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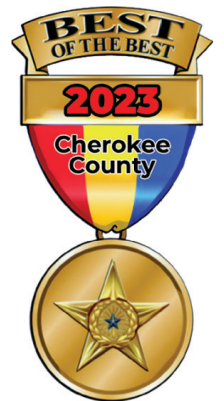


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By Louis Gray

When we relaunched Tahlequah Grapevine in early 2023, we knew we'd face challenges. Production costs have risen, and some of our most valuable advertisers were feeling the crunch of a tight economy. Though economic woes have eased as of late, the holiday season is expensive, and that can mean lean spending for advertising.

Fortunately for TDP, several local business owners know where their ads are going to get the most attention. Each Grapevine has attracted thousands of sets of eyeballs, first in the version on our website, and then in the magazine that will be delivered to readers.

By the time most of you see this, Christmas will have come and gone. We had wanted to get the last Grapevine of the year on the stands the second week of December, but production and staffing issues rendered that impossible. So our plan for an "ugly sweater" photo spread had to be scrapped. However, we do have "Great Grands," featuring 10 photos submitted by readers with their grandchildren. And for our first edition in 2024, we'll ask you for "Perfect Pets" pics.

Inside this issue are five outstanding features, by some of the best writers to ever work for TDP. Our cover story by Joe Mack, on a few of the area's premier musicians, is a real treat for readers. Among those featured are Harold Aldridge and Randy Crouch. Louis Gray, a long-time leader in Oklahoma media - as is his brother, Jim, former Osage chief - takes a look at the movie "Killers of the Flower Moon." Louis' and Jim's great-grandfather was among those murdered. Nancy Garber has a feature on Jerry and Barbra Cook, two of our move beloved local citizens. Dana Eversole writes about a quartet of high-profile women who regularly have lunch together. And Layce Gardner checks out the venerable Jones-Powell-Antoine house.

We are confident you'll enjoy the fourth installment of Tahlequah Grapevine, and that it will whet your appetite for the next one in March 2024!

- Kim Poindexter, Executive Editor



Meet the Editor

Kim Poindexter has been a member of the TDP news team since 1985 and the top editor since 1987. She is in the Oklahoma Journalism Hall of Fame and was the 2022 Oklahoma Press Association Beachy Musselman Award winner. She has won more than 200 journalism awards during her career, both individually and as part of the TDP team, which has been named Best Newspaper of the Year the past four years by CNHI. She and her husband, Chris, have an adult son, Cole, and a new daughter-in-law, Dani.

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The Tahlequah draw

Natural wonders inspire boundless musical talent

By Joe Mack

In a relatively recent chapter of my life, I was immersed in the hyper-synergized world that is Northwest Arkansas, a place fueled by a passion for better understanding not only of what people need, but what they want.

Watching one of the world's largest companies invest millions to attract the best and brightest was nothing short of fascinating. In true "if you build it, they will come" fashion, I witnessed the construction of bike trails and greenways, a world-class outdoor amphitheater, shopping centers full of leading retailers, modern housing to fit every configuration, and all the infrastructure that goes along with a population boom.

To borrow a line from the Velocity Group's Daniel Hintz, I got to witness the construction of the "theater of cool" – assembling the right elements in the right place at the right time, or put more plainly, unlimited resources in a post-recession Natural State.

A decade before landing in Bentonville to carve marks in the mediascape, I rode with four pals in a 1977 Volkswagen Westfalia from Oklahoma City to Tahlequah. After one long, strange trip (the bus didn't go any faster than 55 mph) and taking a four-hour break while waiting for the tire shop to open in Fort Gibson, we grabbed our supplies and headed for the river. Here we basked all day in the cool, clear waters of the Illinois before I was set to open up for the Burtschi Brothers at Roxie's Roost. Talk about a theater of cool, this is the Tahlequah draw: rivers, creeks, hills, trees, food and beverage that hit the right spot at the right time,



Randy Crouch is widely regarded as the "Hillbilly Hendrix."

seemingly at the right place.

This right place has attracted and retained thousands of creatives for over a century. Some were forced here, some born here, others chose to be here. I've been long stricken with the music bug and count myself among the multitudes of musicians and artists drawn to this beautiful nook in Cherokee County, where've I've crawled back after journeys near and far for nearly 20 years.

"The natural beauty of this land, the beauty of the people...that's what's brought and kept me here," said Randy Crouch, 71, who with his wife, Liz, has been nested in north-central Cherokee County since 1970. "There were three places in Oklahoma we could play back in the '70s, and two of them were in Tahlequah: The Squeeze Inn and Granny's Attic. We stayed because they didn't run us off. Not to many places back then or now will put up with our music, which is both

rock and country."

Widely regarded as the "Hillbilly Hendrix," Crouch has drawn crowds across six decades for his chainsaw-wielding, fiddle-blazing, Stratocaster-sent melodies wrapped around earworms like "Got Time to Party," "Big Shot Rich Man" and "Mexican Holiday." He's often referred to one of the godfathers of red dirt music, which bucks the notion of its singular Stillwater roots.

"The good thing about living here is it makes me write good music," Crouch said. "It's a special scene with all kinds of music and art. All of the arts and sciences and everything we use to be part of this planet works well together in Tahlequah."

