



Emotional ending



Oklahoma State athletic director Chad Weiberg addresses the media Tuesday afternoon after the firing of head football coach Mike Gundy.

OSU AD Chad Weiberg says ‘for the good of the program’ it was time to end the Mike Gundy era

By Braden Bush

Less than a month into the season, Oklahoma State athletic director Chad Weiberg found himself in a spot he didn’t anticipate. On Tuesday morning, Weiberg fired Mike Gundy as the Cowboys’ head coach in the start of his 21st season and four days before OSU (1-2) opens conference play against Baylor at 2:30 p.m. Saturday. Weiberg said it was time to make the move during a press conference Tuesday afternoon, with OSU coming off its first home loss to Tulsa in 74 years in what was another disappointment in its streak of 11 straight losses to FBS opponents.



FILE – Mike Gundy will receive his full \$15 million buyout after being fired Tuesday.

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Local candidates vie for House Districts in Payne County

By Jessica Marshall

Local candidates have announced their intention to run for Oklahoma House Districts in Payne County. House District 35 Mike Waters, a Pawnee County resident and former sheriff, announced his run for Oklahoma House District 35 in a press release Sept. 12. “For more than 25 years, I’ve worn the badge and stood watch over our communities,” Waters said. “Now, I’m stepping up to serve in the State House so we can ensure Oklahoma families remain safe, strong, and free.” Waters has spent 30 years in law enforcement. He “led major investigations, broke up child predator rings and worked side by side with other agencies to secure convictions and deliver justice,” the press release reads. “Public safety will always be my top priority. I will fight for tougher penalties on violent offenders, stand with our law enforcement officers, and make sure criminals know that Oklahoma will not tolerate lawlessness,” Waters said. Waters was raised on a cattle ranch and continues to run livestock. “He knows firsthand the struggles faced by farm-

ers and ranchers, and he is committed to ensuring agriculture remains a pillar of Oklahoma’s economy,” according to the press release. “I’ll always be a voice for our farmers and ranchers. Agriculture is the backbone of our district and our state, and I will fight to protect the land, values, and way of life that built Oklahoma,” Waters said. Waters is also dedicated to serving veterans, having come from a military family where his father is a Vietnam veteran, his uncle is a veteran and his stepdaughter is serving as an officer in the U.S. Air Force. Waters said he “is committed to honoring veterans and ensuring they receive the care and respect they’ve earned.” “Our veterans are heroes who deserve more than words of thanks. They deserve action. I’ll fight to fully fund veterans’ services, improve healthcare access, and make sure no veteran is left behind,” Waters said.



BJ ROBERSON



MIKE WATERS

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SPEF highlights teacher grants, programs at annual banquet

By Jessica Marshall

The evening was filled with a focus on Stillwater Public Schools, its educators and students and how the Stillwater Public Education Foundation fills a vital role in the district. SPEF held its annual Celebration of Education banquet Tuesday at Sparrow Beginnings to highlight the efforts the organization has made to provide support, equipment and opportunities to help both teachers and students in the classroom. The banquet also gave SPEF the opportunity to thank donors and to raise more funds for education through both a silent and live auction. The non-profit has been helping improve learning experiences of students and educators in the district since 1984. SPS Superintendent Tyler Bridges shared all that the district has

accomplished in the last year, SPEF Executive Director Emily Lewis noted the most recent grants and programs that were funded and a video was shown of how the grants and programs have supported educators in the district through multiple projects. “I’ve been exceedingly impressed ... by the people who want the best for our community,” Bridges said. “... Thank you for investing in our students and our community, and thank you for helping our students achieve dreams (and) goals.” Tables lined the east wall, and educators and students alike presented the projects that SPEF funded in the last school year, such as robotic sets for elementary students, fraction tiles and pickle ball sets. The tables represented only a fraction of the projects funded last year. Educators in the district fill out applications

to seek funding for a specific request, and SPEF opens applications twice a year – once in the spring semester and once in the fall semester. The applications are reviewed by an allocations committee, who ascertains if the requests fall within SPEF guidelines. “(For) teachers that have great ideas, that are showing innovation and initiative, (the committee) really works to make things possible,” Lewis said. Grants are funded up to \$4,000, but sometimes SPEF can throw in extra funds, even as much as \$20,000 at times for specific projects. Other times, SPEF will partially fund a project. For the 2024-25 academic year, SPEF was able to fund 67% of teacher applications, with 51% of requested funding provided. SPEF’s 2025-26 goal is to fund 75% of application requests. SPEF Board President



Counselors Leslie McSpadden, left, Emily Deason and Mika Lucas speak with a donor at the Stillwater Public Education Foundation Celebration of Education banquet.

Lauren Gee, with other members of the board, provides support to the foundation, helps set the strategic plan and gives direction to how SPEF funds the applications. “Each year, it seems like there are new needs

and new challenges,” Gee said. “And so we try to adapt each year to what those needs and challenges might be to try to keep our kids at the forefront with technology, with opportunities. We want to set the pace, we don’t

want to catch up.” Lewis said SPEF is working closely with new district administration to fill in needs and make more teachers’ dreams a reality.

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IN SPORTS Who are some of the options Oklahoma State may pursue to become the next head coach for Cowboy football?

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