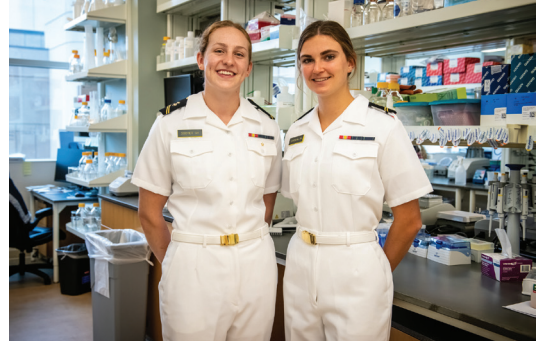
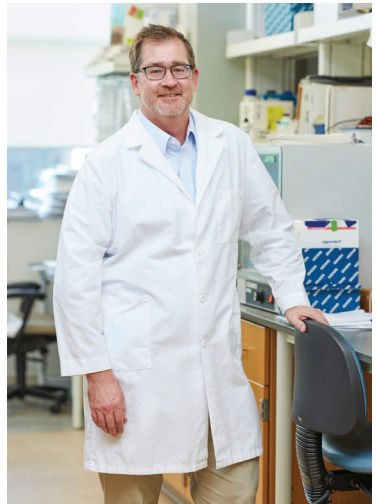
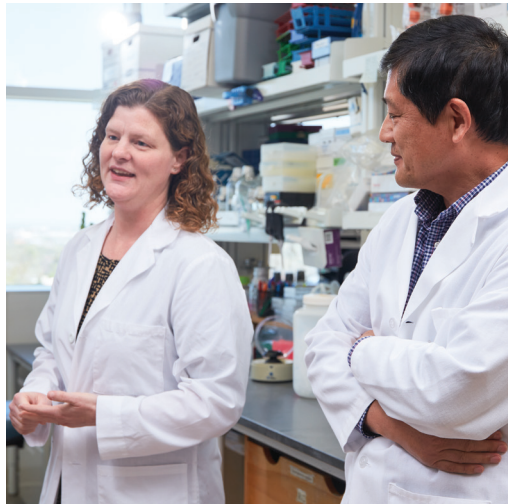




2022



ANNUAL REPORT



 **OMRF**
Oklahoma Medical
Research Foundation

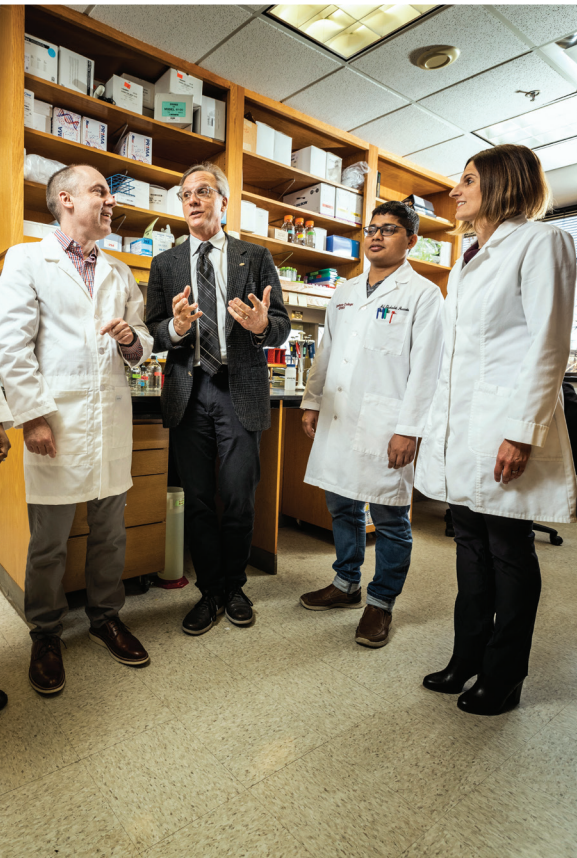


JANUARY

**DR. ANDREW
WEYRICH BEGINS
HIS TENURE AS
OMRF'S 11TH
PRESIDENT.**



OFF AND RUNNING



Dr. Andrew Weyrich (center) set a goal to meet with the staff members of every lab at OMRF, including the one led by Dr. Christopher Sansam (second from left).

In January of 2021, when it came time for the United States to transition from one presidency to the next, things did not go smoothly. In January of 2022, OMRF had no such problems.

Right after the New Year, Dr. Andrew Weyrich became OMRF's 11th president. He succeeded Adam Cohen, who'd been leading OMRF in an interim capacity since Dr. Stephen Prescott's death in the spring of 2021.

When Weyrich arrived, Cohen, a 20-year OMRF veteran, resumed his role as the foundation's senior vice president and general counsel. Meanwhile, Weyrich hit Oklahoma's red dirt running.

After a three-decade career at the University of Utah, where he'd been a cardiovascular biology researcher and, since 2016, the vice president for research, Weyrich set his sights on learning all he could about OMRF. That meant visits with the foundation's administrative groups and board members. Still, the centerpiece of his get-to-know-OMRF effort was spending time with each of the foundation's individual research laboratory teams.

Beginning in January, he mapped a plan to visit all 50-plus of OMRF's labs. During those visits, which he started within weeks of his arrival at OMRF, he made a point not just of diving into the scientific projects in that particular lab, but of connecting with the individuals doing the experiments. "To understand a place, you have to understand the

people," says Weyrich. "That means engaging with them face-to-face and learning what makes them tick."

