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# Order of the Owl Hall of Fame: Four Alumni Inducted in 2016 Class

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# Order of the Owl



The newest members of the Order of the Owl are Bill W. Burgess Jr., Tom J. Colbert, Noma D. Gurich and James L. Gallogly.

# Hall of Fame:

## Four alumni inducted in 2016 class

BY MACKENZIE DILBECK AND JONELLA FRANK

Four distinguished OU College of Law alumni were honored March 9 at the fifth annual Order of the Owl Hall of Fame event. A record crowd of 520 alumni and friends of OU Law filled the Molly Shi Boren Ballroom in Oklahoma Memorial Union for dinner and the induction ceremony of Bill W. Burgess Jr. ('80), Tom J. Colbert ('82), James L. Gallogly ('77) and Noma D. Gurich ('78).

Dean Joe Harroz opened the evening by recognizing special guests and introducing the newest members of the OU chapter of the legal scholastic honor society, Order of the Coif. Newly elected members include 15 graduates from the Class of 2015 as well as honorary member, David A. Poarch ('77), former assistant dean for external relations at OU Law.

Harroz called on OU President David L. Boren ('68) for opening remarks, recognizing Boren as the longest-serving president at a flagship university in the United States. "It is a privilege to be able to honor those who have contributed so much to the rule of law and individual rights in our society," said Boren.

The induction ceremony followed dinner. "Each of these individuals has made an indelible mark on our profession, displaying the highest dedication to professionalism and service," said Harroz. "We are privileged to recognize their achievements and thank them for the example they have set for generations of OU Law students."

After citing the outstanding leadership and service of each individual, Harroz read comments from close friends and colleagues. Each honoree 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 inductee briefly spoke after receiving the award.

The evening concluded with the singing of the OU Chant, led by law student Gerard Michael D'Emilio.



# Bill W. Burgess Jr.

CLASS OF 1980



Dean Joe Harroz, Bill W. Burgess Jr., Lindsay Kistler

For more than 20 years, Bill W. Burgess Jr. has invested time and energy to address the needs of Oklahoma higher education, serving first as a member of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education for 18 years and currently serving a seven-year term as an OU Regent.

Burgess is chairman of the board of the investment corporation Vortex; owner and publisher of *The Lawton Constitution*; and senior partner of Burgess, Burgess, Burgess & Hightower. As chairman and principal owner of Tchrizon, Burgess developed the enterprise into Oklahoma's largest software engineering company.

Burgess has held numerous leadership positions at the state and national levels, including chairman of the board for the Oklahoma Business Roundtable, Oklahoma State Chamber and the Citizens' Commission on the Future of Oklahoma Higher Education. He also currently is civilian aide to the secretary for the U.S. Army and serves as a member of the OU College of Law Board of Visitors. He was inducted into both the Oklahoma Hall of Fame and the Oklahoma Higher Education Hall of Fame, and was honored as Corporate Entrepreneur of the Year by the U.S. Association for Business and Entrepreneurship.

Lindsay Kistler, editor-in-chief of the *Oklahoma Law Review*, presented Burgess' award.

"We all know him as Billy Wayne. He came from humble beginnings. His parents helped provide him with an education. Bill made good use of it. Most of us when we get out of law school set out to make our mark in the legal profession. Not Billy Wayne. He chose multiple paths of law, business and newspaper publication. He has excelled in all of them. But on his way to the top, Bill never forgot his parents and what they had provided him. Bill, in every way, with his time, dedication and money took very good care of his parents until they left this world. For that he should be commended."

— **MICHAEL S. BURRAGE** ('74)

Whitten Burrage Law Firm

"Throughout his career, Bill has never failed to stand up and stand tall as a very strong and effective advocate for the OU College of Law and for Oklahoma higher education. He credits his law degree with opening many doors for him, both professionally and personally. His service to OU and the OU College of Law is his way of giving back and also paying it forward to provide the same opportunities that he experienced in law school to our next generation of law students."

— **GLEN D. JOHNSON** ('79)

Chancellor of the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education

# Tom J. Colbert

CLASS OF 1982



Dean Joe Harroz, Tom J. Colbert, Sam Merchant

A pioneer in the legal profession, Tom J. Colbert became the first African-American to sit on the Oklahoma Supreme Court. During his time on the court, he has served as vice chief and chief justice, making history on both occasions as the first African-American to do so. Before serving on the Oklahoma Supreme Court, Colbert also was the first African-American to be appointed to the Oklahoma Court of Civil Appeals, where he served as chief judge.

He served several years in the U.S. Army and later earned a master of education degree from Eastern Kentucky University. He taught in the public school system in Chicago prior to attending the OU College of Law. He also served as assistant dean at Marquette University Law School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and assistant district attorney in Oklahoma County. He later entered private practice at Miles-LaGrange & Colbert.

Colbert has been honored with many distinctions and awards, including induction into the Oklahoma Criminal Justice Hall of Fame, Oklahoma Association of Community Colleges Hall of Fame and Eastern Oklahoma State College Hall of Fame, as well as the Thurgood Marshall Award of Excellence and the Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher Diversity Award, among others.

Sam Merchant, president of the Student Bar Association, presented Colbert's award.

"I first met Tom Colbert in the appellate record of a case he had won before a jury. As I reviewed that record and read the briefs, it became apparent that this was a case won in the law library. He won it by first laying out the facts of his case as the raw fabric before the jury. By stitching in a number of cases, he created a legal theory that perfectly complemented that fabric and wove together a winning jury case using simple information and compelling explanation. Later, he was appointed to the Court of Civil Appeals, where we became colleagues and close personal friends. From humble beginnings, he has excelled as a first-rate athlete, scholar, law school dean, lawyer, judge, justice and chief justice of Oklahoma's Supreme Court."

