

communiquedigital

communication, arts and media alumni magazine

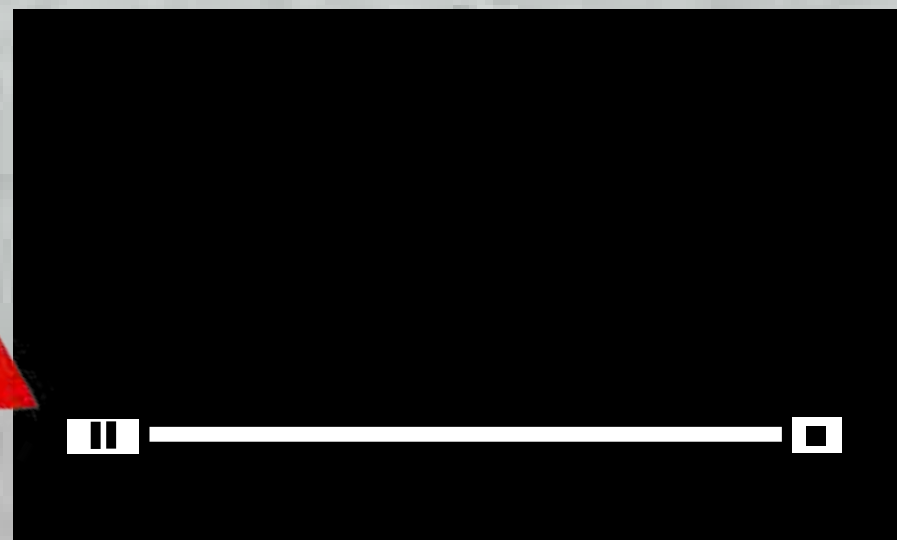
2014-2015



how to use videos for the un-techsavvy

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Enlarging the text will make reading easier. Simply enlarge by using SHIFT + on a computer or double tap on the page if on a mobile device to maximize the text size.

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so how are we doing?

president wilson two years in



Leaps and bounds

Two years into the new president's term, ORU is healthier than ever with increasing enrollment and financial sustainability. President Billy Wilson led the university with strength and discernment as students trusted him in this period of transition. "I am honored and humbled to have been elected to lead ORU at this exciting time in its history," ORU President Billy Wilson said. photo/mark moore; video courtesy/ORU

It looks like ORU is making all "A's." Click [HERE](#) to see our grade card.

A+

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the power of the story

mark steele, a master storyteller



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With a passion for his calling, Mark Steele is a man of many talents. From stand-up comedy to acting to production, Steele looks to impact others through the power of the story. video/camille orgel; music/afternoon haze 8 by paul mottram, audionetwork.com

The art of telling a story is all about expression, but telling a good story requires faith in the unexpected, finding inspiration from the moments in life that are unpredictable. CEO and Executive Creative of Steelehouse Productions Mark Steele never stops telling stories. Whether through production, animation or simple interaction, Steele takes each day as an opportunity to tell a story in hopes of inspiring others.

Steele earned a bachelor's degree in drama, television and film with a minor in writing from Oral Roberts University in 1991. Steele and his three brothers earned degrees from the university and his daughter will be a freshman in the fall, but it was Steele's mother that was the one who made ORU a family affair. She earned her masters and doctoral degrees from the university.

"When I was growing up, Mom would watch Oral Roberts' program on television," Steele said. "It never dawned on me that it was a school."

Sitting in a comfortable gray arm chair, Steele reveals something his mother admitted to him and his brothers only recently.

"Little did we know, our mom had been secretly praying that we would independently choose to go to ORU without bringing it up," Steele said. "I was very intrigued by telecommunication and film, and at the time, there was nothing Christian with that [study] for college."

After attending a college weekend, Steele had no doubts about where he wanted to continue his education.

"I was from a small church and small school," Steele said. "Finding so many people who believed what I believed and had the same interests as me made it very easy for me to decide that I would be at ORU."

Equipped with incredible talent and a passion for writing, Steele knew he was called to tell stories through a variety of media avenues; what he didn't know was how to get there. Communication, Arts and Media Department Chair Professor Laura Holland recognized Steele's passion to use his God-given gift and gave him some guidance. The existing courses in his degree at the time didn't focus on the type of writing in that field where he had his greatest strength.

"I couldn't find the particular class that hit the nail on the head for the approach I wanted to take," Steele said. "She said, 'Don't try and find the perfect fit for you, make the perfect fit for you.'"

“Did the arrows of my writing point people to an unexpected place? I just want people to think the art that I created shifted their thinking for the better. - mark steele

So Holland allowed Steele to work with her to tailor-make a series of independent study courses that allowed him to grow and flourish, preparing him for his career. It was her guiding hand that changed Steele's entire direction, and he has applied those words of encouragement to virtually every decision in his career and life. Since then he has created his own opportunities instead of waiting for them to come along. Now an accomplished author, writer and director, Steele also runs his own production house.

"I'm the CEO and Executive Creative," Steele said. "My role there is vast. The sweet spot of what I do is—as I take on projects personally—I'll spearhead them creatively, and I will run the team that puts it all together within and without, using our own resources and going outside of our team if needed."

Based in Tulsa, Steelehouse Productions has many services to offer its clients.

"We can take an idea from coming up with a concept all the way to completion," Steele said. "We do what is called piecemeal—when a client needs just part of our service—editing, creating and carrying it out. We can fill in the blanks for whatever our client needs."

In a primarily secular field, Steelehouse has set itself apart. Steele and his team minister to corporations such as Walmart, Sonic and Hasbro. When there is no opportunity to minister through content, they choose to minister through outstanding quality of work.

