Rheta Kennedy

**Administrative Assistant**

**OEA Tenure: 7 years**

As administrative assistant to the OEA Executive Director, Rheta says the most important aspect of her work is the vantage point it gives her to see the passion and commitment of OEA staff members to OEA teacher and education support professional members.

Before joining the OEA, she worked for the Oklahoma Lumbermen's Association and as an executive assistant to an Amarillo, Texas, bank owner.

She says the most enjoyable aspects of her work include working with the OEA Board of Directors, helping



## Student OEA

Education majors at colleges and universities are eligible for membership in the Student OEA. They represent the future of the teaching profession and are most likely to be future active members of the OEA.

The Student OEA State Coordinator assists student chapters with recruitment and works with state SOEA officers to provide professional development and networking at the Fall Conference, Spring Convention and Outreach to Teach.

The SOEA president is a voting member of the OEA Board of Directors, and the student officers are all appointed to OEA committees.





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