

JayMac

Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication Alumni Association



GAYLORD ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

“Decide what you want, dream big and believe it is possible, commit to constant improvement, practice persistence and believe in yourself.”

GREG ANDERSON

Secretary of Education, Muscogee (Creek) Nation
Eufaula, OK

From OU journalism to federal policymaking to tribal leadership, education is Greg Anderson's passion.

As the Secretary of Education for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, he oversees programs that benefit thousands of students in the Nation. We spoke to Secretary Anderson about his time at OU and his distinguished career afterward.

What is your favorite memory from your time in the journalism & mass communication program at OU?

When I was a student in JMAC, there were several of us who formed a study group that collaborated on assignments and various projects for a couple of years. Being involved with friends and sharing the educational experience as well as the ups and downs of college life made the journey less stressful and certainly more enjoyable.

Did you have a favorite faculty/staff member in the journalism program?

What do you consider to be the most significant moments of your career so far?

I believe my appointments by President Bush and President Obama were significant in my career not only from a standpoint of recognition to serve our country, but what the appointments allowed me to experience and the institutional knowledge and education I acquired. Many of the opportunities associated with serving 11 years on the National Advisory Council on Indian Education allowed me to work with White House staff, members of Congress, various congressional committees, the U.S. Department of Education and national organizations to gain knowledge and develop and implement positive change that would improve education processes on a national level. The appointments also initiated other career options that enhanced my role within the federal and state government. My role as Chief of Staff at the U.S. Department of Interior-Bureau of Indian Education in Washington, D.C. provided valuable

Paul Dannelly. He was my professor in several classes and my advisor during my years at OU. He reminded me of an uncle who gives great common sense advice but quietly encourages you to push the norm and enjoy life without challenging too many rules.

Describe your work at the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

I serve as the Secretary of Education and oversee all education and training programs of the Nation. We have 11 departments and six grants with approximately 180 staff members serving 87,000 tribal citizens. We offer services such as Head Start, Higher Education, Scholarship Foundation, Language, Employment & Training and many other programs providing assistance from early childhood to adult services. In Fiscal Year 2018, our department provided 7,900 students with over \$12.6 million in scholarships and grants to attend colleges, universities and technical schools.

How has your journalism education served you in your career?

The knowledge and abilities I acquired in journalism school have served me in many ways. Strong writing and reading comprehension along with effective interpersonal communication are specific skills that I learned and developed and they have played a significant role in advancing my career. They were also very valuable while obtaining my Masters in Education Administration and Superintendents Certification. If I was serving as Chief of Staff, Secretary of Education, Superintendent, Mayor or a member of a council or committee, I benefitted from strong and effective communication and interpersonal skills. These aptitudes were born and refined in the University of Oklahoma JMAC program.

experience in overseeing an expansive and diverse education system. We had oversight of 185 schools in 23 states with an enrollment of 45,000 students and provided financial and technical support to an additional 24 tribal colleges and universities across the U.S. serving 24,000 students. These were truly unique opportunities that allowed me to demonstrate executive leadership and sharpen my professional skills while strengthening my sense of responsibility and commitment to improve education opportunities for all.

What advice would you give to current students aspiring to a career in mass communication or public administration?

My daughter Alex is a senior in Gaylord College and this is what I shared with her:

Decide what you want, dream big and believe it is possible, commit to constant improvement, practice persistence and believe in yourself. Everything else will fall into place.

What do you do for fun outside of work?

Our family enjoys all sports and attends and supports OU athletic events and university functions. We enjoy attending classic rock concerts and traveling as much as possible. My wife and daughter are Disney fanatics, so Disney World and Disneyland are usually on our vacation calendar.



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