"We made a decision the moment we started Steelehouse we were going to be an industry, not a ministry," Steele said. "In the field that we're in, we thought it would cheapen the faith aspect by getting a tax exemption."

Steele says the goal of Steelehouse from the beginning has been to do high quality work across the board.

"Because of our excellence, because of our honesty, we deliver what we said we would when we would—excellence in business, production and creativity," Steele said. "Being people with integrity, it says more than if we just hung a shingle that says we are a creative production ministry. There are people who are called to that, and it's great, but that's not us. We're not perfect, but we've seen a lot of fruits from that."

Steele has worked as chief of creative affairs for Big Idea Entertainment. He has written 12 episodes and a live tour between 2009-2012 for the

"Veggie Tales" DVD series such as "Pistachio," "It's a Meaningful Life" and "The League of Incredible Vegetables." Steele not only produces great work, but is great to work with according to Vice President of Big Idea Studios, Mike Nawrocki.

"From story development to script writing to voicing of the movie's villain, Mark is a blast to work with every step of the way," Nawrocki said. "It takes a long time and a lot of work to bring a movie to life—and working with someone like Mark who is talented, hardworking and fun to be around, always makes for a more enjoyable experience and better film."

Film writer and director of Futureboy Films Cory Edwards, who has worked with Steele on and off, also applauds Steele's various talents.

"This is the honest truth: A few years ago I was binge-watching a lot of 'Veggie Tales' with my kids; we hadn't seen them in a few years," Edwards said. "And there was this marked improvement we noticed in some of the recent shows. The music was better. The story was better. It was such a distinct improvement that my wife and I said, 'Who's working on these now?' Much to my surprise, we saw Mark's name all over the credits. Up until then, I had no idea he was working with Big Idea, but his fingerprints were all over those new shows. It was noticeable, even before I knew it was him."

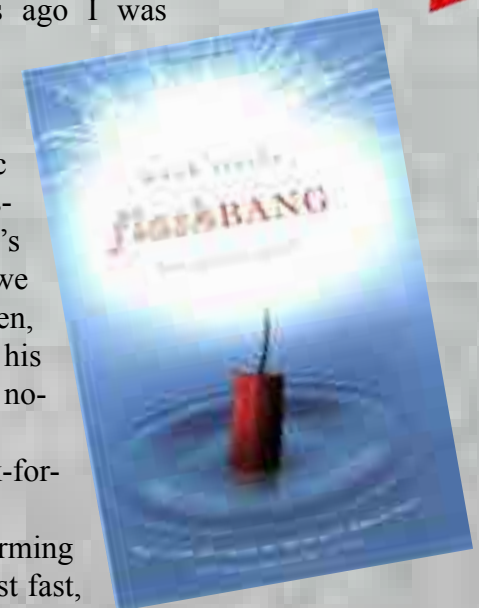
Edwards has been involved in several work-for-hire experiences with Steele.

"Mark was writing sketches and then performing them," Edwards said. "The guy is fast, and not just fast, but good and fast. I'm also envious of his musical ability. He can write music and sing just as easily, and has a real understanding of how to get all the technical aspects of musical projects working together."

From the second floor of the Armand Hammer center, Steele looks out at the campus he used to call home. Looking thoughtful as he stares out the window, the father of four becomes animated, talking with his hands as he expresses through story why he does what he does.

"Years and years ago, we had won a film festival with a short film

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called ‘Foreshadowing’ and one of the top filmmakers in Japan was very impressed with it,” Steele said. “He contacted us after the film festival wanting us to produce a short film for Honda. He and his team came from Japan to Tulsa for the filming. We had been politely cautioned by someone who knew we were people of faith that he was not a person of faith but to still go about our business as normal. We usually start our production shoots with prayer, and we decided that we would get there early and pray before the client arrived on the set. One day he saw the prayer without us knowing and in the end, we were having dinner together and his interpreter pulled me aside and said that the director wanted to express his deep gratitude for the excellence we put into the project and that it was our faith stance the filmmaker respected. To this day, I get a Christmas card from that film director. It was one of those moments where God’s favor intervened and someone was impacted. You dream of those moments that somehow the quality of your work will open a door and someone will experience God.”

As Steele glances over the Alumni-Student Center bookcase, he discovers two of his own works on the shelves. Apart from television, he has written four books, including “Flashbang: How I Got Over Myself.” Steele has also told stories through his roles of stand-up comedian, songwriter, music producer, director, playwright, screenwriter, actor and public speaker. The alumnus has also spoken at President George W. Bush’s inauguration and led a college ministry for two years. Through it all, Steele finds inspiration from his family and people who continually work hard to tell their story without expecting homage.

“We all try and be humble,” Steele said. “But people who walk in that gift and surrender it to the Lord, it wows me.”

Though Steele has had great success, he stays grounded in his assurance that God is the creative one.

“Since I know that God is the absolute source of my creativity, I never worry about losing it or getting writer’s block because I’m extremely confident in where it is coming from,” Steele said. “He’s looking for people to give credit where credit is due, people who have a love for story instead of a love for accolades. What gets me up every day is a great story and knowing it has the power to heal and transform others.”

Currently Steele is working on a large animation project that is an education piece for kids and a large five-book fable for young adults. With many stories left in him to be told, the creative works continue to flow from this gifted man.

