

# CAMPUS UPDATE

January 2020

## Pierson's Perceptions

We've just broken the seal on the year 2020 and no matter where you look you will find East Central University playing positive roles in communities, here at home and around the world.

For starters, ECU's event calendar is loaded with exciting lectures and activities. We are thrilled to have Cheryl Brown Henderson bring her family's working legacy of racial equality to our campus. Chickasaw Gov. Bill Anoatubby will be at ECU to discuss the positive impact that tribes have on our entire state.

Dr. Christine Pappas traveled to our nation's capital with two Legal Studies students for a once-in-a-lifetime experience of witnessing the impeachment trial of a sitting president.

Dr. Mara Sukholuts kaya, director of the Global Education program, continues to help ECU students blaze academic trails overseas. And Ada's own Dr. Tawfik Ramadan continues to honor students working in the field of neuroscience, which of course knows no boundaries.

So no matter where you look, ECU is making a positive impact. Our graduates are ambassadors and make it a habit of improving the communities in which they find themselves. Just remember, all those Tiger tracks start right here.



Dr. Katricia Pierson  
President  
East Central University

## Tribal gaming subject of Anoatubby speech at ECU

East Central University Distinguished Alumnus and Chickasaw Nation Governor Bill Anoatubby served as keynote speaker for the annual Lou Watkins Lecture.

He shared the impact of tribal gaming on the Chickasaw Nation and Oklahoma for the lecture, which also featured a luncheon. The lecture took place on Tuesday, February 4, at Foundation Hall inside ECU's Chickasaw Business and Conference Center.

2020  
Lou Watkins  
Lecture



GOV. BILL ANOATUBBY

See "Watkins" on Page 6

## Brown Henderson set to deliver diversity lecture

Cheryl Brown Henderson, founder of the Brown Foundation and daughter of the man who led the fight for racial equality in the public school system, will deliver East Central University's Lou-ise Young Diversity Lecture at 6 p.m.

Thursday, February 20, in the Ataloe Theatre of the Hallie Brown Ford Fine Arts Center. ECU's Black Alumni Association co-sponsors



BROWN HENDERSON

See "Diversity" on Page 4

## ECU group at impeachment trial of Trump

As the impeachment trial of U.S. President Donald J. Trump unfolds, an East Central University contingent had the chance to experience part of the historic event first-hand.

Thanks to private donations provided through the President's Circle at ECU



See "Trial" on Page 3

## TIGER TALES

### Student to study a semester in Spain

Jacob Talkington, of Pauls Valley, will soon begin his nearly 5,000-mile journey to explore a new country and culture, all while continuing his studies there. He will attend the University of Extremadura in Cáceres, Spain, this spring semester.



Because it is a sister school to ECU, he can attend without having to pay extra tuition. Dr. Mara Sukholuts kaya, a longtime Foreign Languages professor at ECU, is director of the University's Global Education program. She helps students explore the world through academic exchange opportunities. The experience of studying abroad provides a student with a much better understanding of different ethnic groups, cultures, philosophies, and traditions than a textbook or lecture, Sukholuts kaya said.

### Therapy dogs bring good vibes to finals

East Central University's Linscheid Library invited therapy dogs on campus for students to help



relieve stress during finals week in December. The dogs are provided by "A New Leash on Life" – a non-profit organization in Oklahoma City. There were two to three therapy dogs available to help soothe as many as a hundred stressed students. The popular ECU campus event has taken place each semester the week before finals for the past three years.



### Celebrating science and medicine

The annual Raniyah T. Ramadan Symposium took place January 22 on the ECU campus. Pictured, from left, are Suha Ramadan, Dr. Tawfik Ramadan, ECU senior Kay Woodring of Moore and Siham Ramadan.

## Ramadan Symposium marks 8th year at ECU

Outstanding professionals in the neuroscience field visited East Central University on January 22 for the eighth annual Raniyah T. Ramadan Symposium.

The Ramadan Symposium is named for the late Dr. Raniyah Ramadan, who was a research scientist in neuro-ophthalmology. The prestigious symposium was established and is sponsored by Dr. and Mrs. Tawfik Z. Ramadan, parents of the late Raniyah Ramadan.

"Our daughter had a belief in promoting science and research, especially in the neuroscience field," said Dr. Ramadan. "We do this because we feel that we belong to ECU."

