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Why Darnell Smith signed on with a school with no athletes



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Research shows helping others helps us, too

THE OKLAHOMAN

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OSBI is still investigating David Boren

By Nolan Clay
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Boren



Henry

OSBI agents have begun a new round of interviews in a major push to wrap up their sexual misconduct investigation of retired University of Oklahoma President David Boren.

Among those questioned were former Gov. Brad Henry, House Minority Leader Emily Virgin and OU Athletic

Director Joe Castiglione, The Oklahoman has confirmed. Also questioned were former aides from both his final days at OU and from years before. The Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation has been

looking into accusations made against Boren, now 78, and a former OU vice president, Tripp Hall, since March. The OSBI reported in a search warrant request in October that "it was alleged that Boren and Hall inappropriately kissed and touched former and current students and employees of the University of Oklahoma."

Both have denied wrongdoing. In some interviews this

month, agents specifically asked whether Boren ever promoted anyone who was not qualified for a position in exchange for cooperation in what he wanted to do or demoted anyone for refusing to cooperate, The Oklahoman was told.

Agents also asked in some interviews about Boren's drinking, a party years ago at his official OU residence and fishing trips.

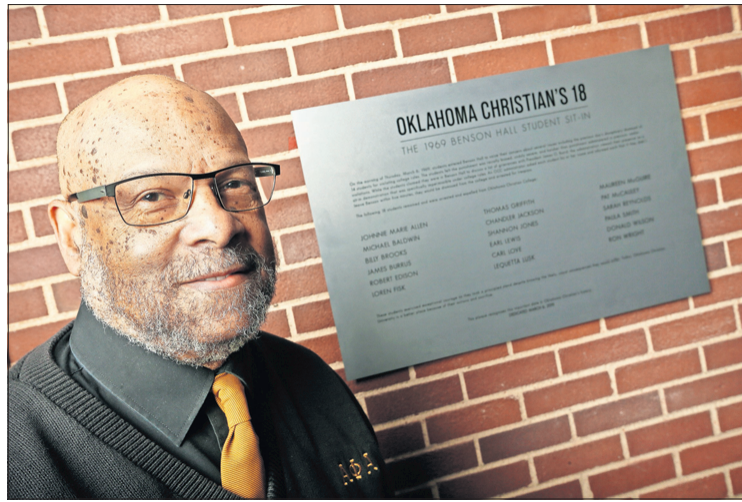
Henry said two agents

interviewed him in person Jan. 13 for about 90 minutes.

The Democrat, who was first elected governor in 2002, said he told the agents "I never saw him do anything inappropriate nor did he ever do anything inappropriate toward me."

Virgin, D-Norman, said one agent interviewed her in person Jan. 6 for 30 to 40 minutes. She said she told the agent "I don't have any

See BOREN, A3



Robert Edison, the new Distinguished Visiting Professor of American Studies in Racial and Ethnic Diversity at Oklahoma Christian University, stands near a plaque at OC's Benson Hall with his name on it. (NATE BILLINGS/THE OKLAHOMAN)

Program helps moms adjust to life with new baby

By Darla Slipke
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At first, inviting a stranger into her home felt a little awkward for Ashley Hill.

After her son Natalio was born, Hill joined a program called Right Track that's designed to help moms adjust to the struggles of bringing a new baby home. The program pairs moms with a parent educator who meets with them in their home on an ongoing basis to offer developmental tools, tips and support.

Now, that "stranger" has become a friend, and Hill looks forward to her visits. So does her 2-year-old daughter, Evele.

"You feel like you have help for that little bit of time," said Hill, 30, of Oklahoma City. "It takes a little bit of stress off."

Parent Promise and Integris Baptist Medical Center started the Right Track program to provide an immediate introduction to home-based parent education and support to families who deliver at the hospital's Women's Center. A parent educator is embedded there to talk to women about the services before they leave the hospital.

The Right Track program is a direct way to reach new moms, said Sherry Fair, executive director of Parent Promise. The Women's Center at Integris Baptist has been

See MOMS, A2

Back to school

King's remarks inspire educator to return to OC

By Carla Hinton
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About 51 years ago, Robert Edison was part of a group of black students booted from Oklahoma Christian University in an incident tinged with racial

undertones. This year, the longtime educator is returning to the private college — to teach OC's first African-American studies courses.

