



# ONEIDA MOUNTAINEER

www.oneidaschool.org

A bi-monthly newsletter of Oneida Baptist Institute

July/August 2023

## Walker Athletic Complex Update

Work is nearing completion on the **Susan and Bob Walker Athletic Complex**. The synthetic track and field plus installation of fencing, lighting and a press box with sound system are completed. Final touches in progress include finishing the Field House, installing the 450-seat bleachers, paving a driveway and completing the landscaping. The tennis courts were upgraded to include lighting and surrounding concrete sidewalks and steps to the lower paved parking area. The next phase of the Athletic Complex is repositioning the baseball and softball fields and upgrading fencing and dugouts.

A dedication ceremony for the Walker Athletic Complex is planned for August 21, 2023, our first home soccer game of the season which will be played on the new field. The Athletic Complex was made possible by a gift from Susan and Bob Walker. Bob is descended from OBI pioneers John Henry Walker, his grandfather and OBI's first college-educated teacher and Martha "Granny" Coldiron Hogg, his great-grandmother who gave the first ten acres of property to help OBI get started. □



To view more photos, visit the OBI Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/OBI.KY>

## OBI students say...



*Bryn-Lee*  
6th grade

"I had always wanted to go to a Christian school. Daily chapel services are one of my favorite parts of the school day. It helps me be a better Christian."



*Timothy*  
11th grade

"I was a day student, but my grades were kind of dropping, so they decided to put me in the dorm. It seemed like it was going to be fun, and it was! I had never heard all the different languages. It was really nice to meet some new people. The teachers are nice and respectful. If I ever need to talk to them, they're there for me."



*Paige*  
10th grade

"I was surprised that OBI students attend chapel services during school. I couldn't actually believe they would put that in school, that they would go that far to teach the students about Jesus. I really like that."

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## OBI Alumna Named Food Service Director



**Geneva Couch** (OBI '87) has been named OBI's Food Service Director. She is starting her 27th year of service in the OBI kitchen. Her mother, **Mae Helton**, was a cook at OBI for 30 years. Geneva said, "OBI has always been a part of my life. On the weekends, I'd come with Mom to work, and the girls in the dorm would take care of me and take me to church with them."

Geneva attended all four years of high school at OBI and began working in the kitchen after school as a senior. "When I first started, 'Granny' would not let me do anything! She looked at me said, 'You're going in the dish room!' Geneva laughed and continued, "Gradually, she taught me things and pulled me into cooking."

After high school, Geneva was ready to leave OBI and try other things but was led back to OBI. "God just changed me. It's not just a job; it's a love for the school and a love for the kids." She credits her connection to OBI for connecting her to faith, first as a child attending church with the dorm girls and later as a student. She said, "I look back, and I see that He had a plan from the start. Getting me to work here; it was all in His plan."

As she steps into her new role, Geneva is grateful to have worked alongside mentors like Ada Abner, Dean Abner, Cassie Mills, Archie Couch and her mother. Geneva said, "They taught me so much; I just want to continue that. I want to put the kids first, which is what they taught me. The students are the first priority." □

## Geneva's Favorite New Kitchen Features

Since the dedication of W.F. 'Bud' and Kay Underwood Hall at Homecoming in 2022, we have shown you the facility mainly from an events perspective—the large seating capacity, the beautiful windows, the outdoor fire pit. Here is spotlight on the heart of Underwood Hall—the kitchen! Thanks to the generosity of our friends, partners and the Kentucky Baptist Convention, we were able to invest in a state-of-the-art kitchen and storage space that will serve the students at OBI for many, many years. These are a few of Geneva's favorite upgrades.

### PREP

*"The best thing about this is the space! There's so much space. I love it!" Each cook enjoys separate work stations, like Anna Dowdy (OBI '19) who is prepping salad vegetables. This area has a dedicated cooler for sandwich/salad ingredients being used that day.*



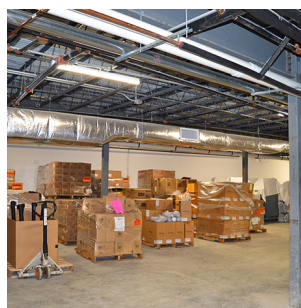
### APPLIANCES

*Old appliances were replaced with new, and a grill added to the line up! "The grill is a really good investment," Geneva said.*



### STORAGE

*From plenty of shelving for dry goods and equipment to dedicated basement space for donations and bulk deliveries, Geneva says, "You know where everything is and you don't have to hunt for things. We have tons of room downstairs, and the trucks can unload down there."*



### FREEZERS

*Besides overall space, Geneva said, "My favorite part is the freezers!" There are three stand-up and two walk-in freezers upstairs plus four walk-in freezers in the basement. The kitchen is equipped with an elevator to move items upstairs.*



## OBI Alumni Achievements

Meet two OBI alumni who have chosen careers in service to their community and nation. **Elizabeth (Hensley) Smith**, OBI Class of 2005, graduated from the Kentucky State Police Academy in November, 2022, and is serving in eastern Kentucky. **Taylor Cochran**, OBI Class of 2014, was promoted to Sergeant in the U.S. Army in September, 2022 and is stationed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Both agreed to answer a few questions about their journeys since OBI.



