

EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION OF OKLAHOMA

# Legacy of Legends

A Celebration of Fifty Years

Ruth Ann Ball with Dr. Sally Nichols Sharpe, Dr. Lori  
Beasley and Judy Collins as Collaborators

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## **Introduction**

This document reflects information shared from the past and honors those of us who have served as leaders of our state and local chapters. The title of this document evolved as conversations between the collaborators occurred. The dictionary definition of Legacy is 1. (in a will) a gift of property, especially personal property, as money; bequest or 2. Anything handed down from the past, as from an ancestor or predecessor. The word Legends recognizes the women who have served as presidents and Board Members and links us as Oklahomans to our Native American roots.

The document became a journey of reflection and a feeling of overwhelming pride at the amount of work that has been accomplished by the dedicated, committed professional volunteers from all sectors of the early childhood profession, most often from the post secondary institutions and agencies which provided support for the families, children and the teachers with whom they interacted in an early childhood program, classroom or family childcare home or Head Start classrooms over the past 50 years. It took all of us collaborating together, listening to differing views, asking questions and being willing to take risks to become leaders and mentor others on their professional journey. Information was obtained from the records housed at the Oklahoma State University, Special Collections Archives Library, the ECAO office, and personal interviews, returned questionnaires from past presidents and organizations, and personal archives.

Providing this history was a dream of Ruth Ann Ball, a consummate archivist and the collaborators who joined her in reading all of the files at the Special Collections section of the Oklahoma State University Library. Thank you to all who contributed to the sharing of history which will give us a foundation for the future of early childhood for the next fifty years. Thank you to Nancy vonBargen, an exceptional editor, who made sure the “ts” were crossed and commas in place and to Kay Bost, OSU Archives Librarian, for providing the DVD of the first 25 years of OACUS video.

This document is dedicated to all those professionals and to all the many Board Members who served under each President. The title reflects the legacy they leave to the next generation of professionals.

## **Collaborators**

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## **Preface**

### **Overview of the field of early childhood/ child development in Oklahoma**

The field of early childhood/child development/early childhood education has grown exponentially over the past 50 years. In the 50's there were some kindergartens in urban school districts, privately owned nursery schools (part day programs for preschool children, ages 3 and 4), no regulations for child care, and programs for young children were housed primarily in churches and some public school sites. Currently, Oklahoma has a nationally recognized Pre-K system within the public schools, certified early childhood teachers in public schools (pre-K to third grade), regional and Tribal Head Start, the first statewide quality rating and improvement system, and child care regulations for child care centers and family child care homes that are recognized as 6<sup>th</sup> in the nation. Partnerships between child care, Head Start and public schools occurs in many of the school districts.

Oklahoma is the only state with two Educare programs – one in Tulsa and one in Oklahoma City – with an additional site under construction in Tulsa. Educare is a private and public partnership that provides education, child care and services to children from birth to 5 years old to strengthen the quality of early childhood for children who are living in poverty. Oklahoma is fourth in the nation with child poverty (Annie B. Casey Oklahoma Kids)

The Center for Early Childhood Professional Development (CECPD), College of Continuing Education, University of Oklahoma coordinates with the Oklahoma State Department of Human Services, Oklahoma Child Care Services (OCCS) to provide professional development for child care directors and staff through leadership academies, professional registries for directors and staff, program improvement through an Environment Rating Scale assessment, Child Care Careers, the REWARD wage supplement program that serves as an incentive for child care staff and directors to continue their education in the field, and the Program Administrators Scale (PAS) for directors who have participated in Leadership Academies. Reaching for the Stars, the tiered reimbursement program is coordinated through OCCS. Scholars for Excellence in Child Care are an initiative at the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education provides scholarships for obtaining associate degrees in the field and for CDA assessments.

The Oklahoma Child Care Resource and Referral Association (OCCRRA) provides parent referrals and coordinates training for child care centers and family child care homes across the state through the work of consultants in eight regions.

All of the progress has come about with the dedication of professionals in Oklahoma who prepare individuals to be the best early childhood teachers they can be in classrooms that serve the youngest children in our state.

### **What does it mean to be a professional?**

A past president of Oklahoma Early Childhood Association (1984-85) and Southern Early Childhood Association Representative (1982-84), Dr. Kathryn Castle, a professor of education at Oklahoma State University, provides a provocative statement about what it means to be a professional. The statement is true today and will be true in the distant future.

“To be “a professional,” you need a credential such as a license, certificate or degree. To actually “be professional” requires action taken that reflects an agreed upon ethical stance such as an ethical code adopted by the profession in which you work. Many people hold a credential but fewer act professionally taking an ethical stance toward their work. Which are you, *a professional? professional? Or both?* Early childhood practitioners answer this question through their actions every day. While some in the field continue to debate whether early childhood education is a true profession in the same way as the medical profession (Freeman & Feeney, 2006), early childhood practitioners are hard at work engaging in professional activities such as providing “...essential services related to an area of social need.” (Feeney, Fromberg, Spodek, & Williams, 1992, p. 416).

### **How Do People Become Professional?**

Dr. Castle continues to remind us in the following paragraphs how we can become professional. “Competency in effective professional performance takes time, practice, development and refinement. That is why professional progress is a developmental process. Being professional means early childhood practitioners are constantly in the process of rethinking what they do and making improvements along the way. One way to do that is through reflection on the *NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment* (2005). This ethical code describes core values, ideals, principles, a conceptual framework, and ethical responsibilities to children, families, colleagues, employers, employees, the community and society. It can be a helpful reference particularly in resolving real-life ethical dilemmas.”

“Professional knowledge, competence, and ethical conduct can be actively developed through taking a systematic approach to what people do in their professional lives. A systematic approach comes through planning for professional growth including setting goals for further training and education. Becoming professional can be a lifelong project.”

## **How does ECAO Help Grow Professionals?**

“The field of early childhood is rich with professional associations to join. Professional associations are committed to the professional development of members. Membership in professional associations has many benefits: publications, resources, conferences, and opportunities to collaborate with others and serve the profession. Probably, the most important and enjoyable benefit is meeting others who are involved in early childhood and working with them in various ways.”

“Professional development activities in ECAO that members can participate in to update their knowledge include the annual conference, the newsletter, committee work, advocacy efforts, and community service projects. Professional service activities include presenting at a conference, committee membership, task force membership, elected offices, and chances to be a newsletter writer of manuscripts and proposals. Many beginning professionals start with service to a local affiliate and then serving on a state committee such as the Week of the Young Child committee that plans local and state events focused on young children and families. Next, might come running for an elected office and serving as a board member to guide the future of the association. ECAO like other associations helps to develop members professionally, and the members of ECAO help to develop the association. It is a great partnership!!!”

History documents that initially, there was one early childhood professional association and now there are several opportunities for networking among professionals who serve young children. Other professional associations include the Oklahoma Kindergarten Teachers Association, Oklahoma Child Care Association, Oklahoma Tribal Child Care Association, Oklahoma Head Start Directors Association and several local family child care home groups in the greater metropolitan areas of Oklahoma City and Tulsa.

The first early childhood professional association in Oklahoma was the Oklahoma Association for Children under Six (OACUS), the state affiliate of the Southern Association for Children Under Six (SACUS). To become more inclusive, SACUS changed its name in the 90's to Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA) with Oklahoma becoming OECA. OECA merged with the Oklahoma Association for the Education of Young Children (OK AEYC) to form ECAO in 1998 with co-presidents and is the association that is outlined in this document.

## **What was happening prior to SACUS/OACUS coming to Oklahoma?**

Quality early childhood/child development/family relations programs were occurring at Oklahoma State University (OSU), the University of Oklahoma (OU) and regional colleges across the state. These programs prepared future teachers and agency staff.

The OSU Child Development Lab began in 1924 following a model from Iowa State University with the goal of preparing mothers and fathers for parenting. (Interview with Mona Lane, 2007) The lab continues in its role of preparing teachers of young children (infants through age 5) for half-day and full-day programs as well as early childhood classrooms in the public schools.

An interview with Harriet Turkington, past OACUS President and teacher at the OU Institute of Child Development in 1948-50, indicated that the OU Lab School began in the 1930's with the first director, Hedwig Schaefer. Garnette Fittro, a good friend of Josephine Hoffer and Gerdie Ware, Oklahoma State University faculty, was the second director. Marilyn Cole Staveno was the director when Mona Lane was a student at OU. Dr. Henry "Bud" Draper, Dr. Sara Robinson, Ruth Ann Ball, Dr. Joanne Hendrick, Cene Marquis, Dr. Jane Vaughn, Dr. Sue Tabor and Dr. Lisa Monroe followed as directors to the present day.

A SACUS conference remembered by several past presidents was their seventh annual conference held at OSU April 26-28, 1956. Dr. Virginia Stapley, Head of FRCD at OSU, wrote letters to all schools that had kindergarten in the state as well as colleges and universities who prepared kindergarten and nursery teachers. Dr. Stapley, colleagues and students at the Department of Family Relations and Child Development at OSU worked on the conference. Dr. Stapley was the first state representative to SACUS under its old structure.

Dr. Ramona Ware Emmons Paul was a student at OSU and remembers that the keynote speaker at the conference was the wife of Spencer Tracy, who had a child who was deaf.

Marilyn Smith, former NAEYC Executive Director, an Oklahoman from Marlow, remembers that conference as well, but what she remembers is the large collection of children's books that were on display at the Oklahoma State University Library.

According to SACUS records, Dr. Josephine Hoffer served as the Oklahoma representative to the SACUS Board in 1952-55, Dr. Virginia Messenger Stapley, 1955-56, Martha Sharrock, 1956-58 and Dr. Josephine Hoffer, 1958-59. Oklahoma was involved at the regional level since almost the beginning of SACUS in 1949.

In 1957 a task force for day care met in Tulsa.

## **Chapter I: 1959-1969 – Building Trust and Growing the Field**

New beginnings with an early childhood professional organization in Oklahoma began with OACUS in April 1959 with the constitution and affiliation to SACUS completed in spring 1960. In 1962 a workshop program says that OACUS is celebrating its third birthday – "We are out of the toddler stage and should now be ready to serve Oklahoma's children under six, which is the overall purpose of this organization."

The Presidents of the OACUS Board served as the representative to the SACUS Board (unless otherwise indicated) the year after their term of office as President until 1983 when a restructuring occurred in SACUS. They served for one year; after the restructuring the representative served for two to four years.