Edison is OC's new Distinguished Visiting Professor of American Studies in Racial and Ethnic Diversity. Beginning in February, his classes will include Introduction to African-American Studies

and the Theory of Race, African-American History I (Africa to 1865) and African-American History II (Reconstruction to the Present).

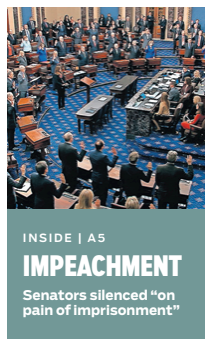
Edison, 71, said civil rights icon Martin Luther King Jr. and Jesus' Parable of the Good Samaritan came to mind as he was considering a return to OC.

"I thought about Dr. King and when he was invited

to come to Memphis (for the 1968 sanitation workers' strike). You know, a lot of people told him 'No, you don't need to go — there are threats against your life,'" Edison said.

The educator said King shared the story of the Good Samaritan with those who urged caution. In essence, King said he wasn't as

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IMPEACHMENT
Senators silenced "on pain of imprisonment"

Legislator seeks to end Board of Corrections

By Carmen Forman
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A top Republican legislator wants to eliminate the state Board of Corrections after a former board member allegedly overstepped his authority.

Sen. Roger Thompson, R-Okemah, prefired legislation to get rid of the

nine-member board first formed roughly 50 years ago.

In mid-September, gang-related inmate fights broke out at six state prisons, leading the Oklahoma Department of Corrections to lock down the prisons for days.

Behind the scenes,

See LEGISLATOR, A3



State Sen. Roger Thompson is flanked by other members of the state Senate. (THE OKLAHOMAN ARCHIVES)





Ashley Hill, right, with her daughter Eveie Ortiz, 2, and son Natalio Ortiz, 2 months, participates in the Right Track program with parent educator Amber Hidalgo at the Parent Promise office in Oklahoma City. The program helps moms like Hill adjust to the challenges of bringing a new baby home. (CHRIS LANDSBERGER/THE OKLAHOMAN)

MOMS

From Page A1

one of Parent Promise's biggest referral sources.

The program is free for patients through grants from the Arnall Family Foundation and the Integris Foundation.

Parent Promise offers three home-based education programs designed to help parents in Oklahoma County create a loving, nurturing and safe home for their children. Women who give birth some where other than Integris can still participate in the programs.

"Every positive outcome we say we want in Oklahoma begins with raising healthy and resilient children," said Cindy Allen, external relations director for Parent Promise.

Parents who participate in the Right Track program meet with a parent educator at home on a regular basis. The parent educators provide developmental information and bring age-appropriate activities to help moms interact and bond with their children.

Fair said the program takes a whole family approach. Parent educators work with clients to set goals. For many of their clients, those goals involve child development, employment and education. They've included obtaining a GED, saving for a car, moving into their own home, re-establishing relationships with family members and learning to cook healthier.

Another benefit of the program is that the parent educator can help recognize signs of postpartum depression and make referrals for moms who are experiencing symptoms.

In 2017, about 15% of Oklahoma mothers reported postpartum depression symptoms, according to the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System, a survey that collects data on maternal attitudes and experiences before, during and shortly after pregnancy. Postpartum depression affects men and women, and some people don't develop symptoms until months after the birth.

Amber Hidalgo, a parent educator for Parent Promise, said the program is a partnership between the educator and the parent. The parent educator is there to support the parent, not to judge or to dictate. She tries to fit the program curriculum into each family's environment and lifestyle.

"The idea for us is to

come in very open, very positive," Hidalgo said. "We try to reiterate to the families that it's very parent led. We bring things for them, but we're not there to be in charge. We're here to just support and communicate and interact."

On a recent Wednesday afternoon, Hidalgo and Hill sat cross-legged on the floor inside the Parent Promise office in northwest Oklahoma City.

Hill's daughter, Eveie, toddled around them on a colorful rug with letters and numbers. The young girl reached into a bag of blocks, pulled one out and inspected it. Then she handed it to Hidalgo, pointing to a picture on one side.