The 2020 symposium featured presentations from Dr. Andriy Yabluchanskiy, Dr. Shannon Conley, Dr. Mike Beckstead, and ECU student Kay Woodring. Yabluchanskiy's presentation was on "Vascular Heath and Memory." Conley presented on "Mechanisms of PRPH2-Associated Retinal Degeneration: A Basic Science Approach to Studying Disease Variability."

Beckstead's presentation was "Decline in Dopamine Neuron Function Precedes Disruption of Neuronal Structure in a Progressive Mouse Model of Parkinson's Disease." Woodring presented on "Transient Brain Microstate Activation and Sensory Processing in Fragile X Syndrome".





### KENNEDY HONORED WITH CAMPUS BENCH

Rebecca Kennedy, who served as East Central University's public information officer for more than a decade, reclines on a bench dedicated to her years of faithful service. With Kennedy is her husband, Harrel, who also served many years at ECU.

## Trial

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and an admission ticket provided by U.S. Senator James Lankford of Oklahoma, a professor and two students flew to Washington, D.C. this week to witness part of the trial on Capitol Hill.

Dr. Christine Pappas, who teaches Political Science and Legal Studies at ECU, accompanied students MiKayla Lott and Rain Rehbein to the extremely rare political proceeding. President Trump's impeachment trial marks only the third such event in U.S. history.

Pappas and her students shared the event ticket, dividing observation time in the U.S. Senate chamber gallery.

"That was probably the tightest security I've ever seen," Pappas said. "They took everything you had on you before you entered the chamber. You couldn't even write anything down."

Pappas also took the students to the National Archives to view the original U.S. Constitution, paying particular attention to Article Two that outlines executive branch power – which is at the heart of Trump's impeachment trial.

ECU student Alex Benitez of Healdton is currently interning in Lankford's office as well, adding to ECU's presence this historic week in Washington.

"This trip wouldn't have been possible without (ECU)

## Composers perform originals at concert

East Central University presented the 14th annual ECU Faculty, Students, and Friends Composer Concert in the Ataloo Theatre of ECU's Hallie Brown Ford Fine Arts Center on January 23.

The event featured new and original compositions written by ECU students and local artists. Participating in the concert were Tommy and Casey Long, Kellan Brown, Jamie Davis, Zach Garcia, Tori Davison, Zana Ebingha, Kelly Gage, Preston Phillips and Anna Tynsky.



W.T. SKYE GARCIA

ECU alum Angela Marshall and ECU art major Brooke Jackson-Holman provided visual inspiration.

ECU instructor W.T. Skye Garcia organized the event, which concluded with the presentation of scholarship awards.



### ECU goes to Washington

East Central University was well represented during President Trump's historic impeachment trial in the U.S. Senate in Washington, D.C. Pictured, from left, are ECU senior Alex Benitez, U.S. Senator James Lankford of Oklahoma, Dr. Christine Pappas, and ECU students Rain Rehbein and MiKayla Lott.

President Katricia Pierson's assistance obtaining private funding for us," Pappas said. "That and Senator Lankford's recognition of the educational importance of these proceedings and his desire to bring students in to participate. I appreciate them both so much."

Give back at [www.ecok.edu/donate!](http://www.ecok.edu/donate!)

## Diversity

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the event with Louise Young. The event, scheduled to coincide with Black History Month, is free and open to the public.

Henderson is one of three daughters of the late Rev. Oliver L. Brown, who in the fall of 1950 – along with 12 other parents in Topeka, Kansas, led by attorneys for the NAACP – filed suit on behalf of their children against the local board of education. Their case joined with cases from Delaware, South Carolina, Virginia and Washington, D.C. on appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. On May 17, 1954, came the landmark decision known as Brown v. Board of Education.

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka was a landmark case in which the U.S. Supreme Court Justices ruled unanimously that racial segregation of children in public schools was unconstitutional. The case became one of the cornerstones of the Civil Rights movement and helped establish the precedent that "separate-but-equal" education and other services were not, in fact, equal at all. Brown passed away in 1961 before he could see the impact of the decision.

Henderson is the founding president of the Brown Foundation for Educational Equity, Excellence and Research, and owner of Brown & Associates, an educational consulting firm. For an extended version of this story, please visit [www.ecok.edu/news](http://www.ecok.edu/news).