### **Historical Highlights of the Decade:**

- Beginning of the Vietnam War with later protests, hippies, love-ins, bra burnings, demonstrations, health/organic/natural food fanatics
- Elvis, birth of rock and roll, Woodstock
- Cold War – concerns about the possibility of a nuclear attack
- Racial unrest
- Assassination of President John F. Kennedy and two years later, Robert Kennedy, who was campaigning for President
- Landing on the moon by Neil Armstrong in 1969

### **Historical Early Childhood Highlights:**

- United Nations proclaims the declaration of the Rights of the Child which states “mankind owes the child the best it has to give” (1959)
- The High/Scope Perry Preschool project begins in 1960 in Michigan
- Child care assistance is made available to mothers on welfare (1962)
- The Economic Opportunity Act is passed and Head Start begins in 1965
- Summer teacher training institutes were held across the country in post secondary institutions to prepare teachers for Head Start. Initially, public school elementary teachers received early childhood education coursework and taught the children during the summer until the work force was developed. Head Start’s philosophy was to bring parents up through the ranks from serving as a teacher to directors and coordinators.
- The Office of Child Development is created in the US Department of Health, Education and Welfare (1969)
- Prepared childbirth and breastfeeding was gaining popularity.
- In 1964, first licensing law was enacted.
- In 1967, DHS Licensing Supervisor, Florence Frank, reported on State Department of Public Welfare adoption of Standards for Day Care Centers. Thirty-four day care centers made application for a license and 195 were licensed. Currently, there are about 1800 child care centers and 3500 family child care homes in Oklahoma.
- In 1963, the SACUS Conference was held at OCCE, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK

## OACUS Presidents

1959-60 - Dr. Josephine Hoffer\*; Chair of the Department of Family Relations/Child Development at Oklahoma State University; Served as OACUS first President after serving SACUS as President in 1957-58; represented Oklahoma on the SACUS Board three times; in 1968 Dr. Hoffer received the first Distinguished Service Award for 38 years of service in nursery school education and in 1980 was honored by OACUS again for her long service to the association. Delores Hopkins served as the Oklahoma Representative to SACUS, 1959-60.

1960-61 – Betty Young, Owner/director of Betty Rowland Nursery School, Tulsa, OK

- SACUS President in 1973
- Dr. Josephine Hoffer served as Oklahoma Representative to the SACUS Board during Betty's term of office as SACUS President (1960-62).

1961-62 – Amy Gibbs

1962-63 – Christine Hamlin Orbach\*, Oklahoma City, OK (deceased)

- Wanda Flora served as Oklahoma Rep to the SACUS Board (1962-63)

1963-64 – Annabele O'Neal

- Dr. Virginia M. Stapley served as Oklahoma Rep to the SACUS Board (1963-64)

1964-65 - Gladis Allen, kindergarten teacher, Norman, OK

- Annabele O'Neal served as Oklahoma Rep to the SACUS Board (1964-65)

1965-66 – Harriet Turkington, School of Home Economics, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK and Dorothy Driver, Child Development Specialist, Oklahoma City, OK

- Sandra Skinner served as Oklahoma Rep to the SACUS Board (1965-66)
- Dorothy Driver served as Oklahoma Rep to the SACUS Board (1966-67)

1967-68 – Shirley Angle\*, DISRS (now OKDHS), Oklahoma City (deceased)

- Helen E. Powers served as Oklahoma Rep to the SACUS Board (1967-68)

1968-69 – Jackie Angelino (some documents indicate that Angle and Angelino were co-presidents)

- SACUS President was Dr. Ramona Ware Emmons Paul, who lived in Texas at the time.

**Reflections:** Ramona was an undergraduate and graduate student at Oklahoma State University where she taught in the full day child care program on campus. After moving to Texas and while

serving of the faculty of Texas Woman's University, Ramona was part of a team of individuals that started the Texas AEYC. Her career led her to Birmingham, AL and Purdue University in Lafayette, IN where she obtained her doctorate. Returning to Oklahoma in 1975, she worked with the Edmond School District, the State Department of Education as the early childhood specialist, Oklahoma City Public Schools, then returned to the SDE, where she currently serves as Asst. State Superintendent of Professional Development, Early Childhood and Family Education. "Reflecting on one's career really let's one know about the journey that got me to where I am today," she noted.

- Shirley Angle served as Oklahoma Rep to the SACUS Board (1968-69)

1968-69 – Leone List, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK

**Reflections** of Leone List: "I came to Oklahoma as director of the OSU Lab School and stayed until 1985. I knew Dr. Josephine Hoffer through my work with SACUS when I was at the University of Tennessee. I was President of Tennessee SACUS and on the NAEYC Advisory Board at that time. At OSU we did a lot of Head Start training in the summer and built good programs and buildings. She says her greatest contribution was helping with children's curriculum development and the development of early childhood education courses. We gave students practical experience by working in the lab school. We wanted students to know about those professional organizations because it gave them an idea what their careers would be about. (Interview, 2007)

- Leone List served as Oklahoma Rep to the SACUS Board (1969-70)

### **OACUS Conferences**

1966, Theme: "Realizing Children's Potential in Preschool Years"; Dorothy Driver, President; conference fee was \$1.00; site, Tulsa.

1967, Theme: "Our Challenge: the Important Years" with Dr. Elizabeth Starkweather, OSU Child Development Professor; Helen Powers, President; conference fee was \$1.00; site, Chickasha.

1968, Theme: "Meeting the Needs of the Whole Child" with Dr. Vernon Sisney, a child psychologist from Oklahoma City; Shirley Angle, President; site, Oklahoma City University.

1969, Theme: "The World of Young Children" with Sallie Beth Moore from the University of Texas as speaker, Jackie Angelino, President; site University of Oklahoma, Norman.

## **Chapter II: 1970-1979 – Becoming Autonomous**

### **Historical Highlights of the Decade:**

- Continuation and end of the Vietnam War
- Martin Luther King assassination
- Equal Rights for Women movement
- Integration of Oklahoma public schools
- Religious strife in countries around the world
- President Richard Nixon's resignation

### **Historical Early Childhood Highlights:**

- In 1970-71, Oklahoma public school kindergarten programs began.
- In 1972 Dr. Mari Scott started the early childhood education program at the University of Central Oklahoma.
- There were more public policy statements in the mid 70's; Jules Sugarman spoke on Patience, Persistence, Luck – “we have got to organize, be interested in working together, ‘eat each other up,’ need people who know how to make noise; if not, the consequences we will see in 10-15 years are increased crime, more delinquency, broken homes, more human misery and poor health.”
- Half-day kindergarten became a voluntary part of the education system; Sally Augustine was the first Early Childhood Specialist at the State Department of Education.
- The Governor's Task Force was formed in the mid 1970's after it was reported that Oklahoma was one of the few states without an Office of Child Development.
- In 1975, we began looking at Child Development Associate (CDA); Dr. Marcia Guinn, Rose State College was the first CDA Rep in Oklahoma. Her number was 10 in the country.
- Susan Loveless, Early Childhood Faculty at Rose State College, Midwest City, was instrumental in obtaining a grant to provide Child Development Associate training through all the two year colleges in Oklahoma.
- In 1976, Jan Shera founded the Child Development Program at Western Oklahoma State College in Altus, developing the curriculum based on the CDA Competencies.
- OACUS developed a position statement on teacher child ratios after Gail Scott; the Governor's Liaison for Education spoke at a meeting to obtain member's reaction to the Proposed Title XX legislation in Congress. Judy Collins expressed concerns over the recommended improved ratios. OACUS urged revision of the Title XX – Social Security Act pertaining to the teacher/child ratios due to financial concerns for child care centers.
- Day Care Standards Committee developed standards for Family Child Care Homes.
- Betty Stratton, Child Development Specialist with the Oklahoma State University, Extension Service, founded and wrote a curriculum for child care staff called Child Care

Services, later known as Child Care Careers curriculum in 1972-74. She enlisted the support of Arthur Mansfield and other early childhood owners/directors, staff and early childhood leaders across the state. The curriculum resulted in 20 child development courses, 5 family child care home courses, and director's courses and was distributed nationwide. Pattie Howell and later, Kim Pearsall became directors of Child Care Careers, Inc. along with a Board of Directors representing the field of child care. Child Care Careers became part of the Center for Early Childhood Professional Development in 1998. Six courses for child care providers and a director's series continue to serve as beginning training for individuals who seek to work in the field of child care.

**Reflections:** Betty Stratton said that we had been receiving letters from providers around the state concerning different issues they were having in their programs. Between 1972-74, many new garment factories had been set up around Oklahoma and 500 new child care centers had started. OSU began to get letters from these centers asking for help. Some of the letters were coming from the new Head Start programs. Betty Stratton was called into Dr. Hoffer's office at OSU, FRCD Department. Betty remembered that she "was told that she would really like to hire me but there was not a position. I brought up the need to respond to these letters and create training for the Head Start and child care programs. I basically created my own job. This was the beginning of Child Care Services, which later became Child Care Careers, Inc." Note: The licensing law was enacted in 1964, but training was needed for the staff – Judy Collins.

Mrs. Stratton's greatest contribution was getting the whole state together to work on providing beginning training for individuals who worked in child care and Head Start programs. OACUS sponsored the first three child care services conferences. "We would not have moved forward without them. I JUST DID WHAT HAD TO BE DONE," she said.

She remembers a teacher in child care coming up to me in Durant and telling that she had never finished anything in her life until she completed the Child Care Careers training. (Interview, 2007)

- Week of the Young Child activities began in the mid 70's.
- 1980 was the beginning of the pilot program for four year olds in Oklahoma public schools. There were 10 programs involved.

**Words of Wisdom:** The Oklahoma Association for the Education of Young Children became affiliated with the National Association in 1975 under the leadership of Dr. Kaye Sears and Dr. Maxine Edwards Cornwell. Wisdom from these two leaders is as follows:

"In any new venture, there are possibilities for success, but many more for failure. I believe the success of OK AEYC has resulted from a cautious but solid beginning, relying on the professionalism of one's associates and a clear agreement that whatever was done, 'in the best interest of children' was always paramount. As the years have passed and change has affected every segment of our society, still 'in the best interest of children' is the sterling rule of Early

Childhood Education. Those of us active in the early years of the organization look with gratitude and admiration at the continuing work of those who have kept the lamps of respect for families and concern for children lighting the way. Our great privilege was to be a small part of the wonderful and challenging ‘obsession for children’. Dr. Maxine Edwards Cornwell, OK AEYC President 1975

“In 1974, I was just beginning my journey on a very definite path toward working on behalf of children and families in Oklahoma first and then nationally. I was willing to do almost anything to further that cause. I was working with Head Start Regional Training Center in McCloud with Kickapoo children and staff, teaching part time at UCO and beginning my doctoral program at OSU. I, along with other key people at that time, began the process of creating a chapter of OK AEYC which would be different from OACUS. OACUS was a valuable group for practitioners, but those who trained them, taught them, led them, needed different information. Dr. Wanda Draper, Dr. Henry “Bud” Draper, I and others met and informed a nucleus. I was young and naive so they elected me President – thus the first President of OK AEYC in 1975. To show you how passionate I was, (or uninformed), I was also President of OACUS at the same time”. Dr. Kaye Sears, President of both associations in 1974.