When Weyrich came to Dr. Bill Freeman's lab in late January, the visit left a distinct impression. "He emphasized that the success of OMRF isn't measured just by published papers and grants, but also by the development of our scientific staff,"

says Freeman, a member of OMRF's Genes & Human Disease Research Program. "That really resonated with me."

Dr. Sarah Ocañas, who was completing her Ph.D. in Freeman's lab when Weyrich visited, was impressed with the president's level of engagement with each member of the research team. "He told us his door is always open, and you could tell it wasn't some obligatory statement. He meant it."

By year's end, having gone deep with every scientific group at OMRF, Weyrich was sketching out a similar outward-facing effort. "For OMRF's 77th anniversary in 2023, our team plans to visit all 77 counties in Oklahoma," he says. He knows it's an ambitious goal, but he's excited by the prospect. "People from every corner of this state have given to OMRF to make us what we are today. I can't wait to meet them in person and tell them thank you."

**TO UNDERSTAND
A PLACE, YOU HAVE
TO UNDERSTAND
THE PEOPLE.**

FEBRUARY



Ryan Eisner (above) narrowly survived sepsis, a blood disorder for which Dr. Florea Lupu (facing page) is testing new treatments.



THERE'S NOT A DAY THAT I DON'T THINK ABOUT IT.

FIGHTING A KILLER

Two days before he almost died, Ryan Eisner felt great. In fact, if you'd asked him, Eisner, then about to begin his junior year as a point guard for the Drew University basketball team in New Jersey, would've told you he was in the best shape of his life.

But when a seemingly routine respiratory infection became septic, Eisner's doctors had to intubate him and place him in a medically induced coma. "You'd better start praying," one of the physicians told his father. "He's going to die."

Fortunately, Eisner didn't. Yet the drug that saved him – Xigris, based on the work of OMRF's Drs. Chuck Esmon and Fletcher Taylor – was eventually pulled from the market. In the time since, no other treatments have emerged. That has left patients with few therapeutic options. As a result, sepsis is the leading killer in intensive care units in the U.S., claiming an estimated 270,000 lives each year.

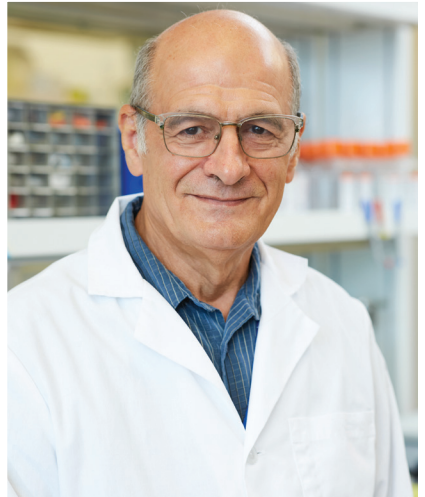
In February, OMRF's Dr. Florea Lupu received a five-year grant to study the condition, which occurs when the

immune system overcompensates while fighting a pathogen like a virus or bacteria. "We are targeting a specific part of the immune system called the complement system, which helps clear away bacteria in early sepsis but then becomes detrimental and contributes to organ failure," says Lupu.

In particular, he's aiming at a protein known as C5, using an investigational drug to counter the protein. "The timing for an inhibitor is crucial," he says. "If you try to block C5 too early, you also block the clearance of bacteria. If you go in too late, the damage will already be done."

Once sepsis becomes severe, a state technically known as shock, the odds of survival decrease by 8% for each hour of delay in treatment, says Lupu. "So, that's the biggest challenge: finding the narrow window to a successful outcome."

The hope is that Lupu's research will one day bring more stories like Eisner's. Until then, Eisner, now healthy, knows he was fortunate. "There's not a day that I don't think about it," he says.



CHANGING THE ODDS

For new drugs, the road to hospitals and clinics is steep and long. Researchers screen countless promising compounds, but they choose only a few to begin clinical trials. Of those selected, roughly 9 out of 10 will fail. For that 10th, it takes an average of more than a decade to complete this journey.

With a pair of major new grants from the National Institutes of Health, researchers at OMRF are aiming to improve those numbers and, with them, patient outcomes.

The grants are part of an initiative known as AMP AIM, which focuses on accelerating the development of novel therapies for autoimmune conditions that include lupus and rheumatoid arthritis. The international partnership involves the NIH, for-profit drug and biotech companies, nonprofits, and 52 universities and research institutions like OMRF.

At OMRF, Drs. Judith James and Joel Guthridge received individual grants, and James was selected to chair the \$58.5 million program. The strength of the effort, she believes, lies in numbers. "Our goal is to demonstrate that a team approach to science will achieve more than any single member or institution."

Another key, says Dr. Robert Carter of the NIH, will be the multi-disciplinary makeup of the team, which includes investigators researching a host of different autoimmune illnesses. "Studying a suite of disorders will enable ... cross-disease comparisons that may help us pinpoint those cells and pathways that are specific to each of these diseases and those that are shared," Carter says.

Also in March, OMRF's Dr. Joan Merrill served as the lead author on a study of an investigational lupus drug published in the influential *New England Journal of Medicine*. In a Phase 2 trial involving 117 clinics on four continents, the highest dose of the medication, iberdomide, showed a reduction of symptoms over 24 weeks in a cohort of nearly 300 patients.

