



MIDTOWN MONITOR

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Smart Growth Tulsa Helps City Progress

By EMILY RAMSEY
Managing Editor

Advocating for greater citizen engagement and for issues that keep Tulsa on pace with the national trend of vibrant urban cores, Smart Growth Tulsa continues to make itself heard since forming in spring 2014.

Smart Growth Tulsa recently gained nonprofit status with the goal of securing community funding in order to expand its efforts.

Tulsa native Bill Leighty founded Smart Growth Tulsa after becoming concerned about the city's slow implementation of its comprehensive plan, PlaniTulsa, that was adopted in 2010.

"I tried to bring together a coalition of people and organizations, including ones who have knowledge of urban planning," says Leighty. "I felt there were voices in our community who were more progressive."

During the planning process for PlaniTulsa, more than 1,500 Tulsans participated in 11 community workshops during 2008 and 2009 that focused on what issues the city of Tulsa would address in the next 20-30 years and the subsequent solutions.

These issues included the location of residential and business developments, transportation investments, the protection of the environment and open spaces, and expansion of civic offerings such as education and healthcare.

According to PlaniTulsa, those who participated in the workshops painted a future of the city as one with more vibrant streets and corridors, a lively mix of housing, retail, jobs and parks, and a strengthened downtown.

"Tulsans overwhelmingly chose the most progressive option for the city's future: to improve public transportation, walkable neighborhoods, and discourage urban sprawl," Leighty says.

Leighty's background includes 25 years in real estate, five years on the Tulsa Metropolitan Area Planning Commission, and more than three years on Tulsa's Transportation Advisory Board and Tulsa's Land Use Task Force.

Part of the implementation that has taken place since the adoption of PlaniTulsa has been a revision of the city's zoning code from single-use zoning to multi-use.

Smart Growth Tulsa has taken steps to encourage implementation of the plan's other elements in a number of ways.

Perhaps most well known is one of the organization's first issues, in late 2014: the sidewalk along Riverside Drive that will enter from the north into A Gathering Place for Tulsa.

After opposition from local neighbors, then-Mayor Dewey Bartlett elected to eliminate the north-end sidewalk.

Smart Growth Tulsa led the charge, however, to reinstitute the sidewalk, "instead of creating an unsafe situation with no sidewalk," says Leighty.

City Councilor Blake Ewing, whose district encompasses that area, held two Town Hall meetings that filled beyond capacity.

"That was the beginning of us (Smart Growth Tulsa) having an influence," Leighty says.

Since then, the group has taken on a number of issues, including request for dedicated funding for mass transit in Vision Tulsa (a first in Tulsa's history), which led to \$47 million being set aside to fund the Bus Rapid Transit line that will run along Peoria Avenue and 11th Street and \$10 million to go toward creation of a facility that will serve as a hub for all modes of transportation, known as an inter-modal passenger facility.

Additionally, the group advocated for the exclusion of the Arkansas River's Sand Springs and Bixby dams in the Vision Tulsa package, asked that the city renegotiate leases on its city-owned properties, played a major role in advocating for a rail connection between Oklahoma City and Tulsa, and pioneered Oklahoma's first-ever participatory budgeting process with its online "budget allocator," which allowed people to choose their desired Vision projects online, thus providing insight into citizens' priorities, Leighty says.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Bill Leighty, founder and executive director of Smart Growth Tulsa, stands with downtown Tulsa in the background. Smart Growth Tulsa recently gained nonprofit status and launched a fundraising drive on March 15. The funding would allow the organization to grow its advocacy efforts.

"One of the greatest desires from citizens was dedicated funding for parks and recreation; people want to fund our parks department," he continues.

The budget allocator largely represents Smart Growth Tulsa's ultimate intentions of "building a more participatory democracy to get more citizens involved."

"We want to use technology to collect data to help our city officials make decisions in line with citizen needs."

The group's next step is its fundraising drive "to see if the community is going to support a staff for Smart Growth," he says.

Smart Growth Tulsa kicked off its fundraising drive on March 15, with a goal of \$160,000 to fund one year.

"There are so many things that we

still want to do. In order to grow, to be more effective, we need to move forward."

If the nonprofit secures funding, that "moving forward" includes holding a series of town hall meetings focused on the Arkansas River and what kind of uses the community envisions for the river, advocating for the creation of a community garden at 61st Street and Peoria Avenue and for the non-commercialization of Helmerich Park, and launching the use of Bang the Table, an online engagement platform that offers greater opportunity for community feedback, Leighty says.

"We don't need people in a back room making decisions that impact the entire community," says Leighty. "We are an advocate for smart policies that would help the city."

KUDOS OF THE MONTH: Tulsa Performing Arts Center

The Tulsa Performing Arts Center is celebrating its 40th year since opening its doors in 1977. During its four decades, the PAC has hosted a who's who of performers and acts that include Tony Bennett, Michael Bubl , Kelly Clarkson, Steve Martin and Itzhak Perlman and touring Broadway musicals such as "The Lion King," "Wicked" and "The Phantom of the Opera."

The PAC was constructed with a then-unique combination of public and private funds. The center is owned and operated by the City of Tulsa and was originally intended to provide a modern facility to house local, nonprofit performing arts organizations.

Public funds for building the PAC were provided by a 1973 bond issue that were matched in private dollars with the help of civic leaders John H. Williams and Leta Chapman. Led by Mayor Robert J. LaFortune, Tulsa voters overwhelmingly approved the challenge, and the center that became known as "Everyone's Place" held its first concert on March 19, 1977, featuring the Tulsa Philharmonic and jazz great Ella Fitzgerald.

In March, the PAC held its 40th Anniversary Concert with Jane Monheit, Nicholas Payton and the Tulsa Symphony Orchestra, in a tribute to Fitzgerald's legacy.



The PAC houses four theatres, with local arts organizations and commercial entertainment promoters being its primary clients.

For more information about the Tulsa PAC, visit tulsapac.com.



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Decorated Navy SEAL to Headline S.A. Booth Event

Marcus Luttrell, author of the New York Times bestseller *Lone Survivor: The Eyewitness Account of Operation Redwing and the Lost Heroes of SEAL Team 10*, will serve as the keynote speaker at the 24th Annual Salvation Army William Booth Society Dinner April 11 at the Cox Business Center. Luttrell, a United States Navy SEAL, received the Navy Cross and Purple Heart for his heroic actions on June 28, 2005.

Luttrell's 2007, *Lone Survivor*, tells the story of four Navy SEALs who journeyed into the mountainous border of Afghanistan and Pakistan on Operation Redwing. An unparalleled motivational story of survival, the book is also a moving tribute to the friends and teammates who did not make it off the mountain. A powerful testament to the courage, integrity, patriotism and community that forged these American heroes, *Lone Survivor* is an incredible account of teamwork, fortitude and modern warfare.

In January 2014, Luttrell's amazing story made the leap to the big screen with the blockbuster film, *Lone Survivor*, directed by Peter Berg (*Battleship*, *Hancock*) and starring Mark Wahlberg (*The Fighter*, *The Departed*) as Luttrell. The film celebrated a historic open, earning the second biggest January debut of all time.

Luttrell joined the U.S. Navy in March 1999 and became a combat-trained SEAL in January 2002. After serving in Iraq for two years, he was deployed to Afghanistan in the spring of 2005. As a SEAL, Marcus Luttrell was trained in weapons, demolition, and unarmed combat. He also served as Platoon medic.

The William Booth Society Dinner, named for The Salvation Army's founder, is the largest source of funding for outreach programs that include the Center of Hope homeless shelter, Christmas assistance, and the six area Boys & Girls Clubs. The theme of the April 11 dinner is "Mission: Salvation" and will focus on the many programs The Salvation Army provides in the community that helps those in need with basic services, positive mentoring and rebuilding lives.

"We are very excited to host a true American hero, Marcus Luttrell, as we come together to help those who desperately need our help," says Shane Fernandez, event co-chair with his wife, Marnie Glasgow Fernandez.

Past speakers for the dinner include: Deborah Norville, Tony Dungy, Paul Harvey, President George H.W. Bush and Barbara Bush, Walter Cronkite, Jay Leno, Tim Russert, Steve Forbes, President



Courtesy Salvation Army

BENEVOLENT ARMY: From left, Captain Jessie Chapman, The Salvation Army Associate Area Commander; Captain Ken Chapman, The Salvation Army Tulsa Area Commander; and Shane Fernandez and Marnie Glasgow Fernandez, 2017 William Booth Society Dinner Chairs are getting ready to host Navy SEAL Marcus Luttrell at the 24th Annual Salvation Army William Booth Society Dinner, Tuesday, April 11 at the Cox Business Center.



Courtesy Salvation Army

YOUTH OF THE YEAR: Mackenzie Bechtold, 15, center, of Tulsa, won the 2017 Youth of the Year competition through The Salvation Army Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Tulsa at a banquet held recently at the Helmerich Research Center of the OSU-Tulsa Campus. She is with Captain Ken Chapman and captain Jessie Chapman.

Bill Clinton, Peyton Manning and Bob Costas.

Committee members for the 2017 event include: 2017 WBS Committee Chairmen Shane & Marnie Fernandez; Mitch & Melinda Adwon; Pat Baldwin; Billie & Howard Barnett; Konnie Boulter; John Bowen; Jayme Cox; Sheila Curley; Camille Nassar; Emily & Todd Perkins; Cassie Reese; LouAnn Smith and Steve & Dede Soule.

Major sponsors of the event include

the Stevens Foundation, The Bovaird Foundation, The Barnett Family Foundation, The Borden Family Foundation, Cyclonic Valve, Charles and Peggy Stephenson, The Barnes Family Foundation, The Merkel Family Foundation, T.D. Williamson, Paul & Helen Sisk Trust, Asphalt & Fuel Supply, The Oxley Foundation, The Herald and Edna White Foundation and The Helmerich Trust.

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April

1- Black Grace- Choregus Productions

1-9- The Last Days of Judas Iscariot- Theatre Pops

2- Hermitage Piano Trio- Chamber Music Tulsa

5-27- Michael Knigin- Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art

5- Brown Bag It: Tulsa Camerata- PAC Trust

8- Brahms' Requiem- TSO Classics

11-16- Dirty Dancing: The Classic Story on Stage- Celebrity Attractions

14- Bollywood And Beyond- South Asian Performing Arts Foundation

18- Che Malambo- Choregus Productions

20-23, 27-29- Annie Get Your Gun- Sand Springs Community Theatre

21-23- Reverb Play Festival- Echo Theatre Company

21- Michael A. McFaul- Tulsa Town Hall

22- Chris Botti- 35 Concerts

30- Lysander Piano Trio- Chamber Music Tulsa

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CIVICS

Tulsa Bike Share to Put City on the Cutting Edge

Program to Launch in September with 'Smart Bikes'

By EMILY RAMSEY
Managing Editor

Editor's Note: Daniel Sperle, executive director of Tulsa Bike Share, is one of Greater Tulsa Reporter's "10 People to Watch in 2017," as announced in its January 2017 issue. GTR was the first news group in greater Tulsa to introduce "10 People to Watch," which launched in January 2009.

Throughout the year, GTR will publish a series of articles featuring each of its "10 People to Watch," with next month's issue to feature Tulsa's Young Professionals 2017 Chair Stephanie Cameron.

Daniel Sperle's role as executive director of Tulsa Bike Share combines Sperle's enthusiasm for Tulsa and knowledge in urban design and transportation. So, when the opportunity to apply for the position came along last year, "a lot of people were telling me that this was in my wheelhouse," he says.

Tulsa Bike Share was started by INCOG (Indian Nations Council of Governments) in 2014. It is part of the GO Plan and will receive a portion of funds from Vision Tulsa.

Sperle learned about the job from one of his instructors at the University of Oklahoma's Urban Design Studio in Tulsa, where Sperle was finishing up his master's degree.

Sperle earned his bachelor's degree in visual communications from the University of Oklahoma in 2013, with his original career plan revolving around graphic design.

However, as he became more interested in architecture and city design, after graduation he worked in urban planning and development in Oklahoma City on projects that involved downtown and river development.

"I was working on some cool projects, but I wanted to be working on something like that in Tulsa," says the native Tulsan and Tulsa School of Arts and Sciences alum.

As he further developed his love for the built environment and urban planning, his next step was to pursue a master's in architectural urban studies at OU-Tulsa. While Sperle was considering other master's programs, part of what attracted him to OU's program specifically in Tulsa was its focus on interaction with city leaders and its hands-on real-life projects, he says.

James Wagner, formerly with INCOG and now serving as Chief of Performance Strategy and Innovation on Tulsa Mayor Bynum's staff, was one of Sperle's teachers.

One project that Sperle played a role in was creation of a redevelopment plan for 11th Street. The students worked with many local entities and stakeholders, including Lobeck Taylor Family Foundation, City Councilor Blake Ewing and University of Tulsa President Gerard Clancy.

It has been fun to see some of our suggestions implemented along Route 66, he says, like the Fuel 66 food truck park, 2439 E. 11th St.

Sperle officially took the position of Tulsa Bike Share executive director in August.

"Transportation has always been an interest of mine in how it can impact the way a city is built," he says.

Sperle has brought his millennial energy for walkability and multimodal transportation to his role, including his push for Tulsa's bike share program to be "at the forefront of where bike share is going," he says.

Although, bike sharing is nothing new to Tulsa, and in the circle of

bike share experts, Tulsa is well known, notes Sperle.

Why?

Tulsa was the first North American city to launch a bike share program: Tulsa Townies in 2007. Additionally, Tulsa Townies continues to hold onto its popularity, with each bicycle averaging close to two rides per day, says Sperle.

As the national trend skews increasingly toward active transportation, Tulsans have shown their embrace of cycling with a growing number of cyclists appearing on roads and sidewalks and the continued growth of Tulsa Tough.

"Cycling is not a cultural norm for Oklahoma, but it is for Tulsa," he says.

With an eye toward progress, a few changes have been made to Tulsa Bike Share's timeline and set-up after Sperle and Tulsa Bike Share's board of directors considered the future of bike sharing programs nationwide.

Instead of launching in the spring with 108 bicycles, Phase I will launch in September with 140 bicycles and 18 launching stations throughout downtown Tulsa.

"I want to show that Tulsa can be ahead of the curve," Sperle says.

And mobile application is the way of the future for bike sharing, he continues.

That means that Tulsa Bike Share will incorporate a mobile app that will indicate the locations of available bicycles, and the bicycles will be "smart bikes," equipped with technology that will allow the bicycles to be tracked and enable users to lock and leave bicycles anywhere, as opposed to only at "docking stations."

Sperle hopes to see Phase II of the program rolled out a few months after Phase I, but that will largely depend on the amount of



EMILY RAMSEY for GTR Newspapers

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Daniel Sperle entered his position as Tulsa Bike Share executive director in August and will lead the launch of Phase I of the city's bike share program in September. The program will begin with 140 bicycles and 18 launching stations throughout downtown Tulsa.

community funding assistance received, he says.

The Phase II extension could include bicycle stations at A Gathering Place for Tulsa, on the University of Tulsa campus, Brookside, Cherry Street, 11th Street, and in the Kendall Whittier area.

Also, in line with the launch of the Bus Rapid Transit line along 11th Street and Peoria Avenue, Tulsa Bike Share will introduce a universal pass that can be used both with bicycles and MTTA (Metropolitan Tulsa Transit Authority) buses, he says. "The plan is to install a bike station at every bus stop so that bikes become the last mile connec-

tor to people's final destinations." City officials hope to launch both the Peoria Avenue and 11th Street routes in 2019.

"We want to make sure that we are servicing the community in the way that we need to."

"Bike share is intended to work with public transportation."

Coming most quickly on the horizon is a rebranding effort by Tulsa Bike Share at the end of May, including a new name, says Sperle, based on input from focus groups and local stakeholders.

"We are creating something to add to Tulsa's culture, and we want the community to feel like they own the system themselves," says Sperle.

OU-Tulsa Hosts UK Minister

On March 8, Henry McLeish, former First Minister of Scotland, visited the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa's Center for Studies in Democracy and Culture, as the inaugural guest for the center's new series of "Fireside Conversations" that will feature small group visits with important figures in global arts, politics and culture.

McLeish spoke about current events in the UK, including what Brexit means for Great Britain and how Brexit raises the possibility of Scottish independence.

His most recent book is "Rethinking Our Politics: The

Political and Constitutional Future of Scotland and the UK." He has authored or co-authored over half a dozen books.

McLeish served as a member of the cabinet during the prime ministership of Tony Blair. He also played a key role in the process of creating devolution for Scotland and was subsequently elected as a member of the first Scottish Parliament. He subsequently rose to become the First Minister of Scotland.

McLeish currently serves as a member of the Queen's Privy Council.



WELCOMING: At the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa's Center for Studies in Democracy and Culture's "Fireside Conversations" are, from left, Dr. Roger Blais, University of Tulsa provost; Dr. James Sloss, OU-Tulsa Graduate College dean; former First Minister of Scotland Henry McLeish; Howard Barnett, OSU-Tulsa president; Raj Basu, OSU-Tulsa vice president for academic affairs; and OU-Tulsa professor Rodger Randle.

HENRY MCLEISH: Former First Minister of Scotland Henry McLeish spoke on March 8 as the inaugural guest for the Center for Studies in Democracy and Culture's "Fireside Conversations."

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Students Benefit from Reading Partners Initiative

From The Mayor

By G.T. BYNUM
Mayor of Tulsa

The spirit of high expectations in our community continues gaining momentum as we work toward making Tulsa a premier place in Oklahoma to receive an education.

The City Council and I have established improvements in high school graduation rates as one of our eight areas of strategic focus moving forward. We know public education matters to Tulsans, and third-grade reading is a key academic benchmark for students. Third-grade reading proficiency is one of the greatest indicators of whether or not a student will graduate from high school. We also know our third-grade reading proficiency in Tulsa is right around 50 percent. We must do much better.

Fortunately, there is a strategy to make improvements and it's called Reading Partners. Reading

Partners is a volunteer program in which Tulsans volunteer an hour per week to practice reading with a student who needs a little extra help in improving their reading skills. The results speak for themselves: While only half of Tulsa third-graders are reading at a proficient level currently, that number skyrockets to over 90 percent for students who participate in Reading Partners. The only limitation on the program's success is the number of adults who volunteer.

This past February, I signed an executive order giving City of Tulsa employees the option of participating in the Reading Partners program during City business hours, if volunteering will not impact their work productivity. This agreement makes the City of Tulsa the largest employer partner with Reading Partners in the United States. The progress of each child that a City of Tulsa employee partners with will be tracked, so at the end of the academic year we will be able to show the citizens of Tulsa what a

difference their employees made in the academic success of Tulsa students.

Allowing City employees to participate in the Reading Partners program will also indirectly affect a number of other long-term priorities for our city, ranging from economic development to reducing crime rates. What we're doing today is something students will see the benefit of quickly, while our community will experience the benefit from this 10, 15 and 20 years down the road. As with education in general, this is a long-term investment.

I'm grateful to Reading Partners for their program that complements Tulsa Public Schools' work to ensure all students read on grade level. It's a proven way for members of our community to volunteer one hour a week and by doing so, help every student have the literacy skills they need to succeed in school and in life. Anyone interested in learning more can visit: www.readingpartners.org/tulsa



Courtesy City of Tulsa

HAPPY LEARNERS: Tulsa Mayor G.T. Bynum listening to a student read. She is one of the many students who is benefitting from Reading Tulsa volunteers who spend at least an hour per week helping the students to improve their reading skills.

Renewing a spirit of high expectations also means having clear ways to reach our goals. When it comes to making Tulsa the best place in Oklahoma to

receive an education, Reading Partners offers a clear way for all of us to play our part. Together, we are building a better city for the next generation.