### **OACUS/OK AEYC Presidents**

1970-71 – Carolyn Rogers, Betty Rowland Nursery School, Tulsa, OK

- Dr. Beth Lamb served as OK Rep to the SACUS Board (1970-71)

1971-72 – Dr. Beth Lamb, Holland Hall, Tulsa, OK

- Reba Dunn served as OK Rep to the SACUS Board (1971-72)

1972-73 – Reba Dunn, Head Start Director, Stigler, OK

- Dr. Frances Stromberg served as OK Rep to the SACUS Board (1972-73)

1973-74 – Dr. Francis Stromberg, Department of Family Relations/Child Development, College of Human Environmental Sciences, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK

**Reflections** of Fran Stromberg: courses for Head Start programs were offered as a form of extension, but we could not call it extension; it was a university extension. It was supposed to be self supporting. Many pamphlets were developed (addressing various child care issues) for these summer programs. Dr. Stromberg came to Oklahoma State University from the Pine Ridge Reservation in Arizona in 1967. “I taught early childhood courses. I think my greatest contribution was holding everything together. We had a good lab school, good educators, and good students. I encouraged faculty and focused on helping students to learn. The focus on publish or perish seems to be occur in cycles. Our focus needs to be on educating students. Students could go for three years in Home Economics and one year in Education. They would

then graduate with a Home Economics and Teaching Certificate – an official early childhood certificate for nursery/kindergarten (NK).”

“In 1973-74 there was a lot of turmoil on campus. We were without a department head in FRCD for about two years. In 1975, I was told that I would be department head. I agreed to act as the department head for one year while a search was continued, but ended up being the FRCD Department Head for the next 10 years.” (Interview, 2007)

- Dr. Kaye Sears served as OK Rep to the SACUS Board (1973-74)

1974-75 – Dr. Kaye Sears, current Chair and Faculty, Department of Human Environmental Sciences, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, OK

- Dr. Kaye Sears also served as President of newly formed OK AEYC
- Dr. Wanda Draper served as OK Rep to the SACUS Board (1974-75)

**Reflections:** Dr. Kaye Sears remembers the very first attempt to bring OACUS and the newly formed OK AEYC together was at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond. The vote of those in attendance was negative; therefore, the two professional organizations remained separate.

A memory of Dr. Sears was when she flew to the SACUS Conference in Virginia and the rest of the Oklahoma delegates came by a 40 passenger bus. As they were riding on the bus, a tornado warning was heard so all had to get off the bus and lie down in the ditch until the tornado passed. It was so traumatic that Beth Lamb, a presenter at the conference and a past President of OACUS, flew home as soon as she arrived in Virginia. During the conference, there was a fire in the hotel and the residents had to evacuate when Kaye’s roommate was in the shower. They couldn’t drink the water, so all water had to be boiled and a pregnant woman had her baby during all the events that occurred. That was a conference to remember.

“We always had roommates at conferences in order to save money, sometimes there were 5 of us in a room, so we had to decide who was showering in the morning and who was showering at night, so we would all be ready for the sessions on time.” (Interview, 2008)

Note: Dr. Sears continues to be involved as the co-sponsor of the student professional group at UCO and beginning the Oklahoma Family Relations Council with other state leaders. She has been one of those “energizer bunnies” who is always there to support and encourage students with opportunities to learn, network, job hunt, hear wonderful speakers and not say “no” when a task needs to be done.

1975-76 – Dr. Wanda Draper, Faculty, University of Oklahoma, Health Sciences Center, Oklahoma City, OK

- Dr. Maxine Edwards Cornwell, NEO, Miami, OK, President of OK AEYC

- Fran Morris served as OK Rep to the SACUS Board (1975-77)

1976-77 – Fran Morris, Diagnostic - Therapeutic Nursery Demonstration School, University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, Oklahoma City, OK

- Dr. Sue Williams, Department of Human Environmental Sciences Faculty, University of Central Oklahoma, President of OK AEYC

1977-78 – Suzanne Ham, Apple Tree, Tulsa, OK – President and OK Rep to SACUS Board

- Dr. Jana Lou Scott, Early Childhood Faculty, Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Weatherford, OK, President of OK AEYC

1978-79 – Susan Loveless, Child Development Program, Rose State College, Midwest City, OK and OK Rep to the SACUS Board

- Ruth Ann Ball, Institute of Child Development, University of OK, President of OK AEYC through 1982

**Reflections:** Ruth Ann Ball explains that “it was a busy time for OK AEYC during those years as I was working on the Year of the Child Conference as a co-chair, leading a new organization, and building partnerships between all the early childhood associations that were collaborating on the Year of the Child Conference. Working together was an important vision for me, so I worked with others to form the Oklahoma Council for Young Children in 1980. OK AEYC had about 100 to 150 members and was struggling to find its place in the early childhood field. We knew we were linked to the national organization and felt that we had a leadership role in the state. I also served as Chair of the Week of the Young Child Committee and Treasurer of the association prior to serving as President. The OK AEYC members wanted to serve in the role of building leadership skills in the state thus provided a leadership conference in the spring for many years”.

1979-80 – Ann O’Bar, Washita Valley Head Start, Chickasha, OK, President and OK Rep to the SACUS Board

- Ann O’Bar was the President of SACUS 1980-82
- Mary Jane Erickson, Tulsa, OK, President OK AEYC

### **OACUS Conferences**

Beginning this decade the conference changed from one day conferences in the spring to two day conferences in the fall.

Spring, 1970, Theme: “Environment for Discovery” with Dr. Keith Osborn, Merrill Palmer Institute, Detroit, MI as keynote; Leone List, President; site, Oklahoma State University; the proceedings of the conference were published.

Fall, 1970, Theme: “A Strong Today for a Strong Tomorrow” with Jeanne Quill, Childhood Resources, Washington DC as the speaker; site, Tulsa Civic Assembly Center; 30 breakout sessions, published proceedings, lots of sessions for and about kindergarten. Judy Collins remembers this as a Friends of Day Care Conference.

- Note: Friends of Day Care, later known as Friends of Early Education, was an active organization in Tulsa. “Friends” held large conferences, which drew people from neighboring states and had a resource center of books that traveled to OECA Conferences into the 90’s. The organization disbanded in the decade of 2000 with much sadness and a sense of loss to the early childhood field. A resurgence to begin again has begun in Tulsa – only the future will tell what will happen.

1971, Theme: “Young Children: Priorities for the 70’s” with Sid Mitchell, Tulsa Public School Early Childhood Development Center as speaker; Dr. Beth Lamb, President; site, Hotel Oklahoma, Oklahoma City.

1972, Theme: “Children’s Lib” with Dr. Henry “Bud” Draper, University of Oklahoma, speaking on the Quality of Life in an Early Childhood Program; Reba Dunn, President; site, McFarlin United Methodist Church, Norman; conference fee was \$8.

1973, Theme: “Let’s Keep It Beautiful” with Jeanette Watson from Texas speaking on Today’s Child: Tomorrow’s Promise; Dr. Francis Stromberg, President; site, Oklahoma State University.

- Betty Young, Tulsa was President of SACUS in 1973. The mission of the organization was health and well being of children, training, collaboration, community, meeting the needs of children; dues were \$5.00 - \$2.00 for Oklahoma, \$2.00 for SACUS and \$1.00 for affiliates.
- Cleveland County was the first affiliate. In 1976 there were seven affiliates: OACUS – Tulsa, Shawnee, Central State University, District 10, Cleveland County, OU and Claremore Junior College.

1974, Theme: “Reassessing Our Education Priorities” with Dr. Burton White from Yale University as speaker; Dr. Kaye Sears, President; site, University of Central Oklahoma; Governor David Hall spoke on early childhood development in Oklahoma.

- As OK AEYC became a state affiliate to NAEYC, a vote to merge with OACUS was presented to the conferees, but was rejected.

1975, Theme: “Free to be Children”, with Dr. Frederick Green, MD, Children’s Hospital in Washington DC as the keynote speaker; Dr. Wanda Draper, President, Marilyn Smith,

Executive Director of NAEYC was the luncheon speaker; site, Skirvin Plaza Hotel, Oklahoma City.

- The second attempt to merge OK AEYC and OACUS was made and rejected by the conference attendees.

1976, Theme: “Fashioning a Day for Children” with Hedda Sharapan as the keynote. A dinner meeting was held for OK AEYC with Dr. Walter Hodges, Georgia State University as speaker. Fran Morris, President. 689 attended the fall conference.

- OACUS wrote a resolution of support for OK AEYC.

1977, Theme: “Terrorizing Preschoolers: A National Pastime” was the keynote address by Chester Pierce, Harvard University; Suzanne Ham, President; site, Rose State College, Midwest City, OK. Gladys Warren of the Bicentennial Commission was the luncheon speaker.

1978, Theme: Big Steps for Little People; conference site was Oklahoma State University.

1979, Theme: “Oklahoma Year of the Children” Conference – a collaboration with Friends of Day Care, Tulsa, Head Start, OK AEYC, Oklahoma Kindergarten Teachers and Oklahoma Child Care Association; Ann Lassetter and Ruth Ann Ball were conference co-chairs; Dr. Ramona Ware Emmons Paul was Program Chair and Susan Loveless was OACUS President; site, OCCE, Norman. Judy Collins was instrumental with the coordination of this conference. Many planning meetings were held with representatives of each organization having input into the success of the conference.

### **Chapter III: 1980-1989 Taking Initiative and Coming of Age**

**Words of Wisdom:** These years were not as I thought they would be. Suddenly we all were going for advanced degrees and looking ahead to careers rather than a job to work at for a while. We spent hours sitting on beds and floors in hotel rooms discussing the world and our place in its future – and, it seems we were thinking collectively rather than as a lone individual. ECAO, OK AEYC and the national organizations became the way we could make things happen for children and their families - and, more importantly, for ourselves and the staff working with young children. CDA became a reality in 1975. It was only the beginning. We were our mother’s daughters but our lives were beyond their belief.....Ann O’Bar, OACUS President 1980 and SACUS President 1981-82. She wore a hat when she was SACUS President.