Despite the positive results, Merrill says that "any given drug, no matter how sophisticated, is unlikely to work for every patient." Still, with each new therapeutic option, increasingly sensitive disease monitoring tools can help physicians devise unique treatment plans for each person living with autoimmune disease. And that individualized approach, known as precision medicine, promises better outcomes for patients going forward.



From top: Drs. Joan Merrill, Judith James and Joel Guthridge (all pictured left) are focused on delivering new treatments for autoimmune diseases.

MARCH

**TODAY, JUST 1 IN 5,000
EXPERIMENTAL COMPOUNDS
PROVES SAFE AND
EFFECTIVE ENOUGH
TO REACH PATIENTS.**

TAKING AIM AT ADDICTION

The headline in The Washington Post said it all: “A young couple died of overdose, police say. Their baby died of starvation days later.”

The article that followed recounted a tragic story. It was specific to a community 60 miles outside Pittsburgh, and to a young family who lost their lives. But it also represented a much larger narrative, one that’s touched every corner of our country.

Beginning around 1970 – thanks to declines in smoking, the development of better treatments, lifestyle changes and a variety of preventive measures – most Americans have enjoyed longer and healthier lives. But around 2000, that trend came to an abrupt halt. The culprit? A group of killers economists labeled collectively “diseases of despair”: suicide, alcoholism and addiction to drugs, primarily opioids.

When Nobel Laureate Angus Deaton published a study that put a finer point on the reverse in mortality trends from 1999 through 2013, he wrote, “Half a million people are dead who should not be dead.” By most researchers’ estimates, those numbers have since more than doubled.

From public health experts to surviving family members, countless

Americans are now working to change those grim statistics. At OMRF, Dr. Mike Beckstead is leading those efforts.

Beckstead investigates the role dopamine, a naturally occurring chemical in the brain, plays in addiction to opioids and other drugs. In April, he published a study that could clarify a mystery about chemical changes in the brain that occur during relapse. “This may be a missing piece in understanding how increased dopamine activity leads to addictive behavior, particularly after a period of abstinence,” he says.

The finding came on the heels of an announcement that Beckstead had received a four-year grant from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to continue his work. With the award, he’ll look to isolate specific pathways that respond to opioids without shutting down broader receptors for dopamine, which plays a crucial role in many other systems in the body.

Dr. Bill Freeman, who will work with Beckstead on the project, recognizes that “there’s no magic pill to cure addiction.” But with such an enormous problem to tackle, the pair hope they can help devise at least a small part of the solution.



Dr. Mike Beckstead is studying neurochemical pathways in the brain to reduce the number of drug-related deaths in the U.S.

THE DRUG EPIDEMIC IN A YEAR



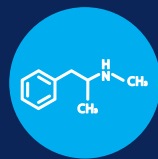
91,799
PEOPLE DIED FROM
DRUG OVERDOSE



9.5 MILLION
PEOPLE MISUSED
PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS



2.7 MILLION
PEOPLE HAD AN
OPIOID USE DISORDER



2.5 MILLION
PEOPLE USED
METHAMPHETAMINE



356,000
PEOPLE MISUSED PRESCRIPTION
FENTANYL PRODUCTS



56,516
DEATHS FROM NON-METHADONE
SYNTHETIC OPIOIDS (PRIMARILY
FENTANYL)



1.2 MILLION
PEOPLE MISUSED PRESCRIPTION PAIN
RELIEVERS FOR THE FIRST TIME



2 MILLIGRAMS
POTENTIALLY FATAL
DOSE OF FENTANYL

SOURCES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
2020 National Survey on Drug Use and Health
National Institute on Drug Abuse

MAY



**DIETARY INTERVENTIONS
MAY BE A MORE
PROMISING AND
EASIER-TO-TOLERATE
APPROACH TO TREATING
AUTOIMMUNE DISORDERS.**

CUT CARBS, CUT MS SYMPTOMS?

Dr. Scott Plafker likes medical solutions that don't come in pill bottles.

In his OMRF lab, he's studied how a compound naturally produced in broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower and Brussels sprouts can protect eyes as they age. "Because it's readily available in vegetables, people can get it with ease, and they can get it without prescriptions or high costs," he says. "That's the best kind of treatment."

Now, with a four-year grant he received in May, he'll continue his search for dietary solutions to medical problems. Once again, he's focused on the eyes. But this time, he's looking at optic neuritis, blindness that accompanies disease flares in multiple sclerosis; vision loss is initially temporary, but repeated flares can cause permanent blindness.

In a previous study, Plafker examined the effects of a drug on optic neuritis. While only two of the 52 patients who stayed on the medication experienced an MS flare while taking it, more than 200 patients in the study quit taking the drug, either due to unwanted side effects or a perception the drug wasn't working. "That's a big reason we believe dietary interventions may be a more promising and easier-to-tolerate

approach to treating autoimmune disorders," he says.

For this study, he'll test how a low-carbohydrate, high-fat ketogenic diet affects optic neuritis in mice genetically engineered to have an MS-like condition. In previous mouse experiments, a keto diet eliminated optic neuritis along with the movement-related symptoms of MS. "One goal of this grant is to figure out how the diet produces the desired results," says Plafker.

As with all of his projects, a key component on this one will be his wife and collaborator, Kendra, who has served as his laboratory manager since the two joined OMRF's scientific staff in 2011. He sets the overall direction of the research while she manages the lab's day-to-day operations and oversees their team's experiments. "The goal is to have somewhat defined roles that complement one another so we can be as efficient as possible," Kendra says.