— **JERRY L. GOODMAN**

Judge of the Oklahoma Court  
of Civil Appeals

"I first came to know of Tom Colbert when he became a judge on the Court of Civil Appeals in 2000. I became acutely aware of his intellect and analytical skills in reviewing his opinions that would come before our court on writs of certiorari. Tom's appointment as a justice on the Oklahoma Supreme Court in 2004 was truly the highlight during my first term as chief justice and indeed, my entire judicial career of over three decades. His tenure on our court, and specifically his excellent leadership, has only heightened my respect and admiration for Tom Colbert."

— **JOSEPH M. WATT**

Justice of the Oklahoma  
Supreme Court

# James L. Gallogly

CLASS OF 1977



Dean Joe Harroz, James L. Gallogly, Daniel Franklin

James L. Gallogly had a highly successful career in oil and gas, holding many executive positions with Phillips, Chevron Phillips Chemical and ConocoPhillips. Gallogly was executive vice president of exploration and production at ConocoPhillips, and also previously served as the company's executive vice president of refining, marketing and transportation.

In 2009, as chief executive officer, he guided LyondellBassell Industries out of Chapter 11 bankruptcy. When Gallogly assumed his leadership role, the company was more than \$20 billion in debt, one of the biggest bankruptcies in American history. Under his direction, LyondellBassell was transformed into what is now one of the world's largest plastics, chemical and refining companies.

Since his retirement from LyondellBassell, Gallogly has served on the board of directors at DuPont, where he provides leadership in corporate governance and strategic planning, and on a number of charity boards.

Gallogly is a member of the Oklahoma, Texas and Colorado bar associations and serves as a member of the OU College of Law Board of Visitors. For leadership in his profession, OU awarded him an honorary degree in 2012. Last year, he and his wife, Janet, provided a major gift to what is now the OU Gallogly College of Engineering. This year, the Gallogly Family Foundation chose the OU College of Law as the pilot school for its selective Public Interest Fellowship Program, which launches this fall and supports a limited number of graduates who wish to pursue public interest work.

Daniel Franklin, editor-in-chief of *Oil and Gas, Natural Resources, and Energy Journal*, presented Gallogly's award.

“When Jim was named CEO of LyondellBassell, it seemed like a precarious place of employment due to the company's state of bankruptcy at the time. But I knew Jim. He was perfect for the job. He could pivot with equal aplomb between town hall meetings with plant employees, Wall Street financiers and bankruptcy lawyers. Jim got LyondellBassell out of bankruptcy in record time and as *Forbes* noted ‘in the history of Wall Street there haven't been too many moneymaking machines quite like LyondellBassell, which has seen its shares return 500% since it emerged from bankruptcy.’ That's what Jim Gallogly does. He makes things better.”

— **CRAIG GLIDDEN**

Executive vice president of GMC

“In the international community, the first impression of Jim is that he looks like the all-American, confident person who can accomplish anything. While some first impressions may lead you astray, in Jim's case this first impression is accurate. Jim is super intelligent, low-key and approachable. He has a Vince Lombardi passion to win fairly and achieve excellence. No one will ever outwork, be better prepared or negotiate harder than Jim. He loves the biggest challenges and the most difficult business propositions. With his drive to succeed, he will always win the important battles.”

— **JIM MULVA**

Former chairman/CEO of ConocoPhillips

# Noma D. Gurich

CLASS OF 1978



To watch the inductions and hear each of the inductees' remarks, visit OU Law's YouTube channel at <http://bit.ly/OULawYouTube>.



Dean Joe Harroz, Noma D. Gurich, Mallory Irwinsky

A leader and role model in the legal profession for more than 30 years, Noma D. Gurich is only the third woman in history to serve on the Oklahoma Supreme Court, having been appointed in 2011. After spending 10 years as a litigator, Gurich was appointed to the Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Court, where she served as a judge for 10 years, including four as presiding judge. Later, she was appointed and elected to serve as a district judge in Oklahoma County, where she served for 12½ years, including two as presiding judge.

She is a master member of the William J. Holloway Jr. American Inn of Court, a member of the OU College of Law Board of Visitors and serves on the Oklahoma County Criminal Justice Task Force. She also is an active volunteer with the El Sistema Oklahoma After-School Orchestra Program and the OKC Festival of the Arts.

Gurich has been honored with a number of distinctions and awards in her career, including membership in the prestigious Order of the Coif, the Mona Salyer Lambird Spotlight Award and 2011 Judge of the Year by the Oklahoma Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates.

Mallory Irwinsky, editor-in-chief of the *American Indian Law Review*, presented Gurich's award. |SL|

"Noma was an exceptional trial lawyer. She was an even better trial judge — smart, hardworking, fair — everything a lawyer and his or her clients want in a judge. In her first hotly contested judicial election campaign in 1998, Noma was a whirlwind of activity, speaking to just about every newspaper, church, school, union, voter group and civic club in Oklahoma City. She won, and no one ever ran against her after that. Noma Gurich is truly a remarkable person both professionally and personally, and we really do miss her down at the Oklahoma County Courthouse."

— **GEORGE S. CORBYN JR.** ('73)

Corbyn Hampton Barghols Pierce PLLC

"I am so happy to have Noma Gurich as my 'sistern' and colleague on the Oklahoma Supreme Court. She sees what needs to be done and she does it. She has incredible drive and energy. You cannot outwork or outtalk her. Her community is the world. She is as enthusiastic about participating in missionary trips to Russia as she is lining up programs for her Holloway Inn of Court. Anything she does, she does with all her heart and mind. And, she does it to the best of her unbridled ability. So help me God!"

— **YVONNE KAUGER**

Justice of the Oklahoma  
Supreme Court