Crouch's neighbor, historian and blues scholar Dr. Harold Aldridge Jr., emphasized another avenue of togetherness borne of necessity.

"I came to Tahlequah to attend grad school in 1967, finished my

master's in '69, and never left, because who would be here to look out for the Black students?" Aldridge asked.

Though racism and segregation were alive and well in the 1960s and '70s, the leadership of community pillars like Aldridge opened doors for thousands. Earlier in his life, his father – who was also his basketball coach – would open doors to the world of music.

"My daddy would take me to these clubs, juke joints and houses down in Taft where there was no law nor curfew, and there'd be a guitar player entertaining folks with some Gospel and blues tunes on a small amp," Aldridge recalled. "My cousins gave me some little 78-RPM records, and that's about the time I got into Freddie King. My parents put me in piano classes when I was young, and I hated it. But they got me a guitar when I was 12, so I was either learning chords, on horseback, or on the [basketball] court."

When he was playing with some guys as a sophomore in high school, he remembers the club owners would say, "If we get raided, grab your guitar, get out of here and go hide in the bushes."

He'd go on to front a party band called The Sole System that tore up the college circuit, and it wasn't until the 1980s and '90s that he'd pop back up at house concerts and special engagements.

Nowadays, Aldridge resides in northern Cherokee County, enjoying a slower pace of life on his



Harold Aldridge currently resides in northern Cherokee County, where he raises horses.

ranch, raising horses, gardening, and writing fingerstyle social commentary blues.

"I left the jump blues behind a long time ago," he explained. "Now I talk about race, sex, politics – if you don't like one of those things, just wait a minute and I'll give you something to think about," he said with a laugh.

In the past year, he's been logging ample windshield time promoting "What if the Past was Lost Forever? Then Who Would Pass on What? Segregation and Desegregation in the Oklahoma Public Schools," a book detailing his encounters with desegregation.

"What's special about Tahlequah is the number of tremendous musicians from around here who inspire me to get my act together," he said. "My advice to young or new musicians here and everywhere would

be to learn what you are studying, and learn it well. I remember one of the guys my dad introduced me to when I was a kid who was a great musician, but for one reason or another, he never finished a song. Learn your music, learn it well, then put yourself into it."

Next to Aldridge, the young songbird Autumn Ragland has been championing the professor's study orders. Now 26 with a family that includes two daughters, Autumn has been playing across Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas and with the likes of Stoney LaRue, Sunny Sweeney and Trace Adkins. The reality: Learning is not always easy.

"I think the hardest times I've ever had playing music were right after I had my youngest daughter. I went back out on the road three weeks postpartum and took her with me. People were not kind to

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me during that time,” Ragland said. “There’s no real options for maternity leave, no real options for childcare, and they don’t want you bringing the baby with you. I just wanted to do what was best for her, and I knew that meant keeping her close to me. I had to keep making money somehow.”

Ragland, an advocate for inclusivity born and raised in Pryor, Oklahoma, has continued nearly non-stop touring in solo and combo configurations. But she’s also released a ton of music, the latest of which was written and recorded in Tahlequah, where she’s lived most of the past five years.

“A lot of musicians around here helped with the creation of my most recent record, Guardian – any sort of expert you need on any sort of musical instrument or



Autumn Ragland is a musician and mother from Pryor.

production can be found around here,” she said.

And while it’s often said you can’t throw a rock in Tahlequah without hitting a guitar player, its creative circle can appear elusive until you’re completely submerged in its ethereal embrace.

“The Tahlequah music scene wasn’t something I was aware of

until I was a part of it,” Ragland said. “There are venues and festivals all over the area, and I think I’ve played all of them.”

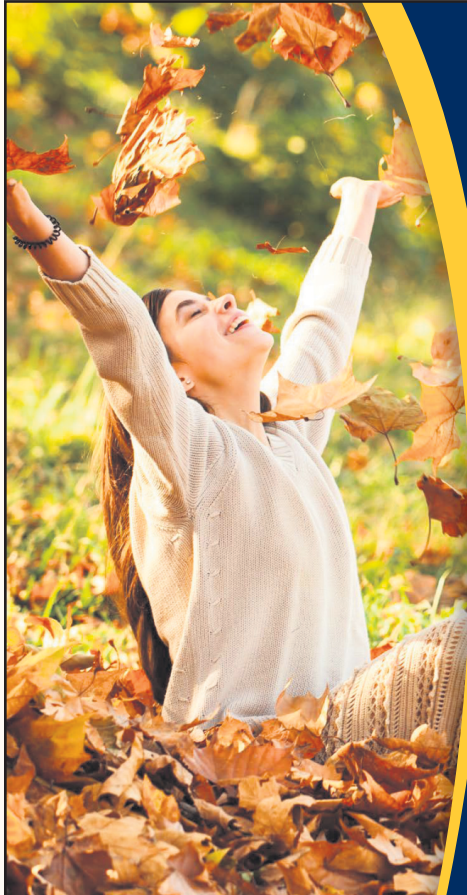
That’s not to say Tahlequah is the perfect place to put down roots, but its scorecard carries more pluses than minuses.