*Trooper Smith with her husband, Josh, and three sons after the Academy graduation ceremony.*

### What led you to this profession?

**Smith:** “I wanted to do more for the community and to help people. The Kentucky State Police do so much outreach and beneficial programs for Kentucky, and I wanted to be a part of that.”

**Cochran:** “During college I was working on a dual degree in Political Science and International Affairs but was not sure what I wanted to do next. I wanted to serve ... but not in politics. The Army offered a job that seemed like the perfect combination of service, mental challenges, and the chance to tackle global-scale problems.”

### What was one of the biggest challenges in your training and how did you persevere?

**Smith:** “Being away from my husband and three kids was the hardest part of being at the academy. Seeing my family on the weekends helped, [and] I wanted to show them you don’t quit something you want so badly.”

**Cochran:** “When obstacle courses, long ruck marches or extended field exercises test my dedication to my job, I have frequently found myself relying on prayer to persevere plus a quite literal interpretation of Philippians 4:13.”

### What are some OBI experiences that helped to prepare you for this journey?

**Smith:** “While I was at OBI, the sports were free to play, no tryouts, and you always had coaches that were your teachers and felt like family. Playing sports at OBI and having ... that confidence throughout adulthood has affected my decisions in a positive way.”

**Cochran:** “In the Army, I’ve encountered people from all over the country and from all walks of life; much like my time at OBI. That experience gave me the skills to build and maintain relationships with a variety of people.”

### How does your faith help you at your job?

**Smith:** “Having faith is what keeps me brave and able to do the job knowing I have God on my side.”

**Cochran:** “It is an understatement to say that my life in the Army is unpredictable. I’ve learned to rely on my faith in the Lord to have control over my life and to guide my path.”

### What did you do between high school and starting this career?

**Smith:** “After leaving OBI, I played college volleyball and tennis and then continued my passion for fitness and became a Personal Trainer and Group Fitness Instructor as well as working at the local hospital in medical records.”



*SGT Cochran following her promotion ceremony at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky.*

**Cochran:** “After graduating from OBI, I attended Eastern Kentucky University where I had the opportunity to travel to Italy and Ireland to perform with university music ensembles and to Washington D.C. and New Orleans for political science-related projects. I graduated in 2018 and taught high school government for one year at OBI while waiting to join the Army.”

### What advice would you have for a current student at OBI?

**Smith:** “I would tell them that you can literally do anything you put your mind to; it’s all in your head whether you can or you can’t. If you want it bad enough, no matter the circumstances you can make it happen.”

**Cochran:** “Take advantage of every opportunity you have at OBI. The Army has this saying that in order to be successful all you have to do is show up at the right place, at the right time, in the right uniform, with the right attitude. Show up both physically and mentally, do the right thing with the right attitude, and you’ll be surprised how much what you do, learn, and accomplish at OBI can set you up for success later.” □

Are you an OBI graduate who would like to share your story? Email: [alumni@oneidaschool.org](mailto:alumni@oneidaschool.org)



**ONEIDA BAPTIST INSTITUTE**  
 PO BOX 67  
 ONEIDA KENTUCKY 40972-0067

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## Homecoming 2023

*Celebrating past, present and future!*



Join us on October 21, 2023 to honor our past accomplishments while we celebrate our newest achievements! Class of 1973—it's your 50th anniversary! Call your classmates and make a plan to meet up at Homecoming!

You can start the day at the Hymn Sing at Oneida Baptist Church before moving to lunch in W.F. "Bud" and Kay Underwood Hall. Be sure to stay for the Homecoming program where we honor all of the 10-year anniversary classes and introduce the newest inductee into the Athletic Hall of Fame. Come ready to answer OBI history questions for a chance to win a prize!



*Ed Roberts ('68) was the 2022 OBI Athletic Hall of Fame inductee. He is pictured walking in front of Underwood Hall with his wife, JoAnn.*



## In Memoriam

Reuben Hacker, OBI alumnus  
 Martha Sears, former student  
 Mary Francis Combs, Class of 1964  
 Ronald Wilson, Class of 1972



**1973 Senior Class Officers (l.-r.):**  
**Billy Walton, Secretary**  
**Lonnie Spurlock, President**  
**Bobby Napier, Vice President**  
**Darrell Chambers, Student Council Representative**



## Athletic Hall of Fame Nominations

The purpose of the OBI Athletic Hall of Fame is to recognize and honor our outstanding coaches and athletes. Nominations made be submitted by anyone. The inductees will be chosen by OBI's Athletic Hall of Fame Committee.

Athletes who are nominated must have been outstanding in his/her sport(s) while a student at OBI and must have left OBI in good standing. Coaches nominated must have been a varsity head coach at OBI for at least three years. *For the full eligibility rules, please email Jamie Middleton, OBI A.D., using the address below.*

Please submit nominations via email to:  
[jamie.middleton@oneidaschool.org](mailto:jamie.middleton@oneidaschool.org)



By mail: OBI-ATTN A.D., PO Box 67, Oneida, KY 40972

### All nominations must include:

- Name of nominee & sport(s) participated in or coached
  - Decade of participation in OBI sports
- Explanation to include nominee's awards, records set, etc.
- The nominator's full name, address and phone number