“If they could say one thing about me I’d want it to be ‘He made us look at it differently,’” Steele said. “Did the arrows of my writing point people to an unexpected place? I just want people to think the art that I created shifted their thinking for the better.” ● story/erica ludwig

By “getting over himself,” Mark Steele has stayed humble in the face of success. Steele looks to the future as unwritten, excited to see new stories and ideas come to life from God, the ultimate author. photo/mark moore



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called to prosper

caitlin boewe investing in lives



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From a corporate office to Honduran jungles, Caitlin Boewe reaches out to others. Boewe takes each opportunity as a way to mirror Christ through her actions and character. video/camille orgel; music/fields so green part 2 by art of flying, freemusicarchive.com

A young real estate broker took a financial risk in taking time off from her demanding job to serve on and fund a missions trip in the jungles of Honduras at a small Bible school when there was no paid vacation time. But the gift of seeing the children's faces was worth the sacrifice. Suddenly, sales associate Caitlin Boewe's phone rings, and her fears are broken; her faith walk was rewarded. The Plaza property she had been working on has finally sold for over \$8 million.

When Boewe graduated from Oral Roberts University in 2010, she never imagined she would be the broker to close million-dollar deals and work at the world's largest commercial real estate firm. Boewe has only been in the industry about three years and treats every day with diligence.

"I'm in an industry that's 90 percent men who are all just about over the age of 50," Boewe said. "I'm the youngest broker, and I'm female, so I'm constantly having to prove my qualifications."

Growing up in Quincy, Illinois, Boewe always admired the giving and obedient spirit of her grandmother, who owned a small business with Boewe's grandfather and carried it on after he died.

"She always kept a Christian attitude and has been a great Christian influence," Boewe said. "She set the example to 'Give, and it will be given to you.'"

Boewe kept that same spirit with her throughout her education and still carries it today. After spending her first two years of college in Illinois, Boewe decided she wanted to go to school out of state. Her aunt and uncle lived in Tulsa, which drew her to consider Oral Roberts University. With its distinguished values and smaller student body, ORU seemed like "a nice little adventure," as Boewe recalls.

She officially transferred to ORU in her junior year and graduated with a degree in Mass Media Communications with an emphasis in Public Relations and Advertising. Upon reflection, Boewe treasures her ORU experience. She looks thoughtful as she remembers the best piece of advice she received in her undergraduate years. "Do what makes you happy," she says while taking a sip of her iced hibiscus green tea.

“It’s an industry that is hard to mention God, so I have to show Him. When you’re filled with the Holy Spirit, people can tell there’s something different.” – caitlin boewe



With a passion for helping those in need, Caitlin Boewe has a strong work ethic complemented with charm and grace. Boewe's kind heart and dedication are perfect examples of her unshakable faith. photo/ chris putman

“Whether that’s with your career or not, be yourself, and do what makes you happy.”

Boewe admits her favorite part of her two years at ORU was the atmosphere.

“I enjoyed the ability to pursue a quality education with a godly impact,” Boewe said. “I think the whole-person thing is not to be overlooked.”

Sitting in a quiet booth at Zoe’s Kitchen with her hair pulled back, Boewe carries a grace and style all her own. Now four years post-graduation, the Illinois native has given herself to Tulsa. Boewe serves with Typros Business Development as Crew Leadership, winning 2013 Business Development Crew Member of the Year. She is also a designee and Chapter Member of the Certified Commercial Investment Members, a developing leader member in the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties, member of the International Council of Shopping Centers, and served on the ICSC Oklahoma Idea Exchange Planning Committee. Boewe was also named in Tulsa Business & Legal News for their “2014 40 under 40.” Working as a sales associate in retail services for a Fortune 500, an S & P 500 company and world’s largest commercial real estate services and investment firm CB Richard Ellis, Boewe plays two roles in her industry.

“My duties fall into two categories,” she said. “I serve as a recruiter for landlords. I match tenants to landlords, like a seller representative. For tenant representation, I try to find the best options for them to bring their companies to Tulsa. Right now I am working with Dairy Queen to come to Tulsa, and I’m taking their representatives on tours, showing them their options. So, my duties vary depending on the deal.”

When it comes to her favorite part of the industry, Boewe loves bringing new retailers to Tulsa. Boewe’s current projects include companies such as: Dollar Tree, Noodles and Co., Jersey Mikes, Raising Canes, Five Guys, Gander Mountain, an expansion in Tulsa Hills and an \$11.4 million sale of a shopping center on 71st Street. Regardless of her success, Boewe strives daily to show Christ in her industry.

“It’s an industry that is hard to mention God, so I have to show Him,” she said. “I have to practice patience with clients. When you’re filled with the Holy Spirit, people can tell there’s something different.”

People have definitely noticed the difference in Boewe. Managing director at CBRE Cary Phillips has especially taken notice over the past six years of Boewe's hard work.

"This is a tough business with a lot of rejection," Phillips said. "If you do not come to work every day—and with every phone call, every meeting, and every interaction—bring an energy, you can get worn down. Daily, she brings a passion for this business and for her clients. She genuinely cares that her clients are afforded the best representation she can offer, constantly pushing every alternative to ensure that the needs are being met in a very competitive, constantly changing environment."

Those in the industry with Boewe cannot help but notice her diligent attitude, which shows in her enormous success. "Caitlin is relatively new to the field. However, due to the breadth, volume of deals and type of clientele that she has worked with, her skills have developed rapidly," Phillips said. "She has the people skills, market/industry knowledge, financial analysis as well as the ability to incorporate the latest technology into her business."

As far as her career is concerned, Boewe loves the endless possibilities.

"I like being my own boss," Boewe said. "I like having the ability to earn as much as I want with no glass ceiling. I'm the only one who stops my success."

She plans to further her opportunities to give to the city of Tulsa. Working to see more downtown retail development and housing projects, she took part in the accomplishment of bringing a Trader Joe's to Tulsa.