“For a long time, I would have said we needed a music store, but we finally got one recently,” Ragland said. “I think we’re doing right by continuing to have live events throughout the year. That keeps money in the artists’ pockets and helps us spread our work.”

This work, crafted in Cherokee County, can be of the highest quality, if done for the right reason.

“I think we should all just make art because we love it, not because we’re trying to be the best,” she said.

Continued on page 16



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A life of service

Cook's partnership focuses on family, community

By Nancy Garber

Jerry and Barbra Cook's partnership is the stuff of dreams.

Both were born and raised in Muskogee, but didn't meet until high school. Barbra Greenhaw, part of a precision marching group, caught Jerry's eye one day during fall practice.

"A friend bet me if I asked her out, she wouldn't go out with me," Jerry said. "I asked, she did; I took the \$10 [bet] and bought us dinner."

The two became sweethearts, enrolled at Northeastern State after graduating from high school, and were wed during their senior year in 1971.

As it turned out, Tahlequah became their home.

Barbra already had a family connection here – one uncle owned the local sale barn, the other a downtown car dealership – so as a young girl, she often came from Muskogee on Saturdays to stop at Morgan's Bakery for a favorite pastry, and then on to visit her grandmother. In his youth, Jerry's parents had modeled the way for him and his two brothers by being actively involved with Parent-Teacher Association and Boy Scouts. He achieved Eagle Scout with the help of his father.

Side by side, the Cooks embarked on a lifelong pattern of community service.

After college graduation, his career as general manager and partner at Greenhaw-Eddings Ford established Jerry's reputation as a business professional in Tahlequah. Twenty years later, he and Barbra created Clear Creek Corp., partnering in land development, independent auto dealership, and mini storage operations.

"Being married to your business



When Jerry Cook retired from NSU, his wife, Barbra, purchased a bench in his honor on the Tahlequah campus.

partner does have its own challenges, but keeping customers first and personalities second provided us a purposeful business model," Jerry said. "Raising Sarah and Andy to be respectful and hard workers were two priorities for us that brought us great pleasure."

Back in 1968, the young couple had been bitten by the political bug while volunteering in George Nigh's gubernatorial campaign.

"His 'anyone can do anything' message really resonated with me," Jerry said.

The governor later recognized Jerry's leadership potential, appointing him to the Oklahoma Motor Vehicle Commission, and eventually, as its executive director. During this time, Jerry accepted a seat on the Tahlequah Public Works Authority Board of Directors, along with several

other municipal boards.

His penchant for politics and public service led him to run for Tahlequah City Council, and eventually, for mayor.

With the help of Barbra and their two children, Jerry engaged a diverse group of active supporters in "Tahlequah Team 2000," a campaign that also drew a number of NSU students eager for a first-time experience in local politics.

Twenty years have passed, and some locals are unaware of the progress Mayor Cook brought to the city that today we take for granted. For instance, Fourth Street running west once ended at Town Branch Creek. With funds available through the Eastern Oklahoma Development District, the right-of-way was cleared to build a bridge over the creek, opening Fourth Street all the way from the east bypass

to the west bypass.

"I have always felt like a community is only as advanced as its technology allows," Jerry said.

And following that philosophy, he gathered a team of NSU student workers to build the city of Tahlequah's first website and launch the transition to a virtual city hall and enterprise system.

Cell phone technology was advancing quickly.

"We needed upgraded phone service to move Tahlequah to the next step in cell service," Jerry recalled.

Working with AT&T, his team brought 3G, followed by 4G LTE, to keep the community advancing with the latest digital services.

"Major school bonds, supported through municipal sales taxes, brought Tahlequah Public Schools much-needed infrastructure and technology advances," Jerry said.

Working with members of the Tahlequah Industrial Trust Authority, his administration drew businesses like Lowe's and



The Cook family (in 2018) includes Andy and Anna Cook, Sarah and Craig Buchan, Barbra, Jerry, three of the Cooks' four grandchildren, and a family friend. "All I want for Christmas is an updated family photo," Barbra said.

Chili's to Tahlequah.

Barbra was in lockstep, by his side.

"I remember spending the night in the Emergency Management

Office on Y2K, waiting to see if the world would stop when the century clock rolled over," Barbra said.

New Year's Eve 2000, as we now know, proved uneventful.



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“Jerry and I promoted three years of Free Wheel biking events. One year, [the cyclists] stayed two nights and filled the downtown with a closed racecourse. Hundreds of enthusiasts lined the streets of downtown Tahlequah,” she said.

While Jerry was mayor, the couple hosted Tahlequah police officers on duty Christmas Day for dinner. On the Fourth of July, Barbra noted, the couple would prepare a cookout for them at their house, so officers could enjoy a meal and fellowship with their colleagues on duty that day.

“Barbra has always been so supportive of my career moves and encouraged me to serve and work in areas she could see shared fulfillment,” Jerry said. “Her wisdom, her ability to say the right thing at the right time, constantly writing notes of thanks and to those in need of encouragement – all of it is priceless.”