Women's Association Supports Tulsa Boys' Home

The Women's Association, founded in 1938, is an auxiliary support group of Tulsa Boys' Home. They provide essential supplies for the boys and raise thousands of dollars each year for TBH through numerous fun-filled events. Since 1938, these volunteer women have been major contributors of energy and influence in fund-raising campaigns. Members have been providing food and clothing since the early years and continue to raise money for expansion and ongoing operating expenses. Today's members consistently help with towels, socks, and underwear, as well as special needs for the kitchen, holiday gifts for the boys, and more.

Springtime events include the Annual Spring Luncheon March 30 and the Tulsa Boys' Home annual fundraiser, "The Run for the Roses," a Kentucky Derby party held at the Expo Square Pavilion on the first Saturday afternoon in May.

The Annual Spring Luncheon benefits Tulsa Boys' Home and is held at the Renaissance Hotel. This annual fundraiser is a blend of exciting events that include a silent auction of fabulously themed baskets, gift certificates, Kentucky Derby style hats, and many other unique items. Luncheon attendees are entertained by music and song.

Sponsorship opportunities are available for Women's Association events.



GTR Newspapers photo

FUN FUNDRAISER: Getting ready for this year's Women's Association Spring Luncheon fundraiser, the "Carnival Celebration," are, from left, Tulsa Boys' Home resident Nathan; Patti Smith, president of the Women's Association of the Tulsa Boys' Home; Honorable Karen Keith, Tulsa county commissioner District 2; Susan Bynum wife of Tulsa Mayor G.T. Bynum; Jacki Van Cura, chairwoman of the Spring Luncheon; and Tulsa Boys' Home resident Chance.

CTCA Matches Employees with Community Caring Organizations

More than 30 non-profit organizations gathered at Cancer Treatment Centers of America (CTCA) for the hospital's third annual Community Day held March 2.

The event, designed to raise awareness for community service with the medical center's broad range of staff, allowed employees to learn more about each agency's mission in one convenient spot. The event is a part of a larger initiative at the hospital, called CTCA Hope Works.

The event provided an opportunity for the CTCA staff to learn more about all of the volunteer opportunities and fundraising programs from the diverse representation from non-profit organizations, as well as participate in a

"flash mob" with dancing staff and volunteers who regularly perform in the hospital lobby on Thursdays to bring cheer to patients and caregivers.

Lisa Buckmaster, who works in Imaging Services at CTCA and has become involved with Street School, said, "Today's economy is making it harder and harder for many nonprofit groups to raise the funds they need to provide much needed services for people who can't afford to pay for them on their own. Many of these organizations rely on private donations for their funding and the less they receive, the less they can provide to people in need. It makes my heart and soul feel better knowing that I've given something to the kids and faculty at Street School, whether it be money, school sup-

plies, time or whatever they may need."

Just last year, CTCA employees volunteered 3,000 hours to 40-plus community organizations. Funds donated by employees to area causes equaled more than \$500,000 to local efforts like the Tulsa Area United Way, Street School and many cancer support organizations. In addition, CTCA employees were active on 30-plus boards and committees of local organizations.

Examples of in-kind donation drives last year at the hospital included: toys and coats for Tulsa Women and Children's Center, business clothes for Dress for Success, baby needs for Emergency Infant Services, and school supplies for Street School. The hospital's interim president



SUPPORTING STREET SCHOOL: Street School Media and Community Relations Director Kelly McElroy, left, with CTCA Interim CEO and President Jay Foley and CTCA's Lisa Buckmaster and Jennifer Jameson at the CTCA Community Caring event. Buckmaster and Jameson are community volunteers.

and CEO Jay Foley said of the day, "Volunteerism and community involvement is encouraged and

commended at CTCA. It's an honor to be part of this caring community."



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Newsmakers Honorees Communicate, Educate, Innovate

The Association for Women in Communications (AWC) Tulsa Chapter will celebrate Oklahoma women who have made significant contributions to the greater Tulsa community and Oklahoma at its annual Newsmakers Awards luncheon, Wednesday, May 3, at Southern Hills Country Club.

The unifying theme to this year's honorees is improving lives through education, communication and philanthropy.

This year's Newsmakers are Tulsa Public Schools Superintendent Deborah A. Gist, Tulsa Community College Spanish Professor and TV host Tina Peña, and Hardesty Foundation Executive Director Michelle Hardesty.

The Saidie Lifetime Achievement Award winner is Teresa Miller, long-time host of Writing Out Loud, author and founder of the Oklahoma Center for Poets and Writers, Celebration of Books, and co-founder of Tulsa Reads.

Deborah Gist

Named as one of Time magazine's 100 Most Influential People in the World, Deborah Gist graduated from Memorial High School. She returned to Tulsa Public Schools to become its superintendent, bringing innovative thinking and a wealth of educational leadership experience including as Rhode Island Commissioner of Education.

Her degrees include a doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania, master's from Harvard University and bachelor's from the University of Oklahoma. She began her education career as a teacher and moved into administration in 1996, eventually serving as a senior policy analyst for the U.S. Department of Education and as the first state superintendent of education for the District of Columbia.

In addition to leading one of



TERESA MILLER



DEBORAH GIST



MICHELLE HARDESTY



TINA PEÑA

Oklahoma's largest school districts, Gist also serves the community on the boards of Tulsa Area United Way, Junior Achievement of Oklahoma, and the Boy Scouts of America Indian Nations Council.

Tina Peña

Tina Peña, a native of Lima, Peru, is founder and president of Mita's Foundation and associate professor of Spanish at Tulsa Community College, where she also trains medical interpreters. She is host of "Temas en Tulsa," a Spanish language television program sponsored by Tulsa Community College that provides both information to Tulsa's growing Latino community and is a place for Spanish language learners to polish their comprehension skills.

Peña is the 2016 Governor's Arts Award recipient for individual service in the Oklahoma arts community, 2015 recipient of the United Nations of Oklahoma's Human Rights Award, a 2007 Pinnacle Award Winner, and serves on the Governor's Task Force for the Advancement of Hispanic Students in Higher Education.

Mita's Foundation efforts include

offering charitable relief and improved quality of life for Peru's impoverished and underprivileged children and their families. The non-profit hosts an annual mission to Peru to distribute backpacks filled with school supplies along with toiletries and self-care items.

Michelle Hardesty

Michelle Hardesty brings a strong business background to her role as executive director of The Hardesty Family Foundation, Inc., which was by her parents in 2005. Previously Hardesty, served as president of Hardesty Realty Corp., where she managed more than 2,000 apartment units and 65 employees in six states.

Her honors include Tulsa Business Journal Woman of Distinction and Outstanding Philanthropist of the Year from the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

Hardesty's additional community contributions include bringing a new meaning to speed dating when she used the concept to introduce potential grantees to funders as member and past president of the Funders Roundtable, a regional

association of grant makers. She also organized the poverty game for trustees and staff of local foundations. The poverty game requires participants to work together to provide food, shelter, and necessities while facing the same barriers as people living in poverty.

Saidie Lifetime Achievement Award: Teresa Miller

Teresa Miller's roots run four generations deep in Oklahoma. She grew up in Tahlequah where she also started in the newspaper business and wrote her first novel, Remnants of Glory. Her other books include a memoir Means of Transit, and novel Family Correspondence. She is currently working on a new novel, Provenance.

Miller was host and executive producer of the long-running television series "Writing Out Loud." The show featured more than 350 interviews including 20 Pulitzer winners. She advocated for Oklahoma writers and eventually developed the Oklahoma Storyteller Series at the University of Oklahoma Press and curated an Oklahoma writers exhibit for the Oklahoma History Center.

In 1994, while struggling with writer's block, Miller established the Oklahoma Center for Poets and Writers and the Oklahoma Writers Hall of Fame, now housed permanently at Oklahoma State University-Tulsa. The center has hosted many of the country's leading authors, such as Pat Conroy, Frank McCourt, Maya Angelou, Alice Walker, Dave Barry, Isabel Allende, Amy Tan, and Neil Gaiman.

Miller also launched the Celebration of Books and Tulsa Reads. Through Tulsa Reads, she developed a book registry to provide free books to Tulsa area groups such as Tulsa Women in Recovery, Family and Children's Services, and KIPP Academy.

About the event

The Newsmakers Awards luncheon provides funding for AWC Tulsa Chapter's college scholarships and for giving a new book to every student at Anderson Elementary School.

Tickets are \$55 for members and \$65 for non-members. Sponsorships also are available.



GATHERING PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT: *Adventure Playground equipment arrived at the Gathering Place March 22. Over the last year, equipment has been accumulating in a 40,000-square foot Tulsa warehouse as construction of the playground has progressed. Hand-crafted wooden towers will make up the five-acre playground. A project of George Kaiser Family Foundation, A Gathering Place for Tulsa will transform nearly 100 acres of Tulsa's waterfront along the Arkansas River into a dynamic and active space when the project is completed. 66.5 acres will be completed within Phase I by late 2017.*



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VARIETY

Spring is Here, Come Out and Play

After a hard day, and especially after a rough week or an exasperating time wrangling tasks and managing challenges, I am tempted, like you might be, to get comfy, read, or escape to "On Demand" television. Yet, I'm always glad when I've made an effort to attend a good play or dance performance, view art, groove to live music or take in a great film. And if someone can make me laugh, I am all about that.

There will be a few opportunities to laugh or smile this month with so many top-flight comics in town. Comics generally are very smart people, and one of the most brilliant is Chris Rock. Comedy Central voted him fifth greatest comedian of all time. When I read that, I had to research to see who were considered the top four. Guess! Don't look yet, but I will post those names at the very end of this column. Chris will perform at the River Spirit Casino Apr. 6, while his compatriots from SNL, Adam Sandler, David Spade and Rob Schneider (all of whom, along with Chris Farley, were "the bad boys of SNL"), will appear with him and Nick Swordson at the Casino on April 18. And, if you like a different brand of comedy, consider Jeff Foxworthy and Larry & the Cable Guy at the BOK Center, Apr. 15.

The Riverspirit has hosted a string of headline performers since it opened its new theatre. In addition to the comics, look for Smokey Robinson on Apr. 20 and Kenny Rogers on Apr. 28, both at the RiverSpirit, and also another big-name performer, trumpeter Chris Botti at the Tulsa PAC, Apr. 22.

"Nobody puts Baby in a corner" as long as Johnny Castle is around. I've probably seen the "Dirty Dancing" movie with Patrick Swayze and Jennifer Grey a dozen times or more, and I'm excited to discover what the story looks and sounds like live onstage. Celebrity Attractions hosts the Broadway show, Apr. 11-16 at the PAC, complete with steamy dancing and songs like "Hungry Eyes," and more.

"Pippin," with music written by Stephen Schwartz, who penned

"Wicked," plays at the Broken Arrow PAC for one night, Apr. 23. I love the music in this piece, especially "Corner of the Sky." I made a

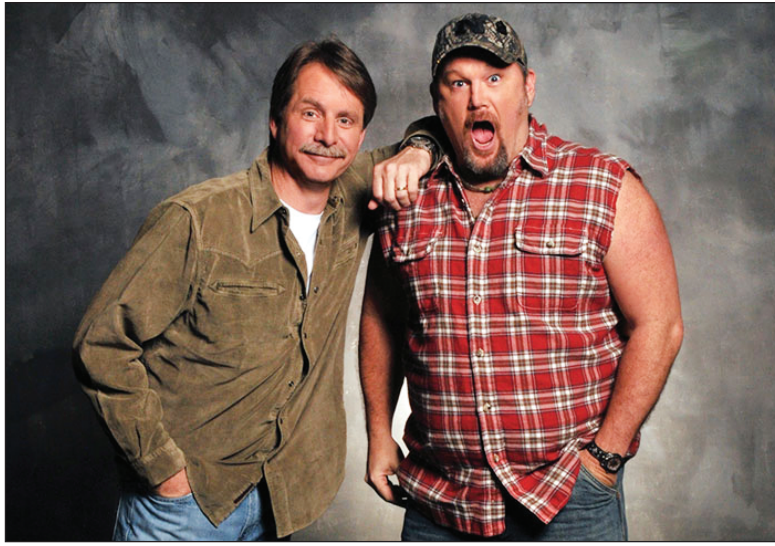
point to see "Pippin" on Broadway just after it won four Tony Awards - one for best revival. There is an abundance of acrobatics in this show, trapeze-flying and Fosse-style dancing.

Dance and chamber music are passions of mine, so I'm happy to enjoy them back to back at the PAC. Choregus Productions

presents Black Grace, all the way from New Zealand, Apr. 1. Tulsa is one stop on the company's 10-city "One Night Only" tour in the U.S. Other cities include Denver, Salt Lake City, Palo Alto (Stanford) and Austin. A hallmark of Black Grace is its physicality, energy and the narrative quality of choreographer Neil Jeremia's work. Another Choregus presentation is Che Malambo, Apr. 18, also in Chapman Music Hall. Fourteen Argentine men - gauchos - perform the malambo, which is only danced by men and is inspired by the galloping horses of Argentina! The program was created by former ballet dancer and choreographer Gilles Brinas.

On Apr. 2, the Hermitage Piano Trio from Russia makes its Tulsa debut with music from Rachmaninoff, Shostakovich and Rimsky-Korsakov. I don't know how Chamber Music Tulsa can possibly follow the fabulous Beethoven Winter Festival, but this program and these highly praised performers are going to provide their own fireworks. They've expressed an interest in seeing Tulsa's vaunted Art Deco, and I hope I have an opportunity to show them around. We can hear The Hermitage ensemble open April and the Lysander Piano Trio close it on Apr. 30. Lysander will perform music from Spanish and Italian composers and Schubert's Trio in E Flat major.

I don't often include films in Show Buzz, but I think we should gather at the Circle Cinema, Apr. 20-23 and geek out at the Architecture & Design Film Festival: Tulsa. Twenty-one films



BLUE-COLLAR COMEDY: Jeff Foxworthy and Larry the Cable Guy will perform at the BOK Center April 15.



CHRIS ROCK: Recently named a top five all-time comic by Comedy Central, Chris Rock comes to the River Spirit Casino April 6.

from nine countries are featured, and curated by Kyle Bergman, program director of ADFF: New York. I attended his film fest in New York in September and saw several of these beautiful and interesting films. One that will resonate locally is the Eero Saarinen film about the man who created the St. Louis Arch and so many other extraordinary structures. Two of the many special guests at the festival are Paul Makovsky from Metropolis magazine, and Pulitzer Prize-winning former architectural columnist for the NYC Times, and now with Vanity Fair, author Paul Goldberger. I'm reading his book "Why Architecture Matters," and it is so very good. He has a recent book out on Frank Gehry and will sign books following the film "Getting Frank Gehry."

ADFF: Tulsa, hosted by Tulsa Foundation for Architecture, will include films about well-known architects, a film exploring the life of Mexican-American photographer Pedro Guerro, a film about yarn and all the cool art being crocheted and knitted, and films about buildings, gardens and communities. I particularly liked "Windshield," which tells the story of an East Coast family that has a West Coast modern architect design their home. Not long after it is completed, tragedy strikes. The story plays out with the help of old photographs and early home movies.

Spring is here! Come out and play all month long.

The answer to the comedian question is: Richard Pryor, George Carlin, Lenny Bruce and Woody Allen.



SMOKEY ROBINSON: The American R&B singer/songwriter brings his Motown hits to River Spirit Casino April 20.



ADFF: TULSA: Frank Gehry's "Treehouse Project," otherwise known as the "crumpled brown paper bag" by its critics, is one of the unique sculptural buildings that has made Frank Gehry an international icon in architecture. The film "Getting Frank Gehry" shows at 6 p.m. April 21 as part of the Architecture & Design Film Festival at Circle Cinema April 21-23.

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April Filled With Epic Stories, Music at Tulsa PAC

Special from the PAC

Spring is here, and with it the Tulsa Performing Arts Center is excited to welcome new and familiar entertainment to T-Town. Here's a look at what's in store for the month.

Set in a time-bending, darkly comic world between heaven and hell, *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* reexamines the plight and fate of the Bible's most infamous and unexplained sinner. This thought-provoking work by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Stephen Adly Guirgis tells the story of a court case over the ultimate fate of the disciple who betrayed his friend and teacher to the authorities. Lawyers call for the testimonies of such witnesses as Mother Teresa, Sigmund Freud and Satan. Theatre Pops presents the drama April 1-2 and 6-9 in Liddy Doenges Theatre.

One of New Zealand's leading contemporary dance companies, Black Grace was founded in 1995 by dancer/choreographer Neil Jeremia. Drawing from his Samoan and New Zealand roots, Jeremia creates innovative, highly physical dance works, rich in the storytelling traditions of the South Pacific and expressed with raw finesse, unique beauty and power. Featuring some of New Zealand's finest dancers, the company has toured to Europe, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Australia and New Caledonia. The Choregus Productions show comes to Chapman Music Hall April 1.

Descending from the great Russian musical tradition, the Hermitage Piano Trio is distinguished by its exuberant musicality, interpretative range and sumptuous sound. For their first appearance in Tulsa, pianist Ilya Kazantsev, cellist Sergey Antonov and violinist Misha Keylin have selected a dramatic and passionate program. Traditional compositions include Rachmaninoff's "Trio Élégiaque" No. 1 in G Minor and Shostakovich's Trio No. 2 in E Minor, Op. 67. The trio will also perform Rimsky-Korsakov's seldom-heard Trio in C Minor, which features some of the most beautiful and sublime moments in Russian music. Chamber Music Tulsa presents this unique show April 1 in John Williams Theatre.

Tulsa Camerata, Tulsa's own chamber music ensemble, returns to the PAC Trust's Brown Bag It series with a pair of quintets that evoke dreams of a lost past and hopes for a better future. The program includes excerpts from Osvaldo Golijov's klezmer-inspired *Dreams and Prayers* of Isaac the Blind and the nostalgic Clarinet Quintet of Johannes Brahms. This free show is April 5 at 12:10 p.m.



THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE: *Celebrity Attractions* brings the coming-of-age tale "Dirty Dancing - The Classic Story On Stage" April 11-16.

Tulsa Oratorio Chorus joins Tulsa Symphony for a work that became the central and longest work of Johannes Brahms' career, the German Requiem. Unconvinced of man's afterlife, Brahms composed this work after the deaths of his mother and his beloved friend and fellow composer Robert Schumann. "Ein Deutsches Requiem" was not intended as a mass for the dead like the ones his contemporaries and earlier composers had written but instead as a work of consolation for those left behind. James Bagwell is guest conductor for this concert happening April 8 in Chapman Music Hall.

Running April 11-16, come have the time of your life when *Celebrity Attractions* presents "Dirty Dancing - The Classic Story on Stage." Seen by millions across the globe, this worldwide smash hit tells the classic story of Baby and Johnny, two fiercely independent young spirits from different worlds who come together in what will be the most challenging and triumphant summer of their lives. This show features the hit songs "Hungry Eyes," "Hey Baby," "Do You Love Me?" and the heart-stopping "(I've Had) The Time of My Life."

Bollywood and Beyond is a unique concert experience presenting three interrelated, yet distinct, musical concepts: Bollywood by legendary playback singer Kavita Krishnamurti; global fusion by violin icon Dr. L. Subramaniam; and contemporary world music comprising elements of pop, rock and jazz fused with traditional Indian music by SubraMania (Bindu and Ambi Subramaniam). The concert features popular Bollywood numbers, soulful compositions and virtuosic violin playing. The Chicago World Music Festival calls Dr. L.

Subramaniam "arguably the greatest violinist in the history of Indian music." South Asian Performing Arts Foundation presents this unique show April 14 in John Williams Theatre.

