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## Art & Athletics – Painting Emotion: Desmond Mason

Artesian Hotel pays tribute to the past  
and celebrates the future

Steve Haggard, Man with a Passion

The Buttram Estate: Antique Vases in  
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assistant : Joni Yeager  
editor : Heide Brandes  
editorial assistant : Hans Weurflein  
videographer : Jeremy Gossett  
director of photography : Michael Downes  
web site developer : Patrick Moore with Set Sail Media  
web site developer : cxxcxx  
illustration : Rosemary Burke  
graphic design : Wendy Mills

**Advertising Sales**

Becky Grantham  
Kim McAlister

**Photographers**

Justin Avera  
Jeremy Gossett  
Donny Ho  
Fran Kozakowski  
Hugh Scott, Jr.  
Zach Seat  
Keith Walker

**Advertising Consultants**

Bob and Ann Barnes  
Dave Amis  
Tina Layman

**Contributors**

cover story : Heide Brandes  
fashion : Linda Miller  
art : Joy Reed Belt  
people : Peggy Gandy  
entertainment : Heide Brandes  
book reviews : Malena Lott  
sports : Don Brewington  
social issues : Robbie Robertson  
community : Lauren Wright  
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## *Publisher's Note*



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As of October 16, 2013, the ion Oklahoma website can report the following:

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Don Swift

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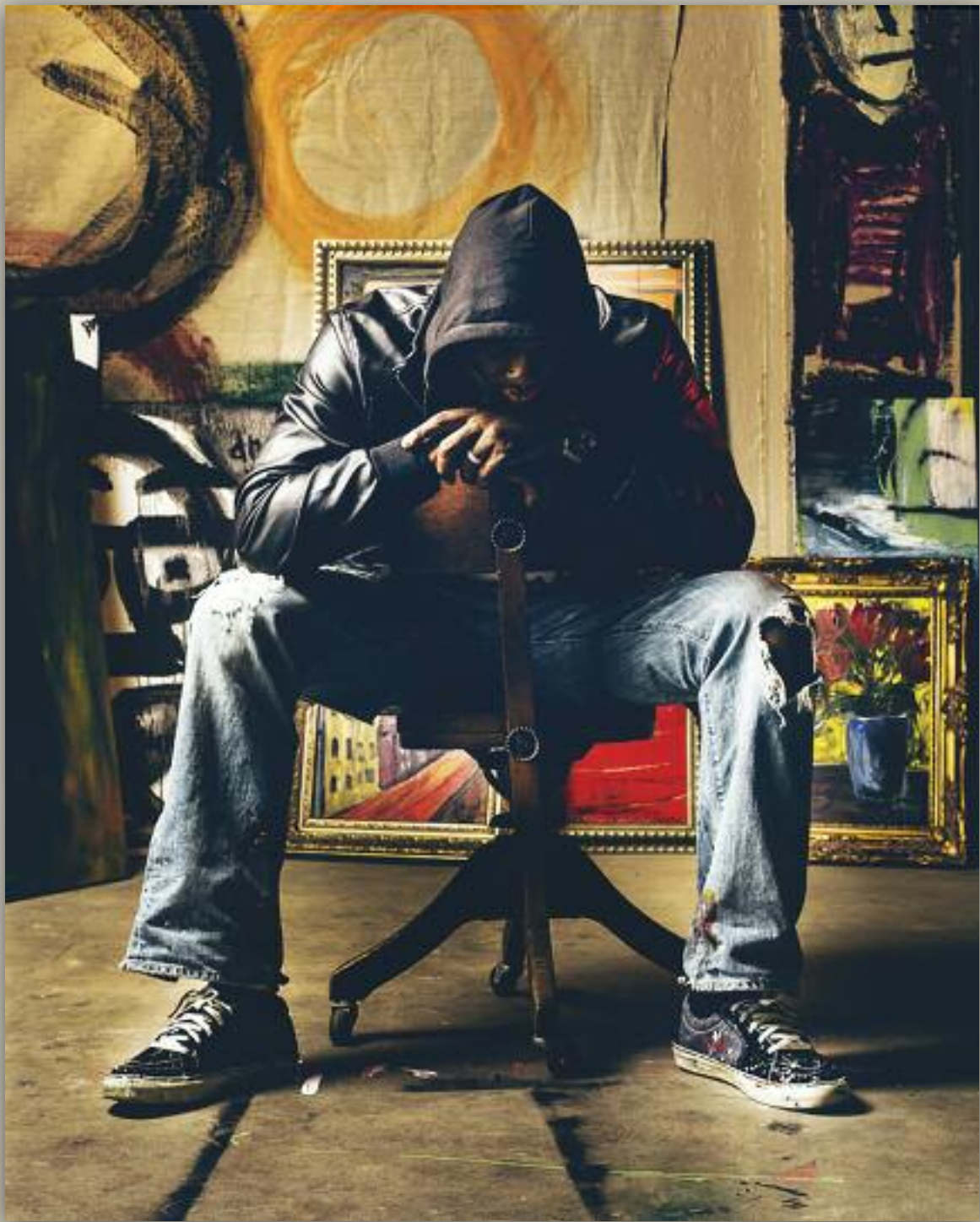
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# ART & ATHLETICS — PAINTING EMOTION

Desmond Mason keeps on pushing the limits with art,  
creativity in Oklahoma City

By Heide Brandes

photos by Josh Welch, Carol Shanahan and Travis Clancey

**T**he floors are covered in thick swirls of paint splatter, but the walls are a horizon of emotion.

Desmond Mason, former NBA basketball player and artist, blends into the riot of color and shapes and drawings and sketches and graffiti that make up his Oklahoma City Midtown studio. He pulls up a chair and invites me to sit by him.

I'd been chasing Mason for weeks for an interview about his art passion. He's a hard man to catch, and for good reason. In the next year, he's booked at art shows from the Bahamas to Los Angeles to Chicago and to the renowned Art Basel in Miami. His paintings, some of which are works in progress in Oklahoma City, are in high demand throughout the world; in fact, he's more in demand now than when he was slam-dunking for the Seattle SuperSonics or the Oklahoma City Thunder basketball teams.

He also takes up space in the studio, which is nestled in the same shopping area as McNellies, Prairie Thunder Bakery and Irma's Burger Shack. When I walk in, his presence is undeniable. It's not just that he's amazingly tall (and I'm short); it's just that he radiates big personality.

Besides spending 10 years in professional basketball, Mason is a career artist. While violence and drugs waged around him in his childhood neighborhood in Waxahachie, Texas, little Desmond was drawing. He drew on skateboards, on books, on folders and with friends. He doesn't know where the urge to create art came from. His parents weren't artists, but his friends were.



Now, Mason has finished hundreds of pieces that have been purchased by fans around the world, is featured in art shows throughout the country and is the newest member of the Oklahoma Arts Council Board. Art started him; art now completes him.



*Jungle Dancer (2012)*

## **BUDDING TALENT**

“I don’t know where I got it from,” Mason says, lounging back on the scruffy chair in his studio. “My parents didn’t have an art background, so I guess I picked it up from school and from my friends.”

From an early age, Mason drew on anything he could find. He and his friends decorated their own skateboards.

“I just picked up skateboarding again. People think I’m insane, but I couldn’t do it when I was in the NBA because it was too dangerous,” he said. “I drew around my friends, and they all drew. I started taking art classes in school when I was 12. Then I moved on to ceramics, pottery and sculpting.”

At the time, young Mason showed proficiency with his hands. In ceramics, those big hands molded bowls and pots, and Mason found ceramics and sculpture to be an easy medium for him.

“Through high school, I made a huge jump in art technique,” he said. “I was good at ceramics. What made me change was that a buddy of mine

made little mini-sculptures, but he sketched them out beforehand. So, I took up sketching – mostly GI Joes and He-Man. We drew shoes and shoe logos and all that.”

High school also unveiled Mason’s natural athletic ability. He played every sport in high school, but found that the creative release of creating art complimented his physical skill.



He found an escape from the pressures of sports and the violence and drugs of his neighborhood through artwork.

After graduating, Mason was accepted to Oklahoma State University, and he moved to Oklahoma.

## SPLIT DECISION

“I wanted to be an accountant,” says the 6’5” Mason. “I was good with numbers. They made sense to me. I could see it in my head, figure it all out. But once I started taking classes, it was too boring.”

Being different has always been Mason’s big secret. Even in high school, he joined the punked out long-haired kids in art class while wearing his sports jerseys. His friends today are more artists than former basketball teammates.

Finding no challenge in accounting, Mason switched his major to Studio Art with the goal of becoming an art teacher.

“Those four years turned my art around,” Mason said. “I was exposed to different styles of art, to architecture from around the world and to art history and theory. But, in college, all the art projects were still life and group projects. I did learn about shading, color theory and art history too.”

Mason’s hardest project to this day was an exercise at OSU. A professor placed a wadded, crinkled up piece of paper on a box and shined a light on it. The shadows, creases and light play on that ball of simple paper remains the hardest thing Mason has ever had to portray in art yet.

But basketball was a part of his life as well. In his senior year, Mason

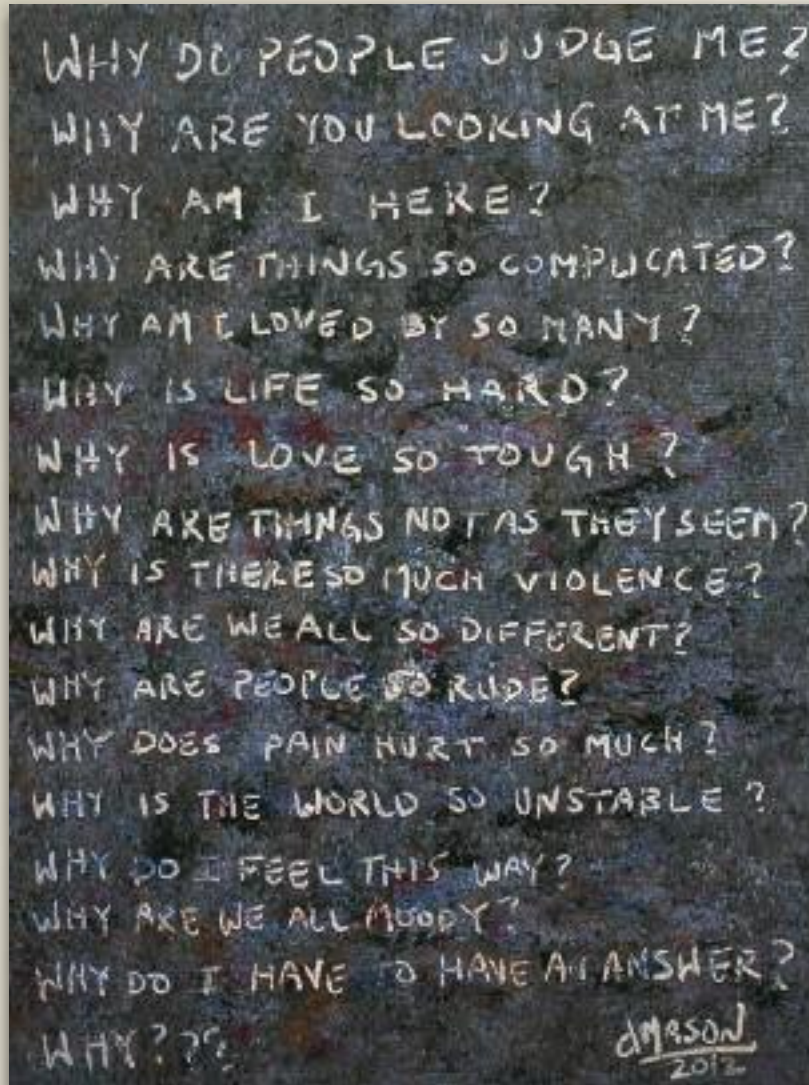




developed as a player, and when he graduated, he signed up with an agent. Halfway through that summer, he knew he would be drafted.

In 2000, Mason was drafted by the Seattle SuperSonics. In 2001, he proved himself by becoming the first Seattle player in that franchise's history to win the NBA Slam Dunk Contest.

He also found his true passion in art while proving himself on the courts.



*Why (2012)*

## PLAY TIME ART WORK

While Mason was drafted for the NBA right out of college, his art took a back seat to the demands of the court. He was already falling out of the realism style he was taught, and moving to Seattle to play for the SuperSonics opened his eyes to a new art world.

"For half of that first season, I couldn't produce anything that was legit," he said. "But then it was also the first time I decided my work would change, that I would paint emotion."



Mason's wife had enrolled in an art history class, and she was required to watch a film about legendary artist Jackson Pollock. Mason watched it with her, and his life transformed.

"It was like someone hit a light switch. I was gone," he said. "I wanted to paint like that. We got rolls of canvas and started slinging paint, and that was it for me. His style was so erratic. It was everything I wanted, except without the alcoholism, the mistresses and the car wrecks."

Switching to an abstract style was a challenge for Mason. He'd been trained in realism, so learning to paint with emotion was a new journey.

"People think it's easy to do abstract, but it's hard to get rid of the techniques you've learned," he said. "But there is a process to it too. I listen to music, drink a glass of wine, sit and think. I look at the piece, walk away, go back to it."

Even as his basketball career advanced, Mason was an artsy guy. His friends were all artsy people. Many of his current friends are artsy. However, he's quick to point out that many athletes have great artistic talent — but they may not know it yet.

## AFTER BASKETBALL

Mason spent 10 years in the NBA before he chose Oklahoma City as his home and the place where his art would bloom. He and his wife reached the decision while living in Sacramento.

He played for the Seattle SuperSonics, the New Orleans Hornets, the Milwaukee Bucks, the Oklahoma City Thunder and the Sacramento Kings. Oklahoma City seemed like the place to be.

"Oklahoma City fit for us. We had friends here and it was a place where we felt our business would thrive," Mason said. "We wanted someplace that had values and morals in the forefront. So we took a road trip from Sacramento to Portland, made calls, loaded up everything we could and made a roadtrip from Portland to Oklahoma City."

Mason and his wife opened Barre 3, a fitness business, on Classen Curve in Oklahoma City right away. Meanwhile, Mason was looking for studio space to paint in. A friend told him about a contest for free storefront space in Oklahoma City's budding Midtown District.



"In Oklahoma City, there were no open studios, so I presented what I wanted to do, which was have an open studio that nursed creativity," said Mason. "They loved the idea, and I won the contest. I remember yelling 'I got a studio!'"

Mason's studio in Midtown was only a big open space with large front windows. It's a working studio, so visitation is by appointment only.

Still, people walk by all the time and rap on the glass as he works.

"I can work in a fishbowl," he said. "I keep the door locked, but people knock on the windows all the time. But, you learn to focus while in a fishbowl. I did that playing in the NBA all the time. You think all the noise and cheering in the stands are distracting, but it's not. You never even hear it. You're that focused."

In 2004, he founded the Desmond Mason Art Show, which supports a variety of charitable organizations. In Oklahoma City, more than 900 people attended last year's event.

"Right now, I want to continue to grow my work, to push to be different," he said. "Everything is starting to take

off, and people who are coming to my shows want me to be free too."

The future remains brightly colored for the artist. Not only does he have shows booked from the Bahamas to Miami, but he is also considering new ventures like a T-shirt design company and a possible skateboard design company. Putting art on clothing fascinates him.

"Push, push, push," Mason said. "You have to keep on pushing it." ■



*Shades of Blues, Greens, Reds (2011)*  
photo by Josh Welch Photography

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**Country, Rock, Foodie.**

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## Autumn's Splendor Reflected In Landscapes At JRB Art at The Elms October Landscape Exhibition

**In October, JRB Art at The Elms** Gallery will showcase landscape paintings by B.J. White and landscape tapestries by Michi Susan.