### **Historical Highlights of the Decade:**

- Soviet collapse in 1985
- End of Cold War (tearing down of Berlin Wall)
- Operation Desert Storm
- First launch of space shuttle, Columbia; Challenger explodes
- Pac Man, Thriller, Cabbage Patch dolls, Cosby Show, first CDs
- Post It Notes were introduced by 3M

### **Historical Early Childhood Highlights:**

- First NAEYC accredited center in Oklahoma was as Judy Collins recalls – McFarlin Weekday Nursery at McFarlin United Methodist Church, Norman. Ann Lassetter was founder and director.
- Found in association minutes of 1980: Ruth Ann Ball, OK AEYC President and Ann O’Bar, OACUS President presented on December 1, 1980 to the State Department of Education concerning teacher preparation and the importance of an early childhood certification N-2 at the bachelor’s level. Early Childhood Certification for public school teachers was for N/K prior to that year. OACUS supported certification of N-2 and wrote a kindergarten position paper.
- The Oklahoma Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators was established in 1982. Kathryn Castle was the co-founder and first Chair. Kathryn and Judy Franks Doebler were working on the certification issues to expand N/K to N-2. Many early childhood faculties at four year universities were involved in forming OAECTE.
- The Oklahoma Council for Young Children was organized to gather information about early childhood, not to offer conferences. Six early childhood groups sent a representative to sit on the Council. This group was ahead of its time in attempting to build partnerships; the stress of creating another group was more than could be handled at the time resulting in its demise in 1984.
- State Department of Education offered state funded grant program for all four year old children on or before September 1. Ten school districts participated.
- Rules for Pre-Kindergarten were developed in coordination with child care and Head Start.
- In 1983, the Institute for Child Advocacy was founded. Eva Carter was the first Executive Director. The Institute became the source of information on public policy. Until 2009, Anne Roberts served as the Executive Director. The annual Fall Forums and follow up legislative action provides the Children’s Legislative Agenda for the Oklahoma Legislature. Child Watch tours are held and the Annie B. Casey Kids Report is provided annually.
- OACUS Presidents sent letters to state senators and representatives during their term of office to alert legislature to issues related to children and families.

**Reflections** of an active board member during the late 70's and 80's: In 1980-85, Jane Mason Boone Nannestad was Director of the Child Care program at Tinker Air Force Base. She was the first director paid with appropriated funds; prior to that the director was paid from the profits of the center. Tinker was also the command test center for family child care homes. Currently TAFB has two child care centers. Eloise Gray was a director and now Carol Scott is the director. As a conference chair Jane ensured that the conference had tracks for staff who worked in the military, Head Start and church related programs. Jane heard about the job at TAFB because of her involvement on the Board of OACUS. She remembers sitting on Ruth Ann Ball's living room floor and labeling conference flyers and preparing them for mailing. (Interview, 2006)

### **OACUS/OECA/OK AEYC Presidents**

1980-81 – Jan Shera, Early Childhood Faculty, Western State College, Altus, OK President and OK Rep to the SACUS Board

- Jean Crockett, Sunbeam Family Services, Oklahoma City, OK President OK AEYC

**Reflections:** Jan Shera remembers when Judy Franks Doebler, Early Childhood Specialist at the State Department of Education, commissioned Bert Seaborne to paint a picture for the 1982 SACUS Conference, which was held in Tulsa. The picture was printed and served as a fund raiser for the state. Judy Collins and Kathryn Castle served on the Board when Jan Shera was President. She was instrumental in helping affiliates have mini-conferences with one of the most active in Altus. She invited Eugene Howard from Texas and had Prairie Dance Group, and there were 300 people who attended that mini-conference.

Jan recalls making a trophy for each Board Member during her term of office. She remembers being professional by wearing high heels, hose, girdles and dresses, which resulted in “hurting feet and needing a massage”. She wore high heels to work every day. (Interview, 2008)

1981-82 – Sandra Nicholson, Early Childhood Coordinator, Tulsa Public Schools, Tulsa, OK, President and OK Rep to the SACUS Board

- Affiliates were in Altus, Edmond, Ardmore, Claremore, Tulsa and Norman; membership dropped to 488.
- Ann Edwards, Director, Children's Place, Integris Baptist Hospital, Oklahoma City, President OK AEYC
  - A memorable speech was given by Ann Edwards at the OK AEYC Leadership Conference at the Kerr Retreat Site, Poteau, OK. Many of us remember the passion Ann had to move us forward as a field. Ann, now retired, has received many accolades for her work in hospital child care as the long time director of Children's Place, Integris Baptist Hospital, Oklahoma City. After Ann's retirement in 2008, Kaitlyn Hunter was hired as the director of Children's Place north and south campuses.

1982-83 – Ann Lassetter, Founder/Director of McFarlin Weekday Nursery School, Norman, OK

- Jan Shera, Early Childhood Faculty, Western State College, Altus, OK, President, OK AEYC

1983-84 – Sharon White, Tulsa, OK

- Dr. Kathryn Castle served as OK Rep to the SACUS Board 1982-84.

1984-85 – Dr. Kathryn Castle, College of Education, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK

- Nine affiliates – Cleveland County, Creek County, Edmond, Logan County, McCurtain ECA, Northwestern ACUS, Pittsburg ACUS, Southwestern OKACUS, Tulsa area.

1985-86 – Mary Ann Bergman, Moore Norman Technology Center Child Development Instructor, Norman, OK

**Reflections:** Mary Ann remembers preparing a President’s notebook for the next President and providing Orientation and Training for the Board. In order to become more inclusive, newsletters were sent to kindergarten teachers, speech therapists and the broader field of children and families. Conferences included workshops that were rated for beginners, intermediate or advanced to encourage teachers to grow in their professional knowledge and not to “repeat same topic again and again”. The next state president, Ruth Ann Ball, was oriented to her role at the SACUS Conference in Orlando, FL by the “exhausted past President”. There were 13 affiliates. (Interview, 2008)

- Sandra Nicholson served as OK Rep to the SACUS Board

1986-87 – Ruth Ann Ball, Institute of Child Development, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK

**Reflections:** I remember holding Board Meetings at OSU with a prepared agenda. I had learned that having agendas in advance of the meeting was important and giving board members an opportunity to add to the agenda at the beginning of the meeting was a way of involving all participants. I remember how nervous I was, but how important it was to carry on the business of the association well. One of the board meetings (in the spring) was held at Rose State College where I had just taken a position as director of the Child Development Laboratory Center. All affiliate presidents were encouraged to attend and share information with the state board about their needs as well as the state board sharing the mission and goals of the state association.

When I served as a conference chair for OACUS, all conference chairs carried around two boxes of history and guidelines that was passed down from one chair to another. Jane Mason Boone Nannestad was instrumental in conceptualizing the conference planning manual.

1987-88 – Dr. Mona Lane, Department of Family Relations/Child Development, College of Human Environmental Sciences, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK

- When Mona Lane was the treasurer of OACUS in the 70's, the treasury was \$4000.
- Sandra Nicholson, Early Childhood Specialist, Tulsa Public Schools, Tulsa, OK, President OK AEYC

1988-89 – Ann Mills\* - Department of Family Relations/Child Development, College of Human Environmental Sciences, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK

- Susan Moore Myers, Director, Rainbow Fleet, Oklahoma City, OK President OK AEYC

Note: The early childhood Community lost two early childhood professionals who were faculty members at the College of Human Environmental Sciences, Oklahoma State University. Ann Mills and Barbara Heister passed away in the early 90's. They were deeply missed by students and colleagues. A scholarship was established in Ann Mills name in 1995.

1989-90 – Judy Franks-Doebler, Early Childhood Specialist, State Department of Education, Oklahoma City, OK

- Dr. Elaine Wilson, Child Development/Parenting Extension Specialist, College of Human Environmental Sciences, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK, President OK AEYC

### **SACUS/OACUS/OECA Conferences and OK AEYC Leadership Conferences**

1980, Theme: “Children of the 80's, Their Needs, Our Concerns” with Jim Doeinger, Leadership Development Institute at Oklahoma State University as the speaker; site, University of Central Oklahoma; a joint conference with the six early childhood associations collaborating and conference expenses was divided up according to the percentage of the membership for each organization.

1981, No conference held; preparing for the SACUS conference

SACUS Conference, Tulsa, 1982, “Children in a Changing World”. This was the largest SACUS conference at that time. Bert Seaborne print was sold to raise funds. Conference chair was Susan Frazier.

1982, A one day conference was held at Bethany Nazarene College in Oklahoma City; Theme: “Oklahoma's Children – Our Shining Diamonds”. Cleta Deatherage, a state representative was the keynote speaker. The first Gerdie Ware Award was given; membership was 539.

1983, Theme: “Child Care Our Emerging Profession” with Dr. Judy Powell, University of Wyoming, speaking on “Pay Yourself First”. Sharon White, President; site, St. Luke's United Methodist Church, Oklahoma City, Judy Collins, Conference Chair.

1984, Theme: “Serving Children and Families” with Willow Ruth Garlow speaking on Child’s Play: the Way and Dr. Lilian Katz speaking on “Compatibility of Parenting and Teaching Style”; Dr. Kathryn Castle, President; site, Lincoln Plaza, Oklahoma City.

1985, Theme: “Let Children Be Children” with Ms Jackie as the keynote speaker; Mary Ann Bergman, President and Dr. Kaye Sears, Conference Chair; site, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond.

1986, Theme: “Our Commitment to Excellence” with Jim Kern as the keynote speaker; Ruth Ann Ball, President; site, Lincoln Plaza, Oklahoma City

1987, Theme: “Working Together for Children” with Caroline Baur, Author, keynote speaker; Carol Phillips spoke on the CDA; Dr. Mona Lane, President; Ruth Ann Ball, Conference Chair, site, Lincoln Plaza, Oklahoma City.

1988, Theme: “Be Creative with Children” with Greg and Steve as speakers; Ann Mills, President; Dr. Marcia Guinn, Conference Chair; site, Rose State College, Midwest City.

**Reflection:** The conference was held on the campus in many classroom buildings and Greg and Steve presented in the Gym. The gym was packed. A decision was made this year to move to the Myriad Convention Center the following year because we were expecting a large conference.

Spring, 1988, OK AEYC had a Leadership Conference at the Raymond Young Conference Center, Baptist Medical Center; theme was “We Care for America’s Children, Their Future in Oklahoma” with the Honorable Wes Watkins speaking on “Children’s Issues at the National Level”.

1989, Theme: “Children Yesterday, Children Now and Children Forever”, with Tanya Wimmer, keynote speaker; Judy Franks Doebler, President; Ruth Ann Ball, Program Chair; site, Myriad Convention Center, Oklahoma City. We had about 1000 in attendance.

**Reflection:** “This may have been one of the first times we developed a contract with our keynote speaker. This year the contract with our keynote speaker was unclear; therefore, the expectation to be paid more than we thought we should caused difficulty and much conversation. We learned that many details such as how the presenter travels, i.e. first class, whether expenses are paid for spouse to attend, and food expectations, percentage to receive from sale of products, etc. must be spelled out in advance within the contract. It was a painful, learning experience.” Ruth Ann Ball, Program Chair of Conference

Spring, 1989, OK AEYC Leadership Conference, Quality, Compensation and Affordability” with Ellen Galinsky, President of NAEYC, keynote speaker; Susan Moore Myers, President; site, St Luke’s United Methodist Church, Oklahoma City.

