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# The Order of the Owl: Three Alumni Inducted into Hall of Fame

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# *The* **ORDER** *of the*

## THREE ALUMNI INDUCTED INTO HALL OF FAME

BY MACKENZIE A. DILBECK AND JONELLA FRANK

The OU College of Law honored three outstanding alumni at its annual Order of the Owl Hall of Fame dinner and induction ceremony March 6. A record-setting 540 alumni, faculty, staff and friends filled the Molly Shi Boren Ballroom in Oklahoma Memorial Union for dinner and the induction ceremony. OU Law alumni honored were David B. Lewis ('83), Judy Hamilton Morse ('79) and Steven W. Taylor ('74).

Calling the Order of the Owl Hall of Fame evening one of his favorite events of the academic year, Dean Joe Harroz welcomed attendees, acknowledged dignitaries and introduced the newest members of the OU chapter of the Order of the Coif. Fourteen 2016 graduates and three new faculty members, Roger M. Michalski, Melissa Mortazavi and Joshua S. Sellers, were elected into the legal scholastic honor society. In addition, Stanley L. Evans, former dean of students, was selected by the chapter as its 2016 honorary member.

"Each of this year's inductees represents the best of OU Law," said Harroz. "We are honored to recognize their many accomplishments and are indebted to them for the legacy of service they model for generations of OU Law students."

Harroz spoke about each of the honorees, enumerating professional achievements and reading comments from friends and colleagues. One by one, the inductee and a student presenter joined Harroz on stage for the presentation of the owl sculpture symbolizing membership in the Order of the Owl Hall of Fame. Each of them spoke briefly after receiving the award.

The evening was capped off with the singing of the OU Chant, led by Gerard Michael D'Emilio, award-winning bass-baritone and 2L law student.



# OWL



David B. Lewis, Judy Hamilton Morse and Steven W. Taylor are the most recent inductees into the Order of the Owl.



## David B. Lewis

CLASS OF 1983

David B. Lewis is the first African-American to serve on the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals, having been appointed to the court in 2005. He served as presiding judge of the court from 2013 to 2014.

Before becoming a judge, Lewis spent three years in private practice and four years as a Comanche County prosecutor. Later, he was a special judge from 1991 to 1999 and a district judge for Comanche, Stephens, Jefferson and Cotton counties from 1999 to 2005.

Lewis has held numerous leadership and civic positions, including president of the Oklahoma Judicial Conference. He was a member of the Class of 2008 Henry Toll Fellowship Program of the Council of State Governments and has served as past chairman of Reach Out and Read Oklahoma. He currently is a fellow of both the Oklahoma Bar Foundation and the American Bar Association; co-chair of the Oklahoma Bar Association Bench and Bar Committee; a member of the board of directors for the Girl Scouts of Western Oklahoma; and also is a member of the OU College of Law Board of Visitors.

Stan West, president of the Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher Black Law Students Association, presented Lewis' award.



Joe Harroz, David B. Lewis, Stan West

"I got to know Judge Lewis during my last semester of law school. As many of you know, he is a very dynamic and inspirational person. He told me I needed to give back to my community and show them success was possible, and so I did."

### RUTH J. ADDISON ('07)

Crowe & Dunlevy

"David is a shining example of the values this award celebrates. I can think of no one who has spent more time mentoring law students to become great lawyers. David comes from humble beginnings. He is the eldest of three children raised by an amazing single mother. Ms. Lewis impressed upon her children the value of hard work, instilled in them self-determination, and taught them to be courageous and to never give up. David fulfilled his dream of becoming a successful trial lawyer, a prosecutor, and having the courage and the distinguished honor to become the second African-American district court judge in the state of Oklahoma to win a county-wide election."

### TOM J. COLBERT ('82)

Oklahoma Supreme Court



## Judy Hamilton Morse

CLASS OF 1979

Judy Hamilton Morse was the first woman to serve as president of a major law firm in Oklahoma. She held the role at her current firm, Crowe & Dunlevy, for three years. She currently is a director in the firm's Oklahoma City office and is the immediate past chair of the litigation and trial practice groups. Morse is an experienced trial lawyer, having spent her career focused on litigation and trial

practice, as well as bankruptcy and creditors' rights.

She is an elected member of both the Litigation Counsel of America and the International Defense Counsel Association. Last year, she was elected as a fellow of the American College of Bankruptcy Attorneys. She also is a member of the OU College of Law Board of Visitors.

For more than 20 years, Morse has been listed in *Best Lawyers* and was recently named the publication's 2017 Oklahoma City "Lawyer of the Year" in the area of banking and finance litigation. Last year, Morse was recognized as one of the "Top 250 Women in Litigation" by *Benchmark Litigation*, the definitive guide to the country's leading female litigators. *Super Lawyers* also named Morse one of Oklahoma's "Top 50 Lawyers" last year, and for seven consecutive years has recognized her as one of Oklahoma's "Top 25 Female Lawyers."

Megan Anson, president of the Student Bar Association, presented Morse's award.