Louise Young Diversity Lecture & The Black Alumni Association Present:



### Relishing victory

ECU Tigers Madison Rehl, of Edmond, Madison Nickens, of Westville, and Maci Hanson, of Choctaw, celebrate a 69-59 victory over Oklahoma Baptist University in December. As Tiger basketball heats up, spring sports are set to get underway. Visit [www.ecutigers.com](http://www.ecutigers.com) to follow your favorite ECU team!

Follow all sports at [www.ecutigers.com!](http://www.ecutigers.com!)



\*\*\*ECU ATHLETIC EVENTS ARE HIGHLIGHTED IN ORANGE!\*\*\*

## February 4

Student Organization Fair  
6 p.m., Stanley P. Wagner Ballroom

## February 6

Last Day to Drop 1st 5-Week Classes  
(w/ Guaranteed "W")  
Women's Basketball vs. Southwestern  
5:30 p.m., Kerr Activities Center  
Men's Basketball vs. Southwestern  
7:30 p.m., Kerr Activities Center

## February 7

Baseball vs. Drury  
12 p.m., Ken Turner Field

## February 8

National ACT Test Date  
Baseball vs. Drury (Double Header)  
Noon, Ken Turner Field  
Women's Basketball vs. Northwestern  
1 p.m., Kerr Activities Center  
Men's Basketball vs. Northwestern  
3 p.m., Kerr Activities Center

## February 11

Interscholastic Meet 8 a.m.  
"Family Feud"  
7 p.m., Stanley P. Wagner Ballroom

## February 12

Last Day to Drop 1st 5-Week Classes  
ECU SCREENS presents: "Small Island"  
(National Theatre Live)  
2 p.m., Estep Multimedia Center

## February 13

Women's Basketball vs. Southeastern (Black Out)  
5:30 p.m., Kerr Activities Center  
Men's Basketball vs. Southeastern (Black Out)  
7:30 p.m., Kerr Activities Center  
ECU Theatre Presents: The 25th Annual Putnam  
County Spelling Bee  
7:30 p.m., Ataloe Theatre

## February 14

Spring 2020 Education Fair  
10 a.m., Memorial Student Union Ballroom  
Baseball vs. Southwestern  
2 p.m., Ken Turner Field  
"Ask Me About the World"  
3 p.m., Bill S. Cole University Center Lobby  
ECU SCREENS presents 10th Annual Foreign Film  
Festival: "The Return of the Hero" (France, 2018)  
4 p.m., Estep Multimedia Center  
ECU Theatre Presents: The 25th Annual Putnam  
County Spelling Bee  
7:30 p.m., Ataloe Theatre  
February 15  
Women's Basketball at Oklahoma Baptist  
1 p.m., Shawnee, Oklahoma  
Baseball vs. Southwestern (Double Header)  
1 p.m., Ken Turner Field  
ECU Theatre Presents: The 25th Annual Putnam  
County Spelling Bee  
7:30 p.m., Ataloe Theatre

## February 19

1st 5-Week Classes End

## February 20

Last Day to Drop 1st 8-Week Classes  
(w/ Guaranteed "W")  
ECU Black Alumni Association & Louise Young Diversity  
Lecture present: "Brown v. Board of Education,  
The Legacy Continues"  
6 p.m., Ataloe Theatre  
ECU Skate Night  
9 p.m., Star Skate, Ada

## February 21

Baseball at Southern Nazarene  
Noon, Bethany, Oklahoma  
Softball vs. Southern Nazarene (Double Header)  
Noon, Ken Turner Field  
ECU SCREENS presents ECU's 10th Annual  
Foreign Film Festival  
4 p.m., Estep Multimedia Center

## February 22

Softball vs. Southern Nazarene (Double Header)  
Noon, Ken Turner Field

## February 23

Beethoven at 250  
2:30 p.m., Ataloe Theatre

## February 25

Movie Night  
6:30 p.m., Estep Multimedia Center

## February 26

"Lift the Mask: Portraits of Life with Mental Illness"  
4 p.m., Estep Multimedia Center

## February 27

Women's Basketball vs. Ouachita Baptist (Pink Out)  
5:30 p.m., Kerr Activities Center  
Men's Basketball vs. Ouachita Baptist (Pink Out)  
7:30 p.m., Kerr Activities Center