When his mayoral term was up, Jerry turned his career path toward academia. He accepted a position as program representative for NSU’s Oklahoma College of Optometry, assisting with recruitment and student support. His energy and enthusiasm propelled him toward a position as special assistant to the NSU president and director of government relations.

“This was an amazing job for both Barbra and me,” he recalled. “President [Larry] Williams and Dr. George Foster [retired dean of

NSUOCO] always said they got two for the price of one. Barbra served students and NSU programs pro bono, and it was a win-win for me, as she was always helping me to remain focused on the many needs of NSU and the students.”

Following his retirement from NSU, Jerry was asked by Dan Sullivan, chief executive officer of the Grand River Dam Authority, to develop a customer relations team.

“It has been a very rewarding way to end my working career,” he said. “What a pleasure to be handed a clean sheet of paper, to build and lead the team to such a rewarding level of service to the 17 public power cities we serve.”

Jerry often refers to himself as “the luckiest guy in the world,” having been a city councilor, mayor, TPWA board member, NSU representative and a GRDA team leader.

“It’s beyond description,” he said.

While being a partner to Jerry and taking care of her family, Barbra became a familiar face at the Cherokee County Election Board.

“We’ll hit the road and live colorfully”

– Barbra Cook

Now semi-retired, she continues to work during early voting as a precinct inspector. And she enjoys being a “patient actor” at the recently opened Oklahoma State University College of Osteopathic Medicine at the Cherokee Nation in Tahlequah.

“This is very rewarding work and encourages me about the next generation of doctors,” she said.

Jerry retired from GRDA in December, so the Cooks can now catch up on traveling and overdue visits with family. Together, they will bestow lots of attention on their four grandchildren. For Jerry, there will also be lots of golf. Both will find ways to continue serving, in keeping with their life’s work.

On their quieter days, Barbra anticipates sitting with her husband at the end of the street where they’ve lived many years to watch the construction progress on the new College of Optometry, where Jerry began his career at NSU.

And whenever the spirit moves them, Barbra looks forward to the two of them putting the top down on their Mustang.

“We’ll hit the road and live colorfully,” she said.



Meet the Author

Nancy Garber is a former member of the TDP news and advertising teams and retired director of Communications and Marketing at NSU. She is an independent writer and photographer.



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Thru It All has been traveling across the country promoting its recent album, "Chaos Zen."

Continued from page 8

Pop punk powerhouse Thru It All has taken up the overall tempo of Tahlequah's music scene by design.

"From our perspective, it's always been very DIY," said frontman Nick Jordan, 33. "From booking my first punk band at the Dream Theater and running sound, to booking a local venue called The Hallway back in the day and throwing our own large events now, we tend to build everything from the ground up and pave our own way when it comes to rock, punk, and alternative music in the area."

Thru It All has been traveling across the country promoting its music, but the recent "Kroner Goes Punk" and the Chaos Zen album release show at The Branch made Jordan – along with guitarist Daniel Dew, 33, and drummer Andrew Lindroth, 26 – realize how unique Tahlequah is.

"We brought an outdoor stage, sound, lights, security, the whole 9 yards, for Kroner Goes Punk. We change the overall atmosphere of the place for the night, drawing about 400 people to these events," Jordan said. "Crowd surfing and good times were had by all!"

While all three band members are now of age, they have life expe-

rience to make music community more inclusive.

"I think Tahlequah could use one more all-ages music venue," Jordan said. "With just a small amount of marketing budget and a little push from NSU and the local community, we could start bringing in – and selling out – larger shows from bigger touring artists, and put Tahlequah on the map even more. When we first started making music as teenagers, we would throw shows in local parking lots, since there were no other venues or options for us, as far as a live music setting." And, he added with a laugh, "They were always amazing until they were inevitably shut down by local law enforcement."

Neicey Dunham-Finch, vocal-

ist from the trio Oklahoma Wildlife, would like to see more venues in general.

"There are not enough listening venues," she said. "Tahlequah has an abundance of quality musicians – maybe [we need] a coffee house with music, and a place to go dancing would be nice."

Neicey, 68, husband Joel Finch, 65, and her big sister Debbie Duvall, 71, blend tight harmonies over their original works, as well as classic rock and country. They even have a list from which listeners can request songs, which isn't exactly a new concept, but this three-piece has embraced it and elevated their performance schedule across Northeast Oklahoma.

"We have played private parties and events all over, but our Cherokee County music headquarters is Jincy's Kitchen; we have played the first Saturday there for 15 years and counting," Finch said.

Having played every nook and cranny in Cherokee County since the 1990s has had its ups and downs.

"We all agree that the time we played BalloonFest in the thunderstorm/tornado is our favorite. We were in a huge commercial tent and had to unplug the PA, so we got down in the audience and played unplugged while the other tents blew away. We saw the tornado cloud in the distance, but our tent was untouched," she said. "There was a time when our audience wanted more country music than we could give them, because



Oklahoma Wildlife is a trio consisting of Debbie Duvall, Neicey Dunham-Finch, and Joel Finch.

our repertoire was mostly rock 'n' roll, but we have fixed that - now we play both kinds!"

Perhaps that's partly why Tahlequah attracts and absorbs so many artists: the community accepts, if not expects, both. We mix and mingle, we rock 'n' roll, we Native and non-Native, our fire and water, our Earth and sky, together in perfect harmony.

