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Oklahoma Hospital Association Presents Awards to Outstanding Leaders; Hosts Annual Meeting

Health care professionals from throughout the state attended the Oklahoma Hospital Association’s (OHA’s) 93rd Annual Convention & Trade Show, held Nov. 20-22, at the Cox Convention Center in Oklahoma City. In addition to the educational sessions and annual trade show, other convention highlights included the presentation of several awards to Oklahoma’s outstanding health care leaders.

During the convention, David D. Whitaker received the Association’s highest award, the W. Cleveland Rodgers Distinguished Service Award, in recognition of his outstanding service to the health care industry.

Whitaker is the president and chief executive officer of Norman Regional Health System. During his 35-year health care career, he has served as president of United Regional Health Care System and Holy Family of Nazareth Health Ministries in Wichita Falls, Texas; chief executive officer and chief operating officer of Bethania Regional Health Care Center; and president and executive director of Texoma Health Network in Wichita Falls, Texas. He began his career with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas in 1977.

A fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives, Whitaker has been very involved in the activities of the Oklahoma Hospital Association. He serves on the OHA board of trustees as Oklahoma City Region chair, OHA council on education and is currently an AHA Alternate Delegate. He sits on the AHA Regional Policy Board 7 of the American Hospital Association, chairman of the Greater Oklahoma City Hospital Council, member of the Governor’s Council on Workforce and Economic Development, and member of the Norman Chamber of Commerce. Additionally, he is the past president of the Sooner Healthcare Executives Chapter of the American College of Healthcare Executives, and served on the governing council of the American Hospital Association’s section for metropolitan hospitals.

Whitaker received his Master of Business Administration in 1982 and Bachelor of Business Administration in 1977 from Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, Texas.

The Oklahoma Hospital Association’s Advocacy in Action Award was presented to Jay R. Johnson, president and chief executive officer, Duncan Regional Hospital, since August 2010. Johnson began his career at Parkland
Health and Hospital System in Dallas, Texas, where he was administrative director of women and children’s services from 1994-1996. In 1996, he moved to Stillwater to serve as the vice president of ancillary services at Stillwater Medical Center and later as the vice president and chief operating officer through 2005. In 2005, Johnson was selected as the senior vice president and chief operating officer at Mercy Memorial Health Center in Ardmore.

Johnson, a member of the OHA board of trustees, is also a member of the OHA council on policy and legislation. He has been very involved in the advocacy efforts of the OHA.

Johnson is a fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives, vice chair of the LifeCare board of directors, member of the board of directors of Cancer Centers of Southwest Oklahoma, an alternate delegate for the American Hospital Association Region 7 Policy Board and member of the board of directors of the Cameron University Foundation.

Locally, Johnson is a graduate of Leadership Duncan Class XVI, member of Duncan Rotary, member of the Duncan Public Schools Foundation board, the chair of the Stephens County Mental Health Task Force, and serves as finance committee chair at Duncan First United Methodist Church.

Johnson earned his Master of Health Administration in 1994 from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Va. He received his Bachelor of Business Administration in 1990 from Cameron University in Lawton.

**William G. Wilson**, president and CEO, Jackson County Memorial Hospital, Altus, and **Joel A. Hart**, recently retired president of INTEGRIS Baptist Regional Health Center, Miami, both received the **OHA Award of Merit**, presented to individuals for long-term commitment to the health care industry.

Wilson has served as president and CEO of Jackson County Memorial Hospital in Altus since 1987. For more than 35 years he has served in CEO positions at four institutions, Schmidt Memorial Hospital in Westbrook, Minn., Springfield Community Hospital in Springfield, Minn., Hermann Area District Hospital, Hermann, Mo. and 26 years at Jackson County Memorial Hospital in Altus. He will retire at the end of this year.

Wilson has served as an OHA board member on two occasions and currently serves as chairman of the council on rural health. He has also served on the council on quality and patient safety and the committee on auditing.

A native of South Dakota, Wilson served as a physiological training technician in the U.S. Air Force from 1966-1969 and completed his RN diploma in 1976. In 1985, he earned a Master of Health Services Management from Webster University in St. Louis, Mo. In 1977, he received a Bachelor of Business from Columbia College.

Wilson has served on numerous community and civic boards. He is a 30-year Rotarian, board member of the
Oklahoma State Chamber and served as the southwest region vice president, and has been a member of the Altus military affairs committee since 1988 and served as chairman from 2000-2007.

Hart has dedicated more than 35 years to the health care industry, only recently retiring. During his extensive career in the health care field, he has held top positions at a variety of health care organizations varying in size from 60 to 600 beds, including facilities in Edmond, Oklahoma City and Woodward prior to Miami.

Hart has been active in numerous professional, civic and religious organizations. He is a fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives and has served on the OHA board of trustees as well as several councils and committees.

He holds a Master of Health Care Administration from Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas, and a bachelor’s degree from Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia.

Molly McCool received the David J. Falcone Award, presented each year to a health administration student for outstanding achievement. The award was renamed in 1996 in honor of the late Dr. Falcone, who served from 1992-1996 as professor and chair of the Department of Health Administration and Policy for the University of Oklahoma College of Public Health.

McCool is currently enrolled in the University of Oklahoma College of Public Health and will graduate with a Master of Health Administration. She is from Eufaula, Okla. and earned a bachelor’s degree is multidisciplinary studies with an emphasis in health studies and a minor in history from the University of Oklahoma in 2012.

During her tenure as a graduate student, McCool has maintained a grade point average of 4.0 and excelled in all of her classes. During the past summer she was awarded an administrative internship at INTEGRIS Bass Baptist Health Center in Enid.

McCool is president of the OU student affiliate of the American College of Healthcare Executives. She is also vice president of the College of Public Health Student Association.

– 30 –

Established in 1919, the Oklahoma Hospital Association represents more than 130 hospitals and health care entities across the state of Oklahoma.