While they may play different parts in the process, Scott says the pair share a common goal: "We want to embolden people to actively participate in their own health. Diet is a powerful way to do that."



Kendra and Dr. Scott Plafker are working to understand how diet impacts the over 3,000 patients with MS that Dr. Gabriel Pardo's team cares for at OMRF.

JUNE



**OMRF HAS
WELCOMED
MILITARY ACADEMY
STUDENTS
TO ITS LABS
SINCE 2009.**

A DIFFERENT KIND OF BASIC TRAINING

For Dr. John Saxon III, the connection was one worth making. “Some people may not think of basic science and the military as linked, but I thought that I could use OMRF’s work as an opportunity to stimulate some basic bench science interest with cadets at service academies.”

The year was 2009, and the Muskogee physician and OMRF Board member was searching for a way to honor his father’s military service and support OMRF. With an initial gift of \$250,000, he found a way to do both, establishing the John H. Saxon Service Academy Summer Research Program.

In June, OMRF welcomed its 13th class of Saxon Scholars. The quartet – two from the U.S. Naval Academy and one each from the Air Force Academy and West Point – brought the total to more than three dozen students from the U.S. military academies who have now spent parts of their summers at the foundation. In Oklahoma City, they work side-by-side with senior OMRF scientists, expanding their knowledge base as they train to become medical officers or serve in other technical roles in the military.

The program almost universally proves eye-opening for the students. “The breadth of this field surprised me,” says Liam Sasser, a West Point cadet who worked on cardiovascular

biology projects at OMRF this past summer. For Naval Academy midshipman Alexandra Foreman, her time in the lab will add valuable context to her biology classwork. “The hands-on nature of this experience has really helped me understand the material,” she says.

OMRF scientists emphasize that the benefits of the program flow both ways. The students “are so focused, disciplined, respectful and motivated,” says Dr. Sathish Srinivasan, Sasser’s OMRF mentor. “They bring such a positive aura that it bleeds over into the rest of the lab.” OMRF Vice President of Research Dr. Courtney Griffin, who’s welcomed a number of Saxon Scholars in her lab over the years, agrees. “They’re academically impressive and simply fearless.”

Saxon, who has since supplemented his initial donation to grow the program, foresees long-term benefits to the scholars – and the country. “They’ll be able to draw on this experience in their military careers, or maybe some will end up working for the National Institutes of Health or the Centers for Disease Control as part of our defense.” To Griffin, each class of students also provides valuable reassurance: “We’re in good hands if they represent the future leadership of our country.”



West Point Cadet Liam Sasser learned about blood disorders at OMRF.

“**THEY’RE
ACADEMICALLY
IMPRESSIVE AND
SIMPLY FEARLESS.**”

MENDING THE WOUNDS THAT TIME CANNOT



Drs. Lorin Olson (above) and David Forsthoefel (facing page) want to improve the ways the human body can repair itself.

Time, it's said, heals all wounds. But we all know that's not quite true.

"Everything must work just right for proper wound healing to take place," says OMRF's Dr. Lorin Olson. "It's a delicate balance."

Olson studies a compound in the body called platelet-derived growth factor. In new research, his team pinpointed the crucial role the growth factor plays in the healing process. Too much of it can lead to excessive scarring. Too little, and wounds fester.

The OMRF researcher is building on the findings to delve into the causes of keloids, thick, raised scars that most frequently form on the ears, shoulders, chest and cheeks of people of African and Asian descent. The discovery, he says, may have implications for other health conditions, "like atherosclerosis, where deadly plaque builds up in the arteries, as well as cancer."

Meanwhile, Dr. David Forsthoefel also broke new ground on how to induce regeneration in damaged tissue. He did it working with sunflower-seed-sized flatworms called planarians, which can regenerate any body part. "If you cut one into 10 pieces, within a few days, you will have 10 planarians," he says.

In a study published in the journal *Nature Communications*, Forsthoefel and his lab found that without lipids ("a fancy word for fats," he says), regeneration slowed by 50%. According to OMRF's Dr. Patrick Gaffney, the work offers important clues for understanding similar processes in our own bodies. "If future research shows that humans need additional lipids to regenerate tissue, we might discover a way of supplying those lipids where they're needed to expedite healing."

Chronic wounds represent a significant health issue for millions of Americans. Diabetes and other circulatory disorders can often lead to chronic foot ulcers, which can require amputation. This is one reason there are now more than 1,000 outpatient wound-care facilities in the country. And with over 70 million annual surgeries in the U.S., the need for wound care is rising sharply.

If insights from Olson, Forsthoefel and their colleagues can one day improve wound healing, it would bring much-needed relief to countless people. Because, right now, time alone isn't doing the trick.

JULY



A PAIR OF OMRF SCIENTISTS
TAKE A DIFFERENT APPROACH
TO THE STUDY OF HEALING.

NEXT QUESTION, PLEASE

As a child, Holly Van Remmen loved to figure out how things worked. Even her younger sister's supposedly impregnable Fisher-Price transistor radio fell prey to her inquiring mind. "I used butter knives, screwdrivers and all kinds of things to get inside it," she says. "I just had to know what made the music play."

In college, a part-time job in a nursing home stoked the fire of her curiosity. What, she wondered, was driving the biological changes she saw in the older people she helped care for? To find out, she enrolled in a graduate program focused on physiology and aging. A career as a researcher in the field followed, first at the University of Texas Health Sciences Center in San Antonio, and then, since 2013, at OMRF.

