

STATE LEADERS DISCUSS PUBLIC SERVICE, THEIR INSPIRATIONS

Tough questions come from mouths of babes

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As the five panelists emerged, members of the crowd at the Oklahoma Heritage Association grew silent. They looked down at their papers and readied themselves to ask some of the hard questions elected officials and public servants are seldom asked.

"Mayor Hammons," a Casady fourth-grader read from her torn, wide-ruled sheet. "Is it hard to go to college and be a mayor?"

"Well, kinda," 19-year-old Muskogee Mayor


John Tyler Hammons
The 19-year-old Muskogee mayor

John Tyler Hammons replied, explaining how he has to balance time between his education and serving his community.

The Oklahoma Heritage

Association's Oklahoma Institute was actually launching a new education series for adults Tuesday. But as spokeswoman Erin Page explained, officials thought it would be fun to kick off the event at the Gaylord-Pickens Oklahoma Heritage Museum by reaching out to the leaders of tomorrow.

The adult seminar took place Tuesday afternoon at Oklahoma City University with live broadcasts at three other universities. But the fourth-graders from Rose Union Elementary and Casady got first crack at Hammons, Tulsa

Mayor Kathy Taylor, Oklahoma City Thunder owner Clayton I. Bennett, and former U.S. Rep. Mickey Edwards.

The panelists talked about the people who inspired them to enter public service, the sacrifices one has to make to be a public servant and why those sacrifices are worth it.

"(While I was) growing up, my mom and my dad always told me that you should try to help people," Hammons told students.

For information on future panel discussions and events, go online to www.oklahomaheritage.com.