

Yolanda Odenyo, Excellence in and out of the classroom

Contributed by Lindy Wiggins

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Odenyo will graduate in May from the College of Human Environmental Sciences with a bachelor's degree in Human Development and Family Science. In June, she will begin pursuing her master's degree in International Studies at OSU.

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Between breaking OSU women's soccer records, leading her team to its first ever Big 12 conference title and being named Big 12 Player of the Year, Odenyo still found time to be an OSU Outstanding Senior with a 3.77 GPA. She also serves as a leader in student organizations such as Collegiate Outreach and the Student Athletic Advisory Committee (SAAC).

Odenyo's CHES professors recognized her not only for excellence in and out of the classroom, but also for her shining personality.

"Her [Odenyo] excellent performance in sports and the classroom was complemented by her impeccable integrity, humility, and quiet confidence," said HDFS Associate Professor Tammy Henderson. "She is gracious toward her peers and always respectful toward professors."

For the 2008-2009 school year, Odenyo received multiple academic honors including OSU Female Student Athlete of the Year, NCAA/Adidas 1st Team Academic All-American, OSU Alumni Association Senior of Significance and an NCAA Post Graduate Scholarship. She was also a candidate for the Lowe's Senior CLASS Award.

"She [Odenyo] is a great role model who exhibits confidence and professionalism," said HDFS professor Beulah Hirschlein.

Odenyo was nominated for the Big 12 Community Service Champion award and earned the Big 12/Chick-Fil-A Community Service award in 2008. She is an Outreach Ministry volunteer at The NET Church of Oklahoma City and co-taught a women's bible study on campus during Fall 2008. Odenyo has also been involved in Red Cross blood drives,

YMCA volunteer opportunities, and the annual Harvest Carnival.

Aside from the numerous hours she has spent as a volunteer, one of Odenyo's most notable projects is the Score for Sasja Fund. Odenyo organized this scholarship in honor of her sister who died in an automobile accident in 2003. The funds help underprivileged children attend high school in Kenya.

With so much going on, Odenyo says the hardest part of being a student-athlete is managing her time.

"Finding a balance between athletics, academics, working and having a social life is a key to success," she said.

When asked for any advice to give to incoming student-athletes, Odenyo encouraged them to enjoy their four years at OSU.

"Utilize the services that are available to you," she said. "Everything you need to succeed is provided for you. Dream big and work hard."