Her research has focused on age-related muscle loss and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, better known as ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease. She's made a series of important insights on muscle degeneration, including identifying links between traumatic brain injuries and neurodegeneration. Her inquiries, she says, revolve around a single theme: "To help people to be stronger for longer."

This past summer, her peers recognized the impact of her work by naming her the president of the American Aging Association. The

53-year-old organization brings together scientists and clinicians to promote research aimed at slowing the aging process.

For Dr. Arlan Richardson, Van Remmen's former mentor and now a collaborator at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, the honor is hardly surprising. "Dr. Van Remmen is a tremendously hard worker and has a gift for fostering collaboration. She is one of the leading researchers in geroscience, and her leadership will impact the field for many years."

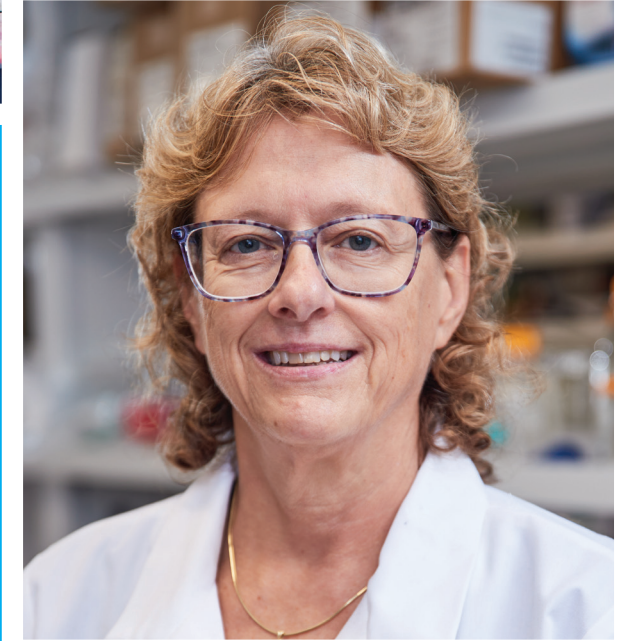
Together with Richardson, she's also made Oklahoma one of only eight Nathan Shock Centers of Excellence, a sought-after designation from the National Institutes of Health that comes with a multimillion-dollar grant to support aging research at OMRF, OUHSC and the Oklahoma City VA Medical Center.

Van Remmen, who holds the G.T. Blankenship Chair in Aging Research, stepped down at year's end as leader of OMRF's Aging & Metabolism Research Program. But with a new, five-year grant from the National Institute on Aging, she has no plans to stop asking those head-scratchers. "Research is a puzzle," she says. "As you put together more pieces, more questions arise, and you have to follow where they lead."

AUGUST



FOR DR. HOLLY
VAN REMMEN,
“RESEARCH IS
A PUZZLE.”



SEPTEMBER



Drs. Audrey Cleuren (top) and Jake Kirkland were the first to benefit from the fund established to honor Dr. Stephen Prescott.

A LEGACY THAT LIVES ON

Dr. Steve Prescott liked new buildings and laboratories as much as the next president. He led the largest campus expansion in OMRF's history, adding a new research tower that brought another 200,000 square feet of clinical and lab space to the foundation's campus.

Yet he knew that what really makes an organization special is its people.

Prescott, who led OMRF from 2006 until his death in 2021, took particular care when it came to recruiting OMRF's principal investigators, the scientists who run each of OMRF's 50-plus labs. He'd interview every candidate personally, which is far from typical for the president of a research institute. He did it because he believed the "high touch" approach was crucial to bringing the most talented researchers to Oklahoma and OMRF.

"It's hard to attract the best scientists out there," he told Findings magazine in 2017. "So, you need to try to sell the city and organization from day one."

In the waning days of his presidency, as Prescott's long journey with cancer came to an end, OMRF launched a fundraising campaign in his honor. Now complete, the effort created a new fund that will support the recruitment and retention of scientists.

Donors gave more than \$10 million to create the Stephen M. Prescott Endowment Fund for the Best and Brightest. Soon after he became president, Dr. Andrew Weyrich created a process for selecting the scientists who will receive support from the Prescott Endowment Fund.

In September, Weyrich named the first two recipients: Drs. Audrey Cleuren and Jake Kirkland. Both joined OMRF in 2021 – Cleuren after completing her postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Michigan, Kirkland after finishing his at Stanford. The funding will help OMRF support them in the early days of their independent scientific careers, where he'll study cellular processes that can lead to cancer, and she, like Prescott, will research blood vessels and cardiovascular disease.

Cleuren and Kirkland represent the first of many scientists who will benefit from the fund, which will make distributions annually. Weyrich, who was a protégé of Prescott's as a young researcher, says it's a fitting salute to his mentor.

"Steve's goal was to bring the most talented scientists to OMRF and to keep them here." The Prescott Endowment Fund, says Weyrich, "will help us do just that."



STEVE'S GOAL WAS TO BRING THE MOST TALENTED SCIENTISTS TO OMRF AND TO KEEP THEM HERE.

OCTOBER

OMRF'S 241 FUNDRAISER RETURNS AFTER A TWO-YEAR HIATUS.



WORTH THE WAIT

The wind – and music – came sweeping across the patio of OMRF’s Research Tower. But even Oklahoma’s gale-force gusts couldn’t dull the mood of the reunion-like atmosphere when the foundation’s annual 241 benefit returned in October after a two-year pandemic hiatus.

