



## OKLAHOMA TEACHERS RETIREMENT SYSTEM

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**Oklahoma City** – The Oklahoma Teachers Retirement System has been named a finalist in the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Public Funds Awards for Excellence sponsored by Money Management Intelligence, a New York-based service providing information, news, trends and research regarding institutional asset management. OTRS was nominated in the Mid-sized Plan category, for plans with between \$1 billion and \$10 billion in assets. MMI will announce the winner at its annual Public Pension Funds Awards for Excellence later this year.

OTRS was nominated for the award for bucking the trend of peer plans that increased allocations to fixed income. The System's aggressive investments in master limited partnerships and core real estate demonstrate how OTRS is a contrarian investor.

“Our investment maxim at OTRS is to either be early into an investment or be contrary,” said OTRS Executive Director James Wilbanks, “We like to get into things before the rest of the market sees the value in them; or get into an area with good long term value when everyone else is trying to leave because of short-run issues. We make a point of being different in order to achieve our long-run total return target, net of fees.”

Wilbanks says OTRS board members felt the timing was right to invest in real estate funds, which had lost 40% of their value from their peak in 2007.

In 2010, OTRS started looking at master limited partnerships and invested \$466 million in the area in 2011, representing 5.3% of the total portfolio. According to MMI officials, this is an area other public plans are only beginning to evaluate.

OTRS officials say they are honored to be among the top mid-sized pension plans in the country nominated for this award. System officials say they are unsure of who nominated the fund; they only know the submission came from someone in the money management industry. The winner will be announced in March of this year.

The OTRS is a state agency that administers retirement assets and provides income security through a monthly retirement benefit payable to its clients, who are educators and employees of Oklahoma's public education institutions and agencies.

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**For more information contact:**  
Becky Wilson, (405) 521-4745