## **Chapter IV: 1990-1999 Identity and role development**

**Words of Wisdom:** The 90's were a strategic time of collaboration across the field of early childhood as we reached across organizations and groups:

- to create “one voice for children” to represent a common identity. The OACUS/OECA membership worked together to improve the quality of early childhood education
- by promoting leadership for professionals and supporting education and advocacy issues for young children and their families. Our identity expanded to include greater emphasis on such topics as scaffolding, protecting and enriching children and families as the profession renewed their emerging role in a global society. Dr. Donna Castle Richardson, President 1990-91; SECA Rep 1998-2002

### **Historical Highlights of the Decade:**

- Desert Storm – war in Iran.
- Alfred P. Murrah Federal building in Oklahoma City was bombed by an American terrorist.
- Increase in violence across the world; at home – students kill others at Columbine High School in Colorado, 1999
- Increase in women returning to work – over 50%
- Increase in divorce rate in the country
- Early childhood programs in regional four year universities were being eliminated.
- AIDS became a concern internationally

### **Historical Early Childhood Highlights:**

The 90's was a decade of commitment by the early childhood leaders in the state to strengthening the system of professional development and regulation in the state. The research on the brain raised awareness in the business community, legislators at the state and federal level as to the importance of a quality teacher/child interaction during the early childhood years. Outlined below is a peek into what happened. Also, the pain of losing some of our finest professionals was felt in the early childhood field.

- 1990 – Removing corporal punishment in public schools was a major advocacy issue. Dale Wares, Fran Morris and Nancy vonBargen were instrumental in forming a coalition of individuals, Oklahomans Opposed to Corporal Punishment; Nancy wrote a “white paper” supporting the elimination of corporal punishment in the public schools to take to the legislature and public schools.
- Education Reform Act of 1990 mandated attendance for half-day Kindergarten programs.

- In the early 90's, House Bill 1017 moved funds from state grants to the state aid formula, providing funding for those students who met Head Start income eligibility guidelines. Other students were served on a sliding scale tuition basis.
- 1990 was the beginning of Sooner Start, a program for families with children of disabilities.
- 1991 – Tribal Child Care formed an association.
- 1991 – Oklahoma Parents as Teachers (OPAT) begins.
- 1991 – NAEYC held its first Professional Development Institute in Los Angeles, CA. A team from Oklahoma attended under the leadership of Judy Collins. Jan Shera, Sherrill Pallotta, Marti Nicholson, Judy Franks Doebler, Pattie Howell, Joanne Hendrick, Marcia Guinn and Cindy Ward participated from their individual agencies. Everyone was assigned a session and debriefing occurred at the end of each day. Judy Collins said that everyone represented their own agency, but returned to Oklahoma as the Early Childhood Professional Development Team. Marti Nicholson remembers sitting at a round table talking about the process and hearing Judy Collins say “no one from this group will have difficulty sharing their opinions. Collectively, this group is about the most stubborn group of individuals you can find in Oklahoma.” (Interview, 2009)

It took one year for the Vision Statement of the Early Childhood Professional Development Team to be written, and a decision to hire a coordinator to carry out the vision was made. In 1994 with a two page job description listing expectations for the new job role, Ruth Ann Ball was hired. The contract was with the University of Oklahoma working with Dr. Loraine Dunn, Early Childhood Faculty Member, College of Education.

- In 1992, the Office of Child Care was created with Prins Ella Anderson as the director, Nancy was the assistant administrator and Judy Collins was the licensing coordinator. The Office became the Division of Child care and now operates under the name of Oklahoma Child Care Services. After Prins, Nancy vonBargen was the director, then Mark Lewis, who recently resigned.
- 1992 –DHS voucher system for conference attendance began.

Judy Collins and Nancy vonBargen were instrumental in creating the Reaching for the Stars program as part of the DHS Office of Child Care. The tiered quality system encouraged child care programs to meet new Stars criteria that included increased staff qualifications and training, a salary scale, parent involvement activities, program evaluation, interest centers, etc.

Currently, there are Two Stars Outreach Specialists who review Star applications and assist providers. There are 13 Consultant and Training Support Specialists (CATSS) who visit 1 Star+ and higher programs to offer assistance with improving quality, locating resources, etc.

They also utilize deliver the ERS assessments to assist with identifying areas needing improvement.

- Oklahoma was the first in the nation to implement a quality rating system. Now there are 19 states that currently have statewide Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS). According to a NACCRRRA study, Oklahoma ties for 3<sup>rd</sup> place with Tennessee in oversight and regulation of child care facilities. Only the Department of Defense and District of Columbia rank higher than Oklahoma.
- In 1993 the Kindergarten Priority Academic Student Skills were published.
- In 1995 the Pre-Kindergarten Priority Academic Student Skills established.
- In 1995 House Bill 1637 provided state funding for all four year olds, age 4 on or before September 1, regardless of income returning Pre-Kindergarten to its original model of universal access.
- 1994-1998 – Oklahoma Early Childhood Professional Development Team applied for a grant with Partners for Change, Wheelock College, to create a professional development system in the state. Wheelock College had funding from the Early Childhood Collaborators across the US to create a national professional development system which would improve the professionalism of child care and Head Start teachers. Oklahoma created a plan to improve professional development and sought to receive funding to implement the plan. The plan included: articulation between two year colleges, four year universities and career tech programs, pre service training (now ELCCT), career development (a Professional Development Record, now the Registry for staff and directors), and compensation, (now REWARD incentives). A Director's panel was created to improve training/ education, develop a director's credential and a career ladder for directors of child care settings.
- 1998 – The Act for Better Child Care passed at the federal level brought in CCBBDG funding to Oklahoma. The Oklahoma legislature passed a law forming the Office of Child Care at the Department of Human Services so that the federal dollars could be used to support children and families, according to the federal mandates. The Oklahoma Department of Human Services, Office of Child Care awarded the University of Oklahoma, College of Continuing Education funding to create the Center for Early Childhood Professional Development to carry out the work of the ECPD Team. Charlotte Hollarn was hired as the director and served from 1998 to 2005. The current director is Dr. Susan Kimmel who began in 2006.
- ECAO was awarded a contract to implement the TEACH scholarship program from North Carolina. Dr. Sue Tabor was the director of TEACH for ECAO with an advisory board and staff. After two years, ECAO could no longer shoulder the financial burden of TEACH and the program moved to CECPD. Oklahoma decided to form their own scholarship and mentoring program that would align with the other professional

development programs in the state. The program is called the Scholars for Excellence in Child Care through the Regents for Higher Education.

- 1995 – Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building Bombing on April 19 resulted in an outpouring of well wishes for Oklahoma children at child care facilities; funding received became scholarships for professional development and accreditation of facilities in the state, serving as the precursor to the current scholarship funding.
- 1995-98 – the Early Childhood Association of Oklahoma was founded with a merging of OECA and OK AEYC. The Boards of the two associations held two summer retreats at St. Crispen’s Retreat Site, east of Seminole, beginning in 1995. Marilyn Smith, Executive Director of NAEYC, a native Oklahoman, and Dr. Chrissy Leister, Executive Director of SECA, attended the first Board Retreats. Judy Collins, OECA and Ruth Ann Ball, OK AEYC were Presidents of the respective organizations. After the merger was approved by the membership, the first and second years had Co-Presidents – Marty Clark and Nancy vonBargen and Susan Carrigan and Joyce Jech. First President of the newly formed Early Childhood Association of Oklahoma was Faye Ann Presnal. The name was chosen after an extension brainstorm of 16 possible names. The Board reduced the list to five and after a vote of the members the name selected was the Early Childhood Association of Oklahoma.
- The Head Start Collaboration Office began in 1996. Federal dollars provided through a competitive grant process awarded the contract to the Oklahoma Community Action Agency. Eva Carter was appointed the first director; when she became a Head Start Fellow for one year, she did not serve in that role. Leslie Porter was hired in 1997. Kay Floyd has been serving as the Head Start Collaboration Director since 2000. Currently there is an Oklahoma Head Start Advisory Panel who provides input to the Collaboration’s Office Strategic Plan.
- 1999 – The Oklahoma Child Care Resource and Referral Association (OCCRRA) were incorporated. OKDHS contracted with OCCRRA to coordinate statewide service delivery and uniform data collection. OCCRRA’s mission is to help achieve a quality child care system for all Oklahoma families through community-based resource and referral services.

Rainbow Fleet was one of the first resource and referral agencies in Oklahoma. The founder, Margaret Loeffler, was a faculty member at Oklahoma City University, and the agency was known for its fleet of rainbow-colored vans that provided toys and resources to family child care homes in the metropolitan area. Kathy Jones, Patti Tepper Rasmussen, Susan Moore Myers, Marti Nicholson, Conni Cooper, Linda Tate, and Joan Yoakum have served as directors of Rainbow Fleet. Royce Junghans is the current director. After much discussion the OECA and OK AEYC Boards approved the motion that some of the donations from the bombing were utilized to support accreditation for child care facilities and administered through Rainbow Fleet with Linda Wyatt as the facilitator.

The Child Care Resource Center in Tulsa began under the leadership of Judy Burton, followed by Liz Reece. CDSA in Enid was under the leadership of Diane Juhnke. In 1999, Liz, Diane and Marti Nicholson of Rainbow Fleet were instrumental in creating the Oklahoma Child Care Resource and Referral Association (OCCRRA). Rainbow Fleet and the Child Care Resource Center in Tulsa had been privately funded until the early 90's when the Oklahoma Department of Human Services began to use federal money to contract with the two existing child care resource and referral agencies in the state. Goals have expanded to include working with Tribal partners, services for Spanish speaking providers, an Infant Toddler Specialists and Child Health Consultants. Two editions of a data book have been published as well as an Employers Toolkit to help businesses build support for the child care needs of the workforce.

- In the 90's the hourly wage was \$3.67 and for experienced teachers it was \$4.40. Current minimum wage is \$7.25/hour.
- A team of individuals representing Oklahoma from CECPD, two year colleges, the Head Start Collaboration Project, OKDHS, University of Oklahoma Allied Health, SDOH, and SDE attended the Natural Allies Retreat in North Carolina to learn about integration of training for staff who work with children with special needs into two year college curriculums and the work of professional development in Oklahoma. The professional development retreat was sponsored by Frank Porter Graham Center at the University of North Carolina. A resource guide is still available on line to support this critical work.
- Marilyn Smith retired as NAEYC Executive Director after serving for 25 years. She is a native Oklahoman and graduate from Oklahoma State University. Current NAEYC Executive Director is Dr. Mark Ginsberg.
- Apprenticeship projects began in states across the country as a way for the Department of Labor to support training of child care staff. The University of Oklahoma, CECPD received one the apprenticeship grants.
- Dr. Bruce Perry, a neuroscientist studying the development of the brain in young children, presented at conferences in Oklahoma to a broad audience of business leaders, early childhood professionals and legislators.

