Paleontologist and Educator Focused on Native Americans Honored by Alf Museum

The Alf Museum honors the work of Dr. Kent Smith with its first-ever Award for Excellence presented to a paleontologist who exhibits excellence both in original scientific research, as well as in education and outreach at the primary and secondary school (K-12) levels.

Claremont, CA (PRWEB) October 19, 2015 -- On October 23, 2015 the Raymond M. Alf Museum of Paleontology will honor Dr. Kent Smith of Oklahoma State University's Center for Health Sciences, with its first-ever Alf Award for Excellence in Paleontological Research and Education at its annual Peccary Society dinner. The award honors a paleontologist who exhibits excellence both in original scientific research, as well as in education and outreach at the primary and secondary school (K-12) levels.

Dr. Smith is a professor of anatomy at Oklahoma State University Center for Health Sciences; associate dean for the university's Office for the Advancement of American Indians in Medicine and Science; affiliated research associate, Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History; and co-founder of Native Explorers Foundation. The Native Explorers and Jr. Explorers programs creates innovative educational programs around the disciplines of anatomy and vertebrate paleontology with the goal of increasing the number of Native Americans pursuing careers as scientists, educators, and physicians.

As his colleagues attest, Dr. Smith’s “unwavering commitment to encouraging students,” has ignited a passion for paleontology and scientific inquiry in countless young minds. He empowers students to explore opportunities, try difficult research projects, and to imagine themselves as scientists. His student-empowering philosophy is akin to that of Raymond Alf.

“Our initiatives will increase the number of American Indians practicing medicine and working in the science fields through mentoring and targeted programs,” said Smith.

Dr. Smith's selection came after a committee made up of members of the Alf Museum's board of trustees, museum staff, faculty and head of The Webb Schools reviewed numerous deserving nominees. As expressed by Alf Museum board member, Terry Baganz, “Out of all the candidates, Dr. Smith stood out because he engages young people to experience the thrill of scientific discovery, which embodies our mission here at the Alf Museum.”

Dr. Kent Smith is an invaluable asset to Oklahoma State University and surrounding communities and the Alf Museum is pleased to honor him with the Raymond M. Alf Award for Excellence in Paleontological Research and Education.

The award consists of an honorarium, an award plaque, and all travel costs for the recipient to attend the Alf Museum’s Peccary Dinner on Friday, 10/23/15 to receive the award.

The Raymond M. Alf Museum of Paleontology (www.alfmuseum.org) is the only accredited museum in the country located on a high school campus, The Webb Schools. Students play an integral role in the discovery, excavation, preparation and research of their findings—often being published in scientific journals. The museum is open to the public Monday through Saturday, and over 90% of the fossils in the museum’s
collections were found by Webb Schools students. For more information, please contact the Alf Museum’s Director, Dr. Don Lofgren, at dlofgren(at)webb.org or (909) 482-5242.
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