"Whether direct or indirect, I feel that doing the best work I can do has a positive impact," she said.

As for the future, Boewe plans to work hard for the next 10 to 15 years and see where that takes her. With a twinkle in her eye, she hopes to continue to follow her grandma's example to be a giver in this world. Boewe is suddenly reminded of a church in downtown Tulsa that bought a building for the purpose of supporting missions. With passion in her voice, Boewe says she would love to do something like that.

"The retail and restaurants can go away, businesses will come and go, but where we see the impact is changing lives," Boewe said. "There's been several times God has rewarded me from giving. I won an iPad mini from a drawing and gave it away. Two weeks later I won a flat screen TV. I could name other things that followed directly after I obeyed. There have been several instances God has blessed me for obedience. We don't give to get, but you should give to want to give more."

Following the example of her grandmother, Boewe's heart for missions and generosity is evident.

"I love missions. When I started as a sales associate I made a personal goal to tithe my first five years' salary," Boewe said. "It was dropped in

my heart to prosper for a purpose. I want to support my aunt and uncle who have Bible schools in Egypt, Honduras, Spain. I went on a mission trip to Honduras, and I was struggling with going for money reasons; when you're your own boss you aren't getting a paid vacation. I then found out when I was on the trip that we made an \$8.1 million sale of a property."

Boewe has a drive to push through to excellence. Whether in the office of CBRE or in the mission fields of Central America, Boewe is willing to break down any barrier to leave her mark on the world. ● story/erica ludwig

With faith in God's path, Boewe looks optimistically at the years to come. She puts her full trust in God, obeying His direction and investing in the less fortunate along the way. photo/chris putman



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sparking dreams within

ramond walker connecting people to purpose

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Dedicated to dreams in action, Ramond Walker aspires to help people from every walk of life. From colleagues to entrepreneurs to college graduates, Walker's heart for teaching leaves impact everywhere he goes. video/chris holmes; music/blanket by engine 7, freemusicarchive.com

Wildfire spreads rapidly and consumes its surroundings. Similarly, inspiration, like wildfire, comes from people with passion. Oral Roberts University alumnus Ramond Walker has a fire in his eyes for empowering people. This graduate believes in encouraging others toward their dreams so they will be ignited to fulfill their life purpose.

Walker does not lack passion for his life goals and dreams. Every time he talks about empowering others toward their dreams, his face lights up with excitement.

"I like to make differences in people's lives no matter who I come in contact with, no matter what I do," Walker said. "My whole goal is 'how can I make you better than when I first met you? How can I empower you?'"

Born in St. Louis and raised in Memphis, Walker grew up enthralled with magazines and designs. He would analyze the graphics and how the artists designed them. In school he was the guy in the class who could make a standout PowerPoint presentation, however, he was unaware that graphic design could be an actual career for him.

After learning his passion was a possible career option, he went to a Memphis tech school to take classes in the field before coming to ORU. He loved the classes so much he decided a graphic design major was right for him. While getting his bachelor's degree, he also got a minor in advertising and public relations. Today, he currently uses both his major and minor in his line of work.

During college he put his skills into practice in his classes with real world clients and on the side, helped friends who needed design work. A few months after his 2010 graduation, he landed a job at McCloud Media. The opportunity came about because of connections with a professor. The founder and publisher of "Community Spirit" magazine, Tom McCloud was hiring a graphic designer and Walker was recommended for the job.

"I needed a graphic artist, so I called the head of ORU's Marketing Department and asked if there was a recent graduate who might fit the job requirements," McCloud said. "They introduced me to Ramond, and they were right. Ramond was perfect for the job."

McCloud has not only been his boss, but also a mentor to Walker, teaching him about business and life in the years they have worked together.

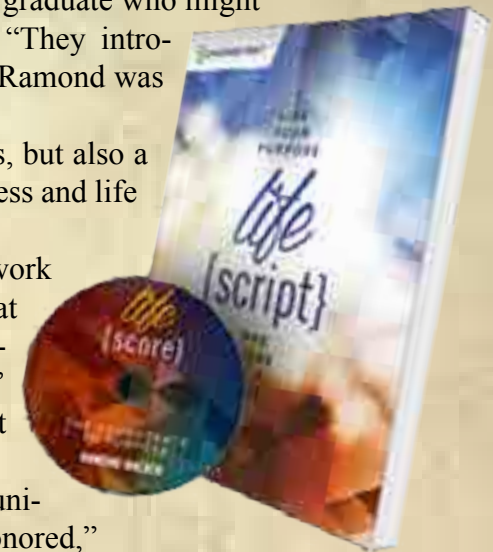
As a child, Walker had the desire to work for a Christian magazine. It so happens that McCloud Media produces Tulsa's only faith-based magazine titled "Community Spirit." Walker continues to work on staff in layout and design for the monthly publication.

"I love the fact that we can communicate values in a world where they aren't honored," Walker said.

His ORU education not only helped him find his first job in graphic design, but it also continues to help him today in the media field. One of Walker's university friends helped connect him with Emerge Marketing and Public Relations in Tulsa, where he now works as the creative director.

In a career that demands ongoing creative ideas, Walker stays up on what is relevant. Reading about graphic trends and researching is a must to

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“I have always defined purpose as aligning yourself with the values and skills and the passion inside of you, and everything in your life aligns with that. - ramond walker

stay abreast of what is current in the industry. Designer's block is death for an artist. Walker faces that challenge head on by taking a prayer break.

His training not only taught him about his talents, strengths and career choice, but understanding how to be a solid man of faith. Walker was always interested in people's dreams. In a matter of a few minutes of meeting someone new, he would quiz him or her about their passion.

