

Billionaire Oilman Dies at 91

Billionaire oilman T. Boone Pickens, known in sports circles as a mega-booster to Oklahoma State athletics, died Wednesday at his Dallas home. He was 91.

Pickens reportedly donated about \$500 million to Oklahoma State, where he graduated from in 1951 after beginning his college career on a basketball scholarship to Texas A&M. He transferred to what was known then as Oklahoma A&M after losing his scholarship following an elbow injury.

Much in the same way as Nike founder Phil Knight at Oregon, Pickens and his money helped raise a football program. Oklahoma State renamed its football stadium Boone Pickens Stadium in the fall of 2003.

His signature donation to Oklahoma State athletics was a \$165 million gift in 2006 – with about \$120 million earmarked for football facilities – to help launch a wave of football success for the Cowboys and coach Mike Gundy, who was just beginning his second season.

Starting in 2008, the Cowboys have appeared in the Associated Press Top 25 in every year, haven't had a losing record and has posted six seasons with at least 10 victories. The Cowboys won the Big 12 title in 2011, then beat Stanford in the Fiesta Bowl to finish 12-1 and No. 3 in the AP poll.

"Other than my wife, the greatest blessing in my life has been Boone Pickens," OSU athletic director Mike Holder said in 2018. "(Oklahoma State) wouldn't look anything like we do today if not for Boone Pickens."

Pickens suffered the first of what would be several strokes in December 2016.