White's work is focused on the exploration of the complexity of issues involved in natural habitats, land development, and our use of the environment. Starting with only a thin layer of color, White transmits emotionally and politically charged ideas, such as urban sprawl, to canvas. Her "Habitat" series not only explores the demise on one habitat for the construction of another, it examines the value man places on our environment while paying attention to the multiple layering of color, image, and texture which she interrupts with repetitive shapes or marks



*B.J. White*

that represent the staccato rhythm of life.

An Oklahoma native, White was awarded an MBA from the University of Oklahoma.

Michi Susan's colorful mixed media "Landscape Tapestries" are mounted on canvas. Each tapestry is a blend of the delicate, the bold, and the detailed all combined in an extraordinary way. Using exotic papers and materials from around the world as well as found objects found locally, her work captures the mind and the eye of the viewer.

Susan was born in Tokyo, Japan, but has made Oklahoma her home for over a



*Michi Susan*





Two pieces by BJ White: *Permafrost w-Title*(above, cropped) and *Green Field Habitat Series* (left).



Michi Susan's *Wind Song 610* (above) and *Kimono Landscape 401* (left).



Michi Susan's *Bird Song*





Holly Wilson sculptures: *It's a Thin Line (Side View)*, *Should I Stay or Should I Go* and *On A Limb*. Below: *Portrait of Paper Wings Front* by Holly Wilson.

quarter of a century. Educated at Japan's Women's University and Hosei University, Susan is well known internationally for both her creation of art and her support of the arts and artists.



Riley, who has been a popular artist and art educator for over 50 years, has had his work featured at the "Firebird" ballet at Kennedy Center in Washington and last year designed a mask for Lady GaGa which was worn in

JOINING WHITE AND SUSAN IN OCTOBER IS HOLLY WILSON'S solo exhibition of intimate bronze, mixed-media, and encaustic relief sculpture which are inspired by her Delaware and Cherokee heritage. Her cast of characters can stand alone or speak to each other, intertwining fragments of nature, culture, and family.

Wilson has a BFA in Ceramics from the Kansas City Art Institute, a MA in Ceramics and an MFA in Sculpture from the Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas.

For the 10th consecutive year, JRB Art at The Elms will also feature masks by leather artist, Patrick Riley. In this year's show, "Silver Faces," Riley demonstrates a double layered effect incorporating leather and silver lame in his sculptural masks.



*Star Mask* by Patrick Riley.

her performance at the Ford Center in Oklahoma JRB Art at The Elms presents a diverse roster of emerging, established, and internationally exhibited artists who create a wide range of media including: paintings, drawings, sculpture, ceramics, glass, fine crafts, functional objects, fiber art and photographs.

This 8,000 square foot award-winning gallery in Oklahoma City's Paseo Arts District changes its exhibits monthly in a gracious environment that fosters a dialogue between

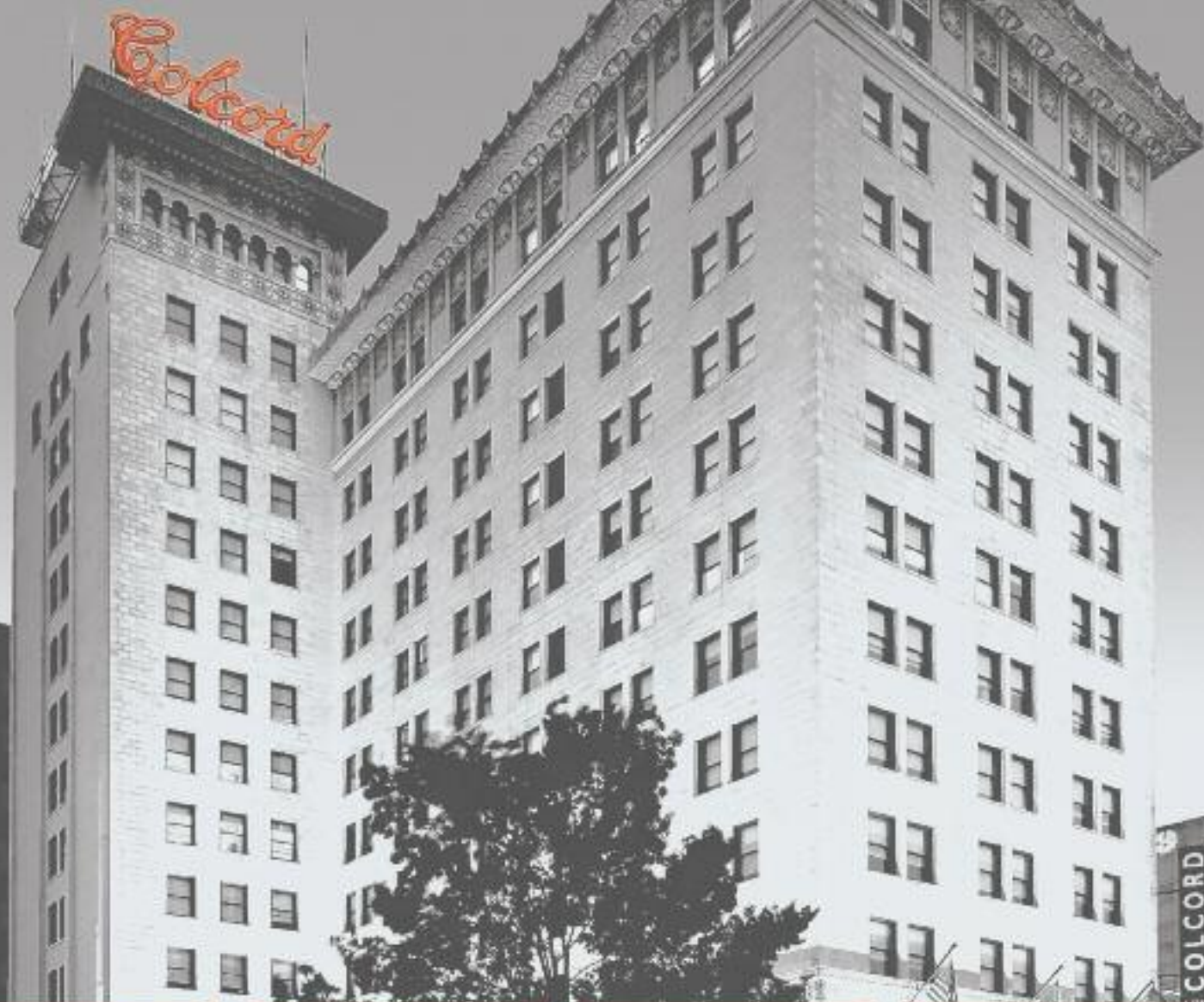
the arts and the larger community while providing quality art for first time buyers as well as individual, corporate and museum collections.

JRB Art at The Elms, the former home of Nan Sheets which was built in 1920, is located at 2810 North Walker. ■



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# **The Buttram Estate: Antique Vases In Storage Found To Be Worth Millions**

by Don Swift

**T**he year was 1923. The date was Aug. 16, and Oklahoman Frank Buttram sent a Western Union telegram from the Powell oilfield in east Texas nearby Corsicana to his wife, Merle Newby Buttram and it read, “Drilled in this afternoon, made seven hundred barrels first hour FEEL RELIEVED.”

Frank, in his telegram, was referring to one of the largest discoveries at that time of oil in the southwest during the 1920's. The headline in the local newspaper read “Fortune Favors Oklahoma City Men When Tide of Oil Comes to Surface.”

On September 15, 1923, The Dallas Morning News stated, “Frank Buttram, oil operator of Oklahoma City, is endeavoring to drill a well each day for 15 days in Powell, Texas field.” “Buttram and Associates have settled oil production of 30,000 barrels daily.”

This series of events were such a rewarding success story, it would change the lives of Frank and Merle Buttram forever.

During the mid 1920's the Buttrams decided they would travel the world, and on several of their trips to Europe, they bought furniture and art pieces for a new home they wanted to build in far northwest Oklahoma City.







*Above: The Buttram mansion, built in 1926, was the first Oklahoma City residence with a swimming pool.  
Right: a portrait of Frank Buttram, who originally purchased the Imperial vases in the late 1920s.*

In 1926, Frank and Merle Buttram purchased an 86-acre site at 7316 Nichols Road and hired a San Antonio architectural firm Ayers and Ayres to design and build a 20,285 square foot Italianate mansion with 30 formal and informal rooms.

The Buttram mansion is believed to have been the first air conditioned private residence in Oklahoma.

Also, the Buttram mansion was known for its professional landscaping, botanical gardens, and Oklahoma's City's first residence with a swimming pool and dressing room. The Buttram mansion was completed by the late 1930's.

Frank and Merle Buttram became two of Oklahoma City's leading philanthropists during the later years of their lives. Frank Buttram died in 1966 and his wife, Merle in 1971. They had a large family, and Dorsey Buttram was one of five children and the person asked to work and manage the family energy companies and handle family estate matters.

In 1975, and after Merle's death, the Buttram mansion was sold and all the furnishings and art pieces were distributed to the children.

Randy and Preston Buttram are the grandsons of Frank and Merle Buttram and sons of Dorsey and Phyllis Buttram. After the death of Dorsey and Phyllis Buttram, the sons became the keepers of the family records and owners of their parent's estate.

Now is when the story really becomes intriguing.

Randy and Preston made the decision to contact their longtime friend Jody Kerr regarding the guidance for conducting an estate sale and auction of the family property in storage.







*The vases were prominently displayed below a grand staircase*







After reviewing the family property, Jody Kerr recommended Scott Shuford from the Dallas Auction Gallery. After Shuford made a visit to Oklahoma City to review the family property, he became interested in two 4-foot porcelain vases with oil paintings of the Dutch master painters on the exterior of the vases.

These vases were purchased by Frank and Merle during one of their trips to Europe for their home they were planning to build in the late 1920's.

With more research, Shuford learned these vases were made in the 1800's at the Imperial Porcelain Factory then owned by the Russian Czar Nicholas I. The czar's wife was passionate about "porcelain art" and enjoyed creating in that time period what they called "Russian Imperial Palace Vases" as gifts for visiting dignitaries and Russian royal family members.

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**FEATURING -** Pair of Russian Imperial Porcelain Palace vases with the blue factory mark of Nicholas I and dated 1833, 54" H. Recently discovered in an estate in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma with documents indicating a purchase in Munich, Germany in July of 1928. Purchased by one of the richest independent oil men of the early 20th century, Frank Buttram, and have remained in the same family for the past 85 years. Personally inspected and authenticated by Dr. Ekaterina Khmel'nitskaya, Curator of the Russian Porcelain Collection in the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.

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Shuford then contacted the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg, Russia and spoke with Ektatarina Khmelnitskaya, the museum chief porcelain curator about these vases. Ektatarina flew from St. Petersburg to Dallas and previewed the vases.

Ektatarina was charged with the authentication of the vases and later verified that the Hermitage Museum records show that one of the original Dutch master paintings from the Hermitage Museum was sent in 1832 to the Imperial Porcelain Factory to be reproduced on one of the vases.







*The mansion's rooms were filled with paintings, tapestries and collectibles.*





*Right: The broken vase handle required months for a complete restoration.*

*Below: the handle pieces after being restored by Mr Yuri Hanin of the Art Group in Cliffside Park, New Jersey.*



The records for the painting on the other vase could not be found nor artist identified. The discovery of these vases is a real event, says Ektatarina.

Ektatarina made the recommendation to ship the broken handles from the vases to a restoration expert in New Jersey for a complete restoration which took several months. A Mr. Yuri Hanin from the Art Group in Cliffside Park New Jersey was selected to completely restore the handles to the vases for an estimated price of \$18,000.

In April 2013, the vases were publicized for auction by the Dallas Auction Gallery. Immediately, eight interested bidders came forward for the vases



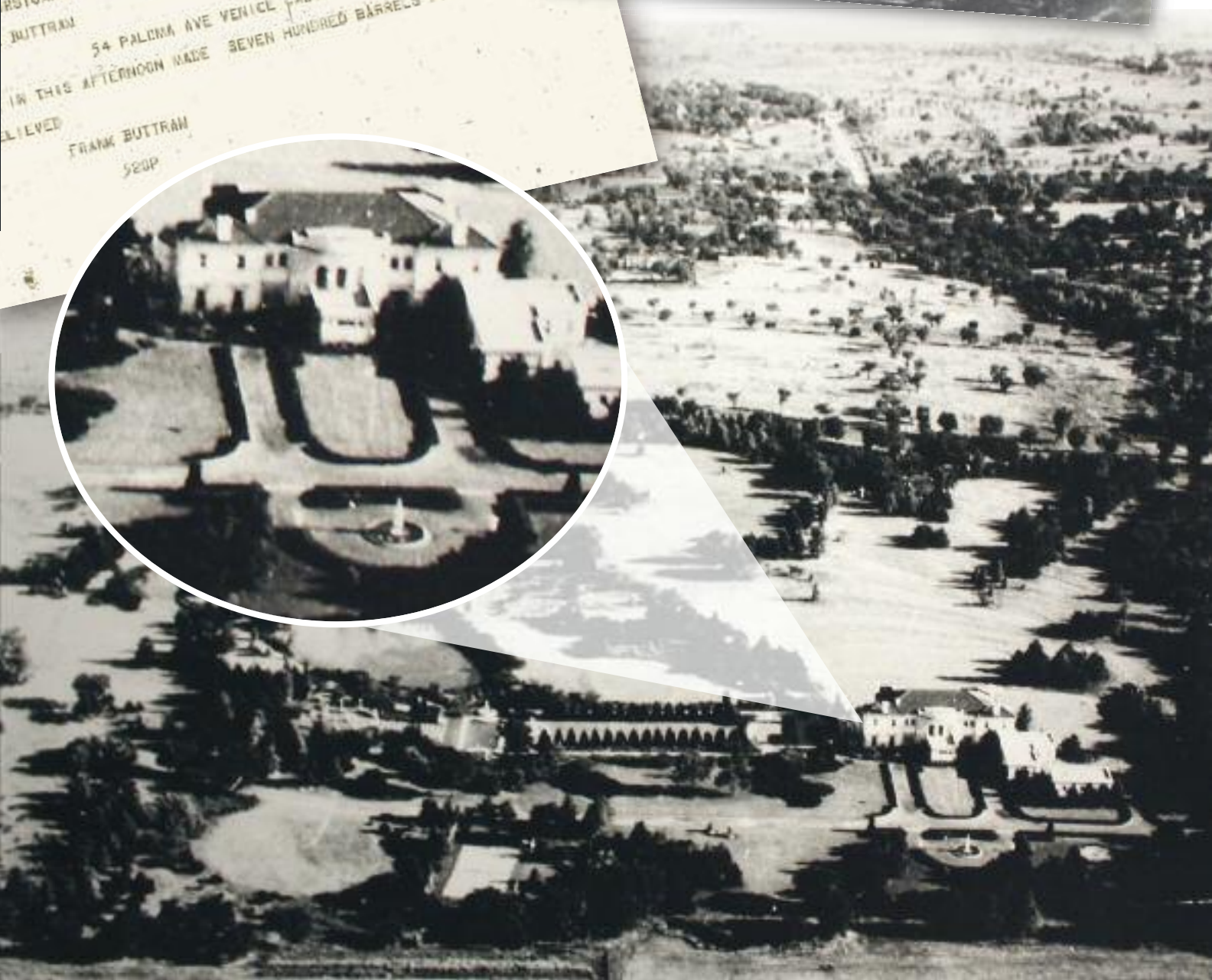
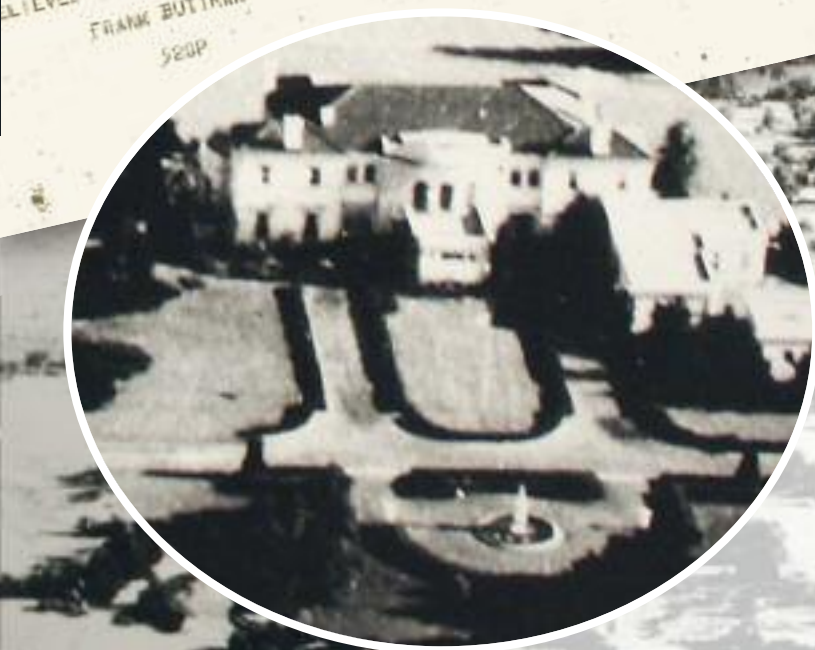
Right: August 16, 1923, Powell Oil Field Corsicana, Texas, produced 700 barrels in the first 2 hours.

