

2022

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strive to be inquisitive.

“Always, wonder, question and inquire above all else,” said Layman, who received bachelor of science degrees in biology and chemistry-biochemistry and won the 2022 EOU outstanding student award.

Abel Mendoza, a member of the EOU board of trustees and the commencement’s keynote speaker, encouraged the members of the class of 2022 to embrace the challenge of continuously learning.

“Remember that this is just the beginning. The path to success requires continuous learning,” said Mendoza, a 1972 Eastern graduate who worked for Dow Chemical for 26 years before serving as a chemistry professor from 2004 to 2014.

Richard Chaves, chair of the EOU Board of Trustees, also spoke. He started by saying that he always feels passionate about giving back to EOU because of all that Eastern has given him. Then he diverted from



Dick Mason/The Observer

More than 350 students received diplomas at Eastern Oregon University’s graduation ceremony on Saturday, June 11, 2022, in Quinn Coliseum, La Grande.

his script and recalled that when he was dealing with a serious health issue over a portion of the past year, he was astounded by the level of support he received from so many people at EOU.

“It helped drive my passion to be successful in winning that battle,” Chaves said.

A 1973 Eastern graduate, Chaves concluded his presentation by urging the class of 2022 to be generous in giving back to their communities and to Eastern, and to stay linked to their alma mater.

“Stay connected to EOU for the support you may need now and also so that

you can support others in the future,” he said.

More than 350 students received diplomas at the June 11 commencement. They were among the approximately 675 students who graduated from Eastern in the 2021-22 academic year.

The June 11 ceremony



Dick Mason/The Observer

Brady Layman, Eastern Oregon University’s 2022 President’s Scholar, on Saturday, June 11, 2022, addresses his fellow graduates at the school’s commencement ceremony in Quinn Coliseum, La Grande.

was originally scheduled to be conducted at Community Stadium but was moved to Quinn Coliseum because of a forecast of heavy rain. Quinn Coliseum did not have enough room for everyone coming to the event. To allow

everyone to be accommodated there were periodic breaks so that people whose loved ones had already received their diplomas could leave to make room for others waiting to watch their loved ones make their commencement walks.

STUBBS

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work experience and earned as an online student the past five years at Eastern, allowed him to earn his degree.

Stubbs, an Air Force veteran, will never forget his commencement walk.

“It thought it was great. It was very emotional for me. I think I even cried a bit,” said Stubbs, who was accompanied at graduation by his wife, Kidd, their two daughters, Amy and Heidi, and their son, Andy.

Amy Stubbs said her father, who lives in Jerome, Idaho, was most deserving of the diploma for many reasons, including his selfless devotion to helping others get a college education.

“He basically put us all through college,” said Amy Stubbs, who lives in Stanley, Idaho.

Heidi Dohse, Bob’s oldest daughter, agrees.

“He has spent so much of his life working to make sure that all of us graduate from college. Today, it was his turn,” said Dohse, who also lives in Stanley.

Bob Stubbs began his drive to get a degree from Eastern five years ago when he enrolled as an online

student. At the time, he had already earned nearly enough credits for a degree from a four-year university, Amy Stubbs said. Those credits were from Miami University, the U.S. Air Force, Portland State University, Cal State Fullerton and Saddleback College, a community college in Mission Viejo, California.

Still, he needed more credits in specific areas to meet degree requirements. Stubbs was doing well in his pursuit of an EOU degree when his uncommon story took another twist.

Honorary alum

Stubbs was sidelined by a series of health issues. Some of his advisers feared Stubbs would not be able to recover to the point that he could continue taking classes.

As a measure of respect for his efforts, Eastern awarded him an honorary EOU alumnus. The honorary degree was presented to Stubbs by Eastern President Tom Insko via a Zoom teleconference. The gesture touched Stubbs deeply but he still longed to have an actual degree from a four-year university. So after recovering, Stubbs continued his pursuit of a degree, putting in countless hours.

“He was tenacious. Every time I visited, he would be studying,” Amy Stubbs said of her father, who has worked with technology and information systems his entire career.

Kerry Thompson, Eastern’s Pendleton-Hermiston Center director, played a critical role in making it possible for Stubbs to graduate, according to his family.

“He was super instrumental,” Amy Stubbs said, adding that Thompson was so impressed with her father that he took it upon himself to get him named an honorary alumnus.

Kevin Clark, an associate professor of business at Eastern, is also credited by Amy Stubbs with playing an influential role in getting her father to graduation.

Clark spent about 30 hours examining Stubbs’ transcripts and determining what could be accepted by Eastern and apply toward his degree. The business professor said that a number of Stubbs’ credits earned long ago were for computer systems that are now outdated.

Clark attended EOU’s June 11 graduation ceremony and said that seeing Stubbs graduate was one

of the day’s biggest highlights for him.

“Being able to watch him graduate made all that work worth it,” he said.

Back in fashion

Stubbs hopes to put his degree to good use by possibly working for a company as a COBOL manager. COBOL is an English-like computer programming language designed for business use.