"I'm a huge lover of music," said 28-year-old Lance Roark.

Originally from Gore, Roark is poised to be the next super-talent to call Tahlequah home. His top-shelf songwriting and work ethic landed him writing credits along-

side Rc Edwards on "Chipping Mill," the second single from the Turnpike Troubadour's latest album, A Cat in the Rain. His stock was already rising after spending time on the road this summer with Koe Wetzal, Tanner Usrey and Jason Boland & The Stragglers, and he will undoubtedly continue to grow, much like Tahlequah.

"The music scene in Tahlequah is always growing and changing," Roark said. "Mixes between country, pop, rock, punk and singer-songwriting styles make it easier to go out and enjoy an evening without being tied to one genre. Not forgetting to mention the live

karaoke scene!"

Yes, music happens at karaoke night. It's also happening at open mics, sanctuaries, powwows, football games, classrooms, stages and streets, creating the theater of cool - and that's cool, ya'll.

Inspired music and art that triumphs life's trials and tribulations is made every day in Tahlequah. As sure as the sun and moon will rise, and water springs from the Earth down the Illinois River into Lake Tenkiller and beyond, our songs will carry on.

Sounds of the Story

Randy Crouch: www.facebook.com/randycrouchofficial

Harold Aldridge: www.facebook.com/fiveagainseven

Oklahoma Wildlife: www.facebook.com/oklahomawildlifeband

Autumn Ragland: www.autumnraglandofficial.com

Thru It All: www.thruitallband.com

Lance Roark: www.lanceroarkmusic.com



Meet the Author

Joe Mack is a songwriter, musician and event promoter residing in northern Cherokee County with his wife, Pam, and their furry housemates. Mack is also a regional marketing executive for CNHI, and a former entertainment editor in recovery.

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This old house

Home on Downing boasts colorful history, long line of owners

By Layce Gardner

The year 1905 was a benchmark year for Tahlequah.

“The Great Fire of Tahlequah” happened only 10 years earlier. The blaze originated in a stable on Muskogee Avenue and burned down three residences and 14 businesses between Shawnee and Delaware streets.

To make sure this never happened again, the Tahlequah City Council adopted an ordinance that no more wooden buildings were to be erected in the business district. The council also voted to establish the Waddie Hudson Fire Company No.1.

That same year, Tahlequah was awarded \$10,000 to build the Carnegie Library. In a letter to Andrew Carnegie, city leaders cited why they needed a library, stating, “...even many of the Indians here are readers.”

Tahlequah was growing, evidenced by the many new homes being built. The Jones-Powell-Antoine house, at 225 W. Downing St., was built in 1905. Since that time, it has had 13 owners.

The land where the house now sits, on the corner of Downing Avenue and College Street, was originally owned by Cherokee Chief Lewis Downing. Daisy Jones bought the land, known as Lot 1 Block 57, for \$20 from the Cherokee government. Under Jones’ watchful eye, the home was constructed in the Queen Anne style. This style is a subtype of Victorian homes, characterized by an asymmetrical design. The house has a turret topped by a cupola on the east side and a stained glass window in the front, facing the street, and has a multigabled, steeply-pitched roof. It looks like a house one might see in a fairytale book brought to life.

In the 1900 census, Daisy Jones



The exterior of Jones-Powell-Antoine House is highlighted by a turret.

was 35 years old. She was a Native American woman who was listed as head of household. A farmer by trade, Daisy had her four children living with her. She owned the house for four years before selling it to Oscar and Anna Goddard in 1909.

Oscar Napoleon Goddard, wife Anna Missouri Richards Goddard, and daughter Freda “Jimmy” Goddard, lived in the home for the next 13 years. Oscar was the manager of a wholesale grocery store in Tahlequah. On his draft card for World War I, he was described as being medium height and build with brown hair and gray eyes. He was a member of the Tahlequah Masonic Lodge, and was also a 32nd degree Mason and a Shriner. In the 1930 census, Anna was listed as being of mixed-blood descent, belonging to the Cherokee tribe. Oscar died in 1960 at age 86 and is buried in the Tahlequah cemetery, next to Anna, who had died eight years earlier.

In 1922, Robert and Charlotte Sanders moved to Tahlequah from Porum, Oklahoma, and bought the home. The couple were schoolteachers, for over 40 years. Robert was Tahlequah High School’s first football coach. A half Cherokee, he attended the Cherokee National Male Seminary and was a graduate of Northeastern State College. He was with the U.S. Indian Service, working at several boarding schools. The Sanderses had four children: Theda, Bettie, Sam, and Sally. Also living on the premises were Charlotte’s parents, Samuel and Florence Mayes.

Van and Lucile Carl bought the home in 1929. Van Willis Carl worked as a salesman at a dry goods store. The Carls had two lodgers in 1930: 20-year-old Henri Minsky and 60-year-old widowed Native American woman Carrie Washington. Van passed away on Feb. 16, 1936, leaving the home to his wife. By 1940,

Lucile was working as a saleslady, making \$600 per year – less than half of what a man averaged per year. At that time, a loaf of bread cost a dime and a gallon of gasoline was 18 cents. Lucile passed away April 2, 1948, and is at rest next to her husband in the Prairie Grove, Arkansas, cemetery.