The Argentine-based company Che Malambo excites audiences through precise footwork and rhythmic stomping, drumming of the bombos, singing, and whirling boleadoras (lassos with stones on the end). Presenting a thrilling, percussive dance and music spectacle, the company's work celebrates the unique South American cowboy tradition of the gaucho. This powerhouse all-male company of 14 gauchos is directed by French choreographer and former ballet dancer Gilles Brinas. Che Malambo brings fiery Malambo traditions and virtuosic dancing to the contemporary stage for an exhilarating and entertaining show that is perfect for the entire family. Choregus Productions brings the show April 18 to Chapman Music Hall.

"Annie Get Your Gun," presented by Sand Springs Community Theatre, is a fictionalized version of the life of American sharpshooter Annie Oakley (1860-1926). When Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show visits Cincinnati, he persuades Annie to join his circus-like attraction, where she falls head over heels for dashing shooting ace Frank Butler, who headlines the show. Annie quickly eclipses Butler as the main attraction, which, while good for business, is bad for romance. Butler leaves to join a rival show but is ultimately pitted against Annie in a final shoot-out. This 1946 hit musical by siblings Dorothy Fields and Herbert Fields includes several well-known songs by Irving Berlin, including "There's No Business Like Show Business," "You Can't Get a Man with a Gun," and "Anything You Can Do." The



AND ALL THAT JAZZ: Chris Botti returns to Tulsa with his smooth jazz and pop sounds on April. 22.

classic musical comes to John H. Williams Theatre April 20-29.

The Reverb Play Festival, presented by Echo Theatre Company, features new works that deal with dangerous subjects written by dangerous playwrights. Reverb showcases works that seek to change the world for the better by providing a stage for underrepresented voices in our society. Echo Theatre Company focuses on work that is global in scope, socially conscious in substance, and educational in outlook. The Reverb Play Festival broadens Echo's commitment to theatre as an agent of change. The festival runs April 21-23 in Liddy Doenges Theatre.

Tulsa Town Hall presents recent ambassador to Russia and former National Security Council member Michael A. McFaul April 21 in Chapman Music Hall. During McFaul's distinguished career in the political and academic arenas, he has earned a reputation as one of the most renowned experts on foreign affairs. Prior to his ambassadorship, McFaul served as the special assistant to President Obama and senior director for Russian and Eurasian affairs at the National Security Council. McFaul is a professor of political science at his alma mater, Stanford University. A Rhodes Scholar, he completed his PhD in International Relations in 1991. McFaul also has authored numerous books and works as an analyst for NBC News.

Since the release of his critically acclaimed 2004 CD "When I Fall In Love," Chris Botti has become the largest-selling American instrumental artist. His success has

crossed over to audiences usually reserved for pop music, and his ongoing association with PBS has led to four No. 1 jazz albums. His 2013 recording "Impressions" won the Grammy Award for Best Pop Instrumental Album. Over the past three decades, Botti has recorded and performed with the best in music, including Sting, Barbra Streisand, Josh Groban, Yo-Yo Ma, Michael Bublé, Paul Simon and more. 35 Concerts presents this jazz sensation April 22 in Chapman Music Hall.

Returning to Tulsa, Lysander Piano Trio is excited to present an unusual program of Mediterranean music, including music by Enrique Granados, one of Spain's most colorful composers. They will also present a very romantic work by the Italian composer Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, who found refuge in Hollywood during World War II and helped shape the sound of movies while teaching the likes of John Williams. The trio, presented by Chamber Music Tulsa, comes to John H. Williams Theatre April 30.

And in the PAC Gallery this month is artist Michael Knigin, presented by the Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art. "Remembrance 2000," in the gallery April 5-27, is a series of images commemorating both dead and living heroes of the Holocaust.

Tickets for all events are available by calling the Tulsa PAC ticket office at 918-596-7111 or online at TulsaPAC.com. You can also check out the latest PAC news on your favorite social media platform.

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DINING OUT IN GREATER TULSA

Ruth's Chris Steak House Sets the Bar High in Quality

Local Dining

By **BLAKE AUSTYN**
Contributing Writer

Ruth's Chris Steak House opened in January at River Spirit Casino Resort, 8330 Riverside Pkwy.

The restaurant sets its elegant ambiance right from its entrance, which features large stately doors off the hotel and casino corridor that lead to the hostess desk and an expansive bar and lounge. In addition, the restaurant's dining room sits behind the lounge and juts out west toward the Arkansas River, offering views of both the resort pool, to open in the spring, and the river. The dining room also offers private rooms for events.

Sitting in the lounge with the sun just beginning to set and its rays reflecting on the water behind the life-like palm trees that border the pool, I felt transported to a tropical vacation spot.

My party arrived at the restaurant for an early dinner and to take advantage of the restaurant's moderately-priced happy hour that runs Monday-Friday, 4 p.m.-6:30.

When we first arrived, the bar and lounge held only a scattering of early diners, but by the time we left, close to 7 p.m., the bar and lounge were packed and had been

for the past hour at least.

We started with the Barbecue Shrimp, and I can pretty much promise that it is not the taste of barbecue that you are imagining — it's better.

The shrimp came in a white wine sauce with butter, garlic and spices. Delicious. We held onto the appetizer plate in order to use the bread brought to the table to fully clean the plate of the generous helping of white wine sauce.

For entrees, my father ordered the steak sandwich, which was on the happy hour menu. The meat was tender with a flavorful sauce. Something he would order again, he said.

My mother and I both chose the seasonal prix fixe four-course meals, for either \$44.95 or \$55.95, depending on the meat choice.

She opted for the six-ounce Filet and Shrimp for \$44.95. I chose the Pan-Roasted Black Grouper with Basil Tomato Sauce as my protein for the higher price point.

Because of an error in the kitchen, however, my mother also received a portion of lobster with her entree, which was an unexpected surprise. All of the meats were tender with none of the seafood tasting fishy. The shrimp and the grouper were, possibly, my favorites. I loved the grouper's tomato basil sauce.

The filet had a good flavor, but,



WELL-KNOWN NAME: Ruth's Chris Steak House, which opened in January, sits in the casino corridor at River Spirit Casino Resort, 8330 Riverside Pkwy.



WARM INTERIOR: Ruth's Chris Steak House offers an expansive bar and lounge as well as a dining room and private event rooms. The restaurant faces west, offering views of the resort pool and the Arkansas River from the lounge and dining room.

as my mom had ordered it medium well, it was a bit overcooked for my preference.

In addition to the entree, the meal comes with the choice of a soup or salad, side dish, and dessert.

My mother chose the Farmer's Market Salad, topped with potatoes, bacon, carrots and squash. The combination of the flavors was truly unique and memorable.

I ordered the Tomato Bisque soup, which was a little less

creamy than I prefer, but it had a nice flavor.

For our sides, we ordered Mashed Potatoes and the Lyonnaise Fingerling Potatoes. I was pleasantly surprised by the fingerling potatoes — long strips of potato cooked long enough to be soft but not yet crunchy, paired with sautéed onions and spices.

For our dessert, we received Apple Crisp Cheesecake with a side of dark chocolate bark.

I loved the apple chunks in the cheesecake, and the chocolate bark was an extra treat that mellowed out the sweetness of the cheesecake.

Ruth's Chris Steak House is open for dinner seven days a week: Monday-Thursday 5 p.m.-10, Friday-Saturday 4:30 p.m.-10:30, and Sunday 4:30 p.m.-9. The restaurant takes reservations online and by telephone at 918-995-8600.

MARDI GRAS CELEBRATION



A FESTIVE GATHERING: The Jambalaya Jazz Band performs during Mardi Gras, or Fat Tuesday, on Feb. 28 at Cajun Ed's Hebert's Specialty Meats and Restaurant, 2101 E. 71st St. The restaurant offers authentic Cajun cuisine as well as a meal delivery service and a retail area with prepared meats and other Cajun items.

GTR Newspapers Photo

Little Light House Nominated for Award

Chick-fil-A Foundation Honors Organizations That Inspire Youth

Arthur Greeno, owner and operator of two Tulsa Chick-fil-A locations, recently nominated Little Light House for The Chick-fil-A Foundation's 2017 True Inspiration Awards.

The True Inspiration Awards was created to honor the legacy of Truett Cathy, founder of Chick-fil-A, who dedicated his life to inspiring and challenging others, especially youth, to be their best.

The True Inspiration Awards recognizes community organizations whose work impacts the lives of youth in the areas of innovative education, youth entrepreneurship and leadership.

Greeno owns and operates the Chick-fil-A locations at Woodland Hills Mall and 11201 E. 71st St. He has also served as a



Courtesy photo

COMMUNITY IMPACT: Arthur Greeno, owner and operator of two Tulsa Chick-fil-A locations, recently nominated the Little Light House (LLH) for The Chick-fil-A Foundation's 2017 True Inspiration Awards. Pictured with Greeno are, from left, Sara Winders, LLH grant writer; Jean Winfrey, LLH executive director; and Rachel Mouton, LLH director of development.

board member for the Little Light House for more than five years.

"I am blessed to be able to serve the Little Light House. My mission is to teach, inspire and serve," he says.

That mission also plays an integral role in Greeno's business model, he continues, that of

teaching his team and others about how to honor their guests.

The Little Light House works to improve the quality of life of children with special needs from birth to the age of six. The Little Light House does not charge tuition and all of its funding comes from private sources.

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Welcoming Spring, Appreciating the Little Things

Every so often, especially the older I get, I make a point to stop and drink in the little pleasures of daily life.

I was talking with a friend the other day about the sad truth that, regardless of what we have or where we live, we all adapt and get comfortable. And, oftentimes, stop noticing what is around us.

I remember when I first moved into downtown Tulsa how excited I was to be able to walk from my home into downtown for

My morning walks into downtown have equally dwindled away.

So that is included in my list of pleasures in need of revisiting.

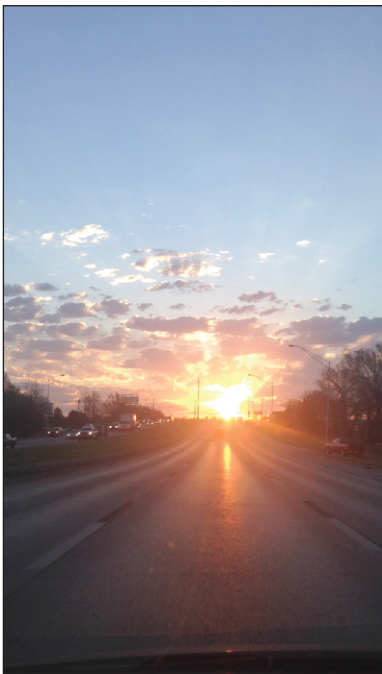
With the re-emergence of spring, another practice to be revived will be welcoming the dawn with a cup of coffee on my patio.

I am anticipating my first walk along 15th Street on opening day of the Tulsa Farmers Market on April 1 and a bright bouquet of flowers to brighten my living room.

Some of my other favorite places around town include the glass study cubes at

Central Library overlooking downtown Tulsa, the Tulsa Botanic Garden, the gardens at Philbrook Museum of Art, and an outdoor seat along Cherry Street paired with a margarita.

The other day, I watched two geese stop traffic along Memorial Drive near 71st Street.



MORNING SUN: A sunrise in Tulsa during the morning rush hour.



FARMERS MARKET SEASON: The Tulsa Farmers' Market opens for its season on April 1 along Cherry Street. Hours are 7 a.m.-11 every Saturday through Oct. 21.

Out & About in Greater Tulsa



By **EMILY RAMSEY**
Managing Editor

breakfast or to walk to Riverside Drive and take a stroll along the Arkansas River. I drank up the accessibility, the activity, the architecture and the natural beauty.

Now, almost five years later, I am fortunate if I make it to the River Parks trails twice a week.

Tulsa Area Nonprofits Receive Grants from AEP

Six Tulsa nonprofit organizations received grants totaling \$230,000 in February from the American Electric Power Foundation to help address education and human needs of area residents. Public Service Company of Oklahoma (PSO), an electric utility subsidiary of American Electric Power, helped secure the grants.

AEP Foundation grant recipients are Teach for America, Inc., Philbrook Museum of Art, Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma, Youth Services of Tulsa, The Little Light House, Inc., and Rebuilding Together Tulsa.

"On behalf of PSO and the AEP Foundation, it's our honor to support these outstanding nonprofit organizations and their missions to serve the Tulsa area," says John Harper, PSO vice president for external affairs. "The AEP Foundation and PSO provide charitable donations to address education and human services in Tulsa and all the communities we serve to improve the quality of life for our customers."

The AEP Foundation grants will support a specific program at each recipient's organization.

- Teach for America - \$50,000 for training and development of corps members (over two years).
- Philbrook Museum - \$25,000 for the MyMuseum program for children and youth access to art education.
- Community Food Bank - \$30,000 for the Food for Kids backpack program.
- Youth Services - \$50,000 for homeless youth services (over two years).

- The Little Light House -- \$25,000 for equipment needs of phase two of new building.
- Rebuilding Together Tulsa -- \$50,000 for roof program for low-income elderly (over two years).

Representatives from the American Electric Power Foundation visited Philbrook recently to present a check to Philbrook Director Scott Stulen for \$25,000 to support MyMuseum, a program that offers free art supplies to children ages 3-13.

Now in its ninth year, Philbrook MyMuseum has served over 30,000 children, and this important funding will enable the museum to continue offering free kits to kids through 2018.

Every day, Philbrook eliminates barriers for children and families to engage with the arts. My Museum is a free program designed to engage children through looking at art and art mak-

ing. Children ages 3-12 can receive an art-making kit, shown in the photo at right, and a new art-making supply and art card each month. The art-making supply enables all children to practice and play through art-making, thus exercising their creativity skills. The art card prompts children and caregivers to find a work of art and discuss it using the prompts provided. A parent or adult can look closely with the child without any previous art history knowledge. Since its inception in 2008, Philbrook has enrolled over 30,000 children in the MyMuseum program.

An AEP spokesperson says, "We believe that providing funding to help make arts education more accessible to all is important to our children and youth, and helps introduce them to creativity, beauty and imagination, which is important to critical thinking and quality of life."



SUPPORTING THE ARTS: AEP/PSO's Carole Huff Hicks recently presented Tulsa's Philbrook Museum of Art with a check for \$25,000 for the MyMuseum program for children and youth access to art education. From left are Meredith Miers, Philbrook grant writer; Diane Shen, Philbrook director of development; Carole Huff Hicks, manager external affairs, The AEP Foundation; and Scott Stulen, Philbrook director/president.

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HEALTH & WELLNESS

Hillcrest Receives Stroke Certification

Hospital One of Two in Northeast Oklahoma Certified as Comprehensive Stroke Center

Hillcrest Medical Center recently received certification as a Comprehensive Stroke Center from DNV GL Healthcare, a national health care accreditation organization that certifies hospitals' quality and patient safety protocols. The certification reflects the highest level of competence for treatment of serious stroke events. Hillcrest Medical Center is one of two hospitals in northeast Oklahoma with Comprehensive Stroke certification.

Comprehensive stroke centers are typically the largest and best-equipped hospitals in a given geographical area that can treat any kind of stroke or stroke complication. Oklahoma Stroke & Neurological Institute at Hillcrest Medical Center offers a fully

equipped emergency department, a dedicated neuro-intensive care unit and an 18-bed stroke unit with a specially trained, rapid response team ready to provide expert care for anyone who may be having a stroke. Additionally, Kaiser Rehabilitation at Hillcrest Medical Center offers inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation services on the Hillcrest campus.

"Hillcrest Medical Center's certification as a Comprehensive Stroke Center means that the same level of stroke care provided at the nation's leading hospitals is available right here in Tulsa," says Andre Fredieu, M.D., medical director of Oklahoma Stroke & Neurological Institute at Hillcrest Medical Center. "This is a validation of our commitment to excel-

lence in treating patients that experience a stroke."

When asked what patients should understand about stroke care, Fredieu said, "When it comes to a stroke, time is brain health. You must act fast in order to reverse the symptoms and after effects of stroke. It is also critical to seek stroke care at a hospital with a proven track record of excellence."

The DNV GL Healthcare Comprehensive Stroke Center Certification is based on standards set forth by the Brain Attack Coalition and the American Stroke Association and affirms that the medical center addresses the full spectrum of stroke care - diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation and education - and establishes clear metrics to evaluate outcomes.

GOING BALD FOR CANCER



GTR Newspapers Photo

FUNDING RESEARCH: Chelsey Beathard, a second-year student at Oklahoma State University's College of Medicine, prepares to have her head shaved by Ashton Alagdon, of Epic Salon in Broken Arrow, as part of a St. Baldrick's Foundation head-shaving event, hosted by OSU-COM, to raise money for lifesaving childhood cancer research.

"Achieving certification shows commitment to excellence," says Patrick Horine, CEO of DNV GL Healthcare. "And it helps demonstrate to your community that you are performing at the highest level."

Broken Arrow, Jenks Utica Park Clinics Announce Doctors

In March, **Taniesha Buffin, M.D., OB/GYN**, joined the team at Utica Park Clinic Broken Arrow. Buffin is board certified in Obstetrics & Gynecology and has been practicing since 2010. She is particularly skilled in the areas of

abnormal uterine bleeding, menopause, and contraception management and is fluent in both English and Spanish.

Prior to joining Utica Park Clinic, Buffin practiced at INTEGRIS Health in Oklahoma City and EASTAR Health System in Muskogee.

Buffin earned her undergraduate degree at Xavier University of Louisiana in New Orleans and received her medical degree from the Louisiana State University Health Sciences School of Medicine in New Orleans. She completed her OB/GYN residency at the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio in 2010.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 918-394-2229.

Utica Park Clinic Jenks, 701 E. Main St., recently announced that it is now offering OB/GYN specialty services delivered by **Paul Whitham, D.O.**, and **April Zumwalt, APRN-CNP**. Along with comprehensive pregnancy and childbirth services, Whitham and Zumwalt offer care regarding breast exams, infertility, menopause and other women's health issues.

Whitham is board certified in Obstetrics & Gynecology and is a fellow of the American College of Osteopathic Obstetricians &



B.A. OB/GYN SPECIALTY: Taniesha Buffin, M.D., has joined the OB/GYN team at Utica Park Clinic Broken Arrow. She is board certified in Obstetrics & Gynecology, has been practicing since 2010 and is fluent in both English and Spanish.

Gynecologists. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, obtained his doctor of osteopathic medicine degree from the Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine, and completed his residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology at Ingham Regional Medical Center/Michigan State University in Lansing, Michigan.



JENKS SERVICES: Paul Whitham, D.O., and April Zumwalt, APRN-CNP, have begun offering OB/GYN specialty services at Utica Park Clinic Jenks, 701 E. Main St. Along with comprehensive pregnancy and childbirth services, Whitham and Zumwalt offer care regarding breast exams, infertility, menopause and other women's health issues.

Zumwalt has been a health care professional since 2006 and a Women's Health Nurse Practitioner since 2009. Zumwalt's specialties include Nexplanon birth control insertion and removals, intrauterine device (IUD) insertion and removals, and routine prenatal care and well-woman exams. She holds a bachelor's degree in nursing from the

University of Oklahoma and her master's of science degree in nursing from the University of Cincinnati.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 918-392-0175.

Utica Park Clinic (UPC) is one of the largest physician groups in Oklahoma. UPC offers over 200 primary and specialty care providers who practice in over 50 clinics throughout northeastern Oklahoma.

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As children, Stephanie and Seth were both severely burned in separate accidents. Brought to the Alexander Burn Center at Hillcrest Medical Center a month apart, they likely passed each other in the hallway as patients. However, it wasn't until later when they began attending a local camp for burn survivors that they finally met. Today, as they plan their wedding, the unique bond they share is unmistakable. Stephanie and Seth are grateful for the compassionate and knowledgeable caregivers at Hillcrest who saved their lives, and also the life of their best friend, soul mate and love.