"Can you say yarn?" Hidalgo asked.

Nearby, Hill cradled her then 2-month-old son, Natalio, enjoying the one-on-one time with her two youngest children and the welcome relief of Hidalgo's company.

"On days like this, I don't have to juggle everything," she said. "I get to sit on the floor and have help."

That day, they used a "tracking toy" — a paper plate with black-and-white patterns — to help develop the muscles in Natalio's eyes by moving the plate back and forth for the baby to follow.

Hill, a stay-at-home mom of five, said things have changed significantly since her oldest child, now 14, was a baby. She said Hidalgo is helping her learn new ways to interact with her baby and to help his development.

Much of their meetings focus on the children, but Hidalgo also wants to know how Hill is doing. That simple question means a lot to the mom.

"It makes me feel like a person because as a mom, you get pushed to the back," Hill said. "When somebody comes in and asks a genuine question — How are you today? — you feel like a person."

Having five kids is a constant juggling act. It can also feel lonely.

Sometimes Hill is so excited to spend time with another adult that the words flow out of her. She enjoys having someone to share her children's milestones and exciting moments with, like when Natalio started rolling from his tummy to his back.

"I just hope that other moms see this as a helping tool and prosper from the program because it really is a great program," Hill said. "And don't be scared if you're a mom of multiples. You deserve help just as much as a first-time mom."

TODAY'S PRAYER

God of compassion, we live in a land of great wealth. Remind us that carries with it great obligation. Amen.

OUR COMMITMENT TO ACCURACY

The Oklahoman seeks to investigate and correct any factual error that appears in the newspaper or online. If you see an item that may require a correction, please contact the appropriate reporter or editor. Or, go to Oklahoman.com/home/support.

King holiday activities scheduled

Here is a brief list of some activities planned to celebrate the Martin Luther King holiday on Monday:

- The Midwest City Martin Luther King Jr. Prayer Breakfast, 7 to 9 a.m., Reed Conference Center, 5800 Will Rogers Road. Tickets are \$15 per person. For tickets, visit the

Midwest City Community Center, 200 N Midwest Blvd. or go online to Eventbrite.

- Martin Luther King Holiday Opening Ceremony and Silent March, 9 a.m. from Freedom Center, 2609 N Martin Luther King Ave., to the Oklahoma History Center, 800 Nazih Zuhdi

Drive.

- Job Fair, 9 a.m., Douglas High School, 900 N Martin Luther King Ave.
- Bell-ringing Ceremony, 11 a.m., Oklahoma History Center.

- Martin Luther King Holiday Program, 12:10 p.m., St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral, 127 NW 7.

• Holiday Parade, 2 p.m., starting from NW 6 and Walker Avenue, proceeding south on Walker to Reno Avenue.

Information: <http://okcmk.org>; OKC Martin Luther King Jr. Coalition Facebook page.

Staff reports

EDISON

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concerned with his own well-being as he was concerned about the well-being of those who needed his help.

In the biblical story of the Good Samaritan, both a priest and Levite saw a robbery victim lying naked, bruised and alone on the road and both of them walked by him while a Samaritan man showed mercy by caring for the victim's wounds and taking him to safety.

"He said the priest and the Levite said, 'What would happen to me if I go?' whereas the Samaritan man said, 'What would happen to this man if I don't go?' And that was my attitude. What would happen to the university trying to put this program together if I don't go and how much longer would the students' dreams be deferred, those that wanted to take the course?" Edison said.

New relationship is formed

Edison's new relationship with OC was one of the positive results that came out of a unique event held in March 2019 at the school, 2501 E Memorial Road.

He was one of seven black former OC students who took part in the "Commemoration of the Benson Hall Sit-in" at OC. In an event that included prayer and candid discussions about race, religion and reconciliation, OC President John deSteiguer publicly apologized to the group for their expulsion from the university in a series of incidents and decisions that many people attending the commemoration — regardless of race — described as racially motivated.

The story unfolded during the 2019 gathering.

In March 1969, a group of mostly black students attended an off-campus gathering. It was later described by then-OC President James Baird as a party, a characterization disputed by the students.