Jesse Eugene “Gene” and Bess Pyeatt bought the home from Lucile in 1941. Gene, the owner of a general store, was a decade older than his wife, Bess. The couple only lived in the house for two years before selling it to Maude and Ova Powell.

Maude and Ova were sisters to a former owner of the home, Lucile Carl. They had visited Lucile many times and were smitten with the house. The Powells were the spinster daughters of Tahlequah Sheriff J.T. Powell. Maude was 17 years Ova’s senior. They lived with their father in the Grandview area until J.T.’s death, at which time they bought the house and moved into town.

To make ends meet, Maude and Ova took in several boarders over the years, one of whom was Joseph Antoine. Joseph was born Nov 17, 1893. He registered for World War II in 1917. At that time, he lived in Park Hill with his wife, Ida Bassett, and was a farmer. He was medium height, slender, with dark brown hair and dark blue eyes. Joseph was listed in the Indian Census of 1910 as Native American, but after 1910, he is listed as white. He lived in southern California until the 1940s, when he came back to Tahlequah and rented a room from Maude and Ova.

It didn’t take long for Joseph and Ova to fall in love. Against Maude’s wishes, Ova and Joseph married in 1946 in Santa Rosa, California. They were middle-aged when marrying and had no children. Maude died February 1952, and according to her obituary, she was the assistant county treasurer for Tahlequah and was a member of the First Baptist Church. She was survived by two sisters, Ova Powell-Antoine and Florence Kindred of Hollywood, California. Oscar Goddard, previous owner of the home, was a pallbearer at Maude’s



The interior of turret of Jones-Powell-Antoine house offers a cozy, intimate ambiance.

funeral. Also acting as pallbearer was Mayor Eugene “Gene” Purdy, who lived next door. Gene Purdy’s grandson, Ken Purdy, would later also become mayor.

Beth Purdy Cohenour, Gene Purdy’s granddaughter, has many fond memories of her next-door neighbors, Ova and Joe.

“They loved to play dominoes. When I was young, I spent a lot of summers with my grandparents,” Cohenour said. “Ova would call me over and I would play dominoes with her and Joe in the evenings.”

Cohenour enjoyed the time spent with her neighbors.

“I remember they would gather up all the walnuts that fell around the house and dump them in the driveway. As they pulled the cars up, the walnuts would crack. Anyone who came over to visit would end up picking the walnuts,” Cohenour said.

Joseph Antoine passed away February 1972, and Ova Powell-Antoine passed away in 1974. Both are buried in the Tahlequah cemetery.

The home was inherited by Madge Olson, John Carrel, and Mildred Jackson. Mildred was Ova’s niece, the daughter of former owner Lucile Carl. Madge and John were the offspring of Florence from her first marriage. The three never lived in the home.

Three years passed and the house was sold to Jerry and Lois Hawkins. The Hawkinses owned the home

less than a year before it changed hands again – this time to Norris and Iva Griffith in 1976. Norris Aldredge Griffith was born about 1926 in Tahlequah. He married Iva Jean Gregory in 1946. They bought the house in 1976 when he was 50 and his wife was 49. According to the WWII draft card of Norris, he was 5-foot-10 with a ruddy complexion, brown hair, and hazel eyes. The Griffiths owned the home for five years.

In 1981, Paul and Suzanne Medearis Greever bought the house. Paul Wylie Greever was born Oct. 10, 1952. Paul attended Oklahoma State University in Stillwater. Suzanne was born in 1959 and attended Tahlequah Public Schools.

Four short years later, John and Ruth Boehning bought the house. The couple were married Nov. 2, 1961. in Blytheville, Arkansas. They had three children: Julie Lyn Wilson, Rob Christopher Boehning, and Craig Boehning. In 1994, Keycorp mortgage company foreclosed on the Boehnings and they returned to Seneca, Missouri.

The current owners, David and Kathryn Lloyd, bought the house at a sheriff’s sale in 1995.

“They had bidders and we were the highest bid,” Kathryn said.

The Lloyds have called 225 W. Downing home for the past 28 years. They have done many improvements on it.

“The first thing we did was put on

a new roof," Kathryn said. "The next thing we did was put in a new heat and air system. Then the third thing we did was new electrical and new plumbing. We changed the wood stove to a gas stove. We remodeled both bathrooms, upstairs and downstairs. We've done improvements, but we didn't change anything structurally."

Remodeling has also occurred on the outside of the house.

"We put a screen and curtains up around the porch. We've painted the outside. It was first pale yellow, then mocha, and now it's a wheat color," Kathryn said.

As far as she knows, nobody has ever died in the house.

"Funny story," Kathryn said. "Soon after we moved in, some people came to the door and asked how we were getting along with all the ghosts. David told them we got along with them just fine."

She laughs at the memory.

"I don't really believe in ghosts. Maybe that's why I've never seen

one," she said.

She paused for a moment.

"Now that I think about it, though, sometimes in the evening, I can smell someone's cooking and I can't figure out where it's coming from," Kathryn said. "It always smells like old-fashioned food, too - meatloaf, fried potatoes, stuff like that. Maybe my ghost likes to cook."