To learn more about Stephanie and Seth's life-changing experience at the Alexander Burn Center at Hillcrest Medical Center, visit Hillcrest.com.

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EDUCATION

TCC to Offer Drone Training Course in April

With the growing popularity of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), commonly known as drones, Tulsa Community College is offering a pilot training program. This course provides an in-depth understanding of the complexity and evolving Federal Aviation Administration Part 107 rules and regulations for small UAS operators as well as hands-on flight training.

The non-credit course is for commercial application and designed to help companies and individuals learn how to fly UAS, understand the regulations for operating within the National Airspace System (NAS), and prepare for the Remote Pilot Airman Certificate aeronautical knowledge test. Currently, the Federal Aviation Administration requires commercial operators of a UAS to have a remote pilot airman certificate with a small UAS rating or be under the direct supervision of a person who holds such a certificate.

The coursework and formalized

hands-on flight training for operators will be provided by an instructor with the TCC Aviation Sciences Technology program who has a remote pilot airman certificate and is a FAA licensed pilot and certified flight instructor. As part of the course fees, the students will keep the DJI Phantom 3 Standard that they work with during the preparation course.

Commercial applications can include services for photography, real estate, oil and gas, media outlets, surveying, agriculture, sports, cinematography, and law enforcement.

Class size is limited because of the hands-on nature of the course and will take place at the TCC Riverside Community Campus and Aviation Center located at the R.L. Jones, Jr. Riverside Airport.

The first UAS pilot training class is set for April 25th, 26th and 27th from 6:00p.m. - 9:20p.m. The cost is \$995. Register at cewfd.tulsacc.edu/uas-drone-program or contact the TCC Aviation Center at 918-595-3717 for more information.



FLIGHT TRAINING: Tulsa Community College will offer a non-credit pilot training program dealing with unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), or drones, April 25-27 at the TCC Riverside Community Campus and Aviation Center; at left, located at the R.L. Jones, Jr. Riverside Airport. The course is for commercial application and designed to help companies and individuals learn how to fly UAS, understand the regulations for operating within the National Airspace System (NAS), and prepare for the Remote Pilot Airman Certificate aeronautical knowledge test.

TTCU DONATES TO NSU



SCHOOL PRIDE PROGRAM: NSU Foundation Director Peggy Glenn, left, and NSU President Steve Turner accept a \$6,000 donation from TCCU Relationship Management Manager Georgia Steele.

Northeastern State University recently received a \$6,000 donation from TCCU The Credit Union as part of TCCU's School Pride Visa Check Card program for area schools.

Through the School Pride program, which supports more than 50 area schools, NSU gets a donation each time a purchase is made using an NSU-branded card.

"At TCCU, we work and live right alongside our members, so it's truly important to us to give back locally," says Donita Quesnel, vice president of marketing for TCCU. "And

what better way to do that than to support our schools, which are the heart of our communities."

NSU Foundation Director Peggy Glenn says funds from this program have previously been used to support the NSU faculty Circle of Excellence awards, which are cash awards for faculty excelling in research, teaching and service.

"The NSU Foundation greatly appreciates support from community organizations such as TCCU, especially when those funds can be used to support NSU's greatest needs," Glenn says.

Student's Story Pays Tribute to OSU Tragedy

Broken Arrow High School graduate Stetson Payne won fifth place in the college feature writing category of the 57th annual William Randolph Hearst Foundation's Journalism Awards Program, in which 141 entries were received from 74 schools.

Payne will be awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.

His story, "The Last Smile: Remembering Nash Lucas," is about the youngest victim of last year's Oklahoma State University's homecoming parade tragedy.

Payne is currently a junior at OSU, pursuing a degree in multimedia journalism.

He has worked as a staff writer, news editor, investigative reporter, and managing editor for the O'Colly, and served full-time internships with the Pryor Daily Times and Stillwater News Press. He was one of two journalism students selected in 2016 to travel to New York City for a one-week internship with the New York Times and will serve as a general news intern this summer at the Tulsa World.



JOURNALISTIC AMBITIONS: Stetson Payne, a Broken Arrow High School graduate and current Oklahoma State junior, recently won fifth place for his feature story, "The Last Smile: Remembering Nash Lucas," in the 57th annual William Randolph Hearst Foundation's Journalism Awards Program.

PSO Supports Area Robotics Programs

Public Service Company of Oklahoma (PSO), an operating unit of American Electric Power, is awarding robotics team grants totaling \$26,000 to schools in its service areas across the state. Of that total, \$13,500 has been awarded to Tulsa-area schools.

The AEP FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) robotics grants initiative is one of several

companywide programs to support pre-kindergarten through grade 12 student education with an emphasis on STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.

FIRST is a multi-national robotics competition that teams professionals and students to solve an engineering problem in an intense and competitive way. The brainchild of Dean Kamen,

entrepreneur and inventor of the Segway gyroscopic personal electric scooter, FIRST competitions are high-tech spectator sporting events demonstrating participants' success in brainstorming, teamwork and meeting deadlines.

"PSO is aware of the critical need for strong STEM education and is proud to have our parent company's support in providing funding for our area schools and robotics teams," says PSO's Carole Huff Hicks, manager, external affairs, Tulsa/Tulsa Metro. "We are hopeful that students will continue their post-secondary studies in these fields and consider career options which require this knowledge."

Tulsa metro area FIRST robotics teams grant recipients for 2016 include:

- Memorial High School (Tulsa Public Schools)
- Central High Magnet School for Fine and Performing Arts (Tulsa Public Schools)
- Jenks High School
- Bixby High School
- Broken Arrow High School
- Union High School and 8th Grade Center
- Boevers Elementary School (Union Public Schools)

More information on FIRST robotics programs can be found at www.usfirst.org. Information on how to apply for a FIRST robotics grant can be found online at www.aep.com/go/aep-firstgrant.

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Tulsa Tech Helps to Break Cycle of Incarceration

Recently, Tulsa Tech provided training to students from the Tulsa Reentry One-Stop, whose mission is breaking the cycle of incarceration by assisting men and women returning to the workplace and the community. This effort includes providing development of career pathways in high-demand occupations, services that enable participants to advance toward employment, and support services that help facilitate successful reintegration into society.

Training programs have been developed and conducted in CNC machining, welding, core construction, forklift operation, certified production technician, food service management and hospitality. According to Matthew Shannon, welding instructor at Tulsa Tech, his students continue to be a great example of the program's success. "Many of the students are unable to read a tape measure at the beginning," Shannon says. "After students complete the course, they currently have a 90 percent success rate for achieving American Welding Society (AWS) certification and 100 percent for students passing the visual welding test."

The Tulsa Tech welding program,

developed for the Tulsa Reentry One-Stop, lasted 10 weeks, with selected candidates attending four days a week. Course curriculum included shop math, weld symbols, blueprint reading, safety, ergonomics, welding, and weld repair. Several students have described the coursework as similar to drinking from a fire hose, but Shannon's unique projects, industry knowledge, and unlimited support are always available to help them to succeed.

Deken Oldham, a student from Shawnee, feels privileged to have spent time in Shannon's classroom.

"When it comes to our instructor (Shannon), I don't know where to begin," Oldham says. "He is amazing, both compassionate and passionate. I feel very fortunate to have been one of his students."

Shannon's latest project, the "Chevellephant," utilized welding techniques to produce an artistic rendering of a life-size elephant. The students used math to scale down the dimensions of an elephant, which included calculating circumference, diameter, height and length, all from photos. A fabrication drawing was then created, followed by the process of laying out the footprint and constructing the base, a critical step for such a large sculpture.

Welding student Shawn Shinskie had never been in a shop before attending the program but now finds that it is one of her favorite places to be.

"The program has exceeded all of my expectations," says Shinskie. "The combination of getting to learn welding while creating art has been fantastic. I really enjoy working in the shop."

The "Chevellephant" project was named in part after some of the materials students used to construct the large pachyderm: parts such as car fenders, square tubing, discarded shelves, along with a few pieces of scrap sheet material.

Oldham believes his instructor's artistic projects and his ability to motivate individuals and assist them in gaining confidence are what make their classroom environment so unique.

"This elephant project is a great example," Oldham says. "When (Shannon) first explained it to us, everyone was kind of like, 'what?' But the next thing you know, he turns on the motivation, followed by his expectation, and before you know it, we are the team that just completed a huge, fantastic project."

Like all Tulsa Tech students, the Tulsa Reentry One-Stop participants have made their own path toward a rewarding career opportunity, with each student learning a skill they enjoy, a successful path that will serve them and our community.

If you are currently looking for exciting classes for high school and adult students, quality customized corporate training, or determined to begin a new career, Tulsa Tech invites you to visit today. For more information, please call 918-828-5000 or visit us online at tulsatech.edu.

News from Tulsa Tech



By DR. STEVE TIGER
Superintendent



Courtesy Tulsa Tech

WELDING TECHNIQUES: From left, Tulsa Tech welding instructor Matthew Shannon stands with welding students Shawn Shinskie, Brett Huskins, Stephen Grey, Deken Oldham and Jeff Poston, who used welding techniques to fabricate their "Chevellephant."



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Proceeds from the black-tie event will support student scholarships at OSU-Tulsa and OSU Center for Health Sciences.



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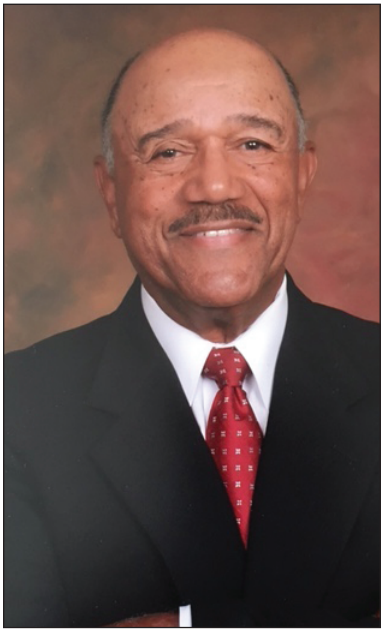
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TPS NEWS

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON TO HOLD HALL OF FAME INDUCTION



DALE HOGG



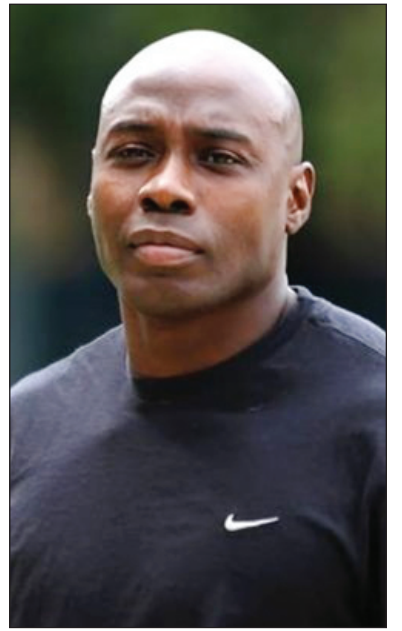
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FELIX JONES II

In April, five Booker T. Washington alumni will be inducted into the Booker T. Washington High School Hall of Fame: a community organizer, a former NFL running back, a nationally-known broadcaster, an internationally-renowned opera director and a longtime educator.

Inductees will be honored both on April 6 during a dinner to be held at Booker T. Washington High School at 6:30 p.m. and at a formal ceremony at 9 a.m. on April 7.

A 1960 graduate, **Dale Hogg** served as the executive director of the Urban League of Tulsa from 1969-1972. Under his leadership, the Urban League helped get the City of Tulsa to enact anti-discrimination housing ordinances. The organization also played a key role in the integration of Tulsa Public

Schools through peaceful protests against forced busing. Tulsa's first black television broadcaster and the first black member of the University of Tulsa board of trustees, Hogg has since gone on to hold leadership positions with The Williams Companies, Coca-Cola, Time Warner and Iridium LLC.

Known internationally for his stage design and directing abilities, 1994 graduate **Thaddeus Strassberger's** credits include "Hamlet" with the Washington National Opera, the world premiere of "JFK" for the Fort Worth Opera and l'Opera de Montreal and "Le Nozze de Figaro" with The Norwegian National Opera. The 2005 European Opera Prize winner, Strassberger's collaborations include with Placido Domingo and Sir Antonio Pappano.

A 1933 graduate, posthumous inductee **Art Williams Sr.**, was Booker T. Washington High School's football and basketball coach in the 1950s and 1960s. The first African-American to receive a graduate degree from the University of Tulsa, Williams launched the athletic program at Carver Junior High School. At the time of his death in 1978, Williams was an assistant superintendent for Tulsa Public Schools. A two-time state Golden Gloves boxing champion, he has been posthumously inducted into the TPS Athletics Hall of Fame and the Oklahoma Officials Hall of Fame.

A 1997 graduate, **Demarco Morgan** joined CBS News as a New York-based correspondent in 2015 after stints with MSNBC and network affiliates in Atlanta,

Miami, Milwaukee, New York, and Jackson, Mississippi. In the 18 months since, his on-air assignments have included the arrest of pharmaceutical executive Martin Shkreli, the impact of opioid abuse and a Cleveland grand jury's decision not to indict two police officers for killing 14-year-old Tamir Rice.

Selected by the Dallas Cowboys in the first round of the 2008 NFL Draft, 2005 graduate **Felix Jones II** established a free ACT training program at the North Mabey Boys and Girls Club. Additionally, the former first team All-American has partnered with other Hornet football alumni over the last eight years to offer a free "Life Skills and Drills" camp for Tulsa-area middle school and high school students.

"We want to recognize these five members of the Booker T. Washington family who have left an indelible mark on the community," Hall of Fame Foundation chairwoman LaVerne Ford Wimberly, Ed.D., says. "Their efforts truly exemplify the ideals of both the school and its namesake."

The Booker T. Washington Hall of Fame Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to honoring the legacy of Booker T. Washington High School.

Tickets cost \$25 with proceeds going to the Booker T. Washington Hall of Fame Foundation's scholarship fund, which provides financial aid for up to four years to graduating seniors and recent graduates.

To purchase tickets, call 918-749-0009.

READ ACROSS AMERICA AT WRIGHT



LOVE OF BOOKS: Cindy Decker, right, Tulsa Public Schools board member, reads to a first grade class at Wright Elementary in celebration of Read Across America on March 2. Also pictured is TPS interpreter Simuka Ditmar.



COMMUNITY ACTIVITY: For Read Across America on March 2, community leaders, including Mayor G.T. Bynum, City Councilor Ben Kimbro and Tulsa Fire Chief Ray Driskell, visited Wright Elementary to talk with students and read aloud their favorite books in celebration of the birthday of children's author Theodore Seuss Geisel, better known as Dr. Seuss. Pictured is Cindy Decker, Tulsa Public Schools board member, with a Wright first grade class.

Students Win All-State Awards

Five Tulsa Public Schools students have been awarded 2017 Academic All-State Awards from the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence: Rachel Ijams, Yash Kumar, and Pierce Pettit from Booker T. Washington High School; Y Quan from Edison High School; and Edward McCabe from Memorial High School.

The 100 winning students are top public high school seniors and were selected from 551 nominations statewide.

Each of this year's All-Staters will receive a \$1,000 merit-based scholarship and a medallion. The

All-Staters will be recognized at the foundation's 31st annual Academic Awards Banquet on May 20, at the Renaissance Tulsa Convention Center.

Since the award program's inception in 1987, some 3,100 high school seniors from 320 school districts have been named All-State scholars.

To be nominated for Academic All-State, students must meet one of the following criteria: an American College Test (ACT) composite score of at least 30; a combined SAT evidence-based reading & writing and math score of at least 1340; or be selected as

a semi-finalist for a National Merit, National Achievement or National Hispanic Scholarship.

This year's All-Staters scored an average of 33.6 on the ACT, with 9 recipients scoring a perfect 36. In addition, 39 of this year's All-Staters are National Merit semifinalists, while three are National Hispanic Scholars.

Academic All-Staters are nominated by their principals or superintendents and are selected on the basis of academic achievement, extracurricular activities and community involvement, as well as an essay submitted by each nominee.

FUTURE CHEFS CHALLENGE



HEALTHY AND CREATIVE COOKING: McClure Elementary third grader Avery Cooley was one of 10 TPS elementary students to participate in the 2017 "Sodexo Future Chefs Challenge." She is standing with Ruth Worrell from McClure Elementary Caf . The students were selected from a group of 126 elementary students who submitted healthy comfort food recipes.

On March 8, 10 elementary school students from Tulsa Public Schools used their creativity and culinary skills to make healthy comfort food recipes in the 2017 "Sodexo Future Chefs Challenge," held at Memorial Junior High School, 7502 E. 57th St.

The Sodexo Future Chefs Challenge was created seven years ago to get students thinking about making healthy food choices while also encouraging them to be active and creative in the kitchen. The 10 students who competed were selected out of a group of 126 elementary students who submitted healthy comfort food recipes.

The finalists were assessed on criteria including originality, taste, ease of presentation, kid-

friendliness, and the use of healthy ingredients. The panel of judges included Tulsa City Councilor Anna America, Lucky's Chef Michael Cook, Tulsa Public Schools Board Member Ruth Ann Fate, Tulsa Public Schools Chief of Information and Operations Blaine Young, and Hale High School culinary students Cierra Dennis and Kiara Madden.

The winning recipe was "Yummy Comfy Cakes," created by Kamryn Jackson, a fifth-grade student from Lee Elementary. Jackson will go on to compete as a regional finalist. The selected regional finalists will vie to become one of five national finalists competing for the public's vote on SodexoUSA.com.

MIDTOWN SPORTS

Edison's Jerome Townsell a Two-Time Champ

By MIKE MOGUIN
Sports Writer

Jerome Townsell, a 182-pound junior wrestler at Edison, earned his second straight state championship in February. He accomplished the feat when he earned an 8-1 decision against Caleb McClaurin of Shawnee, taking home the gold from his weight class in Class 5A at the state tournament in Oklahoma City.

It was another memorable moment in this Eagle's wrestling career. But this one was more special. Townsell endured a season of adversity. He suffered the loss of a family member, went through a period of having the flu, followed by an elbow injury that he incurred in the state semifinals.

His great aunt, Donna Johnson, passed away in December.

"(Winning state) was very meaningful because she was a big supporter of mine," Townsell says. "She wasn't there for it (to see him win state), but my uncle was, and we thought, 'We got to get this next one for her.'"

As the season went on, more hardships came for him to overcome.

Townsell became sick with the flu around Christmastime. He had caught on to a bug that had stricken the team for awhile, his coach, Jim Harper says.

"We went through a phase where our entire team was sick with the flu a little bit," Harper says.

Through the hardships, Townsell kept winning.

He had a record of 34-1 on the season. His only loss came to Alex Kauffman of Vinita in the Catoosa



GOOD MOVE: Edison wrestler Jerome Townsell gets Shawnee's Caleb McClaurin on his back in their Class 5A 182-pound championship match in February in Oklahoma City. Townsell won the match, 8-1.

Tournament in mid-January. Kauffman went on to win state at 182 in Class 3A.

"Once he experienced that loss, it catapulted him for the rest of the season. It didn't happen again," Harper says.

Townsell's career record is 110-10. He enforced 25 pins this year. Next came the elbow hyperextension at the state tournament.

"He overcame a lot of obstacles just to get to the point of where he was," Harper says. "At the state tournament, we had seen the maturation of it, because he won by combined scores of 37-1 in his matches."

The lone point against him came in the final. He won his first-round and semifinal matches, respectively by scores of 14-0 and 15-0.

"That's not done that often. He was that dominant," Harper says.

The hyperextension of his elbow was in the state semifinal. Despite that, he still won the match by 15 points, getting awarded a technical fall at 4:32 into the match.