In 2013, Walker started an organization called Dreamstart, a conference for entrepreneurs in Tulsa to encourage them toward their dreams and goals. Walker wanted to use his passion for purpose to help educate others using practical tools for their dreams to become a reality.

The event is about inspiring, motivating and educating entrepreneurs. After people identify their dream, they can get stuck and not know the next step. The conference offers a practical plan on how to get started. Walker also hopes to reach young professionals who may have gotten lost along the way in their career journey.

“Part of the reason I even did Dreamstart was I wanted to do something bigger on a bigger scale outside of just me,” Walker said. “And if I can empower people, if I can encourage people, I can motivate people beyond where they are, that's what makes the biggest difference.”

Communication, Arts, and Media adjunct faculty and Project Manager for the Center of Faculty Excellence Judi Nation attended the event. She received a bachelor of science in mass media communication and a master's in management from ORU and is a personal friend of Walker.

“I decided to go because it was an opportunity to spend a day focusing intently on ways to offer my skills and experience in an entrepreneurial way,” Nation said. “I wanted to hear from thought leaders who have done that successfully and could provide some insight. It was an opportunity to network with like-minded people who are expanding their personal brand.”



Unsatisfied with complacency, Walker fuses his passions of design and reaching people. He helps clients craft their next steps in life while keeping an attitude that makes him a joy to work with. photo/monica burgess



Believing in the beauty of possibility, Ramond Walker's dreams have no end. Demonstrating champion values in a secular world, he shows his clients not just how to reach their dreams, but to get there without compromising themselves. photo/monica burgess

“The person that doesn’t know what they want to do and the entrepreneur that doesn’t know where to start have so much in common,” Walker said with a huge smile and arms spread out. “That’s one thing I have realized, is that both of them are looking for meaning, but no one knows where to begin. My goal is to help make that clear.”

Dreamstart started out as a conference, but has since evolved into an organization. Through the event, Walker has held seminars and had motivational speaking opportunities. Walker’s dream would be to speak around the country and take the conference to other cities.

“I have always defined purpose as aligning yourself with the values and skills and the passion inside of you, and everything in your life aligns with that,” Walker said.

Walker’s heart is to add value to other people and help shape them. He dreams one day he will own his own firm to do branding consulting to grow and prosper other people’s businesses.

“The sky is the limit for Ramond,” McCloud said. “He has wonderful ideas and a servant’s heart. The combination will allow him to do big things for the Lord.”

The fire blazing with passion does not just remain in Walker’s eyes. He puts his words and dreams in action to go out and empower others. As people step into their purpose, it encourages others to do the same. It will spark a wildfire. ● story/jordan buie

“I love the fact that we can communicate values in a world where they aren’t honored. - ramond walker

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learning to be still

arvin sepehr allows God to make the moves

Life looks much different in America than it does in Iran. American citizens have the freedom to worship how they choose. However, Iranian citizens are predominantly Muslim. Christians live in uncertainty of whether they will be martyred for their faith.

Oral Roberts University senior Arvin Sepehr was born in Mashhad, Iran. His only memory from Iran was when he was one year old spending a day at a park with his grandpa, but Arvin Sepehr's memories of family life wouldn't always be so tranquil. Arvin Sepehr's father was apprehended, interrogated and thrown in prison for being a pastor.

Founder and pastor Haik Hovsepian of Arvin Sepehr's church had been writing letters to the United Nations about what was happening in the Iranian prisons. Pastors were regularly thrown in jail for their faith. Soon after his contact with the U.N., Hovsepian was kidnapped and murdered by the Islamic secret police. The U.N. had received Hovsepian's correspondence and took action. The U.N. notified the Iranian government that their prisons would be randomly checked and no pastors should be found behind bars.

After the Iranian government received notice from the U.N., they had to release Mohammed Sepehr temporarily but had plans to recapture him later. Once they let him out of prison, the Sepehr family knew they had to flee the country for their safety. Ironically, the day they flew out of Iran was on Mohammad Sepehr's scheduled execution day. Logistically speaking, it is a miracle they were able to leave.

"We still have no idea how [we got] the flights, how we got visas, how we were allowed to leave because he was on the wanted list," Sepehr said.

God redirected their steps. They moved from Iran to Turkey, Turkey to Cyprus, Cyprus to New York and New York to Tulsa, Oklahoma. God had a plan and purpose for the family. Although Arvin Sepehr was just a young child during all of the moves, he has a vivid memory. Not only does he remember his grandpa in Iran, but this young man, showcasing his Iranian descent with striking black hair and penetrating dark eyes, uses his hands



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Through trials and storms, Arvin Sepehr has seen God move in extraordinary ways with an escape from an execution date. Sepehr cannot help but humbly share about God's hand in his journey thus far. video/ chris holmes; music/smile quiet by puddle of infinity, youtube.com audio library

to describe the architecture of the buildings and mosques he saw in Turkey when he was at the ripe age of two. At three, he remembers their New York apartment, the church on top of the hill and enjoying eating pizza in the city. Now free and safe in the United States, Mohammed Sepehr traveled about telling their story of escape and preaching God's word. All the while, there was an Iranian community in Tulsa, a town the family never heard of. A small church, formerly known as Evangelistic Temple, now Spirit Life Church, was in need of an Iranian pastor to lead the people. When the church offered the job to Mohammed Sepehr, he accepted. The family moved and made Oklahoma their permanent home.

