

OSU Emeriti Association: 2024 At A Glance

Mike Woods, 2024 President

The OSU Emeriti Association has a rich history with 36 years of activity and contributions to the culture of our beloved university. I genuinely enjoy the interactions and celebrations we all experience as members of the Association. Gary Sherrer passed the gavel to me in January 2024. I had many outstanding role models including Gary, Kent Sampson, Mike Lorenz and other previous presidents. Now, Carolyn Gang assumes the role of president. I know Carolyn and the incoming Council will do an excellent job. The year 2024 was eventful with a few challenges that were met ably by Council members and our volunteers.

Our Monday Night Dinners continued to be a highlight for our association. I always notice the social interaction and joy members exhibit when seeing old friends for the evening. Mary and I have grown to anticipate these dinners as a highlight for each month. It takes a team to plan the dinners from sending out RSVP requests, monitoring attendance, preparing name tags, securing venues, arranging for a caterer, hosting the reception, to scheduling an interesting speaker. The efforts of so many make these dinners happen! Really, what more can you ask for? Great friends, tasty food, an interesting speaker, and a gathering of so many of us who “bleed orange”!

A few events occurred in 2024 that helped us to grow and better understand our organization. Our Association benefits from partnerships with the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) and the Provost’s Office. We share a staff person with OLLI, and this really helps keep our back office running. In mid-year, the current staff person moved across campus to another job, and both we and OLLI were short-handed. Our Association Council and our volunteers stepped up and we kept operating for the remainder of the year. Thankfully, the position is now filled; and we look forward to the continued partnership with OLLI. About the same time in 2024, weather events happened! In Oklahoma, you know the weather can change quickly. We had weather events to deal with on two Monday Night Dinner dates. We learned how to better manage our membership database ourselves and how to quickly communicate with our members.

Our Executive Committee met during the summer of 2024 to review and discuss our financial funds and policies we have in place to guide decisions. We also benefitted from new Association member Donna Koeppe joining us to help us better understand our OSU Foundation funds. We were pleased to confirm our overall financial position remains very bright. In early 2024, our Council made the difficult decision to raise the fee for our Monday Night Dinners from \$15 per person to \$20. This is the first increase in this expense in over a decade and was due to the rise in food and catering costs as our world emerged from the pandemic. As a result of this decision, no subsidy to support Monday Night Dinners was required from our Association reserve fund for the first time in years. Thanks to Clem Ward for handling catering/venue arrangements so well! I know Bob LeValley will do a fantastic job moving forward. Our November 30, 2024, (most recent available at this writing) checking account balance was \$2,619.49. We had three CDs at \$5,339.73, \$4025.49, and \$3,500.00. Our OSU Foundation Endowment Fund had a balance of \$67,759.05, and our Scholarship Fund had a balance of \$57,990.21.

Our membership numbers stayed stable in 2024 at around four hundred in total. Mike Lorenz does an excellent job recruiting new members as OSU faculty and staff retire. We also find “word of mouth” from current members is a terrific way to recruit new members.

Our partnership with the OSU Alumni Center is outstanding and appreciated. Ann Caine supports our organization and is great to work with. We have an office on the second floor of the Alumni Center to house our records and files as well as our desktop computer, which is essential for our organization. We have Emeriti volunteers who assist the Alumni Center in hosting the fall tailgate events prior to home football games. Joyce Sherrer led the way in this activity as our Ambassador Chairperson.

Our partnership with OLLI is great. Robyn Davis is a delight to work with. We have many members who enjoy the excellent educational programs offered by OLLI. What a wonderful year for our Emeriti Association! It is an honor to collaborate with our members and elected leadership. I look forward to many more years of successful efforts supporting Oklahoma State University!