"He had a pretty good lead," Harper says. "It was 8-0 or 9-0 when he came down on it wrong, and he was able to finish it out, really, without calling a timeout. It was after the match that pain started setting in."

Townsell had ice applied to his elbow. A trainer was also there to look at it and taped him up at the final the next night. All that became more challenging for him, but he did come back to win when he needed to most.

"At the final, he was basically



STATE CHAMP: Edison's Jerome Townsell has his arm raised as the state champion.

wrestling with one arm," Harper says.

"My arm was taped up so much that I couldn't get it past my normal point," Townsell says. "It felt pretty snug, which was good. But in the second period, it started hurting. I went out of bounds, but right after that, we kept going. As long as I was moving, it wasn't that bad."

Once the match was over and he tasted the victory, the moment was special.

"It felt really good," Townsell says. "I got to say my first time, it was really exciting to have everybody there. But this one did mean a little bit more to me because it was all for my aunt. I still had most people come over to watch. It was really nice, because when I looked

up at my family, it was really great because they knew what it was for."

Now he faces an offseason to rehab the injury, preparing for his senior year.

Freestyle is in the plans for Townsell's offseason. He also plays football for Edison and will be involved there.

"He'll be ready," Harper says.

The Eagles also had another placer in Eric Hussaini, who took fourth at 106 pounds. Hussaini became the first freshman in Edison wrestling history to place at state. It was also Edison's third consecutive year to place in the top 10 (Eagles took 10th with 31.5 points), as well as having a freshman to qualify for state. Hussaini came to Edison from Blue-T.

A large photograph of a woman with blonde hair, wearing a red shirt and safety glasses, working on a mechanical assembly. A man in a blue shirt and safety glasses is standing behind her, observing her work.

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A photograph of a woman with dark hair, wearing a white lab coat and blue gloves, holding a test tube.

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SPORTS

Success Parallels Union's Rudy Garcia

By **TERRELL LESTER**
Editor at Large

Back in 1995, Rudy Garcia found himself at a crossroads.

He was facing a decision that would define his career.

Would he coach basketball? Would he coach baseball?

The athletics director at Union High School, Benny Dixon, left the resolution in Garcia's hands.

Either sport, either direction Garcia chose, would be fine with Dixon. He had faith that the 34-year-old assistant on the Union staff would make an informed decision that would benefit all sides.

Garcia had a deeper background in baseball. He had played collegiately. He had served as an assistant under the retiring Larry Arrowood.

Although he had played basketball in high school, Garcia's resume was pretty much limited to junior-high work and a one-year turn as girls varsity assistant to Edie Allen.

To the surprise of some, to the chagrin of others, Garcia elected to become the boys head basketball coach at Union.

Dixon was pleased. It had been his hope that Garcia would go with basketball.

"Sometimes you need a change

in what you're doing," Garcia said recently, explaining his decision to reject baseball, a sport in which he had starred in junior college and at the University of Arkansas.

"The aspect of basketball, the strategy, the speed of the game, was a big lure," he said.

He paused for a moment. Smiled. Then added: "It's worked out pretty good for me."

Indeed.

In March, Garcia wrapped up his 22nd season as Union's head coach. Along the way, he has guided the Union program to three Class 6A state championships while amassing 469 victories.

"When I got the job, a lot of people were kind of questioning Benny's hire, being a baseball guy," Garcia said. "Some parents were concerned whether I was the right guy."

Dixon, who has long since retired, had no such concerns over his selection of Garcia.

"I had a lot of big-time, championship coaches apply," he said. "I knew I wanted Rudy."

"Of all the coaches in our system, from eighth grade to varsity, he was the only one who knew how to coach man-to-man defense. Everybody in the system ran zone."

Dixon's affection for man defense was natural. He had played basketball for his father, Truman, who had a Hall of Fame career at Checotah while emphasizing man-to-man defense.

"Rudy knows how to coach defense, and that's what I wanted," Dixon said.

Garcia has proven Dixon to be a blue-ribbon judge of coaching talent.

"I owe a lot to him for trusting me, for believing in me," Garcia said. "Benny's always been in my corner."

It is a corner illuminated by the glow of success.

Garcia's 2016-17 team completed the regular season with the third unbeaten record of his tenure, before losing in the state semifinals. In addition to the state titles (2004, 2002, 2014), he also has three runner-up finishes (1998, 2002, 2006).

Union never has fallen below .500 under Garcia. His winning percentage of .792 reflects a win-loss record of 469-123. Only three times has Union failed to reach the state tournament.

Under Garcia's guiding hand, the basketball program has attained equal footing, in terms of respect and recognition, with Union's football team.

During the Redskins' most recent run (24-1), they won the Tournament of Champions for the fourth time, remained at No. 1 in the Oklahoma coaches poll every week after the Christmas break and reached No. 16 in USA Today's national rankings.

"The perception of Union just being a football school has changed," Garcia said. "The kids in the community, in our school district, recognize that and want to be a part of it, where, before (he arrived), it might have been that basketball was there, but it wasn't that serious."

With a high school enrollment of



CELEBRATION: Union Head Basketball Coach Rudy Garcia and his team celebrate one of his team's three state championships. He has guided the Union program to three Class 6A state championships while amassing 469 victories.

4,690 for the 2016-17 school year that places Union No. 2 in the state, Garcia has seen a rise in the number of athletes who seek to specialize in basketball, forsaking other sports.

As an athlete who participated in football, basketball and baseball at Liberty High School, in southern Tulsa County, Garcia sees advantages for athletes who move from sport to sport, depending on the season.

"We encourage them if they have the ability to play another sport," he said. "I think it helps the kids just being in a competitive situation throughout the year."

"As far as our basketball philosophy, we support those kids if they

want to go to another sport," he said.

Garcia acknowledged that he did not have a particularly favorite sport, or one that he specialized in, while at Liberty. Baseball, though, offered more opportunities to compete, adding summer games in Jenks to his school's spring schedule.

Upon graduation in 1979, he followed baseball to Allen County (Kansas) Community College. As a pitcher, he compiled a two-year record of 18-1, earning him a scholarship to Arkansas and a 2016 induction into the junior college's Hall of Fame.

It was at Arkansas, under the (Continued on page 19)

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RIGHT AT HOME: Kansas Head Coach Bill Self congratulates his star senior guard Frank Mason for helping the Jayhawks advance to the Sweet 16. Self, who played for OSU, was right at home in Tulsa as he coached at ORU and Tulsa.



GOING UP: USC's Shaquan Aaron goes up for two in the Trojans upset over SMU.



EASY TWO: Jayhawk Sviatoslav Mykhailiuk gets an easy basket in the first round game against UC Davis.



GREAT DEFENSE: Baylor's Johnathan Motley makes it impossible for USC's De'Anthony Melton to score in the Bears win over the Trojans.



FULL HOUSE: The BOK Center in Tulsa was an excellent venue for the March Madness First Round games.



FRENZIED FANS: Kansas fans came out in force to root for their beloved Jayhawks.

Rudy Garcia Has Three State Titles

(Continued from page 18)
watchful eye of head coach Norm DeBriyn, that Garcia mapped out career plans that would lead to coaching. Shoulder injuries and three operations curtailed his playing days while he was putting up a 9-1 record. He stayed with DeBriyn after his eligibility expired, serving as a graduate assistant in 1985 when Arkansas qualified for the College World Series. "There are some things that I took from him that I still use," Garcia said. Perhaps most notable is DeBriyn's emphasis on academics.

"He would say, 'If you're going to class, and you're taking care of business there, then I know you're doing all the little things that, when it's time to start crossing those lines (onto the field), I know I can count on you.' "That's one thing that's always stuck with me that I still use today," Garcia said. He stresses the classroom work. The everyday discipline. "It helps with their work ethic," he said. "They're going to make sure they're doing the right thing. They're going to be respectful to their teachers. "And then once it's time to play, you can count on them," he said.

Through the years, the Union school district has counted on Garcia to oversee an efficient, successful, top-level program. He has not wavered. He has spent exactly half his life at Union, working at a series of assistant-level positions for six years before Dixon elevated him in 1995. His wife, Tammy, is a Union counselor and a Union graduate. Their two daughters, McKenzie and Kennedy, graduated from Union. Their son, Mo, will be a senior in the fall and will begin his fourth season as a starter on the basketball team. "I would have never dreamed that we would have this kind of run," Garcia said. "When I got the job, I thought, if I can make this work for five years, maybe I'll feel like I've done something. "Then we made it to the five-year mark, and then it got to 10, and I was like, wow! And now here we are 22 years later." As he prepares for the 23rd year, and with his son entering his senior season, Garcia has one personal goal he is chasing in this team concept. He needs 31 victories to reach the 500 career total. Garcia is not an ego-driven individual. He speaks passionately and convincingly of directing the lives of young people. "But as a coach, we're all competitive. We all want to have success," he said. "Those milestones come along that you start looking at and you're thinking, you know, if I could get to 500, personally it would be an accomplishment. "When I first started, I would

have never even thought of 500 wins." But now, with that number looming, he said: "I think it would be unique to do it at Union, since this is the only place I've been. I think that would be really special." Quickly, Garcia interrupted the daydream and returned to the present. "It's not about me," he said. "It's about our kids and what we can do for them. "We talk a lot about life lessons that are learned just being on a team." Being on Rudy Garcia's team has produced plenty of success over the years.

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Cascia, BK Wrestlers are Headed to D-I Institutions

By MIKE MOGUIN
Sports Writer

Tanner Skidgel of Cascia Hall and Matt Smith of Bishop Kelley have some things in common. Both are seniors about to graduate from Catholic schools, have state championships in wrestling and are bound for D-I programs.

Skidgel won the 152-pound championship bout in Class 4A with a 4-0 win against Dustin Plott of Tuttle. Smith was a victor in the 220-pound weight division in 5A after he scored a 7-3 victory against Josh Heindselman of Piedmont. The matches took place in February in the state tournament in Oklahoma City.

Both have endured different roads en route to their titles.

Skidgel, who has wrestled most of his life, closed his high school grappling career as a three-time state champion. He lost last year after being a state champ his freshman and sophomore years.

While his older brother, Scout, who graduated last year, celebrated a second state championship a year ago, Tanner endured the pain of losing in the final.

"It felt good to be back on top because I felt like I was missing something last year," Skidgel says. "I'm always used to winning state, and I felt disappointed when I didn't win it. But after I won state this year, I felt like I got redemption back."

Tanner Skidgel lost to another Tuttle contender, Tanner Litterell, last year. Litterell, also a senior and committed to the University of Oklahoma, dropped down to wrestle at 138, going on to win state in that weight class.

Although Skidgel was hoping for another shot at the Sooner commit, having won against a foe from Tuttle was also a satisfying accomplishment since the Tigers are both a perennial power and a dynasty and have been for the past two decades.

"It's always nice to beat a Tuttle



TANNER SKIDGEL: Cascia Hall's Tanner Skidgel celebrates after winning state at 152 pounds in Class 4A. He plans to attend the Naval Academy.

kid," Skidgel says. "They just dominate our class every year. We could never beat them as a team (in duals), so it's nice to beat at least one of their wrestlers."

Skidgel will soon be joining his brother at the Naval Academy, whom he signed with to wrestle in college.

En route to the shutout in the state finals match, Skidgel earned points on a takedown (2), an escape (1) and Plott getting called for stalling twice (1).

"I'd say riding was the key moment," Skidgel says, adding "because I knew that I could take him down and get away from him pretty easily. When I wrestled him at regionals, he escaped from me twice. But, this time, I knew I could ride him out for the rest of the first period and then in the whole third period. I didn't want him to have any chance at beating me, because I

would have to wrestle him with a short lead with short time left."

From the last whistle of last year's loss to the final moment of this year's victory, Skidgel always had that defeat on his mind in every practice.

"It was really motivating to think about whenever I didn't want to do one more rep or one more takedown, or if I didn't want to wrestle live, like one more go, I could just think back to that and let it motivate me," Skidgel says. "I would tell myself that I was going to have a tough match in the state finals, and I had to



MATT SMITH: Bishop Kelley's Matt Smith celebrates after winning state at 220 pounds in Class 5A. He plans to attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

win and get redemption from last year."

For Smith, it was his first ever title. Having begun as a freshman, he placed third as a sophomore and was runner-up as a junior.

"It was the culmination of four years of hard work and dedication," Smith says. "It has been my goal. It has kept me awake at night for the past four years. Now I can sleep easy."

A takedown he applied to Heindselman set the tone.

"The first takedown set the tone, like the very end of the first period.

I took him down with like three seconds left. That really opened it up.

"I was an undersized 220. My game plan and tactics were that nobody could beat me on my feet. I could try to get guys moving and usually, it wears on them. I don't take them down right away. I have to move them first and set my shots up and then, eventually, I can take (opponents) down. That was kind of the beginning of the end for him."

Smith will be going east to wrestle at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill on a scholarship.

"I love wrestling," he says.

River Parks is Tulsa Run Beneficiary

Tulsa Sports Commission has named the River Parks Foundation its primary charity beneficiary for the 2017 Tulsa Federal Credit Union Tulsa Run, the organization has announced. The Tulsa Run will be held Oct. 28. As the race's primary beneficiary, the River Parks Foundation will receive \$25,000 from the Tulsa Run.

"The Tulsa Run is about more than just a 15K and medals," says Ray Hoyt, president of Tulsa Regional Tourism, the umbrella organization over the Tulsa Sports Commission, VisitTulsa (Tulsa's convention and visitors bureau), and the Tulsa Office of Film, Music, Arts & Culture. "The charity beneficiary program is one of the many ways the run elevates the quality of community life in Tulsa. By partnering with organizations like River Parks, the Tulsa Run extends its reach to

promote health and well-being throughout the region."

Owned and operated by the Tulsa Sports Commission, the Tulsa Run will celebrate its 40th running this year. The Tulsa Run's philanthropic efforts are made possible by the race's title sponsor, Tulsa Federal Credit Union.

"As we embark on the Tulsa Run's 40th year, we applaud the philanthropic components of this event that enriches the lives of those who live in our community," says Greg Gallant, president and CEO of Tulsa Federal Credit Union.

Additional beneficiaries receiving \$2,500 each include the Tulsa Regional STEM Alliance and Tulsa Tough. Five organizations will receive \$1,000 each, including Aim High Academy, Assistance League of Tulsa, Emergency Infant Services, Global Gardens and Lindsey House.

An anonymous volunteer com-

mittee selects the beneficiary organizations from a pool of applicants each year. Beneficiaries must be registered 501(c)3 not-for-profit organizations, and this year's committee selected finalists with strong commitments to community well-being.

"We really wanted to make the 40th running of the race special," says Heath Aucoin, Tulsa Run race director and vice president of operations for the Tulsa Sports Commission. "We added two beneficiaries at the \$2,500 level this year, re-emphasizing the importance we place on developing community spirit through the hosting of a signature community event. We want to showcase the best our city has to offer for everyone, from elite runners to finish line fans."

Registration is now open for the 2017 Tulsa Run, scheduled for Oct. 28. For more information and to enter the race, visit tulsarun.com.

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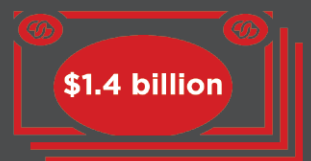


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THE ECONOMY

Ludger's Catering Continues Enduring Legacy of Founder

By EMILY RAMSEY
Managing Editor

Ludger's Catering, a Tulsa-based company that flourished for over 25 years under the ownership of founder and chef Ludger Schulz, continues to see growth under the helm of current owners Scott and Megan Sherrill.

The Sherrills, both native Tulsans with extensive restaurant and culinary backgrounds, purchased Ludger's Catering in 2009.

When the Sherrills took over the catering business, they were careful to maintain the business largely as Schulz left it, including the name.

"We didn't feel like we needed to change the name; the name has a long-standing reputation in the community," says Scott, who met Schulz when Scott was teaching in

Oklahoma State University's culinary department. "It was also important to (Schulz) that we not change everything but just to freshen the business."

Much of that freshening has come through the Sherrills' observations of their clients' changing needs.

While the business has always provided full-service catering and the necessary supplies, including waitstaff and linens, a need began to develop with many of our corporate clients for a turn-key event, says Scott.

So, the Sherrills began providing centerpieces and decor items and stumbled onto a largely unfilled need.

"There are not a lot of rental options in Tulsa for centerpieces," says Megan. "Oftentimes, individuals have to buy the pieces."

As corporate clients began utilizing the decor offerings, "the brides started seeing what we were offering," Megan continues. "And because we rent our decorations, we can price them lower."

While corporate events remain a large portion of their catering business, "I would say that we have quadrupled the business regarding number of weddings," Megan says.

Ludger's Catering is also fully licensed and insured to serve alcohol and offers a rentable freestanding bar with LED lights and bartenders and/or servers.

"People like to go to one place for everything when planning an event," Megan says.

While Megan takes charge of the event planning and decorations, Scott, with his culinary background, focuses on menu planning and food preparation.

Early in his career, Scott worked as a sous chef for local chef Michael Fusco and as executive chef at Montereau retirement community before returning to his alma mater to teach. He met Schulz due to Schulz's friendship with those in OSU's culinary department.

"(Schulz) told me that he was ready to retire," Scott remembers.

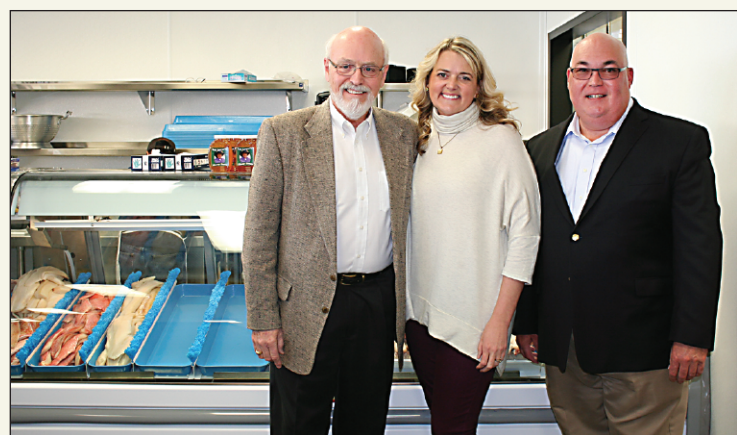
Scott, later, went to work for Schulz in order to learn about the business and to get to know his catering customers. "We came as close to a handshake deal as you can nowadays," he says.

Looking to the future, the Sherrills hope to soon move into a larger building, as they have outgrown their current 5,000-square-foot space, located at 6120-A E. 32nd Pl. As they expand, they plan to grow their rental and center-



EMILY RAMSEY for GTR Newspapers

TULSA NATIVES: Scott and Megan Sherrill took ownership of Ludger's Catering from founder and chef Ludger Schulz in 2009. In addition to offering full catering services, Ludger's Catering also offers centerpieces and decorations for event rental.



ROSSY GILLE for GTR Newspapers

WHITE RIVER IN B.A.: Enjoying the opening of the White River Fish Market and Restaurant in Broken Arrow are, from left, Broken Arrow City Councilor Mike Lester and, from the Broken Arrow Chamber of Commerce, April Sailsbury and Wes Smithwick. The iconic White River opened in Tulsa in 1932 and added its Broken Arrow location in the County Line Shopping Center in January.

piece business, which already includes a large number of holiday-themed items.

Ludger's also offers pre-made meals for the holidays, including Easter, that can be picked up at their location or delivered. The Easter meal includes Baby

Spinach Salad, Garlic-Studded Roast Leg of Lamb and/or Honey-Glazed Pit Ham, Five-Cheese Scalloped Potatoes, Sautéed Green Beans, and a dessert sampler.

To place an order or for more information, visit ludgerscatering.com or call 918-744-9988.