Mohammed Sepehr never had a desire to be on television. Years had passed since the Sepehr family moved to Oklahoma, but that desire

“... it was like God picked us up and dropped us right where we wanted to be.” - arvin sepehr

changed when Christian Broadcasting Network Founder Pat Robertson gave Mohammed Sepehr a call. As it turns out, CBN has satellites that reach Iran. The ministry was in need of an Iranian speaker to teach the Gospel in Farsi. The two ministries connected, and now Mohammad Sepehr broadcasts his Bible teachings, which reach Europe, Iran and online viewers.

Before Hovsepian got kidnapped he told the pastors under him about an amazing place far away. He explained there was a university where Christians could worship God freely. This place—where people could be free to love God while earning a degree—sounded too good to be true. Mohammed Sepehr did not believe a Christian university could actually exist. When the Sepehr family moved to Tulsa, they had no idea that same university was in the area. In Iran a Christian school was only a dream, yet a series of events and ordering of steps took the Sepehrs to a location they never thought possible—right into the lap of ORU.

“It was like God picked us up and dropped us right where we wanted to be,” Arvin Sepehr said.

It was Mohammed Sepehr’s dream to see his children attend ORU. His dream was realized, and both his children got the opportunity to study at the university. Arvin Sepehr not only was accepted by the university, but he was also a full Whole-Person Scholarship recipient. He grew up wanting to be a speaker, author and pastor, hoping his words would touch many lives. The school would prepare him for those goals. Arvin Sepehr reacted enthusiastically when he got the news of the funding.

“I had been praying about that specifically because there was no other way for me to get here financially speaking,” Arvin Sepehr said. “I dropped the phone and ran down the hallway. I couldn’t believe it.”

But walking out his education was not a smooth ride. Growing up, many things came easy for Arvin Sepehr. He grew up attending Evangelistic Temple School, a small Christian school, and he was well-connected with the church. He graduated as the valedictorian, had speaking opportunities at churches and traveled with his parents’ ministry; people saw him as a godly leader.

Everything changed when Arvin Sepehr came to college. The door had closed, and he no longer had speaking engagements; his GPA dropped and his life was spiraling downhill. Lacking direction, he switched his major several times from engineering to business to communications. Arvin

Sepehr temporarily lost his way, but God is a God of redirection, and step by step, He set Arvin Sepehr’s feet on a path of his own, not that of his parents.

“God rebuilt things one small Lego piece at a time,” Arvin Sepehr said.

First, God began to place vital individuals into his life. Assistant Professor of Communications Akena Farmer met Arvin Sepehr while he was in high school. ETS competed against other Christian schools at the Oral Roberts University Educational Fellowship competition. She was a judge for the speech competitions and critiqued Arvin Sepehr in numerous events. Farmer was impressed by his attention to detail and perception. He stood out to her during the events. As it turned out, she later became one of his communication professors.

“The thing about Arvin is I have seen him grow an enormous amount,” Farmer said. “He is a person that started at a very high plateau. He



With each transition in his life, Arvin Sepehr has been a living example of God’s favor. Having seen His miraculous power to open doors, he looks at each day as an opportunity to spread God’s love and word.
photo/mark moore

had to decide if he was going to fall back on that and not grow and expand or if he was going to use that as a starting place and go so much farther than other people did. I believe he has chosen the latter. He always impressed me as someone who really had no limits. He could just do and become what he wanted to be.”

Arvin Sepehr grew up traveling and had a heart for other cultures. While a student, he participated in missions. His junior summer he was the Burkina Faso Team Leader. With a passion for the lost, Arvin Sepehr has been on 30 mission trips and 20 domestic trips. He has also traveled to other countries like Ecuador, Sweden, Haiti, Denmark, Holland and Canada. As he matured in his walk, he was able to take leadership roles.

Leading a trip is different than being a member of the team. Sepehr learned he had to find himself and guide and motivate others in his own style. Assistant team leader to Burkina Faso Taylor Brooks and Arvin Sepehr met for the first time when they found out they would be leading a team together.

“Arvin was one of the best examples of a leader I have had the privilege of knowing, but not for all of the typical reasons,” Brooks said. “He didn’t do everything by the book, but he is one of the most genuine people I know who really understands the heart of God and how to relate that to others. Arvin is real and willing to share the areas of his life that aren’t perfect because he knows that is where God’s goodness is seen the most. His relationship with the Lord and passion for people to really know God was so inspirational that all of the team members were glad to be following someone like Arvin.”

Like his father, Arvin Sepehr has a gift for communication. Whether through the spoken word or the written word, he hopes to touch Christians with challenging new thoughts. In his book, “Your God Does Not Exist and Other Good News for Christians,” this young author targets those who have been raised as Christians in the United States. He hopes to create in them a shift in the way Christians think about God by distinguishing the differences between the God they’ve grown up with and the God with whom they can fall in love.

In graduating this May, Arvin Sepehr closes the book on one chapter of his life and readies himself for the next appointment. He plans to travel and write. With one book under his belt and in the process of publishing it, his heart is to leave a mark on the world.

Gifted to speak and write, this young man hopes his words will touch the lives of others. It is yet to be known where God will direct his life, but one thing Arvin Sepehr is confident in is that God will direct his steps to an amazing journey. ● story/jordan buie



Thanks to the support of his family and mentors, Sepehr is optimistic about life after graduation. With God as his guide, he welcomes what adventure comes next. photo/mark moore

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to the uttermost bounds of the earth oru now online, connecting worldwide



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A new avenue to the destination of globalization, ORU online services resident and nontraditional students. Providing students with more opportunities to change the world, these distance degrees set apart the university in a brand new way. video/courtesy ORU

The university has redefined going global with its new online learning method. A program that started small continues to develop, reaching the farthest and busiest of students. Moving online was a small step for the university that is making a large leap toward President Billy Wilson's master plan of globalization. This isn't just an online degree; it's the same whole person education found exclusively at ORU.