Below: Frank Buttram's telegram sent when the well came in.

Bottom: An aerial photo of the Buttram estate.



CORSICANA TEXAS 653P AUG 16 1923  
BUTTRAM  
54 PALOMA AVE VENICE CALIF  
IN THIS AFTERNOON MADE SEVEN HUNDRED BARRELS FIRST HOUR  
BELIEVED  
FRANK BUTTRAM  
520P







*Row One (Seated): Jerry Newby, William Buttram, Louis Ray, Frank Buttram, Errett R Newby.  
Row Two (Standing): Edna Newby, Louetta Buttram, Jessie Newby Ray, Merle Buttram, Lola Newby*

and one of the bidders sent their art dealer representative to Dallas from London for inspection of the vases.

With this much bidder interest in advance of the auction, Shuford recommended to Randy and Preston that he conduct a private sale before the auction date.

During late April 2013, Randy and Preston Buttram accepted a \$2.7 million dollar offer for the Russian Imperial Palace Vases, originally created in the 1800's, purchased in

the 1920's and kept in storage boxes for years, from one of the eight buyers in a private confidential sale.

In 1990, the Buttram mansion was named to the Register of Historic Homes.

Today the current owners of the Buttram Mansion are Jerry and Carleen Burger. ■

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*Massive columns and marble floors welcome guests as they enter the lobby in the Artesian Hotel in Sulphur.*



Photos provided

## WELCOME BACK, ARTESIAN HOTEL

**New hotel pays tribute to the past  
and celebrates the future**

By Linda Miller

**M**ore than 50 years after it burned to the ground, the Artesian Hotel in Sulphur has come back to life just as grand, glorious and welcoming as ever.

Modern furnishings and amenities mix with architecture and details that honor the original stately hotel that served as a southern Oklahoma tourist destination for movie stars, a president and governors for more than half a century.

Anyone questioning whether the new Artesian would measure up need only step inside for a gracious greeting and a glimpse of the lavish appointments.

Palatial columns, gleaming marble floors and tin ceilings hint at the past. Water, rock and wood are recurring themes, a nod not only to the scenic area but to the artesian well that was discovered on the property.

Dozens of mineral springs once dotted Sulphur. The water was thought to possess healing powers so locals and visitors drank, bottled and bathed in it. Mineral baths aren't available today, but the hotel's large indoor bathhouse promises a relaxing and rejuvenating experience.

Owned and operated by the Chickasaw Nation, the 81-room hotel took three years to build. "It was a labor of love to get





*The exterior of the new Artesian Hotel in Sulphur reflects the original hotel's design.*

this open,” said Nick Starns, hotel general manager.

Along with an inviting and lavish lobby, second, third and fourth guest floors have large waiting areas with chairs and sofas, the perfect place to read, relax or reflect. Chickasaw artwork hangs on the walls and wide hallways make the hotel seem even larger than it is. The Artesian features nine room types and various architectural designs, Starns said. Corner rooms with inviting window seats, large windows and expansive views became popular requests almost immediately.

Hotel amenities aren’t lacking either. They include the Springs Restaurant, banquet and meeting rooms, retail shops, fitness center, indoor and outdoor swimming pool, the Fountain Club Lounge, the

Sole’renity Spa and Little Soles spa and special event area.

There’s also a casino for anyone who want to try their luck at the slots or tables.

For those who prefer to shop or eat, there’s the Bedré Cafe, Chickasaw Tobacco Store, Essentials, Luxe boutique with men’s and women’s fashion, Pinkitzel Cupcakes & Candy, the Woodland Emporium and Smith’s Okie Twister Co. showcasing locally made products.

The Chickasaw Visitor Center will open soon across the street from the hotel.

Located near the entrance to scenic Chickasaw National Recreation Area and on the same corner as



the original hotel, the new Artesian opened with fanfare and anticipation in early August.

While the hotel looks much like the original in scale and design, including the distinctive corner turrets, it's a state-of-the-art facility with gentle reminders of the past. Each room has historic photographs of the area, reflecting a time when mineral springs, natural surroundings and a grand old hotel welcomed thousands of visitors.

Starns said from the outside, the tie back to the original hotel is apparent, but the new Artesian has a

contemporary and luxurious feel inside,

Guests often express surprise that such a beautiful hotel is 12 miles east of I-35 in a small town and no large city in sight.

"People coming from south Texas, Oklahoma City and Dallas can't believe this is here," he said. "People are shocked and amazed."

The Artesian was built in 1906 and became a hot spot for visitors and celebrities. Guests included prohibitionist Carrie Nation, President William Howard Taft, actors John Wayne and Roy Rogers, and







*Above: The guest room "Hollywood Suite" at the Artesian.*

*Opposite: The bathhouse at the Artesian.*

Oklahoma Gov. William "Alfalfa Bill" Murray. It also served as summer home for Oklahoma's first governor Charles Haskell.

The hotel boasted one of the largest, most ornate hotel lobbies in this part of the U.S., complete with marble floors, mosaic tile and massive columns. It became the place to go in Oklahoma for a red carpet stay and a mineral bath.

The Artesian burned in 1962 and a more modern Artesian Motor Hotel was built in 1965. It was purchased seven years later by the Chickasaw Nation and renamed Chickasaw Motor Inn. In its place is the

new hotel.

Once again, the luxurious Artesian is poised to become a popular destination, a beautiful complement to the other area attractions including the Chickasaw Cultural Center, Lake of the Arbuckles, Lake Murray, Turner Falls and the Chickasaw National Recreation Area. ■

*Once again, the  
luxurious Artesian is  
poised to become a  
popular destination.*







## ACTOR DANNY GLOVER VISITS OKLAHOMA CITY

by Joe Price Fallin



**A**ctor and Producer Danny Glover visited Oklahoma City recently to see the devastation from the May severe storms and visit with people who were victims of the tornados.

He also attended a private fundraiser for these same victims which was held at Gallardia Country Club. At the event, he spoke about the domestic release of his recent film, "I Want To Be A Soldier." This critically-acclaimed drama was filmed in Madrid, Spain and released in Europe at the Cannes Film Festival to rave reviews. The film received the Ghandi Award and was featured at the Rome Film Festival.

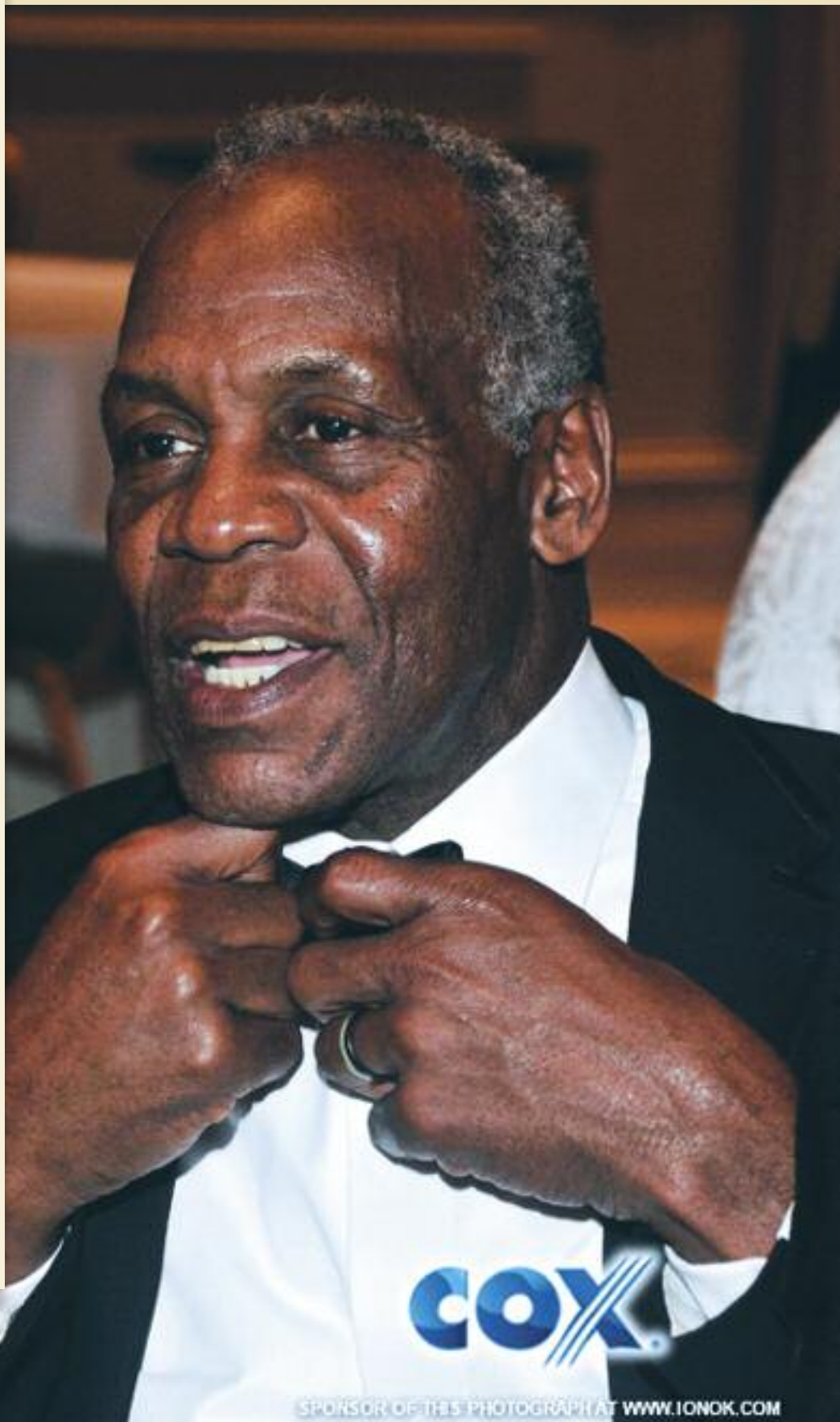
He was joined by a fellow cast member in the film, Cassandra Gava, who is a Filipino-American beauty who started her career opposite Arnold Swarnegger in "Conan the Barbarian."

Annette Colbert-Latham from Oklahoma City knew Glover personally and met him at the Cannes Film Festival in 2012 and arranged for his visit to Oklahoma. She regularly attends the Cannes Film Festival and was co-producer in the credits of this most recent film. "I Want To Be A Soldier" was released in Spanish in 2011 and later dubbed into English. It will be released this fall to American audiences.

Danny spent a day in the heat traveling from Oklahoma City to Moore and on to Shawnee, continually meeting and talking with families and attempting to uplift the spirits of Oklahoma tornado victims. He met with several reporters during his visit both in the field and at the fundraiser itself.

Danny Glover is a legend on the silver screen, starring in such films as "Lonesome Dove," "Lethal Weapons 1,2,3 and 4" opposite Mel Gibson, "Predator 2," "Shooter," "The Royal Tenebaums," "Switchback," "Silverado" and many others.

Annette Colbert-Latham and Danny's co-star actress Gava are working on future plans to bring film celebrities such as Al Pacino, Andy Garcia and other actors to visit the state in support of the Oklahoma Disasters Fund. ■





# Book Buzz

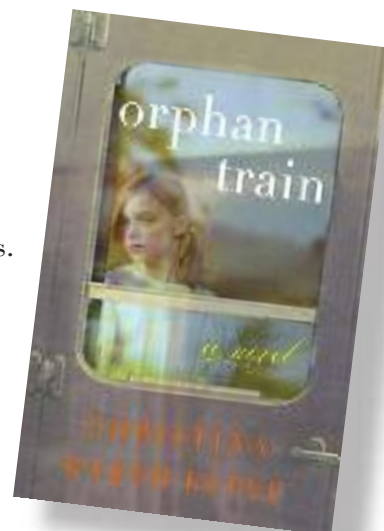
by Malena Lott



## The *Orphan Train* Spotlights a Dark History in the U.S.

While *Orphan Train* by Christina Baker Kline is a novel, it's based on the circumstances of thousands of children who rode the orphan trains carrying mostly immigrants from the east coast to rural areas in the Midwest in the 1800s and early 1900s.

Not only had I not heard of this (not something they'd teach you in school), but I was immediately emotionally invested in the dual story lines of a modern-day foster child, Molly, and the rich widow Vivian with whom she was helping clean out the attic for community service.



The book is told in alternating points of view between the two girls – Molly is in present day and Vivian is from the past as a child being passed from foster home to foster home.

Beautifully written and immensely engaging, *Orphan Train* is a must-read for fans of historical fiction and women's fiction, though it certainly fits in the literary category, too.



I'd heard great buzz on Kate Atkinson's *Life After Life*, and without having read a single review, picked it up and was blown away by her prose and intrigued by the imaginative storyline. It's a literary circular tale of Ursula, a girl born and

re-born into the same family, changing her life in big ways and small due to an innate knowing that leads her to do things that sometimes get her into trouble.

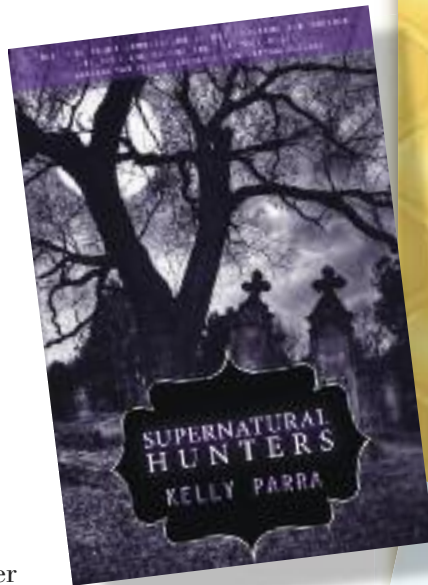
While the book is long (and heavy if you read it in hardback), if you love Atkinson's writing, you can plow through the book despite its length or deja vu aspect you will surely feel as some chapters seem eerily close to the ones that came before it with the exception of ever-so-slight changes.

A story of the impact of family and fate brings new life into the reincarnation theme. A lesser writer could likely not have done it justice. My recommendation is not to read any reviews online, which are full of spoilers. I likely would not have bothered reading the book if I had read those first. The true joy is in the discovery.