Joe Harroz, Judy Hamilton Morse, Megan Anson

"Judy has more stamina, works longer and accomplishes more than anyone else. She is a tough, fair and effective advocate, able to bring matters to a successful conclusion when others could not. She is unfailingly kind to everyone. Judy is one of those few extraordinary people who has the character and determination to excel despite the odds; to stay "all in the game" when others would fold; and to be true to herself despite the cost. She is truly 'a woman for all seasons.'"

### BROOKE MURPHY

Crowe & Dunlevy

"Thomas Jefferson would have loved Judy Hamilton Morse. She has given real life to his dream of 'an aristocracy of achievement arising out of a democracy of opportunity.' Overcoming obstacles that would have discouraged others, she persevered and with brilliance and skill achieved outstanding distinction as a lawyer. And, she has done it all with elegance and grace. Thanks, Judy, for helping make up for the shortcomings of many of us older 'Owls.' You make us all look better!"

### RALPH G. THOMPSON ('61)

U.S. District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma



## Steven W. Taylor

### CLASS OF 1974

Steven W. Taylor has spent his life serving the United States and the people of Oklahoma. He joined the U.S. Marine Corps in 1970 and served on active duty from 1974 to 1978. He was trained as an infantry platoon commander and later served as a prosecutor and chief defense counsel. In 1977, he became the youngest judge in the U.S.

Armed Forces. He was promoted to the rank of major.

Following active duty service, Taylor practiced law in McAlester, Oklahoma, and was later elected mayor, making him the youngest mayor in that city's history. In 1984, he was appointed associate district judge for Pittsburg County, and was later elected district judge of the 18th Judicial District in 1994. In 2004, he was appointed to the Oklahoma Supreme Court, where he served as chief justice from 2011 to 2013. In his 20 years as a trial judge, Taylor presided over more than 500 jury trials, including the state trial of the Oklahoma City bombing case.

Taylor has been honored with the Oklahoma Bar Association Award of Judicial Excellence, the OU Regents' Alumni Award, and induction into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame and the Oklahoma State University Hall of Fame. He also is a member of the OU College of Law Board of Visitors. In December 2016, after nearly 33 years of judicial service to Oklahoma, Taylor retired from the Oklahoma Supreme Court.

Michael Nash, editor-in-chief of the *Oklahoma Law Review*, presented Taylor's award. |SL|



Joe Harroz, Steven W. Taylor, Michael Nash

"I don't think I know anyone as grounded, stable, honest, loyal and committed to Oklahoma as Steve Taylor. He sees everyone as equals and truly cares about their lives. The love and passion we probably share the most is all things Thunder. He is a big part of the Thunder family, attending most every game in his seat, which he has held since day one. He spends time in the family room before the game and at halftime, where he has become a meaningful fixture for family members of players, coaches and staff. He takes time to provide thought, counsel and good humor for these important people who are now making Oklahoma their home, and they consider him a good friend."

### CLAY BENNETT

OU Regent and chairman of the Oklahoma City Thunder

"My dear friend, Justice Steven Taylor, is well known for his composed command of the courtroom, his diligent attention to detail and his amazing legal acuity. Indeed, few have matched the extraordinary excellence of Justice Taylor's lengthy judicial career, spanning from the trial court to the highest appellate bench in the state. However, it's his steadfast commitment to the service of others that stands out in my mind. As I often say, 'Service is the rent you pay for the space you occupy.' Steven Taylor has paid, and continues to pay, his rent many times over. He is the quintessential public servant. Bless you, my friend. If only we had more like you."

### BRAD HENRY ('88)

Former Oklahoma Governor

Since the **Order of the Owl** was established in 2011, 20 deserving OU Law alumni previously have been inducted and honored:

Thomas R. Brett ('57)  
 Bill W. Burgess Jr. ('80)  
 Michael Burrage ('74)  
 Robin J. Cauthron ('77)  
 Andrew M. Coats ('63)

Tom J. Colbert ('82)  
 James T. Comfort ('57)  
 William T. Comfort Jr. ('61)  
 Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher ('51)  
 James L. Gallogly ('77)

Noma D. Gurich ('78)  
 William G. Paul ('56)  
 W. DeVier Pierson ('57)  
 J. Hugh Roff Jr. ('55)  
 William J. Ross ('54)

Kathy Taylor ('81)  
 Ralph G. Thompson ('61)  
 Lee West ('56)  
 Reggie Whitten ('80)  
 Alma Bell Wilson ('41)



Family and friends of Judge David B. Lewis celebrate with him following the induction ceremony.



Stan Evans ('03), former dean of students and 2017 Order of the Coif honorary member (center), stands with professors Jonathan Forman and Katheleen Guzman, faculty advisers to OU Law's Order of the Coif chapter.



Close friends of Judy Hamilton Morse gather around her for a photo to commemorate the evening. Pictured (from left) are Steve Calonkey, Susy Calonkey, Don Sickles, Trudy Sickles, Judy Hamilton Morse, David Morse ('79), Karen Rieger ('81) and Andy Rieger.