Country music legend and 14-time Grammy Award-winner Emmylou Harris headlined the ninth annual music, wine and food festival with her band, the Red Dirt Boys. And the guest list included a second icon: legendary Oklahoma singer and songwriter Wanda Jackson.

Even Harris appeared awestruck that her audience included the octogenarian Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductee. “It’s such an honor to play in front of you. The boys” – her band – “won’t believe it,” she told Jackson before taking the stage. During the show, Harris recognized Jackson, who received a standing ovation from the capacity crowd.

With LaRue and Bill Stoller, CEO of Express Employment Professionals, as honorary co-chairs and The Chickasaw Nation as lead sponsor, the event raised \$674,000 for OMRF. In the decade since its birth, 241 has generated almost \$6 million to support research on diseases ranging from multiple sclerosis to brain cancer.

Meg Salyer, who led sponsorship efforts with Judy Hatfield, joked that when she signed up in 2019 to spearhead a fundraiser originally scheduled for 2020, she didn’t realize she was making a three-year commitment. Nevertheless, the decision to see it through was easy. “Having everyone back together was so special,” says Salyer. “The impact of this institution is without question, and when you’re together among other OMRF supporters, it just feels like we’re all family.”

To Hatfield, an OMRF Board member, watching OMRF President Dr. Andrew Weyrich dance with his son, Sam, served as the perfect cap to the event. Sam was born with a rare genetic disorder, and Harris, who has an animal rescue, dedicated her tune “Big Black Dog” to him and his service dog, a black Labrador the Weyrich family calls Baby G.

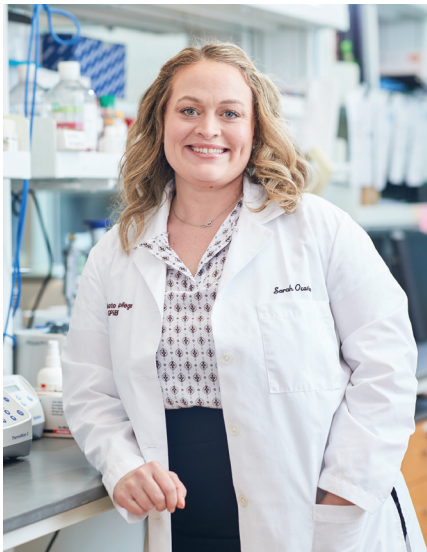
“That filled my heart with joy,” Hatfield says. “They didn’t think Sam would see his second birthday, yet here he is, 22 years later. So, to see the sparkle in Dr. Weyrich’s eyes when he’s around Sam, it’s just absolutely bigger than life.”

The benefit is scheduled to return in 2023. And while the headliner is not yet set, one thing is certain: 241 will again blow everyone away.



Gov. Brad Henry, First Lady Kim Henry, First Lady Cathy Keating and Gov. Frank Keating (top, from left) were in the crowd when Emmylou Harris, pictured with guest Wanda Jackson (bottom, from left), took the stage at 241.

RISING STAR



**THIS IS A RARE
OPPORTUNITY.**

Dr. Sarah Ocañas didn't take the traditional path to becoming a research scientist.

After graduating from college with degrees in mathematics and biology, she joined Teach for America, a nonprofit that sends educators to underserved communities. Ocañas was assigned to Texas' Rio Grande Valley, where she taught high school calculus, statistics and anatomy.

At once, she saw her students faced obstacles that many peers elsewhere did not. "It's a region that's right on the border, and it's 95% Hispanic. There's a lot of recent immigrants, most are low income, and many don't speak English." Ocañas embraced the experience. "I loved the area, and I really enjoyed teaching down there."

In addition to classroom work, she tried to create external growth opportunities for students, coaching robotics and competitive math teams. In seven years of teaching, she successfully helped students gain admission to prestigious universities like Yale and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Perhaps more importantly, in that time she mentored more than 1,000 young people as they tried to master mathematics, science and the transition into adulthood.

When Ocañas decided to pursue a Ph.D. in biology at the University

of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, she found her own mentor in OMRF's Dr. Bill Freeman. She spent five years in Freeman's lab, and when she earned her doctorate in 2022, she again blazed her own trail, becoming Oklahoma's first recipient of the National Institutes of Health Director's Early Independence Award.

Ocañas joins an elite group of awardees, with the other 13 recipients in 2022 coming from institutions like Harvard, Stanford and MIT. The award provides a five-year, \$2.2 million grant that allows Ocañas to bypass the traditional postdoctoral fellowship and start her independent research laboratory at OMRF.

"This is a rare opportunity – to jump from getting her doctorate to having her own lab in just months," says Freeman. "I'm excited for Dr. Ocañas, but also for OMRF because we get to keep a talented scientist."

In her lab, Ocañas will study why diseases progress differently in males and females. She'll initially target Alzheimer's, which strikes more often and leads to steeper declines in women, yet typically results in earlier deaths in men.

Understandably, Ocañas is eager to begin. "I'm finally in a position where I can tunnel-vision focus and figure out some really cool science." If the past is any predictor, the results will be anything but ordinary.

NOVEMBER



**DR. SARAH OCAÑAS BECOMES
OKLAHOMA'S FIRST RECIPIENT
OF A \$2.2 MILLION EARLY
INDEPENDENCE GRANT.**

THE NONAGENARIAN SOCIETY GETS – AND GIVES – A LESSON IN HEALTHY AGING.