### Buzz Round Up:

*BuzzTeen* continues to add more Mythology High tales in the series with the addition of the Mirror/Mirror trilogy by Diana Rodriguez Wallach with three separate Narcissus, Nemesis short stories that will come together in one trilogy in December. October is full of frightful fun with the release of Kelly Parra's *Supernatural Hunters*, Jenny Peterson's *Creature Discomforts* in the Descendants series and Aaron Smith's zombie novel, *Chicago Fell First*.

Malena Lott is an author and the executive editor at Buzz Books USA. Her latest women's fiction novel, *Family Charms*, was published in summer 2013. Connect with her at [malenalott.com](http://malenalott.com) and [buzzbooksusa.com](http://buzzbooksusa.com) and on Facebook at [facebook.com/malenalottbooks](https://facebook.com/malenalottbooks)





## Technology For The Golden Years

**T**he digital age can help make a stressful lifestyle simpler by providing instant communication to keep in touch with family and friends.

Studies show that Americans between ages 55 and 64 represent the fastest growing group of smartphone owners. In fact, the market is shifting to cater to the baby boomers who are interested in becoming technologically savvy.

So the number of apps, devices, smart accessories and smartphones geared toward the older generation is increasing.

Through using these apps devices and smart accessories, there are many opportunities to include and educate older generations in the digital age.

By helping them understand the newest technology on the market, families will be able to keep in touch more often and in new ways, like sending pictures instantly and videos on-the-go.

Although life seems to be getting busier, communication is getting easier. Many grandparents are getting involved in the digital age by using email, texting and accessing Facebook, YouTube and Skype.

There are options available to the baby boomer generation to learn about how technology can make their life easier. Verizon Wireless recently offered a free workshop at Epworth Villa, a local Edmond retirement center.

The workshop provided an opportunity for the residents to come and learn more about their smartphones or tablets. Verizon Wireless provided attendees with helpful apps and easy-to-use technology. From apps to devices Verizon Wireless discussed several helpful tech tips with the residents of Epworth Villa.

IF YOU HAVE A LOVED ONE who lives on their own and still runs their own errands, encourage them to download the Carr Matey app. This handy app helps locate the car by providing walking directions.





It also keeps track of the time left on a parking meter. With the upcoming holiday season, the Carr Matey app will help grandma and grandpa easily maneuver through busy parking lots and get to their car quicker after shopping for presents for their grandkids.

There is nothing more comforting than knowing your loved ones will be safe if an emergency occurs.

With Verizon Wireless SureResponse, family members can have confidence that a loved one always has access to help. SureResponse is a device that is worn around the neck, wrist or clipped onto a belt. It has an emergency call button that contacts emergency services or family members without having to dial or search for phone numbers. SureResponse also provides directions and can help point family members in the right direction if someone is lost.

MANY OF THE RESIDENTS of Epworth Villa still drive their own cars. The Delphi Diagnostics device and app work to give vehicles a voice and notify owners when there's a need for attention to their automobile.

Delphi Diagnostics can also allow remote control access to a person's vehicle such as locking and unlocking the doors,

opening the trunk, triggering the alarm or even starting the engine.

All of these functions might seem basic, but in the event a loved one needs assistance in any of these areas, it's a quick, convenient solution that saves them a lot of trouble. They can help make driving around town simpler and safer and will give family members peace of mind that their loved ones are safe.

THE TREND OF USING TABLETS as e-readers has gained momentum not only with the younger generation, but also with the baby boomers. Instead of driving to the library or bookstore every time they want a new book, grandma and grandpa can now use the Overdrive app on their tablet to access eBooks and audiobooks from the local library.

With this app, never worry about late fees—Overdrive manages that for you, automatically returning books before their due date.

GONE ARE THE DAYS when family and friends used to connect with the older generation only on holidays because grandma and grandpa live too far away. With modern technology, there is never a reason to miss soccer games, ballet recitals or birthdays.

Plus, knowing that you can always communicate with loved ones on easy-to-use technology gives everyone the ability to live independently but always stay connected. ■

# SureResponse™

Personal Emergency Response Service





# CONGRATULATIONS



*(Left to right) Zac Reynolds of Trust Company of Oklahoma, Jacob Reynolds, tax advanced staff of Cole & Reed along with Ron Conner, assurance and tax partner of Cole & Reed and Mark Krienke of BancInsure enjoy the firm's 25th anniversary celebration at the Civic Center Hall of Mirrors.*

## **Cole & Reed's 25th anniversary celebration held September 19 at the Civic Center Hall of Mirrors.**

Cole & Reed is an OKC-based accounting firm specializing in audit and assurance, tax planning, consulting and accounting services to businesses throughout Oklahoma and surrounding areas.

# GLAUCOMA & BLINDNESS

Why this degenerative disease requires advanced glaucoma expertise.



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GLAUCOMA vision degeneration starts in the brain, advances to the optic nerve and affects the retina last. As a result, the elevated intraocular pressure and loss of peripheral vision are late arriving symptoms of GLAUCOMA disease.

That's why the earliest possible diagnosis and prompt correct treatment(s) by an advanced glaucoma expert are absolutely vital in preventing loss of vision and blindness. Important fact to remember: The risk of vision loss in glaucoma cases increases sevenfold after age 55.

Fortunately, advanced GLAUCOMA screening, testing, treatment and laser eye surgery, if necessary, by Oklahoma's advanced glaucoma expert, is covered by most medical insurance plans.

That expert is DR JOHN P. BELARDO, M.D. FACS, co-founder and refractive surgeon at Oklahoma City's ADVANCED LASER CENTER. Dr. Belardo has performed over 40,000 successful vision corrections and provides 21 years of advanced experience with full service optical plus ophthalmic care, including advanced Glaucoma, Bladeless Lasik and Sutureless Cataract Surgery.

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# Stella **r Dining**

by Greg Horton

**L**ori Tyler came home from Italy convinced of three things: she loved Italian food and wine, she loved the idea of a meal as a social event, and she wanted her own Italian restaurant one day.

In April 2010, more than 20 years after she studied in Rome, Tyler opened Stella Modern Italian Cuisine in Midtown.

Located right on the edge of Heritage Hills, Stella is an upscale casual restaurant where guests dine in jeans and tee shirts alongside couples dressed up for the ballet or symphony. “We want people to think of Stella as a neighborhood restaurant,” Tyler said. “I call it casual elegance. Just be comfortable. A meal is a social event shared with friends and family.”

“We emphasize the ‘modern’ aspect,” Tyler said. “For many people, Italian means spaghetti and meatballs or lasagna. That’s more Italian-American, and we are trying to create authentic, modern Italian dishes.”

Executive Chef Jonathan Krell and Tyler collaborate to create remarkable dishes that are faithful to the restaurant’s Italian ethos, but they feel free to put modern twists in their





*Above: Pork Belly Pizza with caramelized onions, garlic oil, smoked gouda, fontina, and fresh apple (\$13) is offered on the lunch, dinner and brunch menus.*

*Right: Brussel Sprout Salad*

*Below: The Stella version of a Chef Salad (\$12). The Chopped salad has salami, mortadella, romaine, tomato, pickled vegetables, provolone and roasted tomato vinaigrette.*



menu. That freedom to improvise leads to dishes like Mussels and Brussels, a fixture on the starter menu. Green-lipped mussels are tossed with roasted brussel sprouts, pancetta, arugula, and saffron aioli. The result is a rich, hearty seafood appetizer with a delicious blend of flavors and textures.

The menu preserves many of Tyler's memories of Italy, both with its selection of Roman-style pizzas and some traditional Italian dishes. Tyler changes the menu seasonally to ensure fresh and locally-sourced ingredients (when possible), but a few items appear during all seasons, including the veal osso bucco. The classic dish, a roasted veal shank, is served in the modern style, with tomatoes, gremolata (chopped herbs), onions, and red wine reduction, over creamy polenta.

The first thing guests see when they enter Stella is the pizza oven. It's on "the curve," as Tyler calls the area of the bar where guests can watch one of the cooks make each pizza by hand from scratch. The

Roman-style pizzas are based around a very thin, crispy crust. The menu features eight different pizzas, and there is a pizza addition every day.

The Italian meat pizza is a very popular choice, especially for Tyler's husband, Ty Tyler. Pepperoni, salami, Italian sausage, and capicola are accompanied by hot cherry peppers, red sauce and mozzarella. Grab a glass of Moscato d'Asti or Prosecco to complement the heat from the peppers and capicola.

Stella's wine list features hand-selected wines only. Tyler sits down with wine brokers and personally



*Right: Tomato braised pork ribs, agrodolce, topped with pickled red onions(\$10). A new starter on the Winter menu, is only offered at dinner time.*

tastes all the wines on her menu. Storage is in short supply at Stella, so the wine list rotates regularly, and the small list focuses on quality wines from Italy and the U.S.

Alice Cottrell designed Stella's interior. She began her design career more than 25 years ago, and has since worked for Donald Trump and the St. Regis Hotel. Knoll chairs and Eames chairs add a modern but comfortable feel to Stella's dining and bar areas. The Fornasetti wallpaper, Italian window shears, and the Venetian light fixtures in the bar give Stella an authentic Italian ambience.

Reservations are recommended for lunch and dinner. The lunch menu is very affordable, and guests are typically served efficiently, making Stella a good lunch choice for downtown and midtown clientele. ■





# Boulevard Steakhouse

by Julie Lesko-Bishop

**W**hen Peter Holloway opened the Boulevard Steakhouse in 1998, he brought with him a heritage steeped in the restaurant business.

While in college, he worked at the Hungry Peddler and discovered he loved the service business and taking care of guests. He earned a degree in psychology but “fell in love with insanity” along the way, choosing to remain in the food industry.

“I like dealing with people and developing employees. There’s no owner’s hat, I just fill in wherever I am needed, whatever needs to be done,” Holloway said. “I’m here, in and out. It’s different from being scheduled. I like being here.”

Over time Holloway, bought Boulevard Steakhouse piecemeal. Now he owns the whole block and can provide a venue for five separate events simultaneously: Martini Lounge, Wine Room, Cellar Room, Board Room and the Diamond Room. The Martini Lounge complements the overall dining experience and offers a Happy Hour, complete with hors d’oeuvres, Thursday and Friday 4:30-6:30 p.m. and live entertainment Friday and Saturday nights. All the areas of the Boulevard Steakhouse intertwine with each other.

If the Holloways had known they were going to own the entire facility they





*Boulevard steak and lobster dinner.*

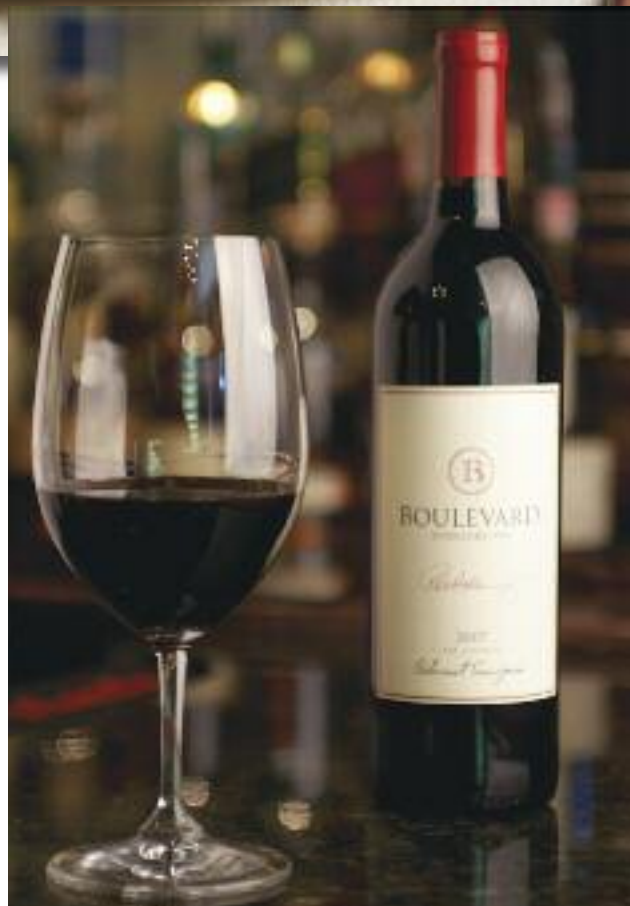
“would’ve done things differently; wouldn’t have put a steakhouse in the center,” according to Holloway.

Upon entering, the heavy wooden bar beckons. The mirrored backdrop reflects the crushed velvet upholstered booths in the background and the chandeliers project just the right amount of light. The ambience conjures up visions of The Rat Pack with drink in hand and laughter. Good times.

Only a savvy restaurateur like Holloway could capitalize on quiet Sunday evenings by hosting Dinner Club the first Sunday of every month. The evening features a four-course meal and specially-chosen wine.

“The meal is always based around steak; the steak is the centerplate item. There is always a theme, and the Dinner Club is centered on educating people about wines,” Holloway said.

The steakhouse has 700 wines on their list including their very own Cabernet. “The wines enhance the experience,” Holloway said.







The wine, varied each month to complement the meal, comes with a wine lesson. Chef Jimmy Stepney creates a four course meal paired with a featured wine.

“I enjoy doing these [Dinner Club], putting the menu together,” Chef Jimmy Stepney said.

May’s Dinner Club menu, for instance, included a Roasted Peach Salad, Chicken Roulade and Prime Center Cut Filet and Apricot Mascarpone Gateau. Each course was accompanied by a Milbrandt Riesling, Chardonnay and Cabernet wine.

Reservations are required to participate in the Sunday Dinner Club.

Boulevard Steakhouse is known for their 7 oz. tenderloin filets and fresh seafood. And what does the guy in the know order? Holloway enjoys the steaks, seafood dishes or the Chef’s creation.

“I’m more of a grazer than anything,” he said.

The old world charm will draw you in; the great food will hook you. Sinatra spoken here. Says so on the door. Welcome.

Hours are Monday-Thursday, 5:30-10 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 5:30-11 p.m. and Sunday, 5:30-9 p.m. . Located at 505 S. Blvd. Edmond, call 715-2333 for reservations. ■











## CLEAN UP Oklahoma

Imagine more than five million pounds of litter, debris, and waste. Now imagine it is gone.

For the 11th consecutive year, Keep Oklahoma Beautiful (KOB), the statewide affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, took part in the nation's largest annual cleanup program. Across all 77 counties, more than 5 million pounds of litter was cleaned up during the 2013 Great American Cleanup™ (GAC) in Oklahoma held March through May.

Keep America Beautiful's Great American Cleanup™ is the nation's largest annual community involvement program. Millions of volunteers across the nation participate each year. This year Oklahoma had more than 60,000 volunteers and participants involved. The GAC is about more than just picking up trash around the state. It gives our state the opportunity for beautification projects that might not be done otherwise.

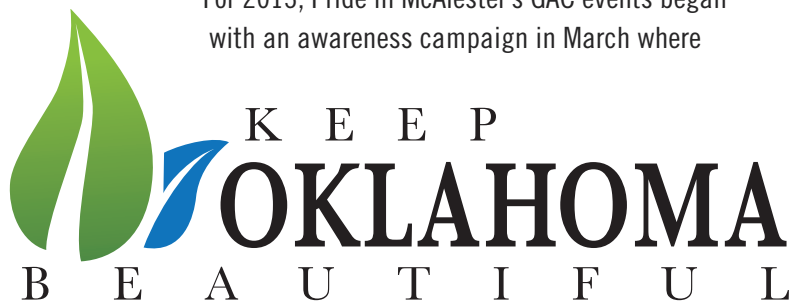
ONE OUTSTANDING EFFORT during the Great American Cleanup is recognized with the Devon GAC Achievement Award. This award is presented in November at the annual KOB Environmental Excellence Award Celebration. The winners of the award receive a stone plaque as well as a cash prize of \$1,000.

