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*Renaissance – A rebirth or renewal*

The word “renaissance” has often been used to describe the University of Oklahoma since the arrival of David L. Boren as its 13<sup>th</sup> president. It’s no coincidence then that the same term could be used to describe the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics and its leader, Joe Castiglione. Just as Boren has transformed the university community that the department is an integral part of, Castiglione, with the support of Boren and OU’s Board of Regents, has done the same thing with the athletics department, easily one of the most recognized representatives of the state’s flagship for higher education.

A department with a long tradition of excellence, there are some who would argue that the past 13 years represent the best of the best. With seven national championships and 44 conference titles produced in his tenure, it would be hard to dispute that. A place where competitive dreams come true and academic goals are the expectations, not the exceptions, has been created at OU. Through his leadership and the support of the University’s administration, there is a department-wide commitment, involving student-athletes, coaches and staff, to that standard.

The 11<sup>th</sup> director of athletics at OU, Castiglione arrived on the Sooner campus in 1998 and what he found was nothing like what you would see today. He made some big changes, some big and, in the process, created a team of administrators, coaches and support staff who have built a climate that pursues ambitious, if not, lofty goals, high standards and a commitment to ethical behavior that is second to none.

The emphasis has been and will always be on OU’s nearly 600 student-athletes who have flourished in the atmosphere, creating new levels of excellence in competition and in the classroom only to raise the bar in succeeding years. Their performances enhance the belief shared by Castiglione, the department’s staff and the university family that the best is yet to come.

Proof of the overall excellence of the program can be demonstrated by the annual Learfield Director’s Cup rankings. The Sooners broke into the top 10 for the first time in school history at the conclusion of the 2010-11 academic year. That performance came after the department finished in the top 30 in 10 of the previous 12 years, a sustained pattern of excellence not seen before in the history of one of the nation’s premier intercollegiate athletics departments.

For Castiglione, though, it’s not just about the championships and trophies. The victories that he celebrates with his Sooners include graduation rates that continue to climb, record-setting grade point averages and academic honors. The true measure of achievement for Castiglione and, by extension, the department’s coaches and staff, is measured in the success of the student-athletes in relation to the department’s mission statement ***“Inspiring champions today ... Preparing leaders for tomorrow”***

Since arriving at OU in 1998 after an outstanding administrative career at Missouri, Castiglione has insisted that daily and long-term decisions be made in a financially responsible manner. The result of that commitment has helped the department close the books in the black in each of the last 13 years, making it one of the few Division I programs which remain totally self-sustaining. His understanding of how the department fits into the University's academic mission led to a decision in June 2009 to increase the direct support provided by the department on an annual basis to \$4 million dollars. Through direct and indirect support, OU Athletics, under Castiglione's leadership, provides more than \$7 million annually to OU's Academics Budget. Facility improvement and construction has been carried out at a record pace and Castiglione takes pride to point out that those improvements have all been paid for with private money.

Castiglione is quick to give full credit to the student-athletes and coaches, the staff, OU President David L. Boren, the OU Board of Regents, the donors and the fans for the success experienced during his tenure. It was that commitment to a team approach emphasis that was one of the many qualities that the search committee recognized when they recommended Castiglione to university administration in 1998.

In recognition of the performance of OU's teams on the field and in the classroom, of the fiscal stability created during his tenure, the dramatic increases in donor giving, facility construction and renovations, and the cutting-edge programs that the department has begun during his tenure, Castiglione was named National Athletic Director of the Year in May 2009 by the *Sports Business Journal*.

That award was one of several earned by Castiglione and the department. The 2007 PRISM Award winner, presented by the School of Sports Management at the University of Massachusetts, OU was just the second Division I winner and all of the programs recognized by the selection panel were started under Castiglione's leadership with the full support of university administration.

His peers have honored him for the department's achievements as well. In October 2004, the Bobby Dodd Foundation named him Athletics Director of the Year. In 2003, he was inducted into the National Association of Collegiate Marketing Administrators Hall of Fame. In June 2001, he received the General Robert R. Neyland Athletic Director Award for lifetime achievement from the All-American Football Foundation. The National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA) named him Central Region AD of the Year in 2000.

The achievement that may bring him the most pride, though, came in May 2007 when he completed a master's of education degree from OU. To understand the need for education and lifelong learning, OU's student-athletes just have to look at their AD who started and completed his master's degree while running the department and maintaining his priorities to his family. He quickly put his experience to use as an adjunct professor in the College of Education, teaching graduate classes in Marketing, Development and Leadership in Higher Education.

Castiglione was instrumental in the athletics department's major campaign, Great Expectations: The Campaign For Sooner Sports. The largest fund-raising effort in OU athletics history included projects that impact each of OU's 21 sports and has become a national model for intercollegiate athletics. The campaign ended three years later with more than \$125 million raised and that figure has grown to

more than \$330 million since then as funds continue to be raised for facility improvements, including the recently announced \$75 million Sooner Student Housing Center, and scholarship endowments.

Hired on April 30, 1998, Castiglione joined the Sooner family after serving as athletics director at Missouri. In his 17-year career with the Tigers, Castiglione, who was named director of athletics at Missouri on Dec. 15, 1993, was credited with rebuilding sports programs, hiring outstanding coaches, implementing an innovative master plan for facilities, inspiring record-setting increases in fund-raising and balancing the budget in each of his five years as athletics director.

A 1979 Maryland graduate, Castiglione received the University's Distinguished Alumnus Award in April 2007. He began his career as the sports promotions director at Rice. He then worked a year as director of athletic fund-raising at Georgetown before being hired in 1981 at Missouri as director of communications and marketing.

His commitment to the success of student-athletes has gone beyond the Norman campus and he has served at the national and conference level. He recently was named to the NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Committee. He chairs the NCAA's Football Academic Progress Rate (APR) Working Group and is currently serving on the Gatorade Collegiate Advisory Board, the National Football Foundation and College Football Hall of Fame Board of Directors and the NCAA Bowl Licensing Committee.

He served three terms as the chair of the Big 12 Board of Athletics Directors and is a past president of both the Division I-A Athletic Directors Association and NACDA. He served a four-year term on the NCAA Championship/Competition Cabinet and the NCAA Baseball Committee and is a past member of the NCAA Football Special Events Certification Committee. He recently served on the NCAA Diversity Leadership Strategic Planning Committee and the NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Discussion Group. He is currently serving on the NCAA Working Group on Collegiate Model-Rules Committee. A former member of the Phi Delta Theta Foundation Board of Trustees, he is a highly requested speaker at annual conventions and continuing education institutes. In November 2011, he was named to the Broward County Sports Hall of Fame.

His involvement in the local community has led to service with civic clubs, churches and charities, including the United Way of Norman. Castiglione recently served his third term as OU's campus co-chair, which resulted in the highest recorded contributions ever by faculty, staff and students to the United Way of Norman's annual campaign.

A native of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Castiglione is married to the former Kristen Bartel, a 1990 graduate of the University of Missouri. They are the parents of two sons, Joseph Robert, Jr. and Jonathan Edmund.

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