STILL LEARNING



**IF YOUR
GRANDMOTHER
WOULDN'T RECOGNIZE
IT, DON'T EAT IT.**



The questions flew fast and furious. How do OMRF scientists share their findings with physicians? What level of detail do researchers include in their grant proposals to funding agencies? How many individual patient samples were used for a particular research project on chemotherapy resistance?

The questioners weren't undergraduate students. Nor doctoral candidates. They were Oklahomans visiting OMRF, and they all had something else in common: Each was at least 90 years old.

The event was a meeting of the Oklahoma Nonagenarian Society, the brainchild of longtime OMRF Board member H.E. "Gene" Rainbolt. On the heels of his 90th birthday, he had the idea "for people in this age group to participate, learn and support the research being done to help us all live longer and healthier lives."

The group held its first meeting in the fall of 2019, but the pandemic kept the planned follow-up on ice until December 2022, when almost a dozen members gathered at OMRF. Over lunch, they listened to a presentation from Dr. Jake Kirkland describing his efforts to improve cancer treatments.

They then visited a lab in OMRF's Aging & Metabolism Research Program, where the Nonagenarians – led by Dr. William Parry, 98, a retired urologist – peppered Dr. Scott Plafker with inquiries about his studies on the interplay between diet and health.

"If your grandmother wouldn't recognize it," said Plafker, "don't eat it." Members of the group nodded.

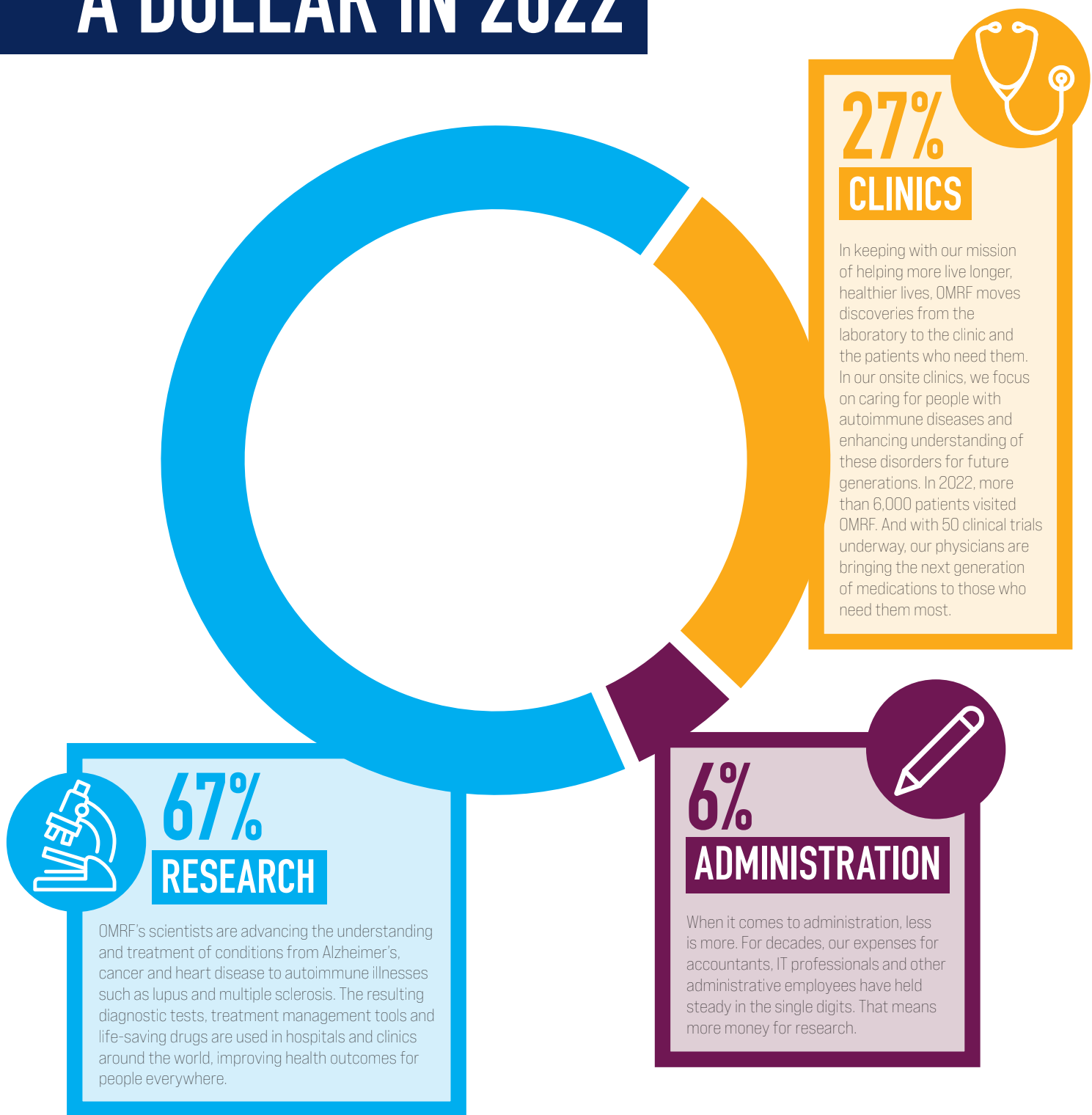
While the OMRF scientist recommended avoiding highly processed foods and minimizing the intake of starches and sugars, he acknowledged that his long-lived audience might take his advice with a grain of salt. "Just keep doing what you're doing, because it seems to be working for you."