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Eastern Europe and America's Energy Challenge

In the late 1990s, I was asked to assist the country of Bulgaria in its oil and gas development. Leading the effort was Dr. Boyko Nitzov, a Bulgarian, who was then working at the University of Oklahoma, along with Dr. Dennis O'Brien, then the university's director for the Institute for Energy, Economics and Policy at Sarkey's Energy Center.

Dr. Dennis O'Brien and Dr. Boyko Nitzov were providing major studies of oil and gas in Kazakhstan, executive management training for international delegations from Central Asia and

Eastern Europe and in Bulgaria for the U.S. Trade and Development Agency. Dr. O'Brien had been instrumental throughout the years of assisting me with the International Energy Policy Conference. He introduced several high profile energy leaders to the conference throughout the years, which I founded and have chaired since 1992, including the CEO/President of Phillips Petroleum and t h e

Chairman/President of PDVSA. Dr. O'Brien held several distinguished positions throughout his career including the chief econo-

mist of Caltex Petroleum Corporation, managing director of Petroad, which assisted clients in developing and implementing strategic business visions and planning for the global energy industry, and served as deputy assistant secretary for International Energy Security for the U.S. Department of Energy. He passed away in 2005 and is greatly missed.

Dr. Nitzov was highly respected among his fellow Bulgarians especially with the Bulgarian government and the country's oil and gas sector. He has served as director of the Eurasian Energy Program, Atlantic Council in Brussels, Belgium.

What concerned Bulgaria and Eastern Europe at the time was the great dependency on Russia's natural gas and energy support. Our goal was to evaluate how we could assist Bulgaria in becoming more self-reliant.

During my trips to Bulgaria along with Dr. Nitzov, we found that the Bulgarian oil and gas sector was not being managed at full poten-

tial. The infrastructure needed upgrading, the management needed up-to-date technological training, research, and development was at a minimum. U.S. know-how and support was a high priority greatly needed. One of the accomplishments the team was able to assist with successfully was with the development of an underground gas storage facility in Bulgaria.

We identified fields onshore that had not reached their full development. Also, we identified potential offshore locations on the Black Sea. If our research could have factored in the application of today's science of combination of horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing, there is no doubt in my mind, that Bulgaria's resource development would be greatly enhanced.

Wall Street Journal stated that "there is a strategic case for more U.S. natural gas exports to Europe, as well as for more investment in projects...which would bring gas from the Caspian Sea to Europe

without going through Russia."

Leaders from Eastern Europe go on to state "natural gas would be much welcome in Central and Eastern Europe, and Congressional action to expedite exports (liquefied natural gas) to America's allies would come at a critically important time for the region."

The U.S. has an abundance of natural gas. Russia continues to focus on Eastern European dependency on its resources including natural gas.

It is time we come together: The U.S. has the immediate challenge of striving for energy independence but also, global energy security for others. It is extremely important that the U.S. be in a strong position of securing energy reserves within its own boundaries. The Global Economic & Security Reality: America Needs America's Energy and the World Needs America's Know-How and Natural Gas!

Mark A. Stansberry is chairman of the GTD Group, an award-winning author and Energy Advocate.

Energy Watch



By MARK A. STANSBERRY

Local Harley-Davidson Dealership Recognized

Myers-Duren Harley-Davidson earned the prestigious Bronze Bar & Shield Circle of Recognition Award for 2016. Presented by Harley-Davidson Motor Company, this award is given to dealers based on motorcycle and related product sales performance, customer service and satisfaction, and operational measures. Myers-Duren Harley-Davidson is the only deal-

ership in Oklahoma to receive this award for 2016.

"We're proud to present this high honor to Reba McClanahan in recognition of the outstanding work being done at Myers-Duren Harley-Davidson," said Mike Kennedy, vice president and managing director for the United States. "Dealers like Reba McClanahan are a big reason why Harley-Davidson is one

of the most respected and recognized brands in the world and why we enjoy having the loyalty and commitment of our riders."

Bronze Bar & Shield award recipients, like Myers-Duren Harley-Davidson, consistently elevate the brand by providing their customers with exceptional and authentic Harley-Davidson experiences, Kennedy said.



AWARD WINNER: Myers-Duren Harley-Davidson, 4848 South Peoria, has been in business in the Tulsa area since 1914 and under present ownership since 1977.

Students to Test Financial Literacy

JA Finance Park presented by Bank of Oklahoma will host nearly 1,000 students in its inaugural session.

More than 1,000 local students are expected to put their financial literacy skills to the test in a simulated city where each decision they make impacts their take home pay and livelihood. Local high schools are invited to participate in Junior Achievement of Oklahoma's JA Finance Park presented by Bank of Oklahoma April 10 - 21 at Tulsa Tech Peoria Campus.

JA Finance Park presented by Bank of Oklahoma is a state-of-the-art mobile facility where students live a fictional life situation, with marital status, children, job and salary. They are then challenged to create and successfully use a budget and make decisions around saving, spending, investing and philanthropic giving. To achieve these tasks, students work in groups and visit 19 kiosks with interactive terminals that simulate stores, restaurants and utility companies among other real-world businesses, like Bank of Oklahoma.

Pat Piper, executive vice president of Consumer Banking Services for Bank of Oklahoma and State Board Member for Junior Achievement of Oklahoma, says the bank was excited to partner with Junior Achievement on an initiative that would help so many students learn to manage money and complements the bank's Learn for Life program, a company-wide initiative that engages employees to promote basic financial skills in the communities the bank serves.

"Supporting financial education is a core focus of Bank of Oklahoma," says Piper. "Financial literacy and money management skills are crucial building blocks for economic success. That's why our employees volunteer in dozens of Junior Achievement classrooms each year through our Learn for Life program and we invest in financial literacy programs to ensure individuals of all ages on the path of fiscal responsi-

bility and economic self-reliance."

Piper added that the partnership on this innovative learning environment was an easy decision for the bank.

"JA Finance Park has a proven track record of engaging students with financial education programs and experiences that are both substantive and fun," says Piper. "We look forward to bringing this experience to students across the state."

JA Finance Park will also host nearly 1,000 students in Oklahoma City in March for a total statewide impact of nearly 2,000 students.

The reality-based simulation is key to giving students the opportunity to put their new money-management skills to the test, says Shannan Beeler, president of Junior Achievement of Oklahoma.

"For 50 years, Junior Achievement

of Oklahoma has helped students understand the short- and long-term impact of educational, financial and life-style decisions," says Beeler. "It also prepares students to succeed as adults by teaching them some basic, practical money management skills which they will need to help them prosper in life."

JA Finance Park provides a resource for Oklahoma schools to help fulfill the graduation requirement adopted by the State in 2008, House Bill 1476, requiring students to complete at least 14 financial instruction areas to graduate.

For a scheduled tour of JA Finance Park, or to request more information, please contact the Junior Achievement of Oklahoma offices at 918-663-2150 or visit www.jaok.org.

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Selser Schaefer Names New Partner Team

Selser Schaefer Architects has promoted Shane Aaron AIA, Nathan Koob AIA, LEED AP, Whitney Stauffer, and Jeff Thomas LEED AP BD+C, RAS to Partners. These new Partners will join Hank Spieker, AIA as leaders of the growing architectural firm.

"This is a very exciting day for our company and the growth of our firm," says Selser Schaefer Architects co-founder Janet Selser. "These new partners are designers, managers, and leaders with the ability to create and guide large and complex projects. Their leadership will continue to empower our team as they take this firm to greater heights."

Shane Aaron AIA is a graduate

of Drury University and is a licensed architect in Oklahoma and Texas. Since joining the firm in 2007, Aaron has completed projects for Broken Arrow Public Schools, Tulsa-based Church on the Move, as well as the H-E-B Grocery Company in San Antonio and the new ambulatory surgery center for Gastroenterology Specialists, Inc. in Tulsa.

Nathan Koob AIA, LEED AP is a graduate of Oklahoma State University and is a licensed architect with over 18 years of experience. Prior to starting at the firm in 2014, Koob managed many notable projects including the Multi-Purpose Event Center at Northeastern State University, Baylor University's Simpson

Athletics and Academic Center and the Spring Lake Public Works Complex in Sand Springs. Most recently, Koob's experience in project management was key for the Tulsa Ballet's Hardesty Center for Dance Education.

Whitney Stauffer is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma. She started her career in the corporate communications department for a large global entertainment company in Los Angeles before returning to her roots and ultimately joining the firm in 2013. Her experience in business development and corporate communications has been key to the success of the firm.

Jeff Thomas LEED AP BD+C, RAS joined the firm in 1998 and is a graduate of Oklahoma State University. Thomas is a registered accessibility specialist and serves as a contract administrator for the firm. His experience has been instrumental in projects that include the H-E-B Grocery Company in San Antonio, Hardesty Center for Dance Education in Broken Arrow, the Phillips Auditorium Remodel for Tulsa Community College, Morton Comprehensive Health Center in Tulsa, as well as the Cherokee Nation's Jack Brown Center in Tahlequah.



Courtesy photo

ARCHITECTURAL FIRM LEADERSHIP: Leaders of Selser Schaefer Architects are, from left, Shane Aaron, Jeff Thomas, Janet Selser, Bob Schaefer, Whitney Stauffer, Hank Spieker and Nathan Koob.

A graduate of Oklahoma State University, Hank Spieker AIA is both a licensed architect and a licensed interior designer in Oklahoma. He joined the firm in 1997 and was announced as partner in 2014. His leadership has been integral on projects for a range of clients including Hogan Assessment Systems, Church on the Move, Broken Arrow Public Schools, and Whataburger, among many others.

Robert Schaefer and Selser will continue to play an integral role at Selser Schaefer Architects. They

will transition to a larger mentorship role, providing their industry and design expertise to the new partners and firm associates. Despite the change in leadership, the name and quality services of the firm will remain the same.

"Each of these partners possess a unique skillset," says Robert Schaefer. "These individuals have proven themselves to not only be leaders within the industry, but true leaders within our firm. I know their collective expertise will serve our clients well."

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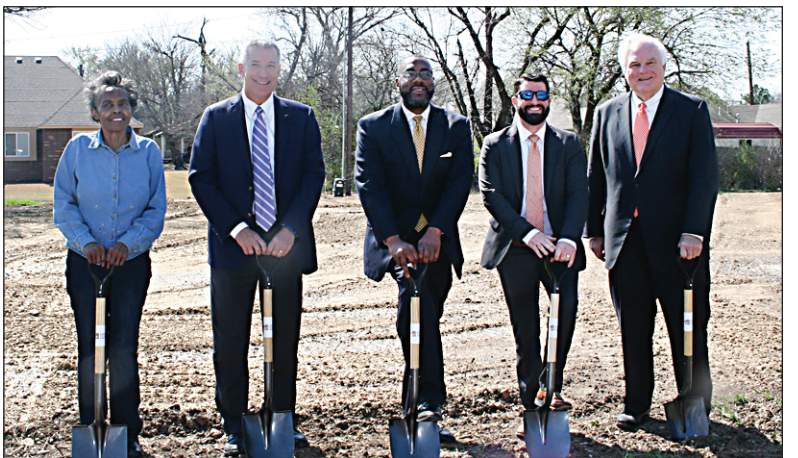
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Groundbreaking Held for Historical North Tulsa Housing Development

Capital Homes hosted a groundbreaking ceremony March 9 for its newest development, Ogan's Circle, a new neighborhood situated in the heart of north Tulsa. This quiet, self-contained cul-de-sac will contain 14 new homes and provide high-quality, affordable housing starting in the \$140's. A new construction neighborhood of this capacity hasn't been completed in north Tulsa in several decades, making this an historic project.

During the ceremony, Tulsa community members, including Capital Homes owner David Charney and O.C. Walker from the Tulsa Development Authority spoke to the impact this neighborhood and additional homeownership will have on the area. The family namesake of the neighborhood, 81-year-old Esther Ogan, attended the ceremony.

The groundbreaking was both a formal announcement of the



ROSSY GILLE for GTR Newspapers

OGAN'S CIRCLE: Present at the groundbreaking for Ogan's Circle are, from left, Esther Ogan's, Ogan's Circle namesake and community activist; David Charney, owner, Capital Homes; O.C. Walker, executive director, Tulsa Development Authority; Nick Doctor, chief of community development and policy, Office of the Mayor; and Roy Peters, chair of the board of directors, Tulsa Development Authority.

development, as well as the construction kickoff. All of the homes will be full brick with

other features exceeding building standards, creating a desirable neighborhood near Booker T. Washington High School, Lacy Park and three miles from downtown Tulsa.

This special development is being offered in partnership with the Tulsa Development Authority. Up to \$4,000 in closing cost assistance will be provided by Capital Homes, and \$4,000 in downpayment assistance will be available from the TDA as a no-interest loan, to incentivize homeowners to make their home in Ogan's Circle.

The event was an opportunity to celebrate new development and give the community a first glance at the new neighborhood. Capital Homes expects to be a steadfast member of the North Tulsa community and looks at this event as the first step in promoting homeownership in an important and vibrant part of Tulsa that has been underserved for many years. Community meetings will also be held to educate the community regarding Ogan's Circle, its unique financing opportunities and the benefits of homeownership. The dates of these community meetings will be released shortly.

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HOME & GARDEN SHOW REVISITED



WE B TREES: *We B Trees arborist Tim Nall, left, welcomed visitors to his exhibit at this year's Tulsa Home and Garden Show held March 9-12 at the River Spirit Expo at Expo Square. Visiting the booth are Nall's nephew Ace Nall and Cathy and John Rains.*



OWASSO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE: *The Owasso Chamber of Commerce proudly exhibited positives about its city at the Tulsa Home and garden Show. From left are Tammy White of Tulsa Federal Credit Union, Andrea Adams of Keller Williams, Owasso Chamber President Gary Akin and Joy Moss of Keller Williams.*



JACK WILLS: *A representative of Jack Wills Outdoor Furniture demonstrates the "Blazing Beats," a dancing outdoor fire pit complemented by its own music. Jack Wills, with locations in Tulsa and Springdale, Arkansas, offers outdoor furniture, grills, play sets and fireplaces.*

BUSINESS & PEOPLE NOTES

Trust Company of Oklahoma announces that **Whittney Stauffer** has joined the company as vice president. At TCO, she will serve high net worth individuals, families and organizations.



STAUFFER

Stauffer comes to TCO from J.P. Morgan Chase's Private Bank in Tulsa, where she accumulated experience providing investment management, wealth advisory, banking, and financing services to individuals, endowments, and foundations. Stauffer received her Bachelor of Business Administration in finance from the University of Oklahoma. She is a trustee for the Philbrook Museum of Art and serves as board president of The Pencil Box. In addition, she is a sustaining member of the Junior League of Tulsa and a Leadership Tulsa graduate.

Trust Company of Oklahoma is the largest and oldest independent trust company in the state, with locations in Tulsa and Oklahoma City. For more information visit www.TrustOk.com

Yvette Martinez and **Audra Alvord** have been promoted to senior vice president positions at the **First National Bank & Trust Co. of Broken Arrow**.



MARTINEZ

Martinez joined the bank in December 2016 as vice president of retail banking administration. A native Tulsan and graduate of Northeastern State University, her resume includes service with Bank of Oklahoma, Prosperity Bank and F&M Bank and Trust where she oversaw retail operations of 12 branch locations in Oklahoma and Texas.



ALVORD

Alvord joined First National of Broken Arrow in 2013 as human resources director and later added director of information security to her responsibilities. A native of Cleveland, Oklahoma, she began her career as a bookkeeper at Peoples State Bank. Her resume also includes service with Bank South where she was a branch manager and Summit Bank where she was a human resources representative.

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Gregory Graham says both women have worked their way up through the ranks of the financial services industry and have clearly shown they are more than qualified to assume the added responsibilities that go with their new positions.

"They have earned the respect of our directors and their fellow employees," Graham says. "They provide expanded dimensions of experience and expertise to our bank and we are delighted to welcome them to our senior leadership team."

First National opened its doors in 1902 in what is now downtown Broken Arrow. In more than 114 years of providing trusted banking services to the community, only four chairmen have headed the institution.

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Oral Roberts University announces the promotion of **James D. Smith** to director of marketing. Smith led the ORU Mabee Center Marketing Department for seven years before accepting this new role.



SMITH

"James has done an outstanding job leading marketing at the Mabee Center, seeing growth year over year," says Ossie Mills, ORU vice president of communications and marketing.

Smith, who was born in England and raised in Tulsa, graduated from Tulsa's Memorial High School and Northeastern State University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in business marketing. He brings a wealth of experience to his new position with 30 years of professional marketing in the Tulsa area.

Active in the Tulsa community, Smith serves as president of his homeowner's association, is an active member of his church, an accomplished chef, business owner and long-time volunteer of numerous Tulsa charitable organizations.

The Collins College of Business will honor three alumni and four graduating seniors during its annual Honors and Awards Banquet April 7 at TU's Allen Chapman Student Union.



SHARP

Kala Sharp (BSBA '99), vice president, controller, natural gas at ONEOK Partners, was named the 2017 Outstanding Alumna and **Don P. Quint, Jr.** (BS '78), principal and founder of Don P. Quint & Associates, as the 2017 Outstanding Alumnus. **Ashley Lewis Jackson** (BSBA '08), customer success integration manager at GE Digital, was named the 2017 Fast Track Alumna.



QUINT



JACKSON

Sharp is vice president, controller, natural gas, of ONEOK Partners. She is responsible for accounting and reporting for the natural gas gathering and processing and natural gas pipelines segments.

Quint is the principal and founder of Don P. Quint & Associates, a registered investment adviser. Quint established his practice in 1978 upon his graduation from the University of Tulsa. Since graduation he has completed his Chartered Life Underwriter designation along with his Chartered Financial Consultant designation.

Jackson joined General Electric (GE) in 2008 as a financial management program (FMP) intern with GE Real Estate. In January, Jackson was promoted to customer success integration manager at GE Digital.

Four graduating seniors will receive the 2017 David R. Lawson Outstanding Senior award in recognition of their leadership and accomplishments while students at TU: Amanda Calhoun, energy management and finance; Paul Moses, accounting and finance; Claire Thompson, accounting, finance and economics; and Francisco Yanez, finance and management.

Ashley Van Horne has been named director of marketing and communications for the **Lobeck Taylor Family Foundation**. Van Horne is a seasoned communications professional with nearly a decade of experience. She joined the Lobeck Taylor Family Foundation after managing communications for the Tulsa Regional Tourism brands at the Tulsa Regional Chamber. Van Horne has a unique background in sports communications, having managed projects for brands like ESPN, Nickelodeon, Spike TV, the NFL Network and Yahoo Sports. She brings to the table a diverse perspective that combines public relations, marketing strategy and event management. After graduating cum laude from the University of Southern California in 2009, Van Horne worked on major national sporting events and marketing campaigns including the Super Bowl, NFL Draft, NBA All Star Weekend, BCS National Championship, NCAA March Madness, Nickelodeon Kids Choice Sports Awards, Spike TV's Lip Sync Battle, ESPN This is SportSCenter commercials, Monday Night Football and more.



VAN HORNE

A Tulsa transplant originally from California, Van Horne says she enjoys exploring Oklahoma and soaking up the four different seasons. She is a volunteer at GUTS Church, a freelance writer, a CrossFit coach and a nutrition counselor in her spare time.

AVB Bank announces the promotion of **Renee Hillhouse** to loan operations officer. Hillhouse manages and oversees AVB's loan servicing and credit departments, providing all loan documentation, payments, advances and maintenance.



HILLHOUSE

Hillhouse joined AVB in 2016 as a commercial lending assistant. With over 22 years of banking experience, Hillhouse's exemplary career in banking is highlighted by upward progression. Bank President and CEO Ted Cundiff announced the promotion and said, "Renee has extensive knowledge of the loan area and has greatly assisted with the increase in communication in her area. We appreciate her expertise and are glad she is a part of our team."