### **OACUS/OECA/OK AEYC Presidents**

1990-91 – Dr. Donna Castle-Richardson, Early Childhood Faculty, Oklahoma City University, Oklahoma City, OK

- Judy Burton, Tulsa Resource and Referral Agency, Tulsa, OK, President OK AEYC

1991-92 – Joyce Jech, Principal, Skiatook Public Schools, Skiatook, OK

- Judy Franks Doebler, Early Childhood Specialist, State Department of Education, Oklahoma City, OK, President OK AEYC

1992-93 – Dr. Marcia Guinn, Early Childhood/Child Development Faculty, Rose State College, Midwest City, OK

**Reflections:** Dr. Guinn worked to ensure that minorities were included on the OECA ballot. Workshops on the History of Early Childhood were presented by Marcia and Kaye Sears and included old toys, children’s furniture, pictures of families, an old churn, dolls and cradle, etc. She designed jewelry illustrating the One Voice for Children theme of the SECA Conference in Tulsa. Dr. Guinn’s first time on the OACUS Board was when Kathryn Castle was President in 1984-85. “There were many memories, friendships, and camaraderie. When we went to conferences, we sought out those we hadn’t seen for a while. One needs to have at least four tote bags to be a real conference-goer and being willing to wear funny hats made out of newspaper.” (Interview, 2008)

- Nancy vonBargen, Department of Human Services, Oklahoma City, OK, President OK AEYC

1993-94 – Dr. Arlene Fulton, Child Development Extension Specialist, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK. There were 19 affiliates.

- Ginger Robertson, Director, Trinity Episcopal Day School, Tulsa, OK, President OK AEYC

1994-95 - Georgia Lamirand, Head Start and Frances Tuttle Technology Center, Oklahoma City, OK

- Marti Nicholson, Director, Rainbow Fleet, Oklahoma City, OK, President of OK AEYC

**Reflections:** Marti Nicholson was the 1995-96 OK AEYC President when the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building was bombed in Oklahoma City. The building housed a child care facility. Marti was the Executive Director at Rainbow Fleet and worked closely with Judy Collins, Director of Licensing at DHS and President of OECA to coordinate the outpouring of support from across the country. One event was a meeting at the Blue Room in the Capital for the Week of the Young Child. Judy Collins and Marti Nicholson spoke. Marti remembers reading notes from people across the country, from Marilyn Smith at NAEYC and one in particular written by Diane Trister Dodge saying that “we cannot always prevent what happens to us but we must do what we can to be sure young children are safe when in our care.” Marti remembers that the phone never stopped ringing and there was lots of mail and resources to help families and staff cope with disasters.

Judy Collins, Marti Nicholson and Ruth Ann Ball established a fund for scholarships utilizing the donations received from around the country. This was the forerunner for the scholarship funds of today. Donations of cash and checks from as small as \$5 to \$20 plus were made by affiliates of NAEYC across the country. Thank you notes were written to every person who

contributed. Approximately \$42,000 was donated to provide scholarships and accreditation support to child care programs and staff in Oklahoma.

The first NAEYC Disaster brochure for young children was being written at the time of the bombing, so Oklahoma was able to give input to the final version.

People sent boxes of toys, baby blankets, equipment, children's books, etc. Marti estimated that there was at least a semi trailer truck full of stuff. A group of women in Kingman, AZ made baby quilts to be distributed to child care centers and homes affected by the bombing. One of those quilts went to the Bombing Museum. The mayor of Kingman and one of the ladies from the quilt group drove to Oklahoma City and made the presentation of quilts to the children in Oklahoma. The presentation was made over KTOK radio.

Suzy Gibson worked at Rainbow Fleet at that time and sorted the items. Several months later, Oklahoma City area child care centers and homes were invited to come to Rainbow Fleet to choose what they could use for their facilities. There were children's drawings and well wishes on the wall behind the tables of resources available.

Marti had a personal family crisis at the same time as the bombing so was at St. Anthony's Hospital, where many of the bombing injured were taken. She remembers seeing the steel of the building from the windows of the hospital and all of the well wishes on the walls of the hospital. She was surrounded in every aspect of her life with well wishes. (Interview, 2009)

An original oil painting depicting angels flowing out of the bombed building and letter was given to Oklahoma and hangs at the Center for Early Childhood Professional Development as a reminder of this horrific act. The picture was painted by Paddy Shaffer of Dublin, Ohio.

1995-96 – Judy Collins, Department of Human Services, Oklahoma City, OK

**Reflections:** “For me, my professional career was happenstance – from serving as a director of a child care facility to licensing and now a consultant. As professionals we grow over the time of our career. We need to have someone believe in us and be intentional in our work. We need to hone our leadership skills, instill confidence in ourselves, and continually evaluate how we do our work. Each generation has gifts to share. Trust ourselves to share our gifts as we become leaders.” (Interview, 2009)

- Ruth Ann Ball, Early Childhood Faculty and Director of CDC, Rose State College, Midwest City, OK, President of OK AEYC

**Reflections:** Judy Collins recalls that Leadership Applications (funding from Partnerships for Child Care, Wheelock College) were scheduled to be reviewed the afternoon of the bombing on April 19 by Judy Franks Doebler, Judy Collins and Ruth Ann Ball at the home of Ruth Ann Ball. We decided to proceed with the review because we needed to be together to support one another after losing the children, director and staff in the bombing. (Interview, 2009)

Ruth Ann Ball remembers many child care leaders went to the bombing site to support those in need and then others chose to support in other ways because going to the site was too difficult.

“As the President Elect for OK AEYC, I was scheduled to attend the NAEYC Leadership Conference the following week in Washington DC where I was asked to speak about the Murrah Federal Building Bombing. While my colleagues in Oklahoma were speaking in the Blue Room at the Capitol, I spoke to the leadership of state affiliates from around the country. It was very moving for those who listened and emotional for me.

The words were not forgotten by many in the field as I have learned over the years. It has helped me to know that what we say can have meaning and impact on those around us.

Dana Brown Cooper, the director of the child care facility in the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building had been one of my students at Rose State College, and two teachers had attended some community based training I had done, so the impact of their loss was felt deeply.

Developing the scholarship forms and processes for the distribution of the donations during my term as President of OK AEYC was an important task that required integrity, honesty and a listening ear to those around the state.

I remember Marty Clark and me attending the NAEYC Leadership meeting in Washington DC. We roomed together and learned about leading an early childhood organization”. (Interview, 2009)

1996-97 – Nancy vonBargen, Department of Human Services, Oklahoma City, OK

- o Merger of OECA and OK AEYC. Nancy served as co-President with Marty Clark, Riverfield Country Day School, Tulsa, OK, President of OK AEYC

**Reflection:** Nancy vonBargen recalls her early years in the organization. “I started out as a board member of the Cleveland County association and loved the work that was accomplished at the local level. Judy Collins was my mentor and both encouraged and expected this involvement from me. My favorite roles on the OACUS board were as affiliate, public policy and Week of the Young Child committee chairs. We more than doubled the number of affiliates, many of whom are still thriving today. I also enjoyed the diversity and richness of the SACUS board when I served as Oklahoma’s representative. In every role I have held, we worked hard, but we made wonderful friendships at the local, state and national levels that I still treasure today.” (Interview, 2009)

**Reflection:** Marty Clark says that it was a privilege to work with so many amazing early childhood leaders from the state – people about whom I had heard so much and for whom I had a great deal of admiration and respect. Having Nancy vonBargen as a Co-President made me feel more at ease about taking on this responsibility, and having Ruth Ann Ball on the Board made everything much more feasible for us all. She was incredible – knew everyone and everything

and always kept us on track. This was one of the most challenging and interesting Boards I have had the good fortune to work with and know, especially since one of our main tasks was to coordinate the merger of two organizations. And that was accomplished!” Marty Clark, 2009.

There were 1535 members in both organizations. 313 voted to support the new name – Early Childhood Association of Oklahoma.

1998 – Susan Carrigan, East Central University, Ada, OK and Joyce Jech, Elementary School Principal, Skiatook, OK served as co-presidents

1999 – Faye Ann Presnal, Department of Family Relations/Child Development, College of Human Environmental Sciences, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK

**Words of Wisdom:** Faye Ann Presnal writes that “early childhood professionals in Oklahoma are celebrating a long history of working with and for young children and their families to create positive outcomes in children’s lives. ECAO is a product of that commitment made by so many individuals across the state over the last fifty years.

This organization continues to be a driving force in Oklahoma as it calls attention to children’s needs, supports professionals working directly with children and participates in the creation of new ideas and models to facilitate change. What makes ECAO strong is that its membership includes individuals working in a variety of roles related to early childhood, all with a united goal and voice.

It was an honor for me to help guide ECAO into a new century of service. Although it has been ten years and much in the field of early childhood has changed, there is still much work to be done and it has been wonderful to see new leaders step forward. Listen to each other, share ideas, respect differing points of view, and always make decisions based on what is best for young children.”

### **OECA Conferences and OK AEYC Leadership Conferences**

1990 – Theme: “Enriching Children’s Lives” with Sidney Clements, Pacific Oaks College, CA speaking on “Children Bring Their Own Agendas”. Mr. Al presented on Friday. Dr. Donna Castle Richardson, President; Ruth Ann Ball and Kaye Sears, Conference Co-Chairs; site, Myriad Convention Center, Oklahoma City.

1991 – Theme: “When Learning is a Joy” with Jim Kern as speaker; Joyce Jech, President; Dr. Donna Castle Richardson, Conference Chair; site, Myriad Convention Center, Oklahoma City. Attendance was over 1100.

1992 – Theme: “Playing for Keeps” with Jim Terrell, Play Leadership Association as speaker: Dr. Marcia Guinn, President; Pattie Howell, Conference Chair. The first silent auction was held. There were 21 affiliates.

Spring, 1992 – OK AEYC Leadership Conference, “Their Future in Our Hands” with Joan Lombardi speaking on “Caring Communities, New Opportunities: New Opportunities to Speak Out for Children and Families”; Judy Franks Doebler, President; site, Frances Tuttle Technology Center, Oklahoma City.

Spring, 1992 – Southern Early Childhood Association Conference was held in Tulsa. The theme was “One Voice for Children”. Oklahoma commissioned Connie Seaborne to do a painting, and prints were sold to attendees at the conference. SACUS changed its name to the Southern Early Childhood Association and OACUS became OECA. Kathryn Castle was the Program Chair.

1993 – Theme: “Creating a World of Hope for Children” with \_\_\_\_\_ as speaker, Arlene Fulton, President; site, Myriad Convention Center, Oklahoma City.

Spring, 1993, OK AEYC Leadership Conference, Theme: Developing Professionals in Early Childhood with speaker Sue Bredekamp. Nancy vonBargen, President; site, Metro Tech, Oklahoma City.

1994 – Theme: “Today’s Children Tomorrow’s Future”, speaker Grace Mitchell; the first two-day conference; Georgia Lamirand, President; site Myriad Convention Center, Oklahoma City. 1246 attended the conference. Membership was 1312. There were 16 affiliates.

Spring, 1994, OK AEYC Leadership Conference, Theme: “Families and Early Childhood Programs=Bright Futures for Children”; Dr. Doug Powell, Purdue University spoke on “Working with Parents in a New Era: Problems and Promising Directions”; Gubernatorial Forum; Ruth Ann Ball, Program Chair; site, Metro Tech, Oklahoma City.