The language is now being used with increasing frequency by the U.S. government for projects involving significant information storage.

Amy Stubbs said that her father learned COBOL many years ago before it lost the popularity it is now regaining. Today, he is among a relatively limited number of people who know COBOL well.

“He has lived long enough to see it come back into fashion,” she said.

Regardless of whether Bob Stubbs decides to join the workforce again, he will remain a role model for those striving to overcome obstacles on the path to higher education.

“Bob is an inspiration to me and I use his story with all of my students that are struggling. Don’t give up,” Thompson said.

WOLF

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Chesnimnus Pack and found dead Jan. 8 southeast of Wallowa originally was determined to have been killed by a gunshot wound, Oregon State Police said at the time. But the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Forensics Laboratory in Ashland conducted an analysis that showed the wolf actually died of blunt-force trauma to the chest and pelvis, state police said, and those injuries were consistent with being hit by a car.

Nonlethal efforts

Birkmaier has been known for his efforts to use nonlethal deterrents to keep wolves at bay.

“He’s doing every nonlethal (action) everybody can dream up,” Williams said. “What was more effective was he had a lot of people out there helping with nonlethal presence of humans.”

“I’m still continuing the relentless nonlethal measures, including two AM-FM radios, two fox lights that come on at night and motion-triggered noise-making devices that have a siren and flashing lights,” Birk-

maier said. “I’ve been putting those in saddles on ridges or any natural crossing area where wolves may enter pasture.”

Dennehy confirmed that “the producer” has been attempting to use nonlethal methods of deterring wolf attacks with limited success.

More livestock deaths

At least one more confirmed and one probable wolf kills of livestock were reported in Wallowa County by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife in its ongoing Wolf Depredation Report on June 8.

The two were attributed to the Chesnimnus Pack, one a 225-pound, 4-month-old calf in the Chesnimnus Creek area June 4 and the other a 245-pound, 2-1/2-month-old calf in the Crow Creek area the same day.

Another three kills were confirmed June 6 in the Daly Creek area of Baker County. They were attributed to the Lookout Mountain Pack, ODFW reported.

The Chesnimnus Pack has been reported to have killed numerous livestock in Wallowa County this year.

PIERCE

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used to being handled — but that she had never been ridden or saddled.

However, as Pierce started to work, everyone was reminded of the filly’s wild and powerful spirit. She galloped around the pen, nervous to be approached while surrounded by so many people.

“I want her to be free, to be powerful,” he said. “I don’t want to take her power from her, I want her to learn what to do with that power.”

Throughout the hour, Pierce worked to build trust with the filly. He let the horse set the pace, getting used to his presence in the pen. She did not want to let him get close and eventually he needed to bring in a roper to lasso her. Pierce said he does not normally need to rope a horse, but occasionally relies on the method to be respectful of everyone’s time.

At times, each step forward also felt like half a step back. Pierce would build the

filly’s trust then push the new boundaries. He worked in steps: calming her down and getting her used to his physical presence before he even attempted to get on her back. Pierce never used punishment, reminding the crowd that this was a new and strange experience for the horse.

After getting up on the filly’s back for the first time, Pierce dismounted to let her calm down. He got down on his knees, wanting to show he could put his trust in her just as she was putting her trust in him.

“I don’t want her to think she’s my servant,” he said.

Pierce’s persistence and patience with the filly paid off. Now, it was time to get her in a saddle.

The filly’s wild spirit reared back to life as the saddle slid onto her back. Pierce once again calmed her down, needing to build back that tentative trust. He reminded the crowd with a laugh that he was known for riding bareback before attempting to get up into the saddle.

An hour prior the filly was running nervous cir-

cles around Pierce. Now he was riding her in slow circles around the pen with saddle, bit, bridle and reins.

Pierce was born and raised in rural Idaho. In 1995, he and his wife set out on the rodeo trail where they pursued a world championship in bareback riding for seven years. After a knee injury in 2002, Pierce became the chaplain for the Professional Bull Riders tour.

Now, he shares his passion for evangelism through the visual imagery of connecting with a wild horse. Pierce does his work through a missionary organization called Riding High Ministries. He trains an unbroken horse in front of a live audience “to demonstrate how Jesus pursues, heals and becomes one with us as a Father,” according to www.ridinghighministries.org.

Pierce is known for his work with men’s groups. During the event, he reached out to the men in the crowd, speaking about the importance of not closing oneself off to emotion.

“You were created with a heart to feel,” he said.

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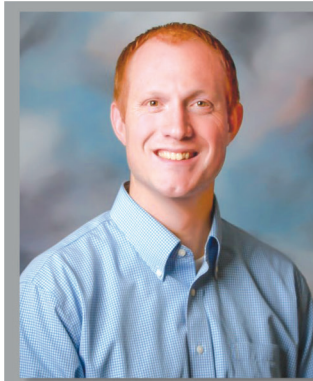
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