

**For immediate release**

Zadie Curry

Western Oklahoma State College, Director of Public Information

[zadie.curry@wosc.edu](mailto:zadie.curry@wosc.edu)

580-477-7701

Western student attends Nigh Leadership Academy

ALTUS, Okla. – Western Oklahoma State College sophomore Ambassador and cheerleader, Kinsey Wilmes, had the opportunity to attend the George and Donna Nigh Leadership Academy in Oklahoma City this month.

This was the 20th year for the academy, which is named after the former Oklahoma governor and his wife. The George and Donna Nigh Scholarship Program was established by the 1999 Oklahoma Legislature to provide scholarship opportunities to outstanding students who are preparing for careers in public service. Each college and university may nominate one scholarship recipient per year.

Wilmes traveled with student representatives from other Oklahoma public higher education institutions. The academy, held from February 8 to February 12, incorporated the motto “you can do it from here,” highlighting the state’s history of accomplishment.

“I learned so much about politics and local government that I didn’t know before,” Wilmes said. “I also learned the importance of staying up-to-date on current events and how I can be a better Oklahoman.”

Attendees had the chance to engage with George and Donna Nigh, the Oklahoma Historical Museum, the Oklahoma State Regents, Downtown Boathouse District, Oklahoma City Thunder, Oklahoma City Memorial, Oklahoma legislators, Lt. Governor’s office, Oklahoma Regional Food Bank, Express Personnel and Ranch, Tinker Air Force Base, OKC Rotary and Naturalization, Devon Tower and the Oklahoma Publishing Company.

Wilmes said the opportunity to attend the Nigh Leadership Academy was such a unique experience.

“I tried to ask every guest speaker at least one question,” she said. “I knew the Nigh Leadership Academy gave me the opportunity to learn and become a better leader, so I wanted to take advantage of that.”

She said that each speaker and experience opened her eyes to the opportunities available in the state.

“We visited many businesses and spoke with individuals who weren’t necessarily involved in politics, which allowed me to see opportunities I didn’t even realize I had,” Wilmes said.

Throughout the academy, Wilmes and other students had the chance to volunteer, meet state legislators and visit special spots across Oklahoma City, like the Oklahoma City Memorial. Wilmes said each visit was fun and engaging.

“The information and tools I received from attending the academy will, without a doubt, help me in my future career,” Wilmes said. “I believe I will be a better leader, in academics and in life. I learned to step out of my comfort zone and network with individuals from across the state.”

Western Oklahoma State College is the oldest original municipal two-year college still in existence in the state of Oklahoma. Its mission is to provide high quality education, support student success, and empower individuals to become productive members of local, regional and global communities. Western offers high-quality associate degrees and certificates to its five-county service area and beyond.

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*Photo Caption: Kinsey Wilmes represented Western at the Nigh Leadership Academy this year.*