Last year, the award was presented to KOB's Affiliate, Pride in McAlester, a non-profit organization with a mission to clean up and keep up the McAlester community for residents and visitors to enjoy.

In 2012, Pride In McAlester collected 418,976 pounds of

waste in their community. This included bulk waste, tires, prescription drugs, electronics, paper, metal, and household hazardous wastes. Again in 2013, they collected over 100,000 pounds more than the year before.

For 2013, Pride in McAlester's GAC events began with an awareness campaign in March where



they gave presentations and recruited volunteers at several community events and meetings.

Staff and volunteers conducted various workshops at McAlester's alternative high school, Key Academy. Students were taught what items are reusable, recyclable, or just down right landfill bound. They also discussed different ways to practice being green in their day to day lives.

On April 6, bins were placed in a parking lot for bulk trash disposal, tire and metal recycling, and electronics recycling. The event was free to McAlester residents and available every weekend through April 27. After that, the event expanded to collect household hazardous waste and prescription drug disposal. During the month of April alone, 1,953 people in 1,248 vehicles came through the cleanup site.

Their efforts continued as Pride In McAlester planted a dozen trees around the town thanks to funding from Public Service Company of Oklahoma. They also held projects to





paint light poles, benches, and fire hydrants downtown, as well as painting the historic and well traveled Washington Street bridge. How inspiring!

This effort is just one effort out of the nearly 300 communities that participated in the spring of 2013.

"It's incredible that we have so many participants from every corner of the state. The GAC in Oklahoma helps bring communities together," KOB Projects Coordinator Jordan Scott said. "Not to mention, cleanup events like these will usually lead to year round commitments that transform Oklahoma and leave its citizens feeling proud of our state."

BUSINESSES, GROUPS, OR ORGANIZATIONS wishing to participate in the 2014 GAC must register with KOB. Through its affiliation with Keep America Beautiful, GAC statewide sponsor Devon Energy, the national GAC sponsors and other partners, KOB is able to offer registered groups in the GAC FREE supplies and support materials for their projects.

These materials include posters, banners, trash bags, media kits, public relations assistance, creative ideas for projects, guidelines for volunteers, etc.

With support from their statewide sponsor, Devon Energy,

KOB is able to expand program reach and reward environmental excellence. In 2012, Devon joined forces with KOB as the first statewide sponsor of the GAC, and Devon came back for more in 2013.

"We are pleased and proud to support the Great American Cleanup™ in Oklahoma again this year," said Wendi Schuur, Community Relations director for Devon. "Clean, healthy and safe communities benefit everyone, and we welcome the opportunity to help those who are working to make it happen."

KOB is one of three states in the history of the program to achieve 100 percent county participation. This accomplishment has been achieved for the past four years and recognized by Keep America Beautiful.

The "Big Number" for Oklahoma is \$5,778,822. The "Big Number" represents the money saved or costs avoided by state, county, and municipal governments as a result of the GAC - just in Oklahoma.

For more information about KOB programs, the Great American Cleanup™ in Oklahoma or to see if your community participates in the GAC, please visit

[www.keepoklahomabeautiful.com](http://www.keepoklahomabeautiful.com) ■



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# MAN WITH APAS



*Stephen Haggard has always loved clothes. He opened S.J. Haggard & Co. in Nichols Hills Plaza in 1991.*

## Stephen Haggard talks clothes, coaches and trends

By Linda Miller

**W**hen Stephen Haggard landed a part-time job at a popular clothing store in the late 1960s, it turned into more than a way to earn a few dollars during the Christmas holiday. Clothes and retail became a passion.

Haggard soaked up everything he could learn about the business and held onto his dream of one day owning his own men's apparel store. S.J. Haggard & Co. opened in 1991 in Nichols Hills Plaza. Two decades later he opened a second store at Shoppes at Northpark.

He attends several markets a year to buy the style of clothes and accessories his clientele has come to expect. He's a stickler for details, right down to the perfect button for many suits and jackets.

And here's an interesting bit of trivia. Haggard wears the same size jacket as George W. Bush. At one of the markets, he got to try on a custom jacket made for the president. It was a perfect fit. Which is exactly what he wants for his customers.

### First, will you share how you got interested in men's fashion and retail?

I have always liked dressing right for the occasion. Back in junior high school I met Denny Wehba at Rothchild's Varsity Shop. At the time it was a lease department owned by the Orbach family. Everybody shopped there with Denny. It was a clubby atmosphere and I got to know all the guys well.

As time went by, I went to college and was partying way too much. At the very time I was considering what to do with my



*Above: Stephen Haggard's attends several markets a year and is particular about everything from fabric to buttons.*







*S.J. Haggard & Co. is described as traditional but not stuffy..*

life, Denny called asking if I would want to work during Christmas. That was in October of 1968, thus launching a 45-year career. I fell in love with every aspect of the business.

#### **Share some of the brands carried in your stores.**

At the top we start with the oldest suit maker in America, H. Freeman & Son. It is made in Philadelphia, Pa., and is a wonderful garment. We have Gitman Brothers shirts and Dolcepunta ties from Italy. One of our lines for dress trousers is Berle, also made in America. On the sportswear side we were one of the first to carry Bill's Khakis. We have Peter

Millar, Scott Barber, Bugatchi from Italy, Alberto jeans from Germany, Big Star jeans and Nat Nast just to name a few. Enough to tempt you, anyway. We also do full custom from H. Freeman & Son and custom shirts from Measure Up.

#### **You waited a long time before opening a second store. What led to that decision?**

That is interesting. Tom Morris, a longtime friend and owner of Shoppes at Northpark, had always mentioned how much he would like for us to be in his center. We never really put much thought to it until it became obvious that we weren't getting

that North Oklahoma City/Quail Creek customer. They just could not drive to Nichols Hills. Northpark presented us with a package that was too good to turn down and after being open in Nichols Hills for 20 years, we finally said yes. Denny Wehba, the man that got me in this business, is running that store and it has turned out to be a great deal for all of us. We are approaching our second anniversary in Northpark and what a great center it is.

Every shop there is locally owned and, in fact, Northpark is approaching its 40th anniversary.

**S.J. Haggard dresses several OSU coaches, including head football coach Mike Gundy, defensive coordinator Glenn Spencer and basketball coach Travis Ford. Can you share a little tidbit about each coach's style?**

This started with Mike Gundy's first season as head coach. He is a man of high integrity and knows what he wants! He is a perfect model, tall and lean, and wears clothes very well. He has been named best-dressed coach of the Big 12 for nine years running. He totally trusts what I do for him and he wears

it exactly like we put it together. His style is old money conservative with today's touch.

Upon Mike's recommendation, Coach Spencer came to us for his wedding attire this summer. Travis Ford is really into clothes and likes to shop. It is always a fun time when he comes in. He, too, is conservative but with an updated touch. He likes all the stuff I like so that makes it easy to work with him.

**Menswear changes slowly. What can men expect to see for fall fashion?**

This fall you will see more sweaters in zip top and collared styles. You'll see rich plaid sport shirts and a little more color in neckwear. We are traditional, but not stuffy. We can get a little out there with our Italian shirts from Bugatchi and St. Croix.

During these times of economic unrest, men's styles become more conservative and speaking of conservative, navy blazers have become a very hot item again. Very hard to beat with dress pants, khakis or even jeans. ■

*Even the mannequins are meticulously dressed.*





# WARMING UP to winter

by Linda Miller

**W**hen the weather turns cold, the Ion Style Team bundles up. We pile on layers for warmth and slather on balms and creams to combat chapped lips and dry skin. Here's a peek inside our perfect winter survival kit.

## Lip service

Fresh Sugar Lip Treatment SPF 15 is ultra-nourishing and protective. The tinted versions are pretty sweet, too. \$22.50 at The MakeUp Bar.



## Get the boot

This Jimmy Choo biker boot is the right mix of edge and timeless chic. It will pair perfectly with skinny jeans or add a bit of attitude to a dress and tights. \$995 at Balliets at Classen Curve.

## Dry skin remedy

Dry, chapped skin is a hazard of winter. Say hello to Pre de Provence 15% Shea Butter Dry Skin Lotion. It leaves skin soft and moisturized and no greasy feeling. \$15 at The MakeUp Bar.





### Feel-good leather

Luxurious leather is everywhere in small details and big statements. This Chanel-inspired, quilted jacket by MICHAEL Michael Kors may be the perfect winter pick-me-up. \$550 at Dillard's.

### Cover tup

What's the perfect topper when the weather doesn't demand a heavy coat? We love capes and ponchos for their ease and versatility. And let's not forget the glam factor. Just take a look at this fur collar poncho by Worth. \$998, available from Cindi Shelby at Ruth Meyers. ■





# Travel the West at Cowboy Crossings Show

## Fine Art Portrays Western Culture

By M. J. Van Deventer



If you love to see western paintings, sculpture and exquisite trappings of the American West, the “Cowboy Crossings” show will be a “must” on your October calendar.

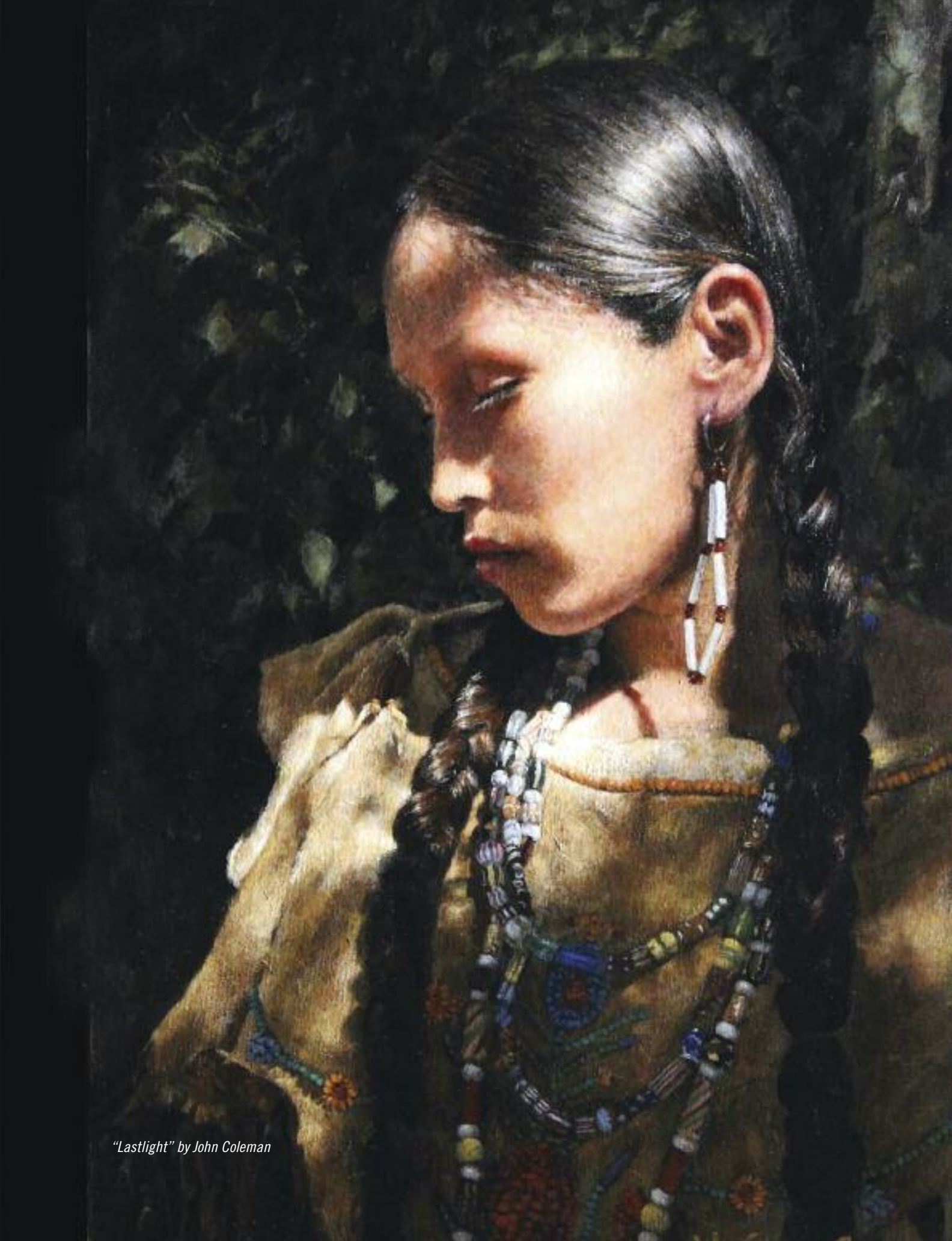
Slated Oct. 11-12 at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, the show provides a fascinating tour through the visual and functional art of the West.

The show represents the unique artistic viewpoints of members of the Cowboy Artists of America and the Traditional Cowboy Arts Association. The two national art groups merged their talents in 2011 to present this annual show.

Now, under the Cowboy Museum’s umbrella, their show gives western art enthusiasts a weekend that reveals these artists’ love for portraying the west in oils and watercolors, bronze and marble, silver and rawhide braiding.

The Cowboy Artists of America have been in existence for 48 years. Twenty-one artists from across the United States are current members, having been invited to join the CAA, based on their merits as artists. Six members have earned emeritus status in this elite art fraternity. Bruce Greene is the current president.

The Traditional Cowboy Arts Association has been in existence for 15 years, and held their first exhibit and sale at the National Cowboy Museum. Today, 15 members, also from across the United States and Canada, comprise this



*"Lastlight" by John Coleman*



prestigious group of Western craftsmen turned artists. Ernie Marsh is the current president.

Combining their talents for this exhibition creates an art show that reflects what Greene calls “the very core of Western American art and craftsmanship.” Marsh adds, “These works of functional and traditional art are representative of the cowboy and our Western culture.”

The paintings, sculptures, saddles, silverwork and leather art provide historical and contemporary perspectives on the cowboy lifestyle. The paintings reflect the way real cowboys live and work. The cowboy gear, from saddles to spurs, reveals the exquisite craftsmanship that makes these cowboy trappings coveted collectors’ items.

