



PANHANDLE STATE
FOUNDATION



Dr. Pauline Hodges Scholarship

Est. 2006

The Dr. Pauline Hodges Scholarship was established by Friends of Pauline Hodges. Pauline Hodges retired from OPSU in December of 2006. She was Department Chair and Assistant Professor of Education.

(From the Panhandle State Alumni webpage)

Dr. V. Pauline Hodges has been a loyal OPSU Alum for 50 years. She is the mother of two Alumni—Brent Hodges of rural Forgan and Mark Hodges of Oklahoma City—both of whom have gone on to successful careers. She has encouraged many students to attend OPSU and has helped them get scholarships to do so. She has served OPSU as a professor, department chair, and committee member.

Dr. Hodges began her career in rural education as a teacher in the Forgan Schools. She then taught in Liberal, Kansas; in Douglas County, Colorado; and at Colorado

State University. She acknowledges that her rural background was one of the factors in Colorado State recruiting her as a professor and consultant since it, at that time, was the national center for rural schools and the headquarters for the National Rural Education Association. She then consulted with rural schools, as well as some urban and suburban, in every state except Maine, as well as in England, Wales, Germany, Scotland, and Guam. During that time she wrote four textbooks, as well as being a contributing editor and consultant for five major textbook publishers.

For five years in the 1980's Hodges was a central office administrator for Jefferson County Schools in Denver, a district with 75,000 students at that time. She was in charge of all the reading and other language arts curriculum and instruction K-12 for the district. Hodges says that she took early retirement to return to her roots and moved back to Beaver, not intending to work anymore. Since that time, however, she has returned to teaching at Forgan three different times, been a professor and department chair at Oklahoma Panhandle State University, and served as the President of the NREA. She also served as the Interim Executive Director for NREA in 2001 upon the untimely death of the long-time director, served as editor for NREA's professional journal, wrote a book accounting the history of the organization which was published in 2007, and began a national essay contest for rural school students. Again, she returned to writing for three major textbook publishers, this time using her rural experience to improve materials for those students in small, rural schools.

Hodges also served as Chair of the Assembly for Rural Teachers of English, a part of the National Council of Teachers of English, as well as chair of the Legislative Advocacy Commission of that organization. NCTE also awarded her the Commission on Leadership Award for Exemplary Leadership at the national level in the teaching of English. In 1993 she was chosen the Outstanding Secondary Teacher by the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence for her work with At-Risk

students and her founding of an Alternative Education Program in the Forgan Schools, along with her principal Bill Nichols who had once been her high school student.

In addition to serving as a champion for rural schools, she is active member, or officer in four other professional organizations. Hodges is a trustee for a large scholarship fund in Beaver County and a member of the Board of Directors for the No Man's Land Historical Society in Goodwell, Oklahoma. She has also served for several years as a Director for the Beaver County Historical Society and authored or edited five books on the history of No Man's Land and the Panhandle, one of which won the Oklahoma Heritage Award for excellence in historical preservation, and another that won an award from the Denver Westerners Historical Organization. She is especially proud to have her home town honor her with the Beaver Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year Award, as well as having the Governor of Oklahoma and the State Legislature honor her by naming a Pauline Hodges Day in recognition of her work to preserve the history of the Panhandle.

Hodges commented that she owes much of her success to the opportunities she had when she was at Oklahoma Panhandle A&M, later Oklahoma Panhandle State University. She says that the finest professors she has had were those she had as an undergraduate there, especially Professors Helen Muller, E. E. Vineyard, and E. E. Bradley. "Miss Muller made me aware of the opportunities I had long before women were admitted to the careers available today. She made me realize that I could do whatever I wanted to do if I worked hard enough. Even after my graduation from here, she supported my teaching, and several years later my obtaining a Master's Degree, and ultimately a Ph. D. On the day I graduated from the University of Colorado with the Ph. D., her comment was 'Well, it's high time! I am so proud of you.' I am sure, even though I told her, she had no idea how much I valued her support. I have tried to be just like her in my own teaching career...tough but caring.

Ed Vineyard was a young professor at Panhandle State when I was taking Education courses to prepare me for teaching. I have to give him credit for teaching me how to teach. No one else ever gave me such good advice for managing a classroom and for getting students to want to learn. He later became President at Northern Oklahoma College but his early years were so important to my career.

My other mentor was Earl Bradley, head of the Speech Program at Panhandle State. He put me on the debate team when women were not considered for those positions, and my teammates were such folk as Leo Winters, Stuart Strasner, and Bill Cox who all later filled such positions as Lt. Governor, president of a huge bank, or a well-known lawyer in Oklahoma City. I later studied with Dr. Bradley at the University of Denver where again he opened doors for me in my career. I was able to attend his retirement ceremony at the University of Illinois many years later where he was given the honor he deserved.”

Hodges also commented that she was fortunate to be recruited to teach at OPSU in 2003 by both Dr. Stewart and Dr. Richter. She said it was “coming home” for her to have the opportunity to serve students of her home area, and to help them find the satisfaction in teaching. She calls it, “Pay Back Time” to a university that helped a girl with no money or financial support from a tiny rural school get a quality education so long ago.