Senior Vice President and Executive Loan Assistant Nema Dobbins said "Loan services, and all of the operations employees at AVB, are such an integral part of this bank." Dobbins continued, "Renee's years of experience and excellent troubleshooting go hand-in-hand with internal operations, and we are grateful to have her."

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CTCA Founder to Receive Horatio Alger Award

Courtesy Horatio Alger Association

Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans, Inc., a nonprofit educational organization honoring the achievements of outstanding individuals and encouraging youth to pursue their dreams through higher education, has announced that Richard J. Stephenson, founder and chairman of Cancer Treatment Centers of America, has been selected for membership in the prestigious organization. Stephenson, widely recognized for his philanthropic efforts, global business leadership, and establishment of a new standard in personalized cancer care, joins 10 other esteemed business and civic leaders from across North America in receiving this honor in 2017. For the last 70 years, the Horatio Alger Award has been annually bestowed upon admirable leaders who have succeeded despite facing adversity and who are committed to higher education and charitable efforts in their local communities.

Stephenson and the member class of 2017 were formally inducted into the Association on March 30-April 1, during the Association's 70th Horatio Alger Award Induction Ceremonies in Washington, D.C. The annual three-day event honors the achievements of both Members and National Scholars, affording both groups the opportunity to meet and interact, exchanging stories of hardships and triumphs.

Stephenson grew up in Sheridan, Indiana, a small farming town of 1,200, and was raised with his brother, Michael, by loving and devoted parents who taught him to understand and follow a morally centered and principled way of life. Much of Stephenson's childhood and early adulthood was devoted to caring for his brother, who faced many lifelong health challenges. His dedication to helping those around him remains a driving force behind everything he pursues. An entrepreneur from a very early age, Stephenson would help his father with his work at a pharmacy and

later took on various jobs around town - mowing lawns, collecting trash, distributing milk and delivering newspapers. His business acumen expanded in college, as he created a handyman services and consulting company, hiring college friends as part-time employees. After graduating from Wabash College, he started his own merchant banking firm before receiving his juris doctor degree from Northwestern Law School.

Stephenson quickly developed a highly successful international merchant banking career, building businesses and employing many thousands around the world. While his business grew, his family always took center stage in his life. When his mother, Mary, endured a lengthy battle with cancer before succumbing to the disease, he witnessed firsthand through her painful journey the failure of healthcare providers to listen to her needs and put her care and concerns first. He noted, also, the lack of comprehensive, compassionate, innovative and integrated treatment options that took the whole person into account, and he vowed to change the face of cancer care in his mother's memory.

In 1988, he opened his first Cancer Treatment Centers of America (CTCA) hospital and committed this new chapter in his life's work to delivering cancer patients and their families what he aptly coined the Mother Standard of care; the kind of care you would want for your loved one. Today, CTCA is a nationally recognized network of five regional medical centers providing a personalized, clinically outstanding, patient-centered Mother Standard of care throughout the United States. The hospitals are located in Tulsa, Philadelphia, Chicago, Phoenix and near Atlanta.

"My fellow Horatio Alger Members and I are pleased to welcome Richard to the Association," remarked Byron Trott, president, Horatio Alger Association, and 2011 Horatio Alger Award recipient. "His entrepreneurial spirit and passionate commitment to caring for others are traits that both Scholars and Members can appreciate and



RICHARD J. STEPHENSON

strive to emulate. Richard's entire career has been devoted to helping others rise above a different kind of adversity - cancer - providing them with the support, care and comfort needed to face this life-threatening challenge. We are confident that Richard will lend that same heart and dedication to the Association and we look forward to working alongside him."

Stephenson also founded and supports five unique charities in each of the regions where his hospitals are located. The Assistance in Healthcare Foundations provide millions of dollars in important financial support to families in need of simple relief from "everyday" stressful expenses back home (i.e. rent, food, utilities). He is a Distinguished Eagle Scout in America, a 33rd Scottish Rite Freemason, and a dedicated global philanthropist, offering his time, talent and treasure to many non-profit organizations with a focus on liberty, private property, free markets and individual freedom. Additionally, in 1991,

Stephenson created the Gateway for Cancer Research, setting out on a personal quest to transform cancer research and care by empowering patients with integrative therapies and innovative treatment options. Twenty-five years, 3,000 patients, 140 breakthrough clinical trials around the world and more than \$70 million raised later, his personal quest has become transformative and a beacon of hope for those diagnosed with cancer.

"Receiving the Horatio Alger Award means a great deal to me and my family, and I am grateful," said Stephenson. "My mother inspired my career and as a strong supporter of education herself, I know she'd be very proud as I receive this honor. The loving 'wind beneath my wings,' my five dynamite children, eight grandchildren, and beautiful wife, Dr. Stacie Stephenson, share in this pride. The Horatio Alger Association is all about lifting people up and providing hope and support during their most challenging times. This has been my life's mission and I look forward to working with my fellow members to provide support for young people as they work to overcome adversity in pursuit of their dreams."

Through its members, Horatio Alger Association aims to educate young people about the limitless opportunities afforded them by the free-enterprise system. To further this goal, the organization awards scholarships to outstanding high school students who are committed to pursuing higher education and giving back to their communities. Like Association Members, Horatio Alger Scholars have faced significant adversities, but have also displayed unmatched resilience in overcoming their challenges. Since the scholarship program was established in 1984, Horatio Alger Association has provided more than \$125 million to students in need. Scholarships are funded solely through the generosity of Association Members, Life Partners and friends.

For more information about Horatio Alger Association and its Member Class of 2017, please visit www.horatioalger.org and/or follow the organization on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.



Courtesy Oklahoma Blood Institute

LIFE SUPPORT: The Oklahoma Blood Institute recently held its annual Blood Thanks and Giving Celebration at the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino. The event honors the many members of the community who generously support Oklahoma Blood Institute's life-saving mission. Maddi Simmons, second from left, a Bixby high school cheerleader and bone cancer survivor, needed blood transfusions throughout her treatments. She thanked three of her 16 blood donors shown above: Daniel Peek of Fort Smith, left, Michael Kisthardt of Edmond and Ashley Farler of Lawton. As the nation's ninth largest non-profit blood center, Oklahoma Blood Institute serves more than 165 hospitals and medical facilities statewide, including more than 40 in northeastern Oklahoma.

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St. Bernard's Dinner Extravaganza is May 13

Annual Event Benefits Numerous Charities

The St. Bernard's Catholic Church Annual Dinner Extravaganza will be Saturday, May 13 at 6 p.m. at the Renaissance Hotel. Tickets are \$100 each, which includes dinner, music by The Grady Nichols Band, 99 drawings for \$100 and the chance to win the 2017 Ford Mustang pictured at the right or \$25,000.

Proceeds benefit The Center of Family Love in Okarche, St. Bernard's next Habitat for Humanity House, plus other St.

Bernard's Charities. Over 40 Silent Auction items including: Dinner (6) with Bishop Konderla and Hallett Motor Speedway packages, to name a few. Tickets will be available on the St. Bernard's website, www.stbernardstulsa.org, and after all Masses. For more information contact Phil 918-808-0600 or Jim 918-855-5030.

The Early Bird deadline is April 2 for Two Round Trip Tickets anywhere Southwest Airlines files in the Continental U.S.



GTR Newspapers photo

MUSTANG PROBABILITY: An attendee at the Dinner Extravaganza will win the Ford Mustang, pictured above. Among those volunteering for the event are, from left, Jim Nicolotti, Msgr. Rev. Patrick Gaalaas, Paul Clark, Bob Potwora, Jim Flusche, Don Schendt and Phil Doerpinghaus. The Dinner and Main Drawing will be May 13 at the Renaissance Hotel and Convention Center in Tulsa.



BUNNY EXPERIENCE: Simon, a global leader in retail real estate, is hosting its annual Easter celebration festivities at Woodland Hills Mall, offering families the chance to participate in traditional and unique seasonal events. The Bunny Photo Experience runs through Saturday, April 15 in Center Court. For all Easter-related events this year at Woodland Hills, visit simon.com.

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SHOPS OF SEVILLE

Beacon Building Remains with Ownership Changes

When I was in grade school, I received a weekly allowance of 75 cents. I supplemented this princely sum by washing the neighbors' cars and other odd jobs. On a good month, I pulled in \$6. In the 1950s, this was big money.

The highlight of my month was to go with my dad to our bank to add a couple of dollars to my savings account. Our bank was The Fourth National Bank located in the Beacon Building, 406 S. Boulder Ave.

Through the eyes of a young boy, I remember a grand two-story lobby with a substantial mezzanine accessible by several spiral brass stairs. These amazed me; I always wanted to climb one which, of course my dad didn't permit. The bank remained in this location until 1967 when it moved to a larger facility.

The eight-story Beacon Building at the southwest corner of Fourth Street and Boulder Avenue was built in 1923 and originally called

the Commercial Building. First owned by James M. and Carl W. Gillette, Patrick M. Kerr, and Elliott L. Mills, the building was renamed the Security National Bank Building and a year later the Tulsa Trust Building; the building changed names every time it changed owners.

After oilman and philanthropist Waite Phillips took ownership of the building, it became the Beacon Building because the Beacon Insurance Company was a major tenant. In 1942, Phillips gave the building to the Southwest Art Association with the stipulation that the income from the building help maintain Philbrook Museum of Art.

The Beacon Building has passed through a number of owners since then. In 1983, during a multi-million-dollar remodel, two different transformer explosions spilled toxic chemicals onto tile floors and basement mechanical ducts. It was over five years before the air in the

building was deemed environmentally safe to allow occupancy.

The 65-foot lighthouse mounted on the roof at the northeast corner (called The Beacon) lost its lighting in the 1950s when air conditioning was installed, and the electrical system couldn't handle both. In 1976, the lighthouse was removed due to roof leaks. It has recently been found in the basement and may soon be reinstalled along with other improvements underway by the current building owner.

At the exterior, the ground floor is faced with limestone around a series of two-story arches (four on the north and six on the east, with rectangular openings at the corners). Between this row of openings are Doric pilasters. Above these is a projecting stone band with a dentil pattern, a wave pattern, and an egg and dart molding. The second through seventh floors feature pairs of steel windows in a red brick façade. At the seventh-floor window heads are limestone brackets supporting a projecting molding below the eighth-floor windows, which are framed in stone. A strong cornice above a massive dentil pattern soffit supports a parapet balustrade of stone. Three original projecting canopies at the east elevation identify the location of the original building entrances.



Courtesy photo

ORIGINAL LIGHTHOUSE: The Beacon Building, 406 S. Boulder Ave., was built in 1923. Its 65-foot lighthouse was recently found in the building's basement and may soon be reinstalled by the current building owner.

In the center was the main lobby serviced by three elevators. The bank space and other ground floor tenant spaces were wrapped around this lobby in a U-shape. To the south of the building is a vacant lot which, during the Fourth National occupancy, was the location of the bank's drive-through.

Today, the Beacon Building, as when it was first built, provides general office space for a wide range of tenants.



ROSSY GILLE for GTR Newspapers

RECENTLY IMPROVED: Today, the Beacon Building, at Fourth Street and Boulder Avenue, provides general office space for a wide range of tenants and has currently undergone a million-dollar renovation.

Spring Cleaning: A Great Time to Brush Up on Recycling Know-How

Spring signals a time to dust off our winter homes, and clear out the clutter. For some recyclers, this is difficult, faced with needing to discard items that have no recycling plan in place. Residents of Tulsa County can indulge in ensuring their cast away items benefit our community through better reuse and recycling programming.

Focus on the Four

Tulsa home owners enjoy curbside recycling but once recycling becomes routine, it's easy to begin putting more in the recycling bin than can be recycled. City managers remind us that curbside, only four main items recycle:

1. Plastics If the top of a plastic bot-

tle is smaller than the bottom of the bottle, it probably

recycles. Single-use water or ketchup bottles both recycle. Yogurt or dairy containers do not. While Plastics #1-7 are accepted, keep in mind that only #1, 2 and 5 can currently be recycled but hopefully all will be in the near future. Also, no plastic bags can be recycled curbside.

2. Paper: This includes cardboard boxes, pizza boxes, non-corrugated cardboard such as your cereal boxes, your junk mail, and regular paper. Paper that gets damp from comingling with other recyclables is

perfectly fine. As long as your paper does not have a plastic or wax coating, it's accepted.

3. Metals: Aluminum, brass, copper and steel are recyclable curbside. Aluminum foil is in general too contaminated after home use. A note about our waste heading to the landfill, a giant magnet sweeps over our trash-to-energy service before the ashes are deposited in the landfill, which snags any salvageable metals for recycling.

4. Glass jars and bottles: While it may alert neighbors to a recently hosted party as the bottles clang into your curbside container, filling the bin with empty wine bottles is encouraged.

Now that consistent recycling reveals how much waste we create that cannot be recycled, you're sure to start searching for where your discarded items can be properly managed.

Those Piles of Clothes!

Refresh your wardrobe as well as a neighbor's by attending Tulsa's Young Professionals Clothing Swap.

Saturday, April 22 from 1-3 p.m.; bring your once-favored frocks to the downtown Tulsa City-County Library and swap them out for something new-to-you. Organizers say that getting a refreshed wardrobe is just one of the goals for hosting this event. "We also want to raise awareness and educate the community about the environmental and ethical costs when people buy new versus used, and encourage the budding trend to thrift first, buy second."

All clothes left after the swap will be donated to a local nonprofit organization.

Discarding Hazard Safely

Thanks to years of overwhelming response, the City of Tulsa created a permanent drop-off site for hazardous waste. Numbers show that in 2016, the site served approximately 1,300 customers and collected more than 44 tons of hazardous materials.

To toss your waste safely, simply make one phone call at 918-591-4325 for a line-free drop-off in downtown Tulsa. This service is free of charge for Tulsa residents. For any-

one living outside of Tulsa, you can drop off up to 60 pounds of waste for free. For a complete list of accepted items, log on to cityoftulsa.org, or call the number listed above.

E-Waste Drop-Off

Electronic waste is another item that requires expert handling in ensuring it is recycled properly. The Tulsa Community benefits from a partnership between locally owned and operated Natural Evolutions and The Met. Last year, statistics show that Natural Evolutions processed more than 66 tons of material. Find drop-off sites at MetRecycle.com, or at naturalevolutions.com. You can also mark your calendars for a drop-off event for e-waste and old tires Saturday, May 13th on the TCC Northeast Campus.

Be Eco-Inspired

New inventions pop up like spring flowers, and it's incredibly inspiring. Here are a few headlines to remind us that today's desires for a smaller carbon footprint can create a more positive future.

Smartflower is a new, fully-functional pop-up solar generator that unfolds like a flower and follows the sun throughout the day, collecting energy for you to power your home. See more at smartflower.com

After a visit to Peru, Dr. Carmen Hijosa created cloth from pineapple leaves that mimics the look, feel, and durability of leather with none of the toxic runoff produced from most clothing manufacturing. Find out more at ananas-anam.com.

Music meets recycling thanks to a UK band named DirtyMurph and the Kerbside Recyclers. According to wastedive.com, this band came together in jest, and is now on their third album. You can hear and purchase such hits as Re-Use Shop at www.dirtymurph.bandcamp.com.

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CANdlelight Ball Provides Strong Support to CAN

By EMILY RAMSEY
Managing Editor

On April 21, the Child Abuse Network will hold its fifth annual CANdlelight Ball, the nonprofit's primary fundraising event, an event that proves more necessary each year as the demand for CAN's services continues to grow, notes event co-chair and board president-elect Cari Marshall.

Over the past five years, CAN, located at 2829 S. Sheridan Rd., has seen a 14-percent increase in total number of children served, currently serving approximately 2,500 children annually.

"Our facility was created to serve about 40 children per month, and now we are serving 50 per week," Marshall says.

"Our greatest limitation is space."

Yet, while many local organizations serve children, CAN's focus is unique, she continues.

CAN endeavors to reduce the re-traumatization of child abuse victims by offering one location with all multidisciplinary groups on site. Therefore, the child is able to report

his/her abuse one time and one time only, says Marshall.

The on-site groups include Tulsa City and County law enforcement officers and those from surrounding areas, the Tulsa County District Attorney's office, medical pediatricians from the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa's School of Community Medicine, the Oklahoma Department of Human Services child welfare investigators, and Child Abuse Network staff.

"It's a seamless communication between the teams in order to minimize added trauma and prevent future child abuse. This service is not duplicated anywhere in the community," Marshall says.

Once a child abuse report is made to either DHS or the authorities and verified, CAN is the next stop, says CAN Community Relations Consultant Brandi Moore. Services for the child are then coordinated through the Children's Advocacy Center. A child can receive a forensic interview, a medical examination and/or a mental health consultation to connect them to the therapeutic services within the community.

CAN provides a connection with other local agencies, such as Family and Children's Services and the Parent Child Center of Tulsa, in order to aid victims and their families going forward.

"If we don't do the right thing for these children, the cycle will repeat," says Marshall, who developed a heart for children growing up in a family that fostered children.

Marshall's youngest sister was originally fostered by her family.

Being around foster children helped me to see that "these kids are dealing with many things, dealing with trauma and displacement, and they need help," Marshall says.

Marshall became involved with CAN four years ago, drawn by the overall mission.

"Instilling hope, that's the mission of CAN," she says.

The CANdlelight Ball is a black-tie event at the Mayo Hotel, 115 W. 5th St., featuring dinner and dancing.

CAN is proud to announce Max and Marian Vowel as the Honorary Chairs for this year's CANdlelight



Courtesy TOM GILBERT

UPCOMING FUNDRAISER: The Child Abuse Network will hold its fifth annual CANdlelight Ball on April 21 at the Mayo Hotel, 115 W. 5th St. Max and Marian Vowel, front left, will serve as the event's honorary chairs. Also pictured are Hillcrest HealthCare System CEO Kevin Gross, top left, for Presenting Sponsor Hillcrest; Howard Barnett, for Presenting Sponsor the Barnett Family Foundation; event co-chairs Ashley Hudgeons, center, and Cari Marshall; and Chef Justin Thompson, right, who will serve as event emcee.

Ball and Ashley Hudgeons as event co-chair with Marshall.

For additional info on email events@childabusenet-work.org.

Spark 2017: Trivia Night to Further Camp Fire's Mission

Camp Fire Green Country will hold its second annual fundraiser Spark 2017: Trivia Night on April 27 at 6 p.m. at the Mike Fretz Event Center, 11545 E. 43rd St. The evening will include dinner and a cash bar, a silent auction, and live event trivia.

Proceeds raised at Spark 2017 benefit Camp Fire's programs and mission to provide all children the opportunity to develop a better understanding of who they are and gain greater self-confidence and the knowledge that they can make a difference, says Camp Fire Executive Director

Renee Meek.

The nonprofit organization serves over 2,000 children, grades Pre-K – 12, in Tulsa and Northeastern Oklahoma through after-school clubs, teen leadership training, and camp and outdoor programs. Camp Fire's structured programming includes STEM and critical thinking activities.

"Eighty percent of the children Camp Fire serves come from low-income or disadvantaged homes, who often don't have the opportunity to participate in after-school activities," says

Meek.

Just Plane Fun was Camp Fire's previous fundraising event, which ran for 18 years. However, the organization began searching for new ways to engage its donors and guests and to better share Camp Fire's mission and efforts in the community, says Meek.

For information on tickets and sponsorships, call 918-592-2267 or visit TulsaCampFire.org.

All new and increased sponsorships will be doubled through a challenge grant provided by the George Kaiser Family Foundation.



