WOSC Alumni Association to Honor James Johnson, Jr. as 2014 Hall of Fame Inductee

James Johnson, Jr. graduated from Western with an Associate of Arts in 1978, played Center on the first Pioneer basketball team under Coach Robert McPherson and was named Mr. WOSC 1978. Johnson completed his education with a Bachelor of Arts from Cameron University in 1980 and a Master of Social Work from The University of Oklahoma in 1987.

Johnson’s distinguished career began in 1980 as a social worker at the Lawton Boy’s Group Home. Since then he has held various leadership positions in his field, working with troubled youth at the Juvenile Services Unit in Lawton, the Central Oklahoma Juvenile Center in Tecumseh, and the Office of Juvenile Affairs in Oklahoma City. Today, he serves as the Executive Director of Juvenile Justice Residential Service at Community Works, LLC in Norman.

Career highlights include the creation of STAND, Striving Toward Adulthood and New Directions, the first independent living program for at-risk teens in Oklahoma, and a school program in a residential setting designed to help at risk teens achieve scholastic success by meeting their specific academic needs. As Superintendent of Central Oklahoma Juvenile Center, James wrote and was awarded a federal grant from the United State Department of Justice/ Office Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The grant was used to develop a comprehensive treatment program for adolescent females in a secure setting. James presented this program to juvenile justice professionals in Oklahoma, and at a national conference on programming for female juvenile justice youth.

Johnson’s work with troubled young people began during his high school years with a program called Teen Involvement. James was also a Big Brother, and worked with troubled youth with an outreach program through his Church, Central Baptist, in Lawton. James says, “It’s a calling and a love of mine. I’m just fortunate that I can make a living doing what I love.” His work and life philosophy are embodied by a quote from Forest E. Witcraft (1894-1967): “A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in or the kind of car I drove. But the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child.”

James lives in Oklahoma City with his wife of twenty-five years, Vivien. They have two sons, Jarred and Jalin. James served on the WOSC Alumni Board from 1990 to 2001 and is a past board president.

The WOSC Alumni Hall of Fame, established in 1996, recognizes and honors Altus Junior College and Western Oklahoma State College alumni who, through leadership, character and hard work, have made exceptional contributions in their field, in their community, and at WOSC. Inductees are honored each February at the Annual Foundation and Alumni Recognition Banquet. Also recognized at the banquet are the generous gifts of many WOSC Foundation, Inc. donors. This year’s event will feature the musical talent of the Raegan Felker Combo. Tickets are $15.00 per person and can be reserved through the Office of Development and Alumni Relations by email at foundation@wosc.edu or by phone at 580-477-7706.