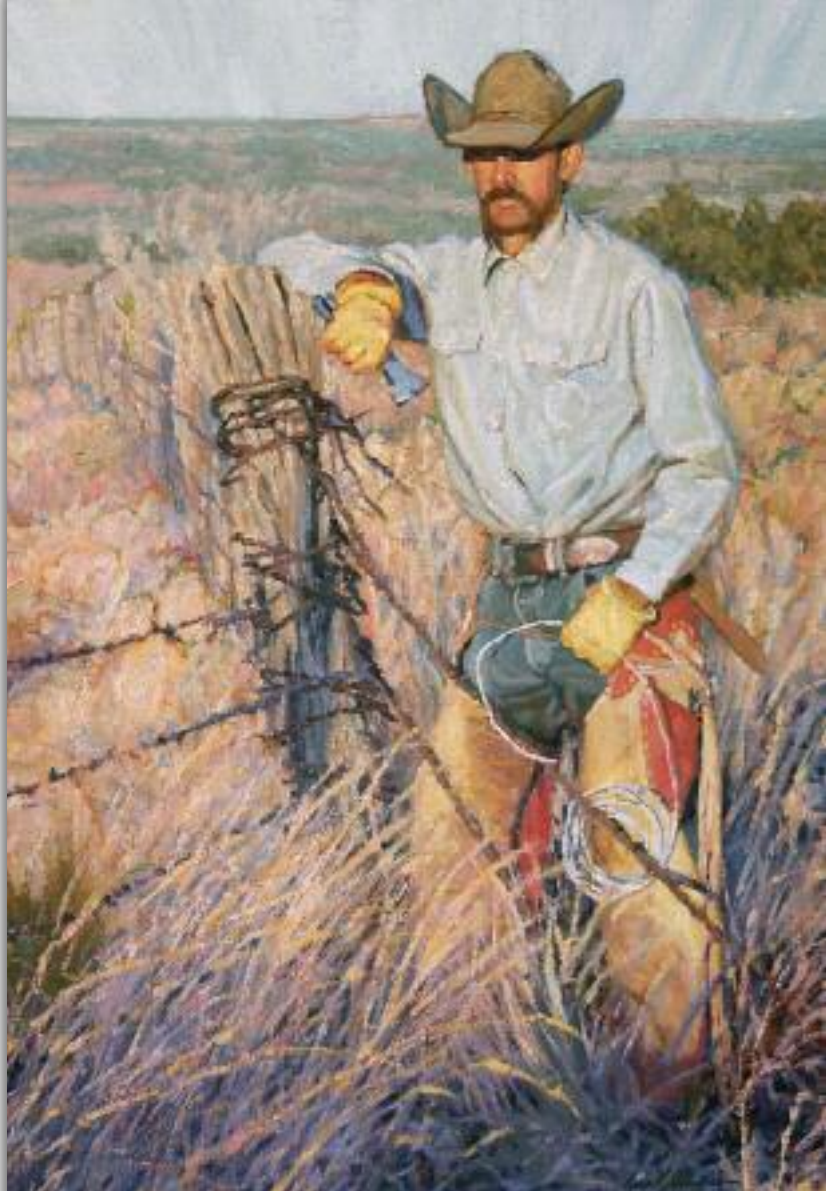
A special feature of the show is the Minimum Bid painting. It is a 34” x 34” oil on canvas titled *Caught A Little Deep*, painted by the late Bill Owen, who accepted membership in the CAA in 1973. Owen, a long-time participant in the Museum’s annual Prix de West show, died suddenly June 15, 2013.

Cowboy Crossings includes an opening reception and preview October 11 at 6 p.m. The Oct. 12 schedule includes an autograph party with artists signing the commemorative 2013 poster, a luncheon and three panel discussions. The Cowboy Crossings sale begins at 5 p.m., followed by the high spirited drawing for sales and an awards banquet.

Saturday seminar topics include Mentor to Mentor, a panel discussion following a luncheon. The talk features Ernie Marsh and Mark Drain, TCAA, and R. S. Riddick and Jason Scull, CAA, moderated by Don Reeves, the Museum’s curator of cowboy culture.

“The Artist’s Role ~ Telling the Story of Historical Painting” will feature CAA artist Dave Powell sharing his expertise during a live painting demonstration. Powell will share vignettes from consulting experiences on the movie sets of *Lonesome Dove*, *Sea Biscuit*, *Silverado* and *Back to the Future*.

TCAA silversmith Scott Hardy will close the seminars with an anatomical look at a three-piece buckle set ~ *A Pictorial Journey from Design to Completion*.



*Above: “Endless” by Greene.*

*Below: “Offering” by Moore.*







*"Looking" by Cox.*

Chuck Schroeder, Museum president, said the exhibition and sale "provides a special opportunity for people from all walks of life to see and experience the work of these gifted folks and get to know their stories."

The show and sale continues through January 5, 2014. Additional information and reservation details are available by contacting the Museum at 405 478-2250, Ext. 219. Check out the Museum's website at [www.nationalcowboymuseum.org](http://www.nationalcowboymuseum.org) for a preview of the 150-piece show. ■

*Left: Watching the Sunset. Below : "Morning Chores" by Tredden.*







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This Time Last Year  
Woman In Love  
My Sanctuary  
Here I Go Again

The Present  
Legendary Story (The Wedding Song)  
You Come And Go  
Forever And A Night

## REMEMBERING WHEN: A FAMILY OF ATHLETES

Smith family remembers days of lettering, playing

By Heide Brandes

**E**very now and again, a family thrives through the sweat, defeat and victory of sports. In Oklahoma City, one family did just that, producing not only 26 “letters” in four boys, but a professional athlete as well.

The 1940s, 1950s and 1960s were glory days of high school sports, and Carl Smith, the oldest of four boys in the Oklahoma City Smith family set the bar for his brothers to follow. Born in 1946, Carl attended Classen High School.

His three younger siblings – Charlie, Skip and Clay – soon followed, and the boys were a coach’s dream.

“I lettered nine times in high school,” said Carl, remembering the days of football, basketball and baseball at Classen. “My mom was an athlete, and we got motivated at the Gray YMCA while growing up. I guess since I’m the oldest and I played sports, my brothers followed.”

Charlie was the next high school athlete star. He lettered nine times in football, basketball and baseball. Skip followed with 8 letters in the same sports, and then Clay lettered three times in baseball at Northwest Classen High School. All of the brothers played quarterback, short-stop and guard.

Clay went on to make All-State when his team won the state championships in baseball in 1977, following his brothers. Carl as a star in conference play for both basketball and baseball and Charlie made the All-State team in 1967 in basketball, leading with 53 whopping points.

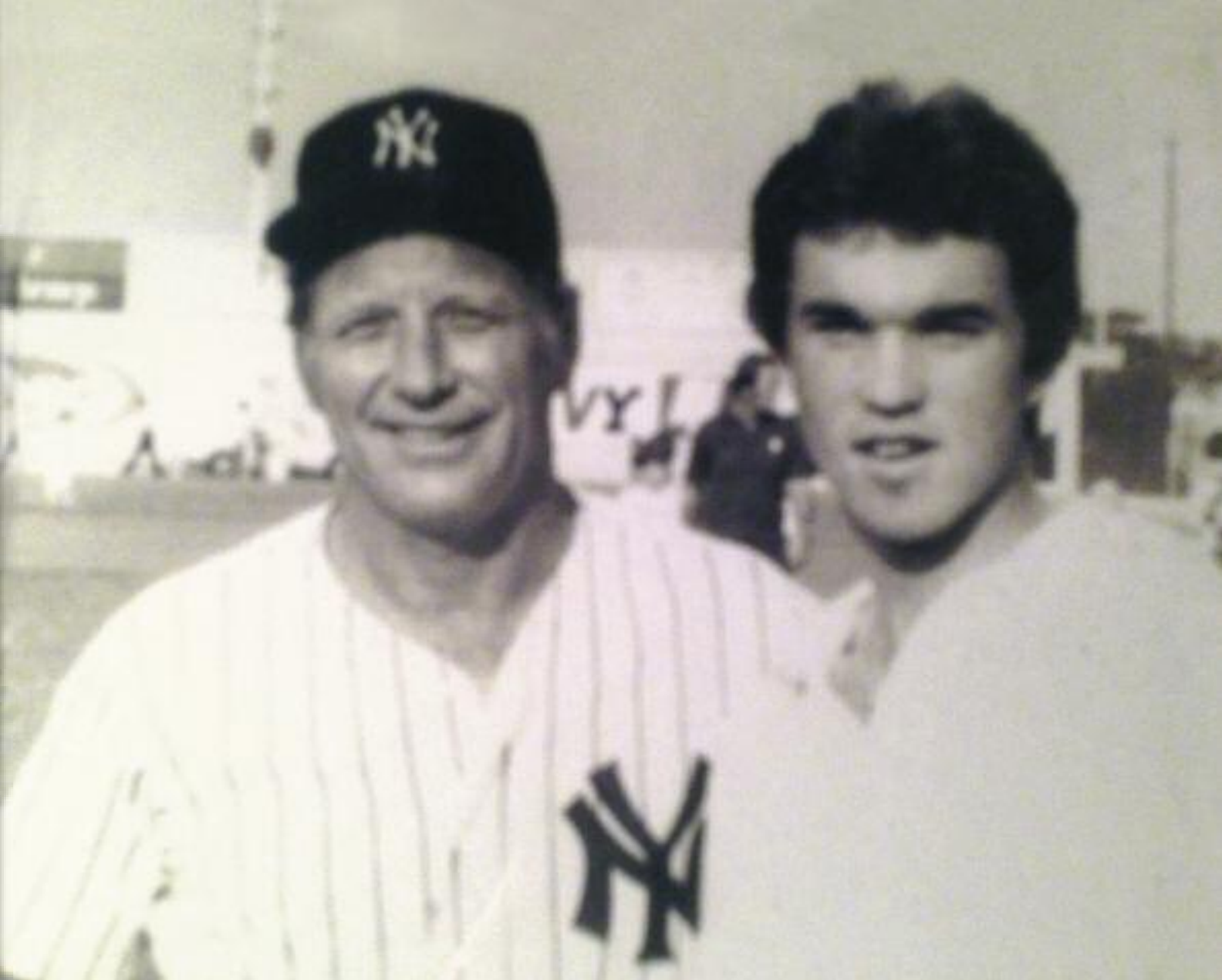


*Clay Smith 1978 NW Classen HS*





*The Smith family (left to right): Charlie Smith, Carl Smith Sr., Nadie Smith, Carl Smith Jr., Clay Smith and Skip Smith.*



*Clay and Mickey Mantle.*

Sports ran in the Smith family. One of Carl's uncles was a professional baseball player for The New York Yankees in the 1940s and 1950s, he said, and that claim to fame helped motivate the boys to match. Clay, the youngest, excelled in baseball primarily, and when he graduated in 1978, he was the first pick in the second round for the Los Angeles Dodgers.

"He played for the Dodgers for four years. He was the only one of us to go professional," Carl said.

Still, sports ran in the family blood. All four brothers continued to compete in softball, playing even more national championships as adults.

"Each one of us played. I coached Clay in basketball and I coached my son in baseball," said Carl. "I guess it's because my mother and uncle were such athletes."

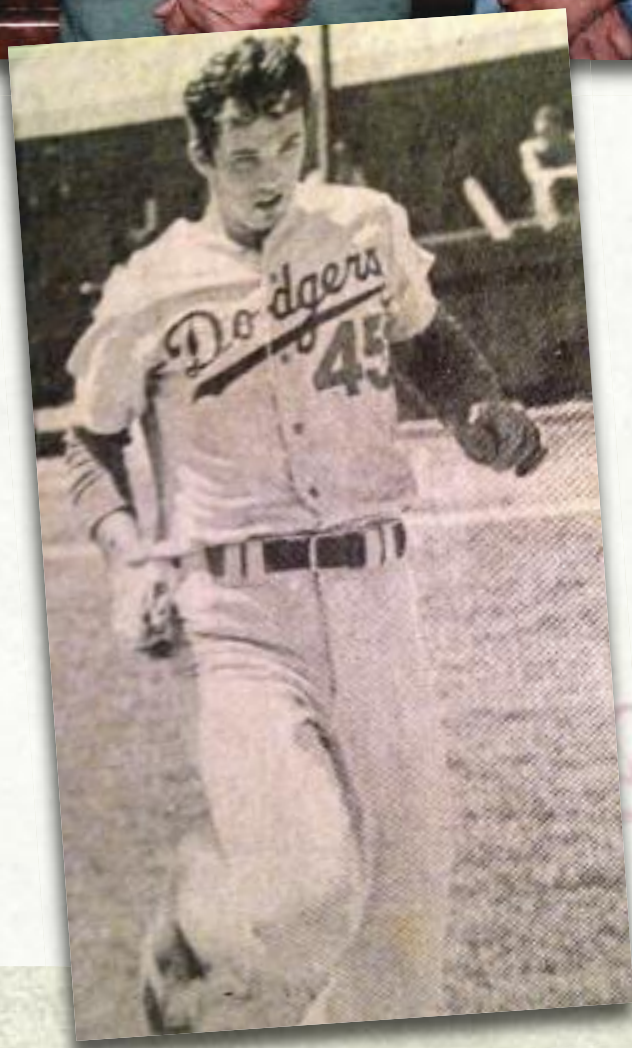
For one family, the glory days of high school may be a memory of the past, but the awards and glory still exist.

"Our whole family played. We just really enjoyed playing sports," he said. ■





*Above, the Smith brothers together in more recent years.  
From the left: Clay, Skip, Charlie and Carl.*



*Left: Clay, the youngest, was the first pick in  
the second round for the Los Angeles Dodgers  
following his graduation in 1978.*



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## FRIDAY NIGHT ALIVE

Street festivals make Friday nights come alive in Oklahoma City

By Heide Brandes

**A**nyone who says there's nothing to do in Oklahoma City on Friday nights isn't looking hard enough.

From food truck festivals to art walks to district open street parties, Friday nights are hot in the city, and the street festival events held every Friday of the month continue to grow. What's more — they're all family- and pet-friendly and usually free!

Every month, four events claim one of the Friday nights as their own. The first Friday boasts of the Paseo Art Walk in Oklahoma's funky Paseo Art District. On the second Friday, the Plaza District on NW 16th and Blackwelder hosts Live on the Plaza, a street festival and business open house that attracts art fans, music fans, foodies and more.

The third Friday of each month belongs to Film Row and the Individual Artists of America's Premiere on Film Row event. Rounding up the month is H&8th, a food and music festival that lines up Oklahoma City's favorite food and drink trucks for a street party at NW 8th and Hudson.

"The goal is to show people that the sidewalks don't just roll up at 5 p.m.," said Brian Bergman, a downtown Oklahoma City enthusiast. "(The festivals) are a way that people can see how Oklahoma City can operate at night. Instead of the flight at night where people disappear from the streets at night, it's become a place to gather."



photo: Christopher McCord



Paseo photos: Christopher McCord

## PASEO ART WALK

On the First Friday, the Paseo Arts District in Oklahoma City hosts its First Friday gallery walk, held on the first Friday and Saturday of every month. The walk starts from 6 to 10 p.m. Friday and continues from noon to 6 p.m. on that Saturday.

Over 60 artists in more than 17 galleries participate. Each event features four to six Art Opening Receptions on Friday night to showcase the new work of the gallery/studio owners or the work of guest artists. Each of Paseo's 25 galleries host an open house style opening each month, and many galleries change their shows monthly.

"First Friday is a great time to see what is new and meet the artists," said Jennifer Barron, executive director of the Paseo Arts Association. "Many galleries also will choose to have a small cheese-and-crackers type reception for guests. In addition to what happens inside the galleries, there are live musicians up and down the street and a variety of interactive activities for guests."

For example, for the past two months, the Paseo hosted the Oklahoma City Astronomy Club, which brings specialized telescopes for visitors to experience.

The Paseo Arts Association also now offers at least one





performer per month with the goal of presenting live local performances on the streets.

"We have some pretty fantastic performers here," Barron said. "The PAA tries to change up the performers each month to offer something seasonal. For example, we had a Ragtime band for the Fourth of July weekend, and we're looking into some fun holiday acts for December."

First Friday Gallery Walks take place 12 months a year, rain or shine or snow. For more information, visit [www.thepaseo.com](http://www.thepaseo.com).

A non-profit since 1997, The Plaza District received \$2,350,000 in public investment dollars and \$110,000 in private investment dollars to bring the neighborhood to life.

And every second Friday, that neighborhood springs even more to life with Live on the Plaza, a monthly Friday artwalk featuring visual artists, live music, local shopping, food and fun.

"Live on the Plaza is a really good chance for some newer people to experience the energy and creativity of our artists here," said Vails. "It's a celebration of our district, and each month, more and more people are coming down to experience it."

The second Friday event is a big part of the district's growth, Vails said.

"Live on the Plaza is a great way to recruit new businesses, artists and residents," she said. "Bring a friend and come see what's new."

For more information, visit <http://www.plazadistrict.org/category/live/>



photos: Christopher McCord

## LIVE on the Plaza

If you look at the Plaza District 10 years ago compared to today, the difference is striking. What was once a neglected neighborhood with a grim business future is now one of Oklahoma City's hippest and most creative areas.