Kathryn doesn't know much about the past history of the house.

"I did meet a woman once," Kathryn said. "Bettie was her name. She told me she lived here when she was a little girl. She did tell me the house had a coal cellar and her dad filled it

in because it was dangerous."

The aforementioned Bettie was the daughter of Robert and Charlotte Sanders in the 1920s.

The house has held many secrets throughout its 118-year-old life. But, given enough time and enough digging, the mystery of history was solved.

Editor's note: Information for the historical aspect of this story comes from deeds at the county courthouse; Ancestry.com census records, birth indexes, marriage indexes, draft cards, obits and newspapers.com; and the NSU Archives, where Tahlequah Arrow is archived.



Meet the Author

Layce Gardner graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Theater from Northeastern State University. She is a playwright, screenwriter, novelist, and special writer for the Tahlequah Daily Press.



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Lunch with the ladies

Four inspirational women leave 'footprints in your heart'

By Dana Eversole

“Many people will walk in and out of your life, but only true friends will leave footprints in your heart.”

That quote by Eleanor Roosevelt sums up the friendship of four inspirational women who call Tahlequah their home. Each gives to the community daily, has strong family ties, and enjoys spending time with one another.

I have had the pleasure of working with all four of these women at one time or another, and I enjoy seeing them out celebrating birthdays, while discussing the city's growing needs, politics and families.

As of this writing, each of them is a young 79, and has stories that could fill the pages of books yet unwritten.

Jo Prout was enjoying life in West Palm Beach, Florida, more than 30 years ago, with her husband and two children, when she came to Tahlequah to visit her mother, Nann Bogan. An ad in the Tahlequah Daily Press related how the Tahlequah Area Chamber of Commerce was looking for an executive director.

“I was currently the executive director of the YWCA in West Palm Beach,” said Jo. “I thought I would apply and see what happened.”

Three months later, she was called for an interview and was offered the job, which would span almost a decade of service to the community.

“One of the things I liked was the Memorial Day Arts and Crafts Festival on the square,” said Jo. “At one time, we had 83 booths on the square for the festival.”

BalloonFest was another event Jo said the Chamber was eager to participate in with the Tenkiller Area Community Organization.

“I had never been to a balloon event,” she said. “TACO went in the



Visiting during lunch are, from left: Kriss Harris, Jo Prout, Barbara Martens, and Ginny Wilson.

hole from buying hats and shirts that did not sell, so the Chamber took over the event the next year.”

The event evolved into BalloonFest, with a board of directors and a 501C3 status.

Jo was a member of the seventh class of Leadership Oklahoma, and after going through the experience, she wanted to bring that to Tahlequah.

“I thought we needed to do this in our community,” she said.

In 1996, the first class of Leadership Tahlequah was born. It had four members and paved the way for the next year's class of nine. Members met once a month.

“It finally grew to 25 members each year, and I developed every piece of literature for that endeavor,” said Jo. “This was one of my biggest highlights. I truly loved that job.”

In 2002, she went to work for the Cherokee County/Cherokee Nation Court Appointed Special Advocates program. She remains in that position today as executive director.

“I learned right away the organiza-

tion had \$3,000 in the bank, and I was asking myself, ‘How do we generate income?’” said Jo. “So, I sat down with the board and started talking about fundraisers.”

She attended a state CASA function and retrieved a copy of a booklet that explained selling chances for a Playhouse. Board member Gary Gore spearheaded that project.

CASA puts on three fundraisers a year: The Playhouse; a women's golf tournament, which has become its biggest fundraiser; and a dinner and silent auction around the holidays.

CASA averages working with 90 children a year. This year, 62 children have been helped; 45% of them have been placed in safe, permanent homes.

Kriss Harris taught for 30 years, more than 20 in Tahlequah at the junior high school. The first year in Tahlequah, 12 students signed up for choir. After that, the number rose to more than 100 each year. She also played the piano for the high school choir, under the direction of



Jo Prout, left, and her mother, Nann Bogan, pose for a photo.

Marjorie Malone.

Kriss taught choir in the school's auditorium on stage.

"There were leaks on stage," said Kriss. "We would bring umbrellas. Everything in that building was old. It was heated by steam heat, and it was not warm."

One of the funniest incidents Kriss remembers from her time teaching was when a fuse box on the north side of the stage began to shoot out sparks. She turned to the class and instructed them to line up in rows and leave the building.

"I looked at the stage and they were passing out robes," she said. "I said, 'Go out in rows, not robes.'"

Kriss said it pays off to teach for 23 years in a small town. She and the other three women had driven to Broken Arrow to watch "Killers of the Flower Moon." Afterward, they were hungry and wanted to stop at Olive Garden to eat.

"I told the ladies I would jump out and go in to see how long the wait was going to be," she said. "I went in, and the hostess was a former student, and she seated us immediately."

Kriss said she loved teaching choir.

"The students worked hard and I worked hard," she said. "Those stu-

dents are still part of my life."

She, like Jo, had to come up with fundraising ideas, so she started the tea ring. sales and the rocking chair program. These fundraisers help send students at the junior high and high school to competitions and national programs.