The students had signed out to leave campus, as they were required to do by school policy. However, the students had broken an unspoken rule — two white female students were also at the gathering. On March 6, 1969, 18 students were expelled and then arrested for trespassing on the campus. Most of them were black, but at least two were white. Some were expelled for attending the gathering, while others were expelled for trying to meet with the president to discuss the expulsions of their fellow students, which they felt were unjust. Many were about



Robert Edison gives an interview inside Benson Hall at Oklahoma Christian University, where he was one of 18 black students expelled from the school in 1969. (NATE BILLINGS/THE OKLAHOMAN)

to graduate. Those who were not from Oklahoma had nowhere to go. The expelled students scattered and for a long time never looked back. Edison was one of the students who hadn't attended the off-campus gathering but he did go to OC's Benson Hall to speak to Baird in the president's office. Edison said he thought that his background as a member of a Church of Christ house of worship would have some sway with the president of the Church of Christ-affiliated university and that he could help relieve some of the tension brought on by the expulsions. However, Baird told Edison and others that he would expel them also if they did not leave his office.

At the commemoration event, Edison said he knew he didn't want to attend the university anymore after seeing how the school treated black students, particularly those who interacted with white students outside of class.

"That was the elephant in the room. Basically the message was the college frowned on any kind of interracial interaction," he said at the time.

Edison also said his return for the commemoration was, in part, to show that his expulsion didn't keep him from fulfilling his dream to become an educator.

He went on to graduate from East Texas State University after leaving OC. He has a master's degree in civic affairs and another master's degree in history.

Edison said he started teaching in 1975 in the 1970s. He retired two years ago as the director of social studies for the Dallas Independent School District. In his long career in education, the Dallas resident also served as director of the Avery Research Center for African-American History and Culture at the College of Charleston, curator of the Dallas Independent School District African-American Cultural Heritage Center and assistant director of research and public program for the Dallas Historical Society. He has worked with book publishers to help identify cultural

bias in books.

New course offerings

OC students who attended the Benson Hall sit-in commemoration events last March told university leaders that they wanted the school to offer African-American studies courses. In a statement, the university said four student leaders and more than 170 OC students requested that the school provide additional academic offerings to more deeply explore African American studies.

Around the same time, Edison indicated his willingness to reconnect with the university by inspiring students in the classroom, university leaders said.

It became clear that God had prepared Edison for such a time as this at OC, Dr. Tina Winn, OC's dean of the college of liberal arts, said in the school's statement.

Scott LeMarcus, the university's chief academic officer, said he was impressed with Edison's educational background and his lengthy career, which included many honors and awards. Like Winn, LeMarcus said Edison comes prepared for the role he will have at the school.

"When we sat down to talk about what he was

going to do here, I asked him how he would want to set it up, how he would want to divide it (course work). It was obvious that he's already done this for organizations much larger than we are," LeMarcus said.

Coming full circle

Edison said he has obviously made a complete turn around in his mind about OC compared to this time last year.

He said he didn't even think he would return to the school when deSteiguer first invited him to attend the commemoration.

"I didn't think I would come back, period," Edison said.

Now his name is among those inscribed on a plaque in OC's Benson Hall that recognizes and honors the expelled group, "OC's 18," for their courage in standing up for the civil rights of students of color.

Edison said most of the group sees his new role at OC as a good thing.

"They were pretty pleased because they look at it from the perspective of how the African-American students here now would benefit from it," he said.

University president deSteiguer shared similar sentiments.

"It was such a milestone event on the OC campus when we commemorated the OC 18. He was such a force in that group and a force for us on campus because we saw a gentleman that is such a part of our history and could be such a part of our future as well," deSteiguer said.

"We didn't want the OC 18 commemoration event to be a one and done thing. We really wanted to acknowledge our history and we wanted to own up to it and we want this university to be a better place going forward. Professor Edison is a real important part of that."

those who were killed

Linda Coleen Housley

HONORING
those who survived
Paul D. Koenig • Jenita Koudrjartsev
Roman Koudrjartsev • Yelena Koushvir

THANKING
those changed forever
Noble Police Department
Norman Emergency Medical Services

LOOKING BACK-THINKING FORWARD
OKLAHOMA CITY NATIONAL MEMORIAL & MUSEUM
MemorialMuseum.com

THE OKLAHOMAN

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