

The Ottawa University Alumni Association Awards  
**HONORARY MEMBERSHIP**

To

**Ronald A. Averyt, PhD**



Dr. Ronald Averyt (“Ronnie” to his many friends) has been volunteering above-and-beyond the call since he first reported to work at Ottawa University in September of 1961. He retired from teaching 38 years later in 1999, but his efforts have continued unabated.

As a professor, he changed lives by challenging and mentoring his students. He set incredibly high standards and sponsored his own “field trips” over Spring break to help students get a better perspective on history.

As an historian and humorist he lent his speaking talents to the Kansas Humanities Council beginning in 1999, giving voice to such topics as “My Vote Wasn’t Bought, Just Rented: The Humor of Politics,” and “Don’t Squat with Your

Spurs On: Western Humor.”

As a “final act” before retiring, he helped raise funds for new sidewalks throughout the heart of the campus. As a sports fan, he zealously supports sports at OU with personal and financial encouragement. As a friend, he maintains a correspondence list 29 pages long with over 570 alumni. He has traveled and spoken extensively to assist with fundraising in support of the mission of Ottawa University.

Dr. Averyt has improved the lives of many by modeling independence of thought, always leaning on students to think with clarity and sharpness, and to behave in ways consistent with high expectations. He has been cited for his *unwillingness* to accept student apathy and disinterest. Ronnie was “no nonsense” when it came to class, saying “When it’s time to work, we work hard. When it’s time to play, we play hard.” During his tenure he sent 34 classes on their way, worked through the administrations of six university presidents, and taught two generations of students.

Though he was “tough,” Dr. Averyt’s efforts were ultimately appreciated by his students. During his career he was repeatedly honored with awards such as “most inspirational,” and “most effective.” He was also named “Professor of the Year” (1977), the Sibyl Martin Distinguished Professor (1986-87), and three times as the recipient of the prestigious Class of 1966 Award for being most influential in the lives of students (1994, 1995, 1997).

Dr. Averyt is also known for his *willingness* to assist students in achieving their educational and career goals through advising and other forms of support. One graduate who is now a successful attorney in Dallas credits Dr. Averyt for much of his success and notes that Ronnie drove him to visit the Southern Methodist University law school over spring break. Others benefited from his personalized spring break field trips, in which he exposed a handful of promising students to the nuances of history and politics through travel. Hundreds continue to hear from Ronnie on a regular basis.

Since his retirement, Ronnie has devoted himself to advancing the University, raising funds for its various scholarships and for support of its athletic teams. One project close

to his heart has been to start a scholarship fund to honor the memory of Dick Andrews. Dick taught Accounting at OU and was a fellow Texan – he and Doc shared an office suite on campus. The two enjoyed some twelve years of camaraderie before Dick Andrews was taken by a sudden heart attack in the summer of 1998.

Doc Averyt has also attended multiple alumni functions to visit with the former students whose lives he has changed. He has tirelessly promoted Ottawa University's vision and mission, and has continually exemplified the spirit of Ottawa University. Dr. Averyt is considered part of the "culture" of Ottawa University, and he is worth his weight in gold to this institution.

Spring 2005

### **Honorary Membership in OUAA**

Occasionally in its history, members of OU's administration have presented certificates of honorary membership in the alumni association as a gesture of respect. In 2005 the OUAA established formal criteria under its award system, with the intention that this honor will be reserved for very special individuals, and will likely be awarded only rarely.