

Saturday, Nov. 17, is another anniversary for Oklahoma State University students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends to observe with sadness. A year ago - 10 months after commemorating the 10-year anniversary of a plane crash that killed 10 men associated with the Oklahoma State University basketball program - the unthinkable happened again. Saturday marks the one-year anniversary of the plane crash that killed women's basketball coach Kurt Budke and assistant Miranda Serna, as well as former state Sen. Olin Branstetter and his wife, Paula.

Olin Branstetter was piloting the single-engine Piper PA-28-180 when it crashed that Thursday afternoon near Perryville, Ark., about 45 miles west of Little Rock, on a recruiting trip.

The event and those who died will be remembered Saturday during the OSU football game. Players will wear a "4" on their helmets and a moment of silence

will be observed before the 2:30 p.m. kickoff. The library bells will also chime

four times at 4:10 p.m., the time of the crash. On Sunday, admission to

the 2 p.m. Cowgirl basketball game is free and people can sign a Remember

the 4 banner at Gallagher-Iba Arena. Suzanne Burks, director of university counseling services at

OSU, said commemorating anniversaries of tragic events can be cathartic for people. "Tragedy and grief affects us all in different ways," Burks said, and many are still dealing

with the losses. "There's certainly a few who still grieve and mourn. For the

families, it's not about moving on, it's about finding a new normal." A preliminary

concept for a permanent memorial is being reviewed, but a location on campus or

at Gallagher-Iba Arena hasn't been determined yet, according to university officials. In January 2001,

a plane crash killed 10 people associated with the men's basketball team, including two

players, on the way back to Stillwater following a game in Colorado. "Most campuses

never go through one, let alone two. I remember after the first I said,

'I can never do this again,' " said Burks, who was once again called

on to help a year ago. The people closest to those who died showed

remarkable strength in the days and weeks following the crash, Burks said. "That was

a brave, brave team of great young women," she said, referring to the women's basketball team. She praised Jim Littell, who took over the head coaching duties. "He coached those girls to a great season," she said. "He had that crash over his head the entire season. He and Budke were best friends. He was dealing with his own grief and helping the girls. He's a phenomenal man." The crash in 2011 and the crash in 2001 have differences in circumstances. Last year's crash involved a private plane piloted by two boosters carrying two coaches on a recruiting trip. The chartered plane in 2001 crashed on the way back from a conference game, with two student athletes among the victims. The National Transportation Safety Board is still investigating the 2011 crash, and findings are expected to be released in early 2013, said NTSB spokesman Terry Williams. After the crash in 2001, a task force was created to overhaul the university's student-athlete travel policy. That policy didn't apply to the trip Budke and Serna took last year because it didn't include student-athletes, said Gary Shutt, director of communications at OSU. A new task force made up of university representatives, a regent, alumni and aviation experts was formed to further evaluate and review OSU's travel policies. Any changes could be presented to the OSU Board of Regents this month, Shutt said. Reactions, and responses, to the two crashes weren't the same either, Burks said. "They were very different crashes," she said. "It impacted the student body more 11 years ago when two students died." Even if someone didn't know one of the victims personally, the loss can still make an impact. "If you've lost someone in the same manner or lost someone recently, they feel it more intensely," Burks said. "Many students this age haven't experienced loss like this. When young people die in such an abrupt manner, it really makes them think about it." Remember the 4 memorial events Saturday Members of the OSU Cowboy Football team will wear a "4" on their helmets in honor of the four killed. A moment of silence will also be observed prior to the OSU vs. Texas Tech

game scheduled to kick-off at 2:30 p.m. at Boone Pickens Stadium. Edmon Low Library's

chimes will ring four times at 4:10 p.m. Sunday Admission is free to the

OSU Cowgirls vs. Weber State basketball game set to tip-off at 2 p.m. "4"

stickers will be handed out to all in attendance. A "Remember the 4" banner

will be available to sign. Victims of the OSU plane crash Kurt Budke Age:

50 Notable: Native of Salina, Kan. ... Coached OSU women's basketball team from 2005-11

... Won two national junior college championships at Trinity Valley Community College ... Compiled

423-104 overall record, including 99-68 at OSU and 273-31 at the junior college level

(his .898 winning percentage is a national juco record) ... Youngest coach inducted into

NJCAA Hall of Fame. Miranda Serna Age: 36 Notable: Native of Guadalupita, N.M. ...

Won two state championships and went 46-0 in two seasons as a player at

Eldorado High School in Albuquerque ... Earned freshman of the year and All-America honors

at Central Arizona College ... played for Budke at Trinity Valley and won the

NJCAA national championship in 1996 ... Finished her college career at Houston ... Worked

for Budke at Trinity Valley, Louisiana Tech and OSU. Olin Branstetter Age: 82 Notable:

Korean War veteran, serving in the U.S. Army Reserves and the Oklahoma National Guard

... 1952 OSU graduate with a degree in agriculture ... State senator from Ponca

City from 1987-91 ... A licensed flight instructor ... Helped establish the Olin D.

Branstetter Memorial Scholarship at OSU. Paula Branstetter Age: 79 Notable: Licensed private pilot ...

Helped establish the Paula G. Branstetter Aviation Scholarship at OSU ... First woman to

fly over the magnetic North Pole in a single engine aircraft ... Flew with

her husband and son over the North Pole in the 1980s ... Also helped

fly cancer patients from Ponca City to their appointments elsewhere. Sara Plummer 918-581-8465 sara.plummer@tu

SUBHEAD: Oklahoma State will observe another anniversary of a tragedy this weekend. Original Print

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