The Plaza District Association and its executive director Kristen Vails have worked over the past years to create a vibrant commercial district on NW 16th Street that allows arts, locally-owned businesses and a neighborhood spirit to thrive.

Through promotions and investment, the Plaza District is now home to 30 businesses and a 90 percent commercial occupancy rate. More than 1,800 artists are represented in the district, which include dance students, musicians, comedians, poets, theatre professionals, storytellers and more.



photo: Nathan Poppe





Plaza photos: Nathan Poppe







## PREMIERE on FILM ROW

Oklahoma City's historic Film Row District is alight with action as it brings in the glamour of the city's newest monthly street festival, Premiere on Film Row, scheduled for 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. on the third Fridays along W. Sheridan Avenue between Dewey and Shartel Ave.

Premiere on Film Row features film screenings, live music, art exhibitions and gourmet food trucks, and is designed to highlight businesses and organizations located on Film Row.

The festival also promotes new developments in the area, and to celebrate the city's rich history and connection to the film industry.

"Film Row is alive and, well, thriving!" Individual Artists of Oklahoma executive director and event organizer Kendall Brown said. "We think people are going to fall in love with new Film Row. It has a distinct personality and style, and a solid community of young, creative professionals and artists who bring the area to life. The long-term potential for the area is exciting."

Visitors to the festival can expect experiences ranging from temporary tattoos for the kids, a photo booth, live music, film screenings, comedy shows and more. Food trucks like Taste of

Soul Chicken & Waffles and La Gumbo Ya Ya are often present.

Beginning in 1907, Hollywood studios including Paramount Pictures, Warner Bros., Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and Fox Films had operations in the 42-block area between Classen Boulevard and Walker Avenue along Sheridan Avenue. Film exchanges served the film industry as distribution centers, where theater owners came to view and lease films. Film Row was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2007.

For more information, visit <https://www.facebook.com/FilmRowPremiere>

## H&8th Night Market

H&8th had something of a rough start in 2011. At its first event, the food and drink truck festival was raided by authorities and shut down.

Although the incident was a "mistake" on the part of the authorities, the raid and the subsequent months were a "huge learning curve" for the now popular street festival that features food trucks, drinks, music and more.

The brainchild of Elemental Coffee's Laura Massenat and Chris Holladay, COOP Ale Works' JD Merryweather and Chris Holliday.

“They had been to different food truck festivals in other cities, and they thought it would be fun to do in our city,” said Massenat. “It’s a way to build community, have fun and bring people to the Midtown area.”

Now, every fourth Friday through September is the place to be for a fully belly and a good time. The H&8th Night Market street festival attracts more and more food trucks, like Café Bella on Wheels, La Gumbo YaYa, Wild Al’s Mutt’s Hot Dogs, Heo’s Kitchen, Big Truck Tacos, Smokin’ Okies and more.

Ludivine, located 805 N Hudson Ave., serves up drinks and a special menu at each event, along with an open-seating environment. Elemental Coffee, located on Hudson, offers coffee and tea and COOP Ale Works pours its craft beer.

In fact, the food fest may be Oklahoma City’s fastest growing event. In March, H&8th attracted 2,500 visitors; 3,500 attended in April. May was canceled due to extreme weather, but Okies made up for that by coming out in June to the tune of 8,000 people. July saw 8,500 attend, and August’s H&8th saw even more people than that, according to organizers.

“That’s the magic of Jonathan Fowler (Fowler Auto Group, which helps sponsor the event),” Massenat said. “When Fowler came in as a sponsor to help us with the music and stage, it caused the event to grow. It’s due to his energy and experience that it is what it is now.”

For more information, visit <http://h8thokc.com/>

## THE MAN BEHIND THE MASK

Three of the four street festivals in Oklahoma City are sponsored by Fowler Auto Group dealerships, including LIVE on the Plaza (Fowler Volkswagen of Norman) on second Fridays and H&8th Night Market (Fowler Toyota).

Fowler Holding Co. Vice President of Operations Jonathan Fowler said being a part of the festivals is a way to get more involved in the cities he loves. ■



photo: Nathan Poppe



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# Shawnee **POET LAUREATE** & Humanitarian

## James L. “Jim” Spurr

By: Don J. Brewington

### Early Years

**A**s a 9-year-old living in Shawnee in 1949, I was introduced to Jimmy Spurr for first time.

Though it was not a pleasant experience, I did notice this Jim Spurr guy had more sides to him than a octopus – all good sides, but it took some time getting use to his intellect and downright honesty.

Jim Spurr and I had only one thing in common in those days, and that was we both loved sports. Although I was always an athlete, I had never ventured outside my comfort zone, but Jim had artistic side which made him a very unique individual for the 1950's.

Jim Spurr and I grew up on Jefferson Circle and he lived just across the street. This neighborhood as it turned out became address of many famous people. Jerry Vandergrift of Van's Pig Stands lived there and was Spurr's best friend. Carl Hubbell, Hall of Fame Baseball player lived there with his family, and Bill Pitt, father of actor Brad Pitt, lived near. Ross Porter, Jr., who became the voice of Los Angeles Dodgers until he retired in California, was a neighbor as well.

Spurr could cut you to pieces with his dry humor in those days and still can today if and when he chooses to. His published poetry is full of days of the great 1950s.

**J**im graduated from Oklahoma Baptist University in 1968 thru GI Bill a program available for veterans after serving in the 82nd Airborne. Spurr attended OBU and graduated in 1968 while working full time at an auto parts store in Shawnee.







In all the years Spurr and I remained friends, he taught me about the world of arts, especially poetry. As kids, there was no way I would ever listen to poetry, no less write poems, but Spurr had a patience that matched his wit.

Spurr's beauty with poetry blossomed during his college years.

"While attending OBU, my speech teacher Professor Simpson told me she liked the way I read poetry, and I was hooked from then on with poetry," he said.

That addiction became a life-long talent. In 2010, Spurr was honored as Poet Laureate of Shawnee, chosen by Shawnee City Commission.

A poet laureate is asked at government functions to write poems for special occasions.

"I trace my thoughts to my service as a Army paratrooper in the 11th and 82nd Airborne divisions, as I neared my first jump I thought, 'I should write about experience one day and

call it my glorious instant,'" Spurr said. "A lot of inspiration came after that because the chute opened.

"As Poet Laureate of Shawnee, I view it as an opportunity to bring more poetry to the city."

Spurr's passion for football still burns brightly with his long time support of Shawnee High Wolves football and his love for Notre Dame. Spurr was Quarterback Club supporter for many years for Shawnee Wolves, but the one gift Spurr did not have was athletic ability.

Spurr is married to Aline Smith, who was an original feminist, and lives and writes in Shawnee.

There are two poetry collections that can be purchased from Spurr.

His email: [jspurline@aol.com](mailto:jspurline@aol.com)

Book— "Open Mike Night/Thursday"

Book—"Hail Mary, On Two"







## An Italian Adventure

By M. J. Van Deventer

I have wanted to go to Italy ever since I saw *Three Coins in the Fountain* in 1954 with my childhood sweetheart Tommy Shelton.


It was one of the first movies we saw together and it seemed only natural that when Rev. William Thomas Shelton and I reconnected 52 years later, we should spend our honeymoon in Italy.

I did some homework before our July 10 departure by reviewing the Internet daily about Italy and studying the traditional tour guides by Rick Steves and Fodor. These are practical guides that help you become a better international traveler.

But I'm a romantic, so I also read all three of Frances Mayes' books on Italy, especially *Under the Tuscan Sun*, a much better read than the movie loosely based on her book. She writes so eloquently of Tuscany and the house she and her husband, Edward, renovated in Cortona that I almost felt like I was in Italy while reading her books.

I also read *The City of Falling Angels* by John Berendt, which is a wonderful read about Venice, based on his three years there as a journalist. While in Italy, I read Don Brown's *Inferno*, mostly set in Florence, and a true thriller. (See related *Inferno* review on page 90.)

Our 12-day Italy odyssey covered more than 2,000 miles of breathtaking terrain. We hop-scotched, on a deluxe Trafalgar tour bus, over and around beautiful territory in southern Italy — Rome, Venice, Florence, the Isle of Capri, Ana Capri and the smaller cities of Assisi, Montecatini Terme, Sienna, Sorrento, Pisa, the ruins at Pompeii.



An example of the architectural style featured on many ancient buildings in Rome.



06 Tourists photographing in the St. Peter's Basilica.

There were 42 people on the Trafalgar tour from across the United States, Canada, Newfoundland, Australia and Panama, including our Scottish-born Italian tour guide.

We marveled at the lush hillsides of Italy, and we were enchanted by the symmetrical beauty of the fields growing wheat, maize, corn and tobacco. The round hay bales dotting now-harvested wheat fields were plentiful - a reminder of farms at home and a sight that is now a universal symbol of agriculture.

The villas and farmhouses that grace the terraced fields look like places out of a children's storybook.

The vineyards are beautifully groomed, as are the olive and lemon groves. The many fields of giant sunflowers were a surprise. Their round, fat faces always faced south, looking upward toward the sun, - or was it the heavens - creating

blankets of shimmering gold across the landscape. Were these the same sunflowers that Van Gogh painted so beautifully?

We basked in the beauty of the rolling hills of Tuscany, and found a familiarity with the Appennine Mountains that reminded us of the American West's great, majestic Tetons.

**T**he canals of Venice were intriguing and we loved the sea journeys, hopping aboard tourist water taxis, and vaporettos to transport us to exotic and exciting locales. A gondola ride on the Grand Canal was memorable as it glided in and out of Venice neighborhoods. Our tour guide had purposely invited an accordion player and an opera singer to entertain us in our gondola as her special honeymoon gift to us. *How thoughtful and romantic!*

We adored the magic of Venice. It truly is a perpetual





*Gondolas are the most relaxing form of transportation in Venice. They compete with speedboats, water taxis and Vaporettos for space on the Grand Canal — Venice's super highway.*

carnival. We saw more characters in one day — especially mimes and grand costumed ladies — than we could have ever seen in a lifetime. An early morning water taxi trip to the island of Murano revealed the most beautiful blown glass art in the world.

The midnight blue of the ocean on a water cruise from Naples to Sorrento and later the Isle of Capri, glistened in the sun like a million sapphires. We fell in love with Capri, our elegant hotel with a view of the hillside villas and Anacapri, the upper village with its interesting museum, fabulous gardens and spectacular view of the ocean below.

In Capri, we were enchanted with the beautiful people who came on Friday afternoon from neighboring cities - Sorrento, Amalfi, Pompeii, Salerno - to stroll in the piazza on Saturday night, looking like fashion models from the runways in Milan. By Sunday afternoon they were gone - vanished on the late afternoon ferry to the mainland.

We still remember our last night in Capri. We opened the shutters and stood on the balcony of our room, basking in the warm night. The white villas were luminous from the glow of an almost full moon. The insects were singing their lullabies. Capri had been a grand part of this tour.

Three experiences took us to poderes, which our tour guide described as “small working farms similar to those in

America that would provide a bed and breakfast or dining experience.” All had their own vineyards and made and served their own wine. They all had their own olive and lemon groves.

At one, in Sorrento, we enjoyed a lunch of sliced tomatoes, mozzarella, quiche, fresh olives and lemoncello cake for dessert. Then we had the luxury to watch a lady named Maria make mozzarella right before our eyes.

In Montecatini Terme, just 60 miles from Florence, we dined, family style, in rustic luxury at a hilltop podere that was also a bed and breakfast. The view of the valley below was worth an oil painting and our night there included a sudden shower and an amazing sunset.

In Montecatini, we truly saw the importance of the piazza to this small spa and resort community. It was late when we returned from the hilltop dinner but we were restless. We walked the block from the hotel to the piazza and happened upon a free concert with a 95-member girls choir and orchestra from England. We heard music by some of our favorite composers - Dvorak, Mendelssohn, and Vivaldi, whose home we saw along a Venice canal.

Then we found a neighborhood bistro, enjoyed a cappuccino and danced in the street to the music of a magnificent street singer. We closed the day by shopping at midnight in one of the town's bargain shops. We felt like teenagers who had missed their curfew. It felt wonderful.

All of the paintings and photographs we viewed about Italy, before arriving there, became reality as we walked through mysterious side streets, traversed hillsides and climbed over more ancient cobblestones than we could have imagined.

To say the scenery was breathtaking at every turn doesn't do justice to the unbelievable beauty of the fertile and verdant Italian landscape.

Hourly, we were entrenched in the history of this ancient country. No travel guide can prepare tourists for understanding the events that shaped Italy until you see, in person, the complex, well-planned architecture of

such historical sites as St. Peter's Basilica in The Vatican Museum, Pompeii, the Colosseum, the Pantheon, the elaborate stone and marble palaces and sprawling villas on hillsides and mountain tops.

The Cathedrals are the anchors in even the smallest villages. One can only marvel at the amazing architecture, the stained glass windows, the gold leaf and jewels found in historic mosaics that tell the story of Christianity. Their tall spires beckon visitors.

Their chapels draw worshippers seeking solace in a busy world. It was emotionally moving to tour the immense basilica in Assisi, which honors the life work of St. Francis.

Nothing could have prepared us for the immense beauty of the Sistine Chapel and the story-telling ceiling frescoes, created by Michelangelo, under incredibly arduous conditions.

Sculptures abound in every setting throughout Italy. They pay homage to figures from history, literature and myth.

But the larger than life sculpture of David, created by Michelangelo between 1508 and 1512, is the cornerstone work of High Renaissance art. Viewing it in a Florence museum makes one realize what a treasure David is in both the history and contemporary life of Italy.

In every city, large or small, we see how the piazza is truly the heartbeat of an

*A gondola pier is right in front of this highly ornamented Venice cathedral.*







Italian village, or city like Rome, Florence or Venice, Capri, Assisi or Montecatini. It is here that people gather in the center of a city, often after siesta, for food, for fun, for fellowship.

The piazza is the home of gossip central and reveals the pulse of daily Italian life. Often, older gentlemen gather in the piazzas in early evening, drinking coffee or cappuccino and share memories with their friends. We enjoyed some of our greatest adventures in the piazzas of Italy, especially in Montecatini and in St. Mark's Square at the 700-year-old Caffè Florian in Venice.

We shopped, not seriously, but found small treasures for friends or family in unexpected places.

We coveted supple leathers in Florence, marveled at unusual shells and jewelry in Capri and admired

*Left: M.J. Van Deventer-Shelton and Tom Shelton in St. Mark's Square at noontime in Venice.*

*Below: A view of the Campo in Siena. Behind the large buildings are numerous tiny streets and alleyways creating a web of interesting sights for tourists.*







*An overlook in Capri, looking down on the harbor.*

couture silks and shoes in Rome windows along the Via Veneto, a fabled street that rivals New York's Fifth Avenue and Beverly Hills' Rodeo Drive.

Several times, we even gave in to the panhandlers and street vendors, purchasing decorative scarves, an exotic ladies fan, a souvenir umbrella when rain threatened at Pisa and a painting reproduction while browsing among street artists in front of Florence's Uffizi.

We marveled at the age-old skill of the maestro glass artisans in Murano. It was hard to fathom the immense diversity of the shimmering work they created. So fragile in its beauty; so sturdy in reality. We longed to bring an exquisite chandelier home.

As our tour came to a close, all too soon, our guide asked us to share our favorite experiences. Predictably our answers were varied — Capri, Anacapri, The Sistine Chapel, St Peter's Basilica, the farm houses where we dined, the seductive, romantic charm of Venice and the gondolas, the magnificent beauty of Rome and yes, Michaelangelo's David — so hauntingly memorable.