1995 – Theme: “Celebrate Children” with Hedra Shapren from Mr. Rogers and Ella Jenkins as speakers. Ann Mills Scholarship was initiated. Judy Collins, President; Denise Buthion, Conference Chair; site, Myriad Convention Center, Oklahoma City.

Spring, 1995, OK AEYC Leadership Conference, Theme: “Enhancing Families and Child’s Strengths in Difficult Times with Carol Pardo, Erikson Institute speaking on “Developing Supportive Settings for Children at Risk”. Marti Nicholson, President; site, OSU-OKC, Oklahoma City.

1996 – Theme: “Believe in the Magic” with Friday speaker – Dr. Shirley Raines and Saturday Speaker was Charlotte Diamond. Nancy vonBargen, President; Luetta Lynn, Conference Chair; site, Myriad Convention Center, Oklahoma City; had tours of child care facilities on Friday. A special recognition was given to A.B. “Bud” LeCrone, founder of Melody House and Mary Fallin, who at that time was Lt. Governor of Oklahoma; currently serving as a representative from Oklahoma in Congress..

Spring, 1996 – OK AEYC Leadership Conference, Theme: “Now is the Time, This is the Place, Who are the Leaders?” with Jerlene Daniels, NAEYC President speaking on “Leadership All that Glitters is Work Nonetheless”. Ruth Ann Ball, President; site, Moore Norman Technology Center.

1997 – Theme: “Building Bridges to the Future” with Hap Palmer as speaker

Spring, 1997 – OK AEYC Leadership Conference, Theme: “Art of Leadership: Creating the Picture” with Chuck Jackson as speaker. Marty Clark and Nancy vonBargen – co-Presidents; site, Tulsa Technology Center.

1998 – Theme: “Rising to the Challenge...It’s Our Time to Shine!” with Nancy Burks, ventriloquist, comedian, storyteller of Nana Puddin Productions. Other featured speakers were Jim Gill, Karen Miller and Madelyn Swift. A series of institutes were held on Friday, site, Clarion Meridian Convention Center, Oklahoma City.

Spring, 1998, OK AEYC Leadership Conference, Theme: “Building Partnerships for Tomorrow’s Leaders”, State Update with Ruth Ann Ball, Dale Wares, Nancy vonBargen and Charlotte Wood Wilson; Views of Oklahoma from Rep. Laura Boyd and Rep. James Hager on the Governor Candidates and Vision of Early Childhood Education – Words from Washington and Joan Lombardi by Eva Carter, Susan Carrigan, ECAO Co-President; Charlotte Hollarn, Conference Chair; site, Westin Hotel, Oklahoma City.

1999 – Theme: “A Search for Quality” with Stephen Fite as speaker; Faye Ann Presnal, President; Kaye Sears and Deborah Norris, Conference Co-Chairs; site, Clarion Meridian Convention Center, Oklahoma City.

## **Chapter V: 2000-2009 – Generativity into the New Century**

### **Historical Highlights of the Decade:**

- Terrorist attack on New York City and the Pentagon in Washington DC occurred 9/11/2001
- War in Iraq began which meant many children and families were impacted.
- Women in the workforce increased to 75% over this decade.
- Technology boom with computers, cell phones, Blackberries, iPods, which has caused us to expect message responses immediately through email, blogging, Facebook, twitters, etc.
- DVD’s in cars so that children are always entertained.

- Parents are afraid for the safety of their children; therefore, many children cannot walk, ride bikes and play in the neighborhoods.
- Gang violence, domestic and elder abuse is on the increase.
- Choices abound with food, clothes, television programs and cable viewing programs
- Conversations about working with multiple generations in the workplace began. Generational genres are identified as Traditional, Baby Boomers, Gen X, Gen Y and Millennial and some authors call the new generation Gen Z.

### **Historical Early Childhood Events:**

- No Child Left Behind funding became available for early literacy programs in the country. Oklahoma has been awarded seven grants to enhance the teaching of early literacy in preschool classrooms in public schools, Head Start programs and child care facilities. Those receiving funding were University of Oklahoma, CECPD (4), Little Dixie Head Start (2) and Choctaw Nation (1).
- Universal public school pre-k programs were nationally recognized.
- Governor's Task Force on Early Childhood Education was created by Governor Frank Keating after Bob LaFortune, Tulsa, asked the governor what he was going to do about early childhood. Gov. Keating twice did not sign the legislation that came out of this committee. Governor Brad Henry signed HB 1094, the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Act in April 2003 which led to the formation of Smart Start Oklahoma. The legislation formed a board to oversee SSO. Nancy vonBargen was the first Director. The current director is Susan Illgen.
- Re-affiliation with NAEYC was a major focus during the beginning of the new century. The board spent many hours working on vision, mission, and goals and revamping the entire Board structure to be in alignment with NAEYC state affiliates across the country. NAEYC formed the Affiliate Council in 2002 which meant that Oklahoma was represented in Region 6 and had a voice within the national organization. The Oklahoma representative to the Affiliate Council was Charlotte Wood Wilson until an ECAO election was held. Jill Soto was elected. Dr. Lori Beasley served for a year. Currently Dr. Mona Lane serves as the representative from Oklahoma.
- Ruth Ann Ball was elected as Vice-President of NAEYC serving the association for four years from 2002-2006. She was the first Oklahoman to serve on the National Board. When the NAEYC President resigned due to illness, Ruth Ann served as President for several months on an interim basis.
- The 2003 Georgetown Study of Universal Pre-Kindergarten in Oklahoma showed significant impact of Pre-Kindergarten on the language development of young children.
- 50% of Head Start teachers must have at least an Associate's degree.
- In 2005 the findings from the Georgetown Study were confirmed by NIEER.

- Oklahoma’s Public School Pre-Kindergarten program cited as number one in the nation in terms of access.
- In 2005 Senate Bill 982 required districts to offer full-day Kindergarten by 2011-2012. Mandatory attendance for children remains for ½ day Kindergarten.
- The state legislature appropriated ten million dollars in state funds for The Pilot Early Childhood Program private-public partnership which will serve at risk children ages zero to four.
- Increase in mental health issues along the life span which moved a focus of training to helping staff to work with children and families with mental health issues.
- Five community colleges in Oklahoma (Tulsa Community College, Oklahoma City Community College, OSU-OKC, Connors and Western Oklahoma State College) have been accredited through the Association Degree accreditation process from NAEYC with support from ACCESS.
- New Head Start Reauthorization has increased the requirements for teacher credentials: by 9/30/2010: 100% of Early Head Start teachers with CDA; by 9/30/2011: 100% of Head Start classrooms with at least one teacher with an AA degree; by 9/30/2013: 100% of Coordinators with BA and 50% of teachers with BA; by 9/30/2013: 100% of teacher assistants will have at least CDA national credential, enrolled in a program leading to an associate or baccalaureate degree or enrolled in a CDA national credential program to be completed within two years. (See reauthorization act for a more detail on the qualifications needed for staff ) This means increased access is needed for Head Start staff in two year colleges and four year universities early childhood programs.

**Words of Wisdom:** Leadership continues into the new century with the words of the 2009 SECA Rep, Susan Carrigan; 2009 SECA President, Georgia Lamirand and NAEYC Affiliate Council Rep, Dr. Mona Lane.

“It is an exciting time to be in the field of early care and education! The past twenty years has seen a field grow to unimaginable proportions. Technology has allowed us to learn so much more about the learning process and the ‘windows of opportunity’ for developmental growth potential for the children we serve and teach in our programs and homes. I wish I had the resources and information available when I began my career. Being a member of the Early Childhood Association has been invaluable to me. It has afforded me opportunities to meet extraordinary people from within the field throughout Oklahoma and the country. I moved to Oklahoma knowing no one in this state. ECAO has helped me to meet colleagues and friends throughout the country. It was the support and encouragement from this group that led me to become a Board Member for ECAO, to serve a term as President of that Board, and later to become the Southern Early Childhood Association Board’s Oklahoma Representative. What has always struck me as being so beneficial to its membership, is that organizations’ ability to continue to conduct itself in a highly professional manner, to maintain current research and focus

on policy, and yet to maintain a ‘grassroots’ relationship with each of its members. This is a group that truly cares about each other, who inspires everyone to reach their full potential and is always willing to support its members in the kindest manner. This is a group of professionals that make me proud to be a part of.” Susan Carrigan, SECA Rep 2009

Dr. Mona Lane indicated that the overall field has blossomed – really developed since the 60’s. DHS has supported the growth and improvement of child care to ensure Oklahoma staff and directors have the latest information and resources. (Interview, 2007)

The current SECA President is Georgia Lamirand, Early Childhood Instructor at Frances Tuttle Technology Center. Following are her **Words of Wisdom** – “Change is the Law of Life and those who look only to the past or the present are certain to miss the future.” I think that the future of Early Childhood is in our hands. Oklahoma has been in the forefront of our industry for many years. I believe that decisions and discussions made by the Oklahoma Early Childhood Professional Development Team over fifteen years ago have made the difference in our profession.

From the very beginning of my early childhood career, thirty-one years ago, I have belonged to our state and regional organizations – OACUS/SECA/ECAO and SACUS/SECA. It has made a huge impact not only on my life, but also in my career in early childhood. I would not have the position that I have today without my involvement in the association.

I began by taking baby steps by participating on local and state committees, then nudged to present workshops and finally, encouraged to run for office. Along the way I met wonderful mentors, Ruth Ann Ball and Ann O’Bar, who have been there to be not only a role model for us all, but also to encourage each of us to participate and become active in our organizations.

I think that the value of belonging to ECAO/SECA has meant a lot to me professionally. The relationships that I have formed have benefitted me and allowed me to grow into the leader that I am today”.

### **ECAO Presidents**

2000 - Sue McCauley\*, Department of Human Environmental Sciences, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, OK

Note: Sue McCauley passed away after a short illness in March 2008. After teaching at the University of Central Oklahoma for many years, Sue became a nanny for several children and is missed deeply by many who knew her passion for young children.

2001 – Dr. Lori Beasley, Department of Human Environmental Sciences, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, OK

**Reflection:** “As a student in child development at Northeastern A&M College with Dr. Maxine Edwards Cornwell, I was told it was important to belong to a professional organization—then the reason to join was because Dr. Edwards said so!!! As the years passed and I continued as a member in OACUS and OAEYC, I experienced the importance of *belonging*. There was the excitement of conferences, the anticipation of newsletters in the mail, and people that talked the same lingo heard in higher education. I was gradually invited to be on committees for state and local affiliates and then eventually ran for office, only because the professionals in our field placed a high importance on mentoring and supporting young professionals. At the retreat in 1996 OAEYC and OECA discussed the possibility of a merger. I witnessed amazing, strong, and passionate professionals whose vision was “one voice for all children” work together to achieve that very vision. As we entered a new century, Sue McCauley and I served as Presidents of ECAO consecutively, and escorted ECAO into the era of Generativity. This movement was instigated by NAEYC Re-affiliation. During this time, we looked carefully at our state organization in an attempt to carry it through the culture of the new decade. Oklahoma has been better served by the hardworking, caring and motivated advocates that are members of ECAO. I have met professionals that have made a difference in the lives of child care professionals, families and children across the state. I am a better person for serving with and being involved in ECAO”. Lori Beasley Ed.D., ECAO President 2001.