These distance degrees were crafted specifically with future world changers in mind. Learning the same curriculum used in the university classrooms in Tulsa, online students are being equipped to go into every man's world without stepping foot outside their homes. This new technique can meet the needs of nontraditional students alike. From adult learners with jobs, families and busy lives to students in countries around the world, becoming a whole person has never been easier. Bachelor's degrees in business administration, Christian caregiving and counseling, church ministries, leadership studies, RN to BSN completion, Biblical literature with a concentration in New Testament or English Bible, government and communication are available for anyone anywhere. Communication and other select minors are also available to study for learners on the go.

Specializing in the craft of communication, this program supports the diversity of communication. In studying multiple approaches to converse with others, students better understand how these techniques apply to everyday life. Curriculum covers not only theories of communication, but also requires practice of interpersonal communication skills regarding functional intelligence, social decision-making and self-expression. The purpose behind studying communication via the web is not only to learn how to communicate, but also to acquire necessary life skills. While in this program, students gain skills in organizational communication, public speaking, problem solving, conference leadership, seminar development, systems analysis, interviewing, listening and in-house communication consulting. Everything students learn while perfecting this craft is meant to be applicable to realistic situations. Online degrees have not only helped students around the globe, but have enabled a university to go global. ● story/jordan buie

agency-run fun

branding & promotions students adopt clients



Students with opportunity

The client brief is the first opportunity for the agency to get an idea of the campaign direction. Branding and Promotions has been an acclaimed course as students gained experience for their careers. "I enjoyed the hands-on experience of working with Big Brothers Big Sisters. I believe it will benefit my future, knowing firsthand how brand marketing works," junior account planner Audrey Gray said. photos/chris putman



click on blue arrow to see student-produced work

“

It offered us the opportunity to stand for a worthy cause while we learned practical skills.

- daniel wagner, sophomore agency account executive

”

music to their ears

koru english and spanish, coming in strong



Since being brought back to life, KORU has given student workers real experience for their future careers. From production to performance, the campus radio station continues to expand, uniting a diverse student body through the power of radio. photo/mark moore

Work, school, family, friends, church and sports may crowd the schedule of the average person's week. Staying in touch with Oral Roberts University can be a challenge as busy as life can be; however, KORU, the campus 24/7 radio station, makes it easy to access listening to music with no advertisements and stay in tune with the alma mater.

KORU streams online for easy access for anyone to listen to at their convenience. The program consists of primarily Christian music, but there is something for everyone online: praise and worship, rock and rap as well.

The station has a variety of music and entertainment to enjoy throughout the day while driving to the grocery store, working, cleaning, cooking dinner or exercising. Language options include both English and Spanish.

Oral Roberts' university vision was for the ORU students to go into every person's world. This includes the entertainment industry, such as radio. The program is student produced, and those who participate gain class credit and real-world experience.

While the week may be hectic juggling soccer games, work projects, household chores, church, play rehearsals and homework, in the middle of an active day, listeners can take some downtime to connect with the university by visiting oru.edu and clicking on the KORU icon, easily accessible online 24/7. ● story/jordan buie



Click on the KORU logo to listen live

talking it up

oru ad club hosts digital strategies conference



Digital Master Class

Professionalism permeates the room of the Tulsa Talks Conference. Months of preparation invested into the event had paid off. "Tulsa Talks speakers from recognized media agencies shared industry insights in an interactive environment, the perfect opportunity to hear from the media experts and to network at the same time," junior Paty Torres said. photo/mark moore

“

Technology changes so quickly that mastery requires a willingness to continually learn, test and share best practices.

- cristi freudenrich, aaf chapter adviser
assistant professor of media



click on blue arrow to link to Tulsa Talk

”

tripping the light fantastic

dance majors excel on stage

“

Every time the curtain rises, a new chapter of dance history may begin.

- ORU dance majors

”



Whole in one

Dance is just one way to use God-given talent for worship. The dance program has grown as more passionate dancers came to perfect their craft through relationship with God. “It is not that I am a dancer and then a Christian. I dance because I am a Christian. You see the two things are not separate. Because I have Christ in me, everything else flows from that. If I abide in Him and Him in me, there’s no room for separation,” sophomore Bailey Thompson said. photo/mark moore; video courtesy ORU

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time in a bottle

mark labash showcases ORU's best moments

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Travel back

The teacher never stops teaching, even if the students aren't his. Mark Labash used the forum of media to educate new students on the history of the university. "This is the 50th anniversary of the freshman class, so we have a lot of students who don't know who Oral Roberts is; some of them have never heard him preach. I went to Archives to pull up old chapels and put this show together where we have this fictitious time machine. We're going to travel back in time and re-experience some of those chapels," assistant professor of media Mark Labash said. video/camille orgel; music/locally sourced by jason farnham, youtube.com audio library



Click blue arrow to link to the Time Machine page

“

Come ride with me in the
ORU time capsule.

- mark labash,
assistant professor of media

”

teachers teaching teachers

denise miller touches lives through others

“

My student teachers are part of Oral's vision of taking God's light into every man's world.

