

Trey Ardese by Charlie Clark

Choctaw Veteran Named Distinguished Alumni

DURANT, Okla. – A noted member of the Choctaw Nation was among those recognized at this year's Southeastern Oklahoma State University's Distinguished Alumni Banquet. The event, which took place on Oct. 12 in the Visual and Performing Arts Center, honored alumni and retired faculty and ushered in a new alumni board.

A member of the of the Class of 1989, retired U.S. Marine Corps Col. Tray Ardese earned his bachelor's degree in history at SOSU, where he also captained the football team. "No one gets here without the help of many others" Ardese stated as he thanked coaches and mentors.

Ardese later earned a master's of Strategic Studies at the United States Army War College. As a marine, he became a pilot and amassed more than 3,000 hours of flight time and 257 combat missions in the air. He was wounded in an intense fire fight and received the Purple Heart. His many decorations also include the Bronze Star with "V" for Valor in Combat.

Ardese began life in Krebs. His time in the military took him to more than 50 countries around the world. He now resides with his family on the farm of his childhood. He is currently director of government and international affairs for Magpul Industries and serves as a Christian evangelist along with volunteering his time with Honored American Veterans Afield and Outdoor Network International.

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Photo by Charles Clark / Choctaw Nation

Retired U.S. Marine Corps Col. Tray Ardesse accepts this year's Southeastern Oklahoma State University's Distinguished Alumni Award.

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Medals/Honors

Four (4) Sea Service Deployment Ribbons, Arctic Service Ribbons, NATO Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary, Armed Forces Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Humanitarian Medal, Navy & Marine Corps Achievement Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Navy (& Marine Corps Commendation Medal w/Combat V for Valor, 4 Medals for Combat Flight.