2002 – Charlotte Wood Wilson, Director of Child Development Laboratory, Oklahoma City Community College, Oklahoma City, OK

2003 – Dr. Ladonna Atkins, Department of Human Environmental Sciences, University of Central Oklahoma

2004 – Jill Soto, Center for Early Childhood Professional Development, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK

**Reflection:** Jill remembers her first venture into state early childhood work was when she was President of SPECA in Shawnee. She attended the Board retreat at St. Francis Christian Renewal Center on NW Expressway in Oklahoma City. Nancy vonBargen and Marty Clark were co-presidents. She felt intimidated as she sat at the same table with the leaders that she had always heard about.” (Interview, 2009)

2005 – Kelly Ramsey, Program Manager for OK Parent Information and Resource Center, Member of OICA Kids Count Leadership Class XV, Adjunct instructor for UCO and OSU/OKC and owner of Developing People, Inc., a consulting firm, Oklahoma City, OK

2006 –Dr. Sue Tabor, Early Childhood Faculty, currently Dean of Social Sciences, Oklahoma City Community College, Oklahoma City, OK

2007 –Dr. Paulette Shreck, Early Childhood Faculty and Director of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, OK

**Reflection:** Paulette remembers the retreats held for the merging of the two early childhood associations. She remembers the symbolic nature of weaving together that we did as an activity.

2008-10 –Dr. Sally Nichols-Sharpe, Chair of Early Childhood Department, Bacone College, Muskogee, OK

### **ECAO Conferences**

During some of the following years, the ECAO Board carried on the tradition of a fall and spring leadership conference. During the late 90's and early 2000, Cene Marquis, retired Early Childhood Instructor, Metro Tech, Oklahoma City, was the Facilities Chair at many, many conferences.

Spring, 2000, Leadership Roundtable, theme: "Building a Unified Leadership" Roundtable Participants – Ruth Ann Ball, Moderator with Glenda Bean, Elizabeth Ford, Leslie Porter, Heather Sparks, two OKC Public School early childhood teachers and Janet Wise. Sue McCauley, President; Tami Wright and Harriet Kuykendall, Co-Chairs; site, Metro Tech, Oklahoma City; one of the goals for the roundtable was to have a panel of individuals representative of differing cultures.

Fall, 2000, Theme: "Experiencing Literacy Through Cultures" with Rosa Guerreo, dancer, storyteller and educator s the keynote. Sue McCauley, President; site, Clarion Meridian Convention Center, Oklahoma City.

Fall, 2001, Theme: "Children's Laughter: The Happiest Sound in the World", Friday evening Greg and Steve held a Family Concert and had a keynote address on Saturday. Dr. Lori Beasley, President; Peggy Byerly and Dorothy Porter, Conference Co-Chairs; site, Clarion Meridian Convention Center, Oklahoma City.

Fall, 2002, Theme: "Creating Adventures in Learning", Friday speaker was Ruthie Bushnell on Health on the Move: Early Fitness for Healthier Lives, Saturday speakers were Ruthie Bushnell, Mike Wimmer, artist, Dr. Robin Gurwitch, OU Health Sciences Center, and Mike Stiglets, Principal. Chuck Jackson, keynote speaker on Saturday; Charlotte Wood Wilson, President; site, Clarion Meridian Convention Center, Oklahoma City.

- Spring, 2002 – Southern Early Childhood Association Conference was held at the Myriad Convention Center in Oklahoma City. The theme was "Embracing Challenges Across Generations". Keynote presenters were Stephen Fite, musician, Donald Davis, storyteller, Dr. Charles Figley, psychologist. Sue McCauley and Dr. Lori Beasley were co-chairs of the conference. A pre-conference session facilitated by Dr. Lori Beasley, Dr. Robin Gurwitch and Ruth Ann Ball on Violence in the Lives of Children was held. A tour of the bombing memorial was conducted. Ruth Ann Ball was honored with the SECA Distinguished Service Award.

Fall, 2003, Theme: “Children’s Opportunities, Our Responsibilities”, two speakers on Friday were Diane Trister Dodge on Developmentally Appropriate Care in Today’s Environment” and Mike Rutherford speaking on Lessons from Bus 57: Dealing with Dilemmas of Change”. Saturday’s keynote was Stephen Fite. Ann Wheeler and Peggy Byerly were conference co-chairs. We had our first resources for inclusion (a Petting Zoo of special needs resources) and diversity (cultural ideas and experiences) facilitated by Ruth Ann Ball and members of Natural Allies Team, Eloise Gray and Cene Marquis; site, Clarion Meridian Convention Center, Oklahoma City.

Spring 2004, Leadership Conference, Theme: “Early Childhood Today and Tomorrow” with a panel – Judy Collins, Camille Catlett, NC, Eloise Gray, Tinker AFB, Dan Haggard, NM, Adele Robinson, NAEYC Public Policy. Jill Soto, President; site, Tulsa Technology Center. Ruth Ann Ball was awarded the Friends of Children Award.

Fall 2004, Theme: “Building Strong Foundations for Children” with Joe Frost speaking on Friday on “What Adults Do To Mess Up Children’s Play and Play Environments” and Madelyn Swift speaking on Saturday on “Developing Character and Bringing Back Integrity”; Ann Wheeler and Beverly Grant, Conference Co-Chairs.

Spring, 2005, Leadership Conference, Cecelia Alvarado spoke on “Embracing Principles of Servant Leadership”. Kelly Ramsey, President; site, Southern Nazarene University, Bethany, OK.

Fall, 2005, Theme: “hand in hand – Together We Can,” with Maryann “Mar” Harmon speaking on What We Give Them Today, They Will Keep Forever”, Friday luncheon for public school teachers and assistants with Susan Illgen, 2004-05 Oklahoma Teacher of the Year. Beverly Grant and Peggy Byerly, Conference Co-Chairs; Kelly Ramsey, President; site, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, OK.

Spring, 2006, Leadership Conference, Theme: “Reflection on Connection” with Anne Roberts speaking on “Your Role in Legislative Process”. Sue Tabor, President; Peggy Byerly and Lynn Null, Conference Co-Chairs; site, Oklahoma City Community College.

Fall, 2006, Theme: “Mission Possible: Children Are Our Mission...Choose to Accept It”, Sue Tabor, President; Peggy Byerly and Lynn Null, Conference Co-Chairs; site, National Center for Employee Development ( NCED), Norman.

Spring, 2007, Leadership Conference, Theme: “From Quilts to Tapestries” with Judy Collins speaking on Early Childhood Quality Rating System and Indicators, What Do We Need to Know?”, Paulette Shreck, President; site, Oklahoma City Community College.

Fall, 2007, Theme: An Early Childhood Tapestry: Weaving the Old with the New”, Friday speaker was Libby Doggett – “Early Childhood Education: Today and Beyond” and Saturday’s

speaker was Gina Lopez and Ed Cunliff, “Cluck a doodle do” and Karen Hickman on “Becoming Brain Smart” Paulette Shreck, President; site, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond.

July 25-26, 2008, Theme: “PLAY: discovering, exploring, learning”, Friday’s speaker was Dr. Ellen Frede on “If the children play: how do I access their learning? A false dilemma of appropriate practices,” Saturday was Dorothy Sluss on “Nurturing the Love of Learning through Play”, Jan Wetsel, conference chair with Susan Illgen as co-chair; Sally Nichols Sharpe, President; site, Science Museum in Oklahoma City.

2009, Theme: “Celebrating Children: 50 Fabulous Years of Early Childhood in Oklahoma”, Stephen Fite, speaker on Saturday. Thursday, Child Watch Tour in the morning, Deborah Diffily in afternoon; Friday has Tier II workshops and Julie The Slime Lady and a Fifty Year Celebration Banquet on Friday evening with Marty Clark, Ruth Ann Ball and Kathryn Castle speaking; Tier II workshops on Saturday, Sally Nichols Sharpe, President; Susan Illgen and Paulette Shreck, Conference Co-Chairs; site, Moore Norman Technology Center, South Penn Campus, Oklahoma City.

## **Chapter VI: The Future –**

**What will the next “Fifty Years” hold?????**

**How will our history impact what happens?**

**How will technology impact how we do our work?**

**Who will be the leaders to carry on the Legacy of Legends?**

# APPENDICES

## **SACUS/SECA Representatives after SACUS reorganization:**

- Dr. Kathryn Castle, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK, 1982-84
- Sandra Nicholson, Tulsa Public Schools, 1984-86
- Dr. Elaine Wilson, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, (1986-88)
- Ruth Ann Ball, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK (1988-1990, serving as Vice-President) Health Committee Chair;
- Dr. Mona Lane, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK (1990-92)
- Nancy vonBargen, Department of Human Services, Oklahoma City (1992-94)
- Judy Franks Doeblner, State Department of Education, Oklahoma City (1995-97)
- Dr. Donna Castle Richardson, Oklahoma City University, Oklahoma City, (1998-2002 served as SECA Secretary), on the Legislative committee (1987-1991) and Pre Conference Seminar Chairperson (1985)
- Georgia Lamirand, Frances Tuttle Career Tech, Oklahoma City (2002-2006)
- Susan Carrigan, East Central State University, Ada, OK (2006-2010)

## **Business Managers of OACUS/OECA/ECAO:**

- Carolyn Ryan, Edmond, OK
- Donna Grabow, Claremore, OK
- Patricia Williams, Oklahoma City
- Samantha Schasteen, Oklahoma City
- Charlotte Wood Wilson, Oklahoma City
- Katie Woodard Young, Executive Director, Oklahoma City (9 months)
- Sandy Hunter, Administrative Assistant Oklahoma City

## **OACUS/OECA/ECAO Awards:**

## **SACUS and SECA Executive Directors**

In 1971 after serving as treasurer of SACUS for six years, Miss Harley became SACUS business manager and served in that position until her death. Jane Alexander was the long time administrative assistant and conference planner from 1974. “When I was a young professional, I remember sitting in hotel rooms at conferences, listening to Helen Harley and SACUS Presidents talk about how to move the early childhood profession forward”. Ruth Ann Ball

1978-80 - Ann Sartin was the Executive Director

1980 - Jane Alexander was Director of Administrative Services until her retirement in 1998

1989 -95 – Dr. Cathy Grace was Executive Director

1995-96 - Rose Adams, was Executive Director

1996-98 - Dr. Chrissy Leister served as Executive Director

1998 to present - Glenda Bean serves as Executive Director of SECA