- denise miller,
assistant professor of media



Taking the heat

The heart of an educator is to see her students succeed after they're long gone from the classroom. Denise Miller brought curriculum and wisdom into her classes. "Every single one of the graduates we've had since my nine-year tenure got hired the very first semester that they interviewed—every one of them—and they've been making a difference in their students' lives ever since," assistant professor of media Denise Miller said. video/chris holmes; music/grass by silent partner, youtube.com audio library

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on with the show

drama, theatre, film majors take center stage

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Objectives in action

Actors never stop learning, even more so when they are teaching others. The theatre program grew greatly as students tackled challenging and heartwarming productions. "We're really pleased with the recruitment for graduate schools for our alumni. We have students working in film, theatre, television, in Austin, Los Angeles, New York, Chicago. Everywhere they can work, they are working, and we are really, really pleased and excited for what the future has for them," assistant professor of drama and director Courtney Sanders said. video/camille orgel; music/chillax time, audionetwork.com

“

We welcomed over 2000 high school students to student matinee performances... from all over the tulsa area.

- courtney sanders.
professor & theatre director

”

up for debate

debate team triumphs at competition

“

We had another outstanding team with 30 students logically presenting the truth of God's Word.

- agena farmer,
assistant professor of comm
& debate coach

”



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Truth without rebuttal

The closing arguments in a debate often determine the victorious team. The art of debate gained momentum as students formed a team and excelled in competitions with integrity and character. "If you show honor to the person you're talking to, then they'll show you honor when you present your view. Debate is a phenomenal way to learn how to not only listen carefully but to respond to the argument well," assistant professor of communication and debate coach Agena Farmer said. video/chris holmes; music/open sea morning by puddle of infinity, youtube.com audio library

“

Students should be thinking of multiple ways their skills and natural traits can be used. I believe God put in us everything we need to be sustained and to represent Him in the workplace.

- judi nation, CAM adjunct,
faculty excellence center
project manager”

**Success without limits**

The learning process shifts as the student transforms into the teacher. Judi Nation found success in being adaptive with her skills and gleefully brought that experience into the classroom. “I enjoy being a part of our students’ transition from college into the field, and walking them through the process of becoming life-long learning communication professionals,” CAM adjunct Judi Nation said. photo/mark moore

there's a new kid on the block

dr. reid-martinez shines as chief academic officer



With passion for excellence, dedication to academia and a love for international affairs, Dr. Reid-Martinez is an incredible resource for the mission and vision of ORU. Reid-Martinez left each university she worked with better than she found it, helping students of today become leaders of tomorrow. photo/mark moore

Oral Roberts University welcomed Dr. Kathaleen Reid-Martinez in January 2014 as provost. Many qualified candidates were considered for the position, but it was Reid-Martinez that was selected as the chief academic officer. Her vision for international and academic studies along with her vast experience stood out to President Billy Wilson and the Board of Trustees. She has now completed her first full academic year at the university. One year down and more success to come.

Reid-Martinez arrived on campus with more than 25 years of experience working in higher education which includes academic administration, leadership and distance education. Her prior role was at Oklahoma City's Mid-America Christian University as provost. Under her leadership and other staff effort, the student enrollment increased 250 percent. Not only did MACU grow, but so did other universities Reid-Martinez served. At Lee University, she helped raise the enrollment in the communications department, and at Regent University, the School of Leadership Studies rose in numbers.

A heart for learning has prompted Reid-Martinez to study and work around the world. She graduated with a degree in English, a master's degree in mass communication and a doctorate in speech communication; all have assisted Reid-Martinez in her career. She has taught courses such as film criticism, intercultural communication, theories of leadership and educational leadership. She has served as the executive director for the National Peruvian Youth Congress and was given funds from the Peruvian Government. Also, Reid-Martinez presented "Transformative Education for Resilient Leaders and Global Sustainability" at an International Leadership Association Conference in Canada.

Reid-Martinez shares ORU's vision for globalization. Her knowledge, experience and passion are an asset to the university and will help with growth and student sustainability. ● story/jordan buie

“

I am interested in making certain students are well-prepared—spirit, mind and body. I embrace the ORU mission.

-dr. kathaleen reid-martinez,
chief academic officer

”

onward and upward

laura holland shares the year's events



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Expanding and thriving

It's a new season under new leadership and the results are a happy, healthy university. Communication, Arts and Media has been a department that had flourished as majors were added and students stretched to their full potential. "All of us are looking toward a bright future. We are looking toward discovering what God has for us and how our mission can fit the vision of the university, and we are very excited," department chair Laura Holland said. [video/camille orgel](#); last days of summer, [audionetwork.com](#)

“

We are continuing the vision our new president has set before us and that is globalization.

- laura holland,
department chair

”

retiring from the daily grind

jo bierman takes an extended coffee break

“

I have thoroughly enjoyed my almost 29 years at ORU. I will especially miss seeing my friends every day.

-jo bierman,
department CAM secretary

”

cup of joe to go

After nearly three decades of selfless service to the university, Jo Bierman is taking life a little easier in retirement. During her time on staff, the department ran a little smoother because of her gift of organization. “I believe I was at ORU because that was where I was supposed to be,” Bierman said. photo/chris putman



If you would like to update your mailing address or sign up to be notified of the release of the next issue of the Communique digital, simply click on the reminder on the to do list.

To Do List:

1. [Sign up to receive the new, interactive, online magazine](#)
2. Walk the dog
3. Mow the lawn
4. Wash the car
5. Pick up dry cleaning

the communique wins again

OCMA 1st place magazine writing category

Click on magazine to see all issues.



“

This year the online, interactive magazine was a big experiment. As it turns out, the quality is ongoing and so are the awards my students are snagging.

- chris putman,
assistant professor of media
& communique adviser

”

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chris holmes, videographer

The Communique is a product of the Oral Roberts University Communication, Arts, and Media Department for its alumni. All stories are written by student writers under the direction of Assistant Professor of Media Chris Putman. Contact Alumni Relations at alumni@oru.edu to receive a postcard notification when the new magazine is available or to update a mailing address.

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