At 6’1” tall, Kirsten Tilleman often stood above basketball opponents and classmates alike. As a starting forward on the Oregon State University women’s basketball team from 2008 to 2010, she helped the Beavers win more than 30 games. As an OSU Honors College student graduating summa cum laude with a bachelor’s degree in natural resources, Tilleman stood taller than most of her classmates academically as well. But perhaps a greater achievement is that while juggling collegiate sports, scholastics, social activities, and work in Jeff McDonnell’s Hillslope and Watershed Hydrology Lab (FERM), Tilleman managed to complete her bachelor’s degree in just three years.

How did she do it? “Academics has always come first for me and Oregon State has been incredibly conducive to that,” Tilleman says. “But I would not have been able to do this alone. I am incredibly grateful for my three years here and all of the support I have received from the College of Forestry, the Athletics Department, the Honors College, the university at large, and especially my family.” And what was her motivation? “Not all degrees hold the same meaning; I wanted to be able to call myself an alumna of Oregon State,” she says.

Tilleman came to OSU from Bozeman, Montana, where she was an elite athlete and exceptional student. During her high school years, Tilleman competed in soccer, track, and basketball, winning the Gatorade State Player of the Year award for Montana in both soccer and basketball for 2007. After visiting campus as a senior in high school, she chose OSU because of the friendly vibe and the opportunity OSU would provide in developing herself as a student, an athlete, and a person.

Initially part of exploratory studies, Tilleman was intrigued by the options available through the Natural Resources Program. “I’m fascinated by the interaction between people and the environment,” she says. “The Human Dimensions option in the NR program described my interest perfectly. I didn’t hesitate to declare it and I have never looked back.” Tilleman explored this concept in greater depth through her thesis, “Our Natural Family: A study of young children and how we connect with nature.” The thesis, written as a requirement of the OSU Honors College, was inspired both by her love of nature and the influence her mother had on Tilleman’s education. Tilleman believes that environmental education begins...
at an early age. “That is where we start creating our own views and how we relate to our environment,” she says.

The College of Forestry was proud to honor Tilleman with both the 2011 Paul & Neva Dunn Outstanding Senior Award and the Natural Resources Program Outstanding Student Award. “Kirsten is not only a conscientious and exemplary student, she is personable, articulate, and friendly, and quick to offer assistance to other students in academic as well as extracurricular matters,” said Dean Hal Salwasser at the 2011 awards ceremony in May. “She shows a level of maturity rarely seen at the undergraduate level and she is an excellent representative of the College of Forestry!”

Tilleman has begun graduate studies at the Bren School of Environmental Science & Management at University of California, Santa Barbara, where she is continuing not just her education but also her last two years of collegiate eligibility playing basketball. She is currently planning on blending two specializations for her graduate program of study—Conservation Planning and Water Resources Management—in a way that focuses on the information people can gain about land use from watersheds and the greater hydrologic cycle. “For example, we are quickly losing much of the world’s forests to issues like land use change and lack of land tenure,” Tilleman says. “Much of this is preventable, but there are huge barriers to overcome. We must use the forests and other undeveloped landscapes we have left wisely.”

2011 College of Forestry Awards

**Keynote Speaker** Andrea Thorpe, NR, ’98

**Outstanding Alumni Awards for 2011**
Steve Kelley, FP, ’79
Paige Fischer, MA/MS, ’03; PhD, ’07
Lee Miller, FE, ’80

**Paul & Neva Dunn Outstanding Senior Award**
Kirsten Tilleman, NR

**Harold Bowerman Leadership Awards**
Brad Hamel, FM, and Ryan Bronson, FOM

**Dean’s Award for Outstanding Service**
Jesse Narog, FE

**Kelly Axe Award** Justin Thomas, FE

**Pack Essay Award**
Danielle White, WST, for Buffalo Road
Chet Miller, FE, for The Cry of Timber!

**Photo of the Year Oregon Gardens**
Ashley Flint, FE

**XI Sigma Pi “Julie Kliewer” Excellence in Mentoring Award** Kama Luukinen (FERM)

**Aufderheide Excellence in Teaching Award**
Robin Rose (FERM)

**Outstanding Student Awards, by program**
Forest Engineering: Jesse Narog
Forest Management: Mathew Hemshorn
Forest Operations Management: Ryan Bronson
Natural Resources: Kirsten Tilleman
Tourism & Outdoor: Leadership Kelly Pence
Wood Science & Technology: Jeffery Vaughn

**2011 Phi Kappa Phi Initiation**
Initiates: Garrett Duyck (NR); Tasha Livingstone (FM); Jake Thompson (FOM); Larae Guillory (FM); Jeremie Jones (NR Distance); Thomas Lord (FE/CE); Sally Murray (NR); Mike Shettles (FM); Sean Ellis (NR Distance); Kirsten Tilleman (NR); and Thomas Maness, FERM Department Head.

Melissa Stone (FE/CE) delivered the undergraduate student address and was introduced by Claire Rogan (FE/CE). Kirsten Tilleman received a graduate fellowship from the local chapter and was the single OSU candidate advanced into competition for a national fellowship.