

Dr. Kathryn GARDNER-VANDY

Class of 2000

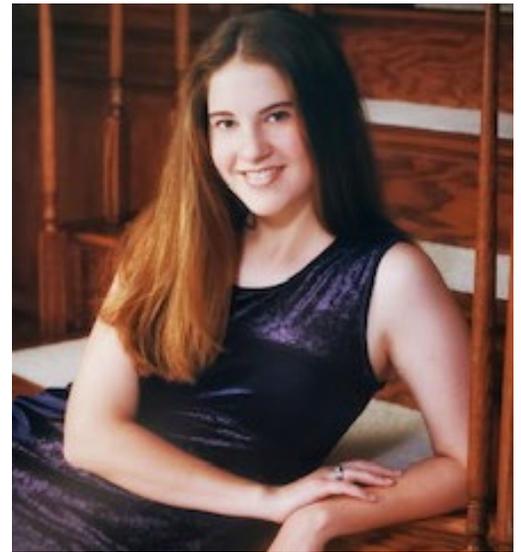
Dr. Kat Gardner-Vandy (aka Katie Gardner) is a BA Great Graduate who takes flight and shoots for the Moon! Born in Tulsa and reared in Broken Arrow, Gardner-Vandy was active in concert band and the Pride of Broken Arrow marching band throughout her time at Broken Arrow High School. An All-State Band oboist, she played oboe and English Horn solos throughout the 1999 Pride show “Festival Español,” resulting in her being touted as the “woman with ice water in her veins” by the band directors.

When at South Intermediate High School, AP History teacher Paul Shaddox remarked that Gardner-Vandy wrote and thought like a scientist. It is no surprise that Gardner-Vandy moved to Norman, OK after graduating from Broken Arrow in the Top 3% of the Class of 2000 to obtain a BS in Geology summa cum laude from the University of Oklahoma in 2005. While at OU, she participated in several NASA internships and was awarded the prestigious national Goldwater Scholarship for undergraduate research. She also served in leadership of the Honors Student Association and the Sigma Gamma Epsilon earth science honor society and was a member of the PE-ET Top 10 Seniors Honor

Society. In addition to being named Big Woman on Campus twice, Gardner-Vandy completed her FAA Private Pilot certification right before graduation.

Gardner-Vandy then moved to Tucson, AZ to obtain a PhD in Planetary Sciences from the University of Arizona in 2012. While becoming an expert in the study of meteorites, she was awarded the Alfred P. Sloan Indigenous Graduate Partnership Fellowship and the NASA Earth and Space Science Fellowship. Upon completing her doctorate, she did a postdoctoral fellowship at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of Natural History where she had the honor of working directly with the Smithsonian’s collection of meteorites.

Now, Gardner-Vandy is an Assistant Professor of Aviation and Space at Oklahoma State University where she teaches and studies her two favorite topics: space and flight. As a proud citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, she is the Principal Investigator of a \$4M NASA Science Activation program called Native Earth | Native Sky. She manages a team of colleagues at OSU who work collaboratively with three Native nations in OK to



co-create earth-sky STEM curriculum for middle school grades in an effort to engage more Native American youth in earth and aerospace careers. She has a passion for the development of a diverse and inclusive STEM workforce in Oklahoma. Most recently, Gardner-Vandy was named to the 40 Under 40 2022 list of The National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development.

Gardner-Vandy is grateful to be living in Tulsa, OK with her husband and their four children.