We all followed tradition and joined the throngs of tourists who each threw a euro or two into the famed Trevi Fountain in Rome. More than 3,000 coins are tossed each day into this historic sculpture.

Tom and I could not resist the tradition. We each properly tossed a coin backward over our left shoulder. That singular toss, according to legend, insures us a return visit to Rome and hopefully, the next trip, a sojourn in Milan and other ports of call we missed on this fabulous Italian journey. ■



# Dan Brown's Inferno

## Tracing the Author's Steps through Italy's Famous Sites

By M. J. Van Deventer

Open the pages of Dan Brown's latest thriller, *Inferno*, and you will find yourself following the serpentine trail of Robert Langdon and his sidekick, Dr. Sienna Brooks, in Florence, Italy.



*The doors of the Baptistry of San Giovanni in Florence are described in detail in Dan Brown's Inferno. He writes: "Adorned in the same polychromatic facing stones and striped pilaster as the cathedral, the baptistry distinguished itself from the larger buildings by its striking shape — a perfect octagon. Resembling a layer cake, some had claimed, the eight-sided structure consisted of three distinct tiers that ascended to a shallow white roof."*

You will travel through the ancient cobblestone streets and hidden passageways of Florence, and occasionally you will find yourself in Venice, which Brown calls "an outside slowly sinking museum."

On seeing Venice, Brown says, "Eyeing the canal (that would be the Grand Canal) filled with water taxis, vaporettos, gondolas and private speedboats, it was a floating traffic jam. Somehow, the congestion that would be maddening in Boston felt quaint in Venice." The Doges Palace and St. Mark's Square in Venice also have roles to play in this thriller.

At one point in *Inferno*, page 272 in the hardback edition to be exact, Robert Langdon even winds up in Geneva to attend a World Health Conference. Langdon does get around in this book.

I read *Inferno* while traveling all through southern Italy this past summer on a belated honeymoon. I

was only in Florence one glorious day and my Triple AAA-Trafalgar guide had already prescribed our adventures for July 19.

Seeing Michelangelo's David was at the top of the list. He is Italy's "most admired male nude sculpture," according to author Brown. Perusing David in the round at the Art Institute is now a treasured memory. He lives in splendor in his own soft gray private gallery, which has a vaulted ceiling, high arches and an abundance of artistic molding. There is bullet-proof plexiglass around the lower one third of this 15' high sculpture, to protect David from all of us as we walk around the sculpture, to view it from every angle. No drooling, please.

Those who have read Brown's other books, especially *The Da Vinci Code*, know he is a writer who deals with cryptic codes and symbols, angels, demons and mythical gods. Brown also frequently asks his readers to ponder provocative questions about the role of cutting edge science in our future.

I won't spoil the story for you, but *Inferno* is definitely not a travelogue. However, if you are looking for future places to travel, this book is a grand scavenger hunt. And that's how I chose to read it. Dan Brown is not one of my favorite authors. I outgrew mysteries when I overdosed on Nancy Drew sagas as a child. As an adult reader, I've never been into mysteries and spies and my life has plenty of intrigue without Brown's literary advice.

But since his descriptive words paralleled many of the places I was seeing in Italy, I thought I should respect his viewpoint. I read *Inferno* with notebook and pen in hand, jotting down the places he was in, or I was about to see, or wished our itinerary had allowed time to visit.

All that day in Florence, I kept thinking about the main character, Robert Langdon, who does seem to come to life in the book. Is he following me? Is he behind that statue? Will I bump into him going down this dark, mysterious street in the center of Florence? Is he hiding in the Duomo?

Let's start with Ponte Vecchio. It was an ancient entrance to Florence and is today the most famous

medieval stone footbridge in the world. It is lined on either side with jewelry and goldsmith markets, which are held up by stilts.

There's been a market on the bridge since the 1400s, when open air butchers ran a thriving meat market. According to Brown, "they were banished in 1593, when the rancid smells of rotting meat wafted up into the Vasari Corridor and assaulted the delicate nostrils of the grand duke."

The Vasari Corridor is "the quintessential secret passageway" in Florence, quite similar to the famed Passetto in Vatican City in Rome. Both were secret escape routes so Florence's leaders/royalty could escape to safety unseen. Likewise, the Passetto allowed the Pope to move in and out of Vatican City with anonymity. It's doubtful Pope Francis uses it, since he's very visible in his travels, even drives his own car around Rome, according to our Trafalgar tour guide.

The Ponte Vecchio connects the Pitti Palace to the old city in Florence. This famous palace is situated in a low valley overlooking the Arno River, which has a colorful history in the growth of Florence. Residents have a love-hate relationship with The Arno. They love it because it brings trade to Florence, which equals money. They hate it when it floods. It's never been as temperamental as Mt. Vesuvius in Pompeii, however.

Along with the impressive sculpture of David, the Pitti Palace is one of Florence's most famous landmarks, having been the home of the Medici family. This is where the Medicis, one of the wealthiest of the noble families, lived and reigned, creating very turbulent times for Tuscany from 1569 to 1737.

Today it is a seat of government and an art museum. Oklahoma has a special connection to the Pitti Palace, which Brown was probably not aware of.

Currently on view at Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa is a show titled "The New Frontier," which originated at the Palazzo Pitti in 2012. More than 300,000 people saw the exhibit, which was organized by the Pitti and Gilcrease, which is now owned by the University of Tulsa.

The Palazzo Vecchio is the town hall of Florence and an art museum. Brown writes, "It resembles a giant chess piece, as it guards the southeast corner of the Piazza del Signoria."

The Uffizi plays a big role in *Inferno*. It is one of the most famous and important art galleries in the world. While Robert Langdon and Sienna are being pursued inside the Uffizi, my husband and I were being stalked outside in the Uffizi's immense street gallery to buy a work of art.

The artists who set up easels all over Florence may not be producing museum quality work, but we found an exceptional 1850s reproduction of a Venice canal scene that now graces our living room. My husband bargained the artist down from 15 euros to five ~ \$7.50 American, so it was a steal.

The Uffizi is located at the corner of Piazza della Signoria, the center of life in Florence. Across the street is the Palazzo della Signoria, Florence's home of the municipal government. Both buildings are ornate, expressing Florence's unusual blend of Gothic and Romanesque styles of architecture.

Of course, the Duomo has a role in the book, too. It is the best known site in Italy and this impressive cathedral has a towering presence, with its exquisite dome, the largest built of brick and mortar in the world.

Better known historically as Santa Maria del Fiore, it is a must see for every Florence tourist, along with the Campanile, a landmark tower, much like the Washington Monument in D.C., and the Baptistery, across the street from the cathedral, which houses ornate mosaics, telling stories from the Bible.

Some of the most exciting action in *Inferno* occurs in the Boboli Gardens, a Palazzo I wish had been on our tour. This is a 111-acre masterpiece in a wooded setting. The gardens also feature a sprawling museum with all kinds of intricate rooms, perfect places for Robert and Sienna to hide.

At one point, they are hiding near the Boboli's famous grotto, which is full of stalactites and stalagmites, as well as sculpted animals in a cavernous area oddly intended as a children's playground. There's even an oculus in a ceiling housing a bubble

with floating red carp.

This oculus is not to be confused with the famous oculus in The Pantheon in Rome, where Julius Caesar would stand on a certain day every year in April, so the sun could shine down directly on his self-centered head.

Also while Robert and Sienna are in the Boboli, they're being chased madly by a drone. Do they escape? Can't tell. I must not spoil this part of the story.

I will say *Inferno* is filled with breathless excitement. There are police chases, close calls, hidden passageways, scary ancient streets. There are lies and deceptions. Robert and Sienna are sometimes looking down the barrel of a guard's handgun. There's a suicide. Even the robbery of Dante Alighieri's death mask.

Frequently, Brown cites passages from Dante's *Inferno*, when he thinks the passages will move the story along. More often, he dissects this epic poem, as it provides clues to the mystery Robert Langdon is set on solving.

*Inferno* is not a quick read, even though the action on the pages will get your pulse up. Sometimes you need a scorecard to keep up with the characters. It takes 451 pages for Brown to tell this story, which is hair raising at times.

Near the end of the book, you will find yourself in Istanbul, along with Robert and Sienna, and several other intriguing characters they have collected along the way. They are ever so fearful and frightened of a virus that could threaten the world.

Read the Epilogue. It will at least provide some soothing comfort for the tumultuous journey you've been on in this book.

We were celebrating our approaching first wedding anniversary on this Italian sojourn. Having married last October, my husband and I are still discovering things about each other, even though we've been friends since the first grade.

"Why don't you like Dan Brown's books?" he asked while proofreading this story.

"That's easy," I said. "His books are filled with intense action, suspense, and high drama. They make my pacemaker work overtime." ■





Dr. Chambers

Dr Jennifer Chambers

## Family's Legacy of Giving Back Helps Grow Business

**D**r. Jennifer Chambers hustles about her office in a calm frenzy, organizing files and models of teeth before sitting at her desk. Covering her walls are decorative shelves filled with pictures of her children, husband and family— many of whom are a part of the *My Dentist* family as well.

Once Dr. Chambers is settled, we begin the story of how she became the chief dental director at the booming company, *My Dentist*, Inc.

Dr. Chambers has spent her entire life in the dental industry. From sterilizing equipment at her uncle and *My Dentist* founder, Dr. Pat Steffen's dental practice as a young girl, to assisting her uncle with procedures while completing her dental degree at the University of Oklahoma College of Dentistry, Dr. Chambers' profession ran in her blood.

"From the minute I could pick up a broom and learned my ABC's, I was helping my uncle around his practice cleaning and organizing every day after school," Dr. Chambers said. "I knew almost immediately that becoming a dental professional was my destiny and I had one of the best examples one could ask for- my uncle Pat!"

Dr. Steffen was diagnosed with cancer in 2012 and passed away at the age of 60, a mere two months after his diagnosis. Dr. Chambers used her years of

experience in his offices to step in as chief dental director at *My Dentist*.

"Learning from my uncle was one of the most amazing blessings of my life," Dr. Chambers said. "I couldn't have asked for a better teacher and I'm so proud to continue his legacy through *My Dentist*. The way he conducted his practice and treated his patients is something that I recall every day while working in practices across the five states we have locations."

The Oklahoma City-based practice has always been a family practice and continues to be with many of Dr. Chambers' family members employed by *My Dentist*.

"My staff and I strive to treat each patient like family because that's the premise this company was built on," Dr. Chambers said. "We are all a part of the *My Dentist* family and we try to reiterate that to our patients and our staff- after all, without them, *My Dentist* would not be what it is today."

*My Dentist* is a complete care dental practice with the ability to perform virtually every service for its patients, from orthodontics to oral surgery to clinical care with more than 800 employees. *My Dentist* has more than 45 locations across five states and has recently opened locations in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Kansas.

"For some dentists, the cost of operating their own practice is too high," Dr. Chambers said. "Being a part of a larger parent company like *My Dentist* allows doctors to focus on the aspect that they love, working with patients, while we take care of running the office."

Dr. Chambers assists with the openings of nearly



every *My Dentist* location, serving as new doctor advocate. In this role, Dr. Chambers trains the new members of the *My Dentist* family, educating them on the technological advancements and new procedures available to their customers.

Dr. Chambers also assists dentists across all the states where *My Dentist* is located with major procedures and surgeries. Because of her many roles at *My Dentist*, it is rare for any of Dr. Chambers' workweeks to look alike.

"In any given week, I'm traveling to multiple cities in at least three states, assisting in surgeries and helping new doctors get settled in," Dr. Chambers said. "I love that my job varies from day to day- it's never boring!"

As a way of celebrating the many grand openings this summer, *My Dentist* has begun a community initiative where one deserving community member from the area of the newly opened office can win *My Smile Makeover*, a complete smile restoration valued up to \$10,000. Residents of the city where a new office is opening may nominate themselves, friends or family members that they feel are in need of a complete smile makeover.

*My Smile Makeover* recipients may take advantage of procedures such as veneers, dentures, implants and orthodontics, as well as general dentistry care. The

winner is announced at that location's ribbon cutting ceremony. After a general check-up, *My Dentist* dental professionals work with each recipient to determine the plan best suited for them and their smile.

"I have seen multiple patients undergo complete smile restorations and it has improved their self-esteem, which in turn, improved their relationships and even their careers," Dr. Chambers said. "For *My Dentist* to be able to use our resources to help improve

an individual's life is not only our way of saying thank you for welcoming us to the community, but our way of giving back."

*My Dentist* has announced four winners of the *My Smile Makeover* community initiative and looks forward to several more announcements to be made over the coming months. Dr. Chambers is grateful for the opportunity to give back,

— Dr Jennifer Chambers

which is what influenced her career move into the dental field when she was a teenager.

"After watching my uncle work on a complete restoration of a women's smile and the gratitude she felt for having received that, I was convinced this was what I was meant to do," Dr. Chambers said. "To be a part of changing someone's life by giving them a new smile is an incredible thing. It truly impacts every part of their life. I look forward to doing it for many years to come."

For more information about *My Dentist* or to find an office near you, please visit

[www.mydentistinc.com](http://www.mydentistinc.com). ■

“ Learning from my uncle was one of the most amazing blessings of my life. I couldn't have asked for a better teacher and I'm so proud to continue his legacy through *My Dentist*. ”





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# WALKING AWAY ALZHEIMER'S

**Oklahoma events aim to raise funds, awareness  
about 6th-leading cause of death**

By Charlene Burrell

**W**ouldn't it be great if  
walking could cure  
Alzheimer's?

Walking has helped raise Alzheimer's awareness across the country for more than two decades. The memory walk began with nine Alzheimer's Association chapters in 1989. By 2011, over 600 walks across the country had been orchestrated. This annual walk unites communities and provides opportunities for research on Alzheimer's, the sixth-leading cause of death.

The Walk to End Alzheimer's inspires and educates future generations on this disease. To incorporate awareness and progression, the Alzheimer's Association created this event with the mission to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health.

On September 21, walkers gathered for Oklahoma City's Walk to end Alzheimer's at Chickasaw Bricktown Ballpark. Seven days before the walk, 208 teams had registered and the goal of \$300,000 was over 60 percent complete.

Donations for the walk will be accepted through October 21, 2013. Donations can be submitted in the form of a check, money order or cash and sent through the mail, paid online or taken to the local chapter location in Tulsa.

Bake sales, auctions and cook outs are other ways to raise donations that contribute to the cause,” says Jamie Barker, RN and team captain for Home Instead Senior Care-OKC at the 2012 Walk to end Alzheimer’s. As team captain, Barker was responsible for recruiting others to get involved and excited about walking for a good cause. “It was my first time to participate in the walk. Seeing the decline in clients and the progression of the disease I wanted to do my part.”

“We went to the State Fair after the walk and had our shirts on there too. I saw many people that had the same idea,” Barker said.



All funds raised from the walk go toward clinical research, treatment and education. The Alzheimer’s Association is devoted to spreading awareness on finding a cure or providing care to someone living with the disease. The foundation is also committed to expediting prevention.

This disease has potential to ruin families and bankrupt the healthcare system. Each year a goal amount is set by the Alzheimer’s Association for research and treatment.

The Alzheimer’s Association orchestrates many events to spread awareness of this disease. To participate in a Walk to End Alzheimer’s in Oklahoma this year, the next event is scheduled for November 2, 2013 in Lawton. ■



*Home Instead senior care staff.*





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Lauren Dennison, Urban League of Greater OKC  
Nam Do, Sonic Corp.  
Tina Dzurisin, Archdioceses of Oklahoma City  
Christopher Gilchrist, American Fidelity Group  
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Phillip Mazaheri, Price Edwards & Company  
Matthew McCombs, Heritage Trust Company  
Armand McCoy, Trifecta Communications  
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