Courtesy Camp Fire Green Country

BENEFITING DISADVANTAGED YOUTH: Camp Fire Green Country will hold its second annual fundraiser Spark 2017: Trivia Night on April 27 at 6 p.m. at the Mike Fretz Event Center, 11545 E. 43rd St.



Photo courtesy Tom Gilbert

Ashley Hudgeons, Event Co-Chair; Max & Marian Vowel, Honorary Chairs; Cari Marshall, Event Co-Chair

CANDLELIGHT BALL
Star Light, Star Bright

Benefitting the Child Abuse Network, Inc.

Friday, April 21, 2017

Sponsorships & Tickets childabusenetwork.org OR 918-624-0217

Sponsors Include: **hillcrest** HealthCare System, **The Barnett Family** Foundation, **GTR Newspapers**, **Lou and Connie Miller** Charitable Foundation, **LIVE UNITED** United Way, **Helping Hands United Way** Partner Agency



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The Tulsa Drillers Return To ONEOK Field In April. Home Opener is April 13 vs. Midland.

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| 26 March GOLDEN EAGLES vs. South Dakota St. • 1 p.m. Baseball 918-495-6000 for info. SWAN LAKE Tulsa Ballet 3 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. EXCISION Cain's Ballroom 8 p.m. Visit cainsballroom.com for more information. | 27 I CAN'T IMPROV WITH MARK FRANK McKeon Center for Creativity 12 – 12:45 p.m. Visit tulsacc.edu for more information. BEETHOVEN BOOK EVENT Central Library 7 p.m. Visit chambermusicstulsa.org for more information. | 28 MAINLY MYSTERIES: DISCOVER AUTHORS JULIE MCELWAIN AND EMILY LITTLEJOHN Hardesty Regional Library March 13-18 Visit tulsalibrary.org for more information. | 29 FOOD TRUCK WEDNESDAY Guthrie Green 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Visit guthriegreen.com for more information. ADULT BOOK DISCUSSION Bixby Library 2 – 3 p.m. "The Invention of Wings" by Sue Monk Kidd. Visit tulsalibrary.org for more info. BRAIN CANDY LIVE! 35 Concerts 7 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. | 30 SPLIT LIP RAYFIELD Cain's Ballroom 8 p.m. Visit cainsballroom.com for more information. GEORGE THOROGOOD AND THE DESTROYERS Hard Rock Hotel and Casino 8 p.m. Visit hardrocktulsa.com for more information. Ask us about ID Fraud Protection Central Bank of Oklahoma Strong roots. Endless possibilities. | 31 ALEXANDER WHO'S NOT NOT NOT NOT NOT GOING TO MOVE PAC Trust 7 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. THE LAST DAYS OF JUDAS ISCARIOT Theatre Pops 8 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. | 1 April THE LAST DAYS OF JUDAS ISCARIOT Theatre Pops 8 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. BLACK GRACE Choregus Productions 8 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. LIFE IN COLOR BOK Center 7 p.m. – 12 a.m. Visit bokcenter.com for more information. |
| 2 THE LAST DAYS OF JUDAS ISCARIOT Theatre Pops 2 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. HERMITAGE PIANO TRIO Chamber Music Tulsa 3 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. WINTER JAM 2017 BOK Center 6 p.m. Visit bokcenter.com for more information. | 3 HIRING EVENT Goodwill Job Connection 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Visit goodwilltulsa.org for more information. I CAN'T DO STAND UP WITH BLUE WHALE COMEDY FESTIVAL McKeon Center for Creativity 12 – 12:45 p.m. Visit tulsacc.edu for more information. | 4 RECYCLABLE ART Central Library 4 – 5 p.m. Visit tulsalibrary.org for more information. PANIC! AT THE DISCO BOK Center 7 p.m. Visit bokcenter.com for more information. We offer Health Savings Accounts Central Bank of Oklahoma Strong roots. Endless possibilities. | 5 BROWN BAG IT: TULSA CAMERATA PAC Trust 12:10 p.m. This event is FREE. GREAT DECISIONS: CURRENT EVENTS DISCUSSION GROUP South Broken Arrow Library 12 – 3 p.m. Visit tulsalibrary.org for more information. | 6 THE LAST DAYS OF JUDAS ISCARIOT Theatre Pops 8 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. CHRIS ROCK River Spirit Event Center 8 p.m. Visit riverspirittulsa.com for more information. DOG NIGHT WITH PETS WELL PANTRY AND TULSA SPCA Tulsa Botanic Garden 7 p.m. Visit tulsabotanic.org for info. | 7 THE LAST DAYS OF JUDAS ISCARIOT Theatre Pops 8 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. EASTER ISLAND MUSIC & CAMPING FESTIVAL Valley Park April 6 – 8 Visit easterislandfestival.com for more information. SIGNATURE POPS: SIGNATURE CELTIC TCC Van Trease PACE 7 p.m. Visit tulsacc.edu for more info. | 8 L.O.V. THE ART WITHIN U OK Performing Arts 7 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. TSO CLASSICS: BRAHMS' REQUIEM Tulsa Symphony 7:30 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. THE LAST DAYS OF JUDAS ISCARIOT Theatre Pops 8 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. |
| 9 BROWNIES 5K/ FUN ROOT BEER RUN Cascia Hall West Field 12:30 p.m. Visit facebook.com/browniesclasic for more information. THE LAST DAYS OF JUDAS ISCARIOT Theatre Pops 2 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. EASTER PAGEANT Rose Event Center, B. A. 2 p.m. Call 918-991-4083 for more info. | 10 ARTIST MICHAEL KNIGIN PAC Gallery April 5-27 FREE exhibit. BACHELOR'S BUTTONS AND SUNFLOWERS Brookside Library All day Visit tulsalibrary.org for more information. | 11 DRAWING ON MEMORIES Gilcrease Museum 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. Visit alz.org/oklahoma for more information. DIRTY DANCING – THE CLASSIC LOVE STORY ON STAGE Celebrity Attractions 7:30 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. | 12 DIRTY DANCING Celebrity Attractions 7:30 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. STS9 Cain's Ballroom 8 p.m. Visit cainsballroom.com for more information. Free small business checking Central Bank of Oklahoma Strong roots. Endless possibilities. | 13 TULSA DRILLERS vs. Midland 7:05 p.m. Visit www.tulsadrillers.com for more information. DIRTY DANCING Celebrity Attractions 7:30 p.m. • April 13-14 myticketoffice.com for tickets. TROUT UNLIMITED MONTHLY MEETING Hardesty Regional Library March 13-18 Visit tulsaflyfishers.org for more information. | 14 TULSA DRILLERS vs. Midland 7:05 p.m. • April 14-15 Visit www.tulsadrillers.com for more information. BOLLYWOOD AND BEYOND South Asian Performing Arts Foundation 7:30 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. NATURAL EGG DYEING Tulsa Botanic Garden 7 p.m. Visit tulsabotanic.org for more information. | 15 DIRTY DANCING Celebrity Attractions 2 & 8 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. JEFF FOXWORTHY AND LARRY THE CABLE GUY BOK Center 7:30 p.m. Visit bokcenter.com for more information. AARON WATSON Cain's Ballroom 8:30 p.m. Visit cainsballroom.com for more information. |
| 16 SUNRISE EASTER SERVICE Guthrie Green 7 a.m. Visit guthriegreen.com for more information. DIRTY DANCING Celebrity Attractions 2 & 7 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. BUG BY TRACY LETTS TCC Van Trease PACE 8 p.m. Visit tulsacc.edu for more info. | 17 TULSA DRILLERS vs. Frisco 7:05 p.m. Visit www.tulsadrillers.com for more information. LIFE'S MUSICAL MONDAYS Cascia Hall PAC 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Visit lifeniorservices.com for more information. New Name. Same Bank Central Bank of Oklahoma Strong roots. Endless possibilities. | 18 CHE MALAMBO Choregus Productions 7 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. TULSA DRILLERS vs. Frisco 7:05 p.m. Visit www.tulsadrillers.com for more information. ADAM SANDLER River Spirit Event Center 8 p.m. Visit riverspirittulsa.com for more information. | 19 TULSA DRILLERS vs. Frisco 12:05 p.m. Visit www.tulsadrillers.com for more information. UMPHREY'S MCGEE Cain's Ballroom 7 p.m. Visit cainsballroom.com for more information. THE 1975 Brady Theater 7 p.m. Visit bradytheater.com for more information. | 20 ANNIE GET YOUR GUN Presented by Sand Springs Community Theatre 7:30 p.m. • April 20-21 myticketoffice.com for tickets. WELLNESS NIGHT - YOGA IN THE GARDEN Tulsa Botanic Garden 6 p.m. Visit tulsabotanic.org for more information. SMOKEY ROBINSON River Spirit Event Center 8 p.m. Visit riverspirittulsa.com for info. | 21 MICHAEL A. McFAUL Tulsa Town Hall 10:30 a.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. REVERB PLAY FESTIVAL Echo Theatre Company 7 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. CHRIS BOTTI 35 Concerts 7:30 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. | 22 ANNIE GET YOUR GUN Presented by Sand Springs Community Theatre 7:30 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. REVERB PLAY FESTIVAL Echo Theatre Company 2 & 7 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. A PERFECT CIRCLE BOK Center 8 p.m. Visit bokcenter.com for more information. |
| 23 ANNIE GET YOUR GUN Sand Springs Community Theatre 2 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. REVERB PLAY FESTIVAL Echo Theatre Company 2 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. PIPPIN Broken Arrow PAC 7:30 p.m. Visit guthriegreen.com for more information. | 24 TULSA DRILLERS vs. Arkansas 7:05 p.m. Visit www.tulsadrillers.com for more information. EAT BETTER, MOVE MORE Owasso Library 11 a.m. – 12 p.m. Visit tulsalibrary.org for more information. | 25 TULSA DRILLERS vs. Arkansas 7:05 p.m. Visit www.tulsadrillers.com for more information. LUNCH AND LEARN WITH TULSA MASTER GARDENERS Central Library 12:10 – 12:50 p.m. Visit tulsalibrary.org for more information. | 26 TULSA DRILLERS vs. Arkansas 4:05 p.m. Visit www.tulsadrillers.com for more information. PAWS FOR READING Owasso Library 4 – 5 p.m. Visit tulsalibrary.org for info. MUSIC NIGHT WITH PAUL BENJAMIN BAND Tulsa Botanic Garden 7 p.m. • April 27 Visit tulsabotanic.org for more information. | 27 TULSA DRILLERS vs. Arkansas 7:05 p.m. Visit www.tulsadrillers.com for more information. ANNIE GET YOUR GUN Presented by Sand Springs Community Theatre 7:30 p.m. • April 27-28 myticketoffice.com for tickets. TULSA CAMERATA: DREAMS AND PRAYERS Philbrook Museum of Art 7 p.m. Visit philbrook.org for info. | 28 TULSA DRILLERS vs. NW Arkansas 7:05 p.m. • April 28-29 Visit www.tulsadrillers.com for more information. KENNY ROGERS River Spirit Event Center 8:30 p.m. Visit riverspirittulsa.com for more information. More Bank for your Buck. Central Bank of Oklahoma Strong roots. Endless possibilities. | 29 IRIS SHOW Tulsa Garden Center 12 – 4 p.m. Visit tulsairis.com for more information. ANNIE GET YOUR GUN Presented by Sand Springs Community Theatre 2 & 7:30 p.m. myticketoffice.com for tickets. 80S PROM Cain's Ballroom 9 p.m. Visit cainsballroom.com for more information. |



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AREA NEWS

Tulsa Native Grows Music Career

By EMILY RAMSEY
Managing Editor

A budding music producer with ties to Tulsa took his very first walk on the red carpet at this year's Grammy Awards on Feb. 12.

Tulsa native Derek Blankenship is the nephew of former University of Tulsa head football coach Bill Blankenship. His parents and grandparents all still reside in the greater Tulsa area.

Derek Blankenship moved to Los Angeles in 2012 and, thanks to a series of "right place at the right time" moments, has worked as a production assistant for the Grammys since 2014.

For the 2017 Grammys, Blankenship walked the red carpet, representing himself as a producer, musician and composer, walking with the likes of John Legend, Ryan Tedder, Carrie Underwood, Lady Gaga, all of whom he spoke to briefly.

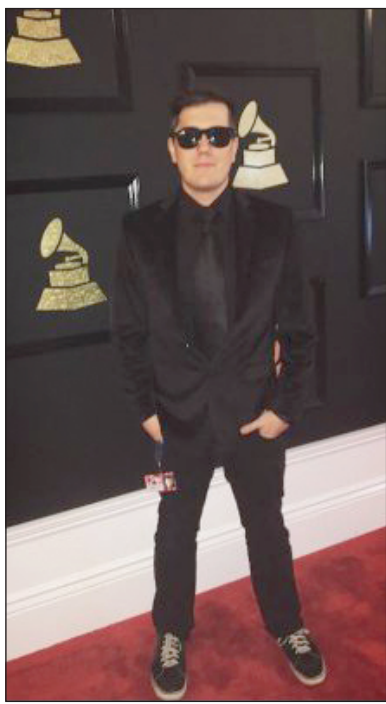
"To be walking among those artists, it was a dream come true," he says.

Blankenship also worked as stage manager for the show, and he made sure to bring up his Tulsa ties to Tedder and Underwood back stage.

Since moving to L.A., Blankenship has been working to build a career as a music producer, operating under the name The Northern Lights.

Blankenship has been playing music since he was six years old when he took up guitar lessons and was in his first band by fourth grade.

After graduating high school, he attended Baylor University, pursuing a film and digital media



GRAMMY APPEARANCE: Derek Blankenship, nephew of former University of Tulsa head football coach Bill Blankenship, stands on the red carpet at the 2017 Grammy Awards, on Feb. 12. Blankenship is making a name for himself as a music producer.

degree, but left after a couple years, questioning what he ultimately wanted to do with his musical aspirations.

He took the next few years deciding on his next steps, gaining the advice of those in the music industry, "asking myself if this is what I really want to do," Blankenship says.

In 2012, he made the jump to L.A. with \$1,000 in his pocket, he continues.

Through some serendipitous situations, Blankenship secured a job with NBC Universal, wearing a number of hats as a tour guide, errand runner, and production assistant on shows such as The Big Bang Theory and The Voice.

"That opportunity allowed me to get my foot in the door, network and meet people that I admired," he says.

All the while, Blankenship still pursued his own music projects by mixing and composing music, selling it online, and gaining a following of more than 40,000 people on SoundCloud.

Many of his albums have received high ratings, including, in 2015, his album Teenage Wasteland, which was named top album of the year by New Retro Wave.

As his exposure rose, he began receiving attention from artists looking to collaborate.

Currently, he is working with Dana Jean Phoenix, a Canadian musician, and with Vast Hill, a band from Sydney, Australia, creating music for their upcoming albums and spending upwards of 16 hours in the studio each day, he says.

But, as far as he is concerned, there's no where else he would rather be.

"One thing that L.A. has taught me is that I don't want to be an actor," he says. "I love working behind the scenes and working with artists."

As Blankenship continues to advance his dreams, he is eager to encourage others to do the same: "I just want people to know, don't let anyone tell you no; just go for it."

CENTRAL LIBRARY CELEBRATES 100,000TH CHECKOUT



LOYAL CUSTOMER: Michael Mullens, Central Library's 100,000th checkout customer, holds his prize of an Amazon Echo with Buddy Ingalls, Central Library manager.

In February, Tulsa City-County Library's Central Library reached a milestone since its reopening: its 100,000th checkout of printed materials.

Since opening in October 2016, Central Library has seen a daily traffic count of more than 1,500 people and a steady flow of customers exploring new library features including the maker space, digital learning lab and scenic study rooms overlooking downtown Tulsa.

"This is an exciting time as visitors continue to marvel at the beautiful downtown library," said Buddy Ingalls, Central Library manager.

Library customer Michael Mullens was the person check-

ing out the 100,000th item, and he was rewarded with an Amazon Echo.

"I was not expecting this. It was a real shocker to win," said Mullens, who regularly visits Central Library. "As a reader, I appreciate the new library and how easy it is to find the books you like to read."

Now, librarians are preparing for the next milestone: the 1 millionth checkout.

"Even as many readers transition to accessing library materials on tablets, smartphones and other digital devices, there is still a strong demand for a physical copy of a book," said Ingalls. "Our main objective is to connect people with information in a format they prefer."

Rebecca Norton is at Home in Her Greenbelt

By KYLIE McFERRIN
Contributing Writer

Not everyone grows up becoming one with trees, but Rebecca Norton did. It was her escape and it seems not much has changed since. As a child, the woods were a friend while living in New England, and now a licensed counselor with degrees from Louisiana State University and Amberton University, the trees are still her constant friends as her continuous work in the greenbelt behind her Minshall Park neighborhood home in south Tulsa can attest.

Moving to the neighborhood in 1998 with husband, Doug, Norton was drawn to the trees yet again. It felt like home, the home she identifies with. "So, you see, trees and woods have always saved my life. When I saw the woods in the greenbelt, I knew I was home," she says.

Upon exploring the area and noticing the extreme amounts of erroneous material dumped among the trees, her mission began. Working steadily to begin removing the trash, the momentum picked up.

Asked why she began her cleanup of the greenbelt, she says, "I would take my dogs for a walk most mornings. I noticed how much trash and dumping that there was in the greenbelt so I began to clean up."

"I found an air conditioning unit, car seat, truck door, shag carpet, truck tires, and lots of debris that would be dumped after trees were cut near electric lines. Smokers, all kinds of planters, debris that

yard workers would throw there, and of course all kinds of miscellaneous trash. I still continue to find the trash on a regular basis."

Working with Up With Trees via the City of Tulsa foresters helped Norton recognize which vines were hurting the indigenous trees, some of which are red buds as well as ancient oaks. By clearing the vines and other species that have been continually preventing growth of native trees, Norton's work has ensured that they are stable and flourishing. She certainly doesn't discount help from local neighbors. Many have stepped in to lend a hand to her efforts.

"Some of our neighbors have decided to pitch in and help with some of the projects. I've gotten a chance to get to know more about several of my neighbors, and this has turned out to be a lot of fun," she says.

When it comes to projects beyond her work with the trees and planting of native plants, Norton has constructed "wattle fences" throughout the corridor of her greenbelt section, which hold a dual purpose. Not only do they look nice but they also help with soil erosion. Although a wattle fence may sound mysterious, it is a medieval fence woven from tree branches, in which neighbors have also learned to craft themselves with her instruction. Some residents are beginning to use them in their own yards after seeing her work. Yet another delight hidden in Norton's greenbelt are hand-made wooden teepees, also created with branches. These structures have even taken in a new resident or two.



LADY OF THE WOODS: Minshall Park neighborhood resident Rebecca Norton works hard to keep her nearby greenbelt free of debris from natural and man-made sources.

"One teepee is being occupied by a critter right now and it will be interesting to see if birds take up residence in some of them as well. So, you see the wood structures were a solution to the wood debris problem. One of the best things that came out of this, but I never planned, is that so many people love wood structures. One of the best compliments was from a person who said that it looks like Narnia down there," she says.

Narnia indeed! The extreme

time, attention, and utter determination to refurbish a greenbelt in south Tulsa is not lost on many. Norton's work has inspired her neighbors and friends to pitch in to help ensure her vision maintains itself. It isn't just her work, but her passion and creativity that make the greenbelt a magical place.

"For a while I felt like the Lone Ranger down here in the greenbelt, but now I feel like I have a support group with neighbors and

the Home Owners Association. Long-term I hope that others will take up my efforts to be good stewards of such a blessing that we have here. Oh, I plan on living until some other nut that likes all the dirty work comes along and takes over for me," she says.

One thing is for certain: Rebecca Norton's time and attention to trees, wildlife, and plants has invigorated not only the greenbelt, but those who live near it. She is indeed a true Lady of the Woods.