## February 28

Baseball vs. Harding  
2 p.m., Ken Turner Field  
ECU SCREENS presents ECU's 10th Annual Foreign Film  
Festival "Pain and Glory" (Spain, 2019)  
4 p.m., Estep Multimedia Center

## February 29

Women's Basketball vs. Henderson State (Senior Day)  
1 p.m., Kerr Activities Center  
Baseball vs. Harding (Double Header)  
1 p.m., Ken Turner Field  
Men's Basketball vs. Henderson State (Senior Day)  
3 p.m., Kerr Activities Center



## Earning the degree

Erin Dempsey, right, received her diploma from ECU President Katricia Pierson during the Fall 2019 Commencement exercises inside the Kerr Activities Center on December 14. Dempsey, of Ponca City, graduated with a degree in Biology.

## Holiday opera

ECU senior Zana Johnson Ebingha, of Kinta, performs in the holiday production of "Amahl and the Night Visitors" in December. The ECU Department of Performing Arts presented the opera, based on Italian folk tales, twice in December.



## Teddy Bear Toss

More than a dozen oversized plastic bags were stuffed with teddy bears thrown by visiting elementary school students during the ECU men's basketball game against Randall University a few days before Christmas. The "Teddy Bear Toss" event has proven a popular attraction and the stuffed animals that are collected are donated to a local hospital for distribution to children in need.

# ECU FOUNDATION TURNS 50 IN FEBRUARY!

## Watkins

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Anoatubby, a 1972 graduate of ECU, was elected governor of the Chickasaw Nation for the first time in 1987 and has held that position since. As governor, he manages more than 13,500 employees, more than 200 governmental programs and numerous tribal businesses.

Under his financial leadership, the Chickasaw Nation became one

of the first tribal governments in the United States to be certified as an A-102 tribe, with superior ratings for management and fiscal controls.

The lectureship honors Lou Watkins, former chair of ECU's Political Science department. Its purpose is to bring recognized authorities to campus to address subjects of public interest at the local, state and national levels. Watkins taught Political Science at ECU from 1980

until 1991.

Serving as president of World Export Services Inc. and as a member of the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges, Watkins was honored as a member of ECU's Distinguished Former Faculty in 2019.





## SAVE THE DATE

**February 14, 2020**  
Education Career Fair

**March 25, 2020**  
ECU Founders Day

**April 10, 2020**  
ECU Thunder Night, details TBA

**May 8, 2020**  
Evening of Honors and Recognition

**September 25 & 26, 2020**  
ECU Homecoming Weekend

**For more information visit**  
[www.ecok.edu/alumni/events](http://www.ecok.edu/alumni/events)

## IN MEMORIAM

Donald Black, 1952  
Janet Borders, 1967 & '81  
Mike Brooks, 1969  
Nancy Makinson Brown, 1998  
Wayne Edwards, 1952  
Marion Fenton, 1950  
Billy Roel Gibson,  
Melanie Gollihare, 1987  
Judy Horne  
Whitney Bynum Howard, 2013  
Verna Whittington Nance  
Lynda Sherman Simpson, 1965 & '84  
Vicki Strong, 1987  
David Wiley, 1963 & '89

The ECU family offers our  
deepest sympathy to the  
families of the alumni and  
friends we have lost.

## TIGER TRACKS



**Dacona Smith, 1994**  
announced as the  
executive vice  
president and chief  
operating officer for  
Walmart U.S.



**Todd Graham, 1987 & '92**  
named as the new  
University of Hawaii head  
football coach.



**Jay McAdams, 1994**  
was honored as  
Administrator of  
the Year at the 2020  
Oklahoma Music  
Educators Association  
Awards Reception.



**Richie Vallandingham, 2002**  
was honored with the  
President's Award at the  
2020 Oklahoma Music  
Educators Association  
Awards Reception.

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## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

2020 AWARDS  
DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI  
DISTINGUISHED FORMER FACULTY  
DISTINGUISHED FAMILY  
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

Nominations for the 2020  
Distinguished Alumni, Family,  
Former Faculty and Service  
Awards at East Central University  
are being accepted with a deadline  
of February 7, 2020.

**Make a nomination online at**  
[ecok.edu/2020Nominations](http://ecok.edu/2020Nominations)

**WWW.ECOK.EDU/ALUMNI**