Dr. Kay Goebel, who interned at OMRF during her Ph.D. training, was excited to revisit what she called "an outstanding institution." As an OMRF supporter, she was gratified to see the many ways in which her investments in research are paying dividends.

"The science is very interesting," says Goebel, 93, who walks two to three miles most days. "And I especially appreciate the practical tips from research that I can use in my daily life."



HOW WE SPENT A DOLLAR IN 2022



FINANCIALS

OKLAHOMA MEDICAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION Selected Financial Information - Operating Fund

	Prior year	2021-2022
OPERATING REVENUE:		
Competitive research grants:		
National Institutes of Health grants	\$ 32,620,542	\$ 39,903,552
Other competitive research grants	<u>14,746,854</u>	<u>12,525,718</u>
Total grants	47,367,396	52,429,270
Private contributions:		
Income and gifts from trusts	7,547,037	8,179,655
Gifts and bequests	2,180,222	2,514,582
Contributions	2,862,978	2,436,858
Memorials	<u>528,682</u>	<u>650,753</u>
Total private contributions	13,118,919	13,781,848
Other revenue:		
Clinical revenue, net of provisions for contractual and other adjustments	20,400,381	21,308,555
Interest, dividends and net realized gains on investments designated for operations	1,046,646	1,473,886
Mineral income	826,242	1,699,326
Rent	400,281	435,604
Royalties and licensing income	3,104,474	3,325,397
Loss on disposal of assets	(123,789)	(368,254)
Loss from uncollected receivables	(70,000)	-
Other	<u>1,745,684</u>	<u>1,755,683</u>
Total other revenue	<u>27,329,919</u>	<u>29,630,197</u>
Total revenue	\$ <u>87,816,234</u>	\$ <u>95,841,315</u>
Net assets released from restrictions	7,958,048	10,180,213
Total operating revenue	\$ <u>95,774,282</u>	\$ <u>106,021,528</u>
OPERATING EXPENSES:		
Program Services - Research	56,472,201	59,936,785
Program Services - Clinic Operations	22,501,401	24,064,374
Support Services - General and Administrative	<u>4,835,648</u>	<u>4,770,307</u>
Total operating expenses	<u>83,809,250</u>	<u>88,771,466</u>
Change in net assets from operations	\$ <u>11,965,032</u>	\$ <u>17,250,062</u>

2022 HONOR ROLL

\$5,000,000+

The Chapman Trusts

\$1,000,000 – \$4,999,999

Anonymous
Presbyterian Health Foundation

\$500,000 – \$999,999

E.L. and Thelma Gaylord Foundation
George J. Records
Estate of Debra Ann Worley

\$100,000 – \$499,999

Estate of Rubye F. and Richard W.
Brindley
Chickasaw Nation
Clyde R. Evans Charitable Trust
Wilma Davis-McElmurry Trust
Jessie Dearing Kinley
Testamentary Trust Estate
Linda and Claude M. Harris III
Tom and Judy Love
Beth and Dale A. Matherly/
Matherly Mechanical
Contractors, LLC
McCasland Foundation
Budd S. and Linda A. Parrish
Revocable Trust
Sarkeys Foundation
The Anne & Henry Zarrow
Foundation

\$50,000 – \$99,999

Anonymous
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Remainder Trust
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Katharine Duncan
Norma and Jim Freeman
Hocker Foundation
Inasmuch Foundation
Fred Jones Family Foundation
The Merrick Foundation
Madalynne L. Peel Foundation
The Puterbaugh Foundation
Putnam City Schools
Kim and David E. Rainbolt
Robert Glenn Rapp Foundation
Stacey D. Spivey and
Jorge L. Charneco
Bill Stoller/Express Employment
International
United Way of Central Oklahoma
Margueritte H. Wallace
Revocable Trust

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Jacob Matherly/Matherly
Mechanical Contractors, LLC
Estate of Leola McIntyre
Polly and J. Larry Nichols
John R. Shofner
S. Graham Smith Revocable Trust
Glenna G. and Dick I. Tanenbaum
Fletcher Brandon Taylor Jr., MD

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Donna and Len B. Cason
Mary K. Chapman Foundation
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Christy and Jim H. Everest
John S. Gardner
Ann Felton Gilliland

Estate of Joan Elizabeth Gilmore-McLaughlin
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Ernestine and Pat Hallren
The Hammons Fund - The Dallas Foundation
Hardesty Family Foundation
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Dolores Hill
G. Ed Hudgins Family Fund - OCCF
Hudiburg Chevrolet, LLC
Hudson Family 2018 Fund - OCCF
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Sara F. and Donald J. Kyte
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Shang-Mei Lee
Gigi and Rod McEver, MD

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OMRF General Organization Fund - OCCF
OMRF Kirkpatrick Fleming Scholarship - OCCF
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Mary Gayle Smith
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Marilyn and Paul M. Thomson
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Wilshire Charitable Foundation
Conna D. and Paul S. Woolsey
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Danny Zelisko Presents

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AT&T - Oklahoma
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Sheryl and Bruce Benbrook/Stock Exchange Bank
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Jeffrey F. Caughron
J.V. Palmer Chase
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Lura S. and Robert S. Fabian
Hughla F. Foreman

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Barb J. Grimes
Drake Gungoll Foundation
Cindy M. and Dale Hanchey
Hank FM
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Headington Companies
Bonnie and Frank X. Henke III
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Memphis Stanley Hixson
Karin and David Holsted/MRK Capital, LLC
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M. Carol Wright

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Ricia Allen
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