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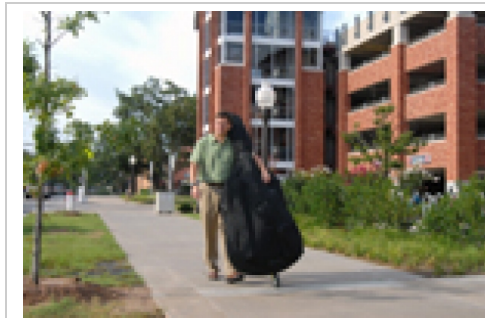
Oklahoma Gazette

News

Talented OU recruiter Stoops has never been to Sooner football game

Andrew Gilman
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TWO STOOPS
STOOPS ON BASS
OHIO NATIVE
'ARE YOU RELATED?'

It's a good thing Anthony Stoops carries I.D.

It's a better thing that he carries a sense of humor. After all, it's hard being a

Stoops at OU when your first name isn't Bob. It's even harder to order a pizza.

TWO STOOPS

Anthony Stoops is "Dr. Stoops" around the music department at OU. He's 35 years old and has been playing the bass since "Jaws" hit the big screen in 1975.

"That was what got me started," he said. "I guess you could say that was the moment in the sun for us bass players."

Stoops is an artist and teacher of bass, and is the string area chair at the OU School of Music. A winner of international prizes, he's played hundreds of concerts all over the world, even winning the International Society of Bassists International Solo Competition.

But this is Oklahoma, and most folks around here consider the state song to be classical music. Luckily, this Stoops has no problem putting things in perspective.

"I guess that award is kind of like the Heisman Trophy of the bass," the assistant professor said. "Maybe not that prestigious, but close. Like the Doak Walker."

Easygoing, referencing a range of topics stretching from Bach to Bradford, Stoops references sports like the Doak Walker Award (which goes annually to college football's best running back) as quickly and fluidly as he knows his scales. He's like Bob Stoops without the visor. Better yet, he's like Bob Stoops with a bow " that is, if Bob Stoops spent his mornings recruiting, his days teaching and coaching, and his evenings playing in a pick-up football league.

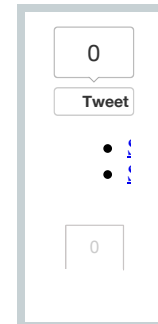
Anthony Stoops is all of these things: a top recruiter, a tireless worker and a peak-level performer during the day, who also spends time not just teaching, but playing. He performs in the Oklahoma City Philharmonic along with his wife, Emily, a cellist.

If he were a coach at OU, he'd be a coordinator. If he were a player at OU, he'd be the subject of a Lee Corso ESPN feature. Call it "A Symphony with a Twist."

One thing, however: This Stoops has never been to an OU football game.

STOOPS ON BASS

"The bass is called the big cello by a lot of people," Stoops said. "If you've seen the orchestra, it's the guys in the back row. I guess that's because we cause so much trouble, and they don't want to deal with us."



Not that trouble and bass players usually go hand in hand " or have ever been put together in the same sentence " but Stoops seems to be the unconventional classic(al) rocker. He plays in a group called the Bad Boyz of Bass and makes sure to make fun of himself.

"We have this reputation of being stuffy, classical music guys," he said. "We try to make fun of ourselves and joke around. I guess people expect us to show up everywhere wearing a tux."

And just like most people expect Bob Stoops to show up in slacks and a sideline demeanor, ready for game day every day, this Stoops definitely does the same.

He requires more than four hours of practice per day for his students " which is more than Bob Stoops can require of his players on a daily basis " and expects a Big 12-type performance every time they touch the strings.

"I want to someday play in a professional symphony," said Talon Davis, an OU senior from Edmond who majors in double bass. "You could say Dr. Stoops is like a coach. I transferred from Oklahoma City University last year, and it was because I wanted to get to a certain level. And the first few weeks at OU, because of him, I knew I was in the right place."

Norman seems to fit Stoops, too.

OHIO NATIVE

The 35-year-old grew up in Columbus, Ohio (home of Ohio State), and went on to graduate from the University of Iowa in 1997, getting a bachelor's degree in music. He went to graduate school at the University of Michigan before landing in Norman, basically making stops only in football-crazed hotbeds.

He even spent a spell at Bowling Green State University in Ohio while football coach Urban Meyer was there. Meyer is now the head coach at Florida, which beat OU 24-14 last January in the BCS National Championship Game.

Stoops started playing professionally his sophomore year in college. He has played in the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, which he described as kind of the junior varsity to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. He has also listed himself as the "sixth man" of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's bass section. He played more than 300 concerts with them, all while teaching at Bowling Green, racking up an impressive 80,000 miles on his car in three years.

"I think it was then when I realized that the idea of being able to go to one place to go to work was appealing," he said.

And naturally, considering where he's made his home, he deems himself a pretty big football fan.

"We joke about his name every once in awhile," said Jesse Kaminski, an OU junior from Le Claire, Iowa. "He's really laid-back about it. I met him in high school at a music camp that he and his wife ran, and basically went to OU because of him."

Call it a successful recruiting job by Stoops. Kaminski, along with Davis, made the national finals for the American String Teachers Association's national solo competition.

"The requirements I have might be intense, but I try to approach it a lighthearted way," Stoops said. "We joke around a lot. We have fun, and we work hard. I expect the students to do the work, and they do it."

'ARE YOU RELATED?'

Practice is tough. Having the name Stoops could be tougher. People generally ask him to repeat himself over the phone. There's the double take in person. There are the knowing glances.

"Usually, the conversation is the same," he said. "They always say, 'Huh, are you related?' And we go through the whole thing. Over the phone is the worst. When we first moved, we got it all the time. The bank didn't believe me that I wasn't related."

Bob Stoops, who was born Robert Anthony Stoops, probably doesn't have to deal with the same problems.

However, Anthony Stoops is hoping for one more double take " maybe a situation where the two names do get mixed-up.

"My retirement plan is to have the payroll office at OU slip up one month and send me Bob's check," Stoops said. "Maybe if I bribed them with a ticket to my next show, it would work."

"Andrew Gilman