"We were always looking for ways to make money," said Kriss.

After retiring from teaching, Kriss opened KC Harris Burgers to spend time with her mother and daughter. Her mother, Blanche, pressed the hamburger patties every day.

"When she became ill, I sold the business and took her home. I know working down there and visiting with people extended her life several years," said Kriss. "I did that for 14 years. I didn't make a lick of money, but I had a great time."

Nowadays, Harris works as a collaborative pianist accompanist for voice students at Northeastern State University. She volunteers her time with Tahlequah Community Players, cooks for the Feed My Sheep program, and has served as a board member for CASA. She's also a mentor for Oklahoma State University medical students. She and a student will meet on Zoom, and Kriss will talk to the student about how to visit with an elderly person.

"This is a viable program and I enjoy working with the students. I have met some nice men and women who are in medical school," she said.

Dr. Barbara Martens spent 28 years in education. She received her undergraduate degree in education from the University of Texas at Dallas, her master's from NSU, and her doctorate from The University of Arkansas.

She began her employment with the State Department of Education, testing children for educational placement. She then began a long career with Stilwell Public Schools, where she taught classes, served as a counselor, was high school principal and finally was an administrative assistant to the Superintendent.

But her favorite job was working at

the Holiday Inn West on Meridian in Oklahoma City as a clerk.

"We had celebrities there and there were always meetings taking place," she said. "I met a lot of wonderful people, and I would have stayed there if my husband had not been transferred."

In 1995, Barbara had a conversation with then-Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Wilma Mankiller about running for deputy chief with George Bearpaw, who ran for chief. Bearpaw was declared not qualified to run for office because of an incident 20 years earlier. The Cherokee Nation Judicial Appeals Tribunal said Bearpaw, the leading candidate in the June 17, 1995, general election, was not qualified for office after reviewing two petitions contesting his candidacy.

"I had traveled to all 14 counties, meeting and talking to citizens," said Barbara. "I went down with him."



MARTENS

CASA of Cherokee Country had started, and Barbara was the first person to go through training to become an advocate. She did that for several years before becoming a member of the CASA board. She was in the sixth class of Leadership Oklahoma.

"I had read an article in the Tulsa World about a 2-year-old baby who had been abused. The neighbor took her to the hospital, and the mom spent her time outside smoking. Nurses went out and told the mom if she wanted to see her child, she needed to come in now, but the mother said she would after she finished her cigarette," said Barbara.

She called the CASA office in Tulsa and found out there was a chapter in Tahlequah, and she started her training.

"I just wanted to see if I could help some children," said Barbara.

Ginny Wilson started her career at Northeastern State College as a clerk typist. She retired after 37 years as assistant dean of Student Affairs.

She oversaw Student Conduct and Development, an area that earned her

the nickname “the Dragon Lady.”

“It could have been worse,” said Ginny, with a big grin on her face. “I would rather be known as the Dragon Lady than as a pushover.”

Ginny’s job was to enforce the student discipline regulations, adopted by the Oklahoma Board of Regents.

In a story from a Tsa La Gi yearbook, Ginny said she worked at keeping the standard of behavior at the level established by the university.

“My job was to make this a safe place for students,” she said.

Ginny saw a lot while at NSU. In the 1970s, what started as a panty raid in Leoser the night before Christmas break turned into a riot on campus. Ginny had to fill out all the paperwork from this incident. Several students threw rocks and explosives and were jailed or expelled, or both.

“It was a dark day for NSU,” said Ginny.

Ginny received the Adviser of the

Year Award in 1993 from the Bacchus and Ganna Peer Education Network.

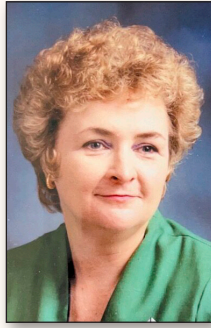
She was chosen out of 650 advisers.

She said students of the 1980s and 1990s did not often require disciplinary action.

“Before I retired, I could sit down and reason with students, as adults. In the past, they would bring their lawyers or their parents,” she said. “I saw my job as help-

ing students, even though they might not agree. My satisfaction came from going to graduation and seeing some of my students, and I would feel I had a hand in their success.”

Ginny has served on the board for CASA, worked with Habitat for Humanity, the Arts Council of Tahlequah, the Chamber, and was a member of the Sweet Adelines, a barber-shop-type show choir that competed and performed. She is active in Cherokee Nation politics as well as local, state and national.



WILSON



Meet the Author

Dr. Dana Eversole is a professor of Media Studies and chair of the Department of Communication and Media Studies at Northeastern State University, where she begins her 35th year this fall. Eversole worked as news editor for the Daily Press for two years before taking the job at NSU. She has been a stringer throughout the years for the Press. During her tenure at the Press, she won many awards, including a Sweepstakes award for investigative reporting from the Oklahoma Associated Press. She was recently named Oklahoma Outstanding Journalism Educator by the Oklahoma Society of Professional Journalists. Eversole is serving her second term on the Tahlequah School Board.

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The Osage saga

'Killers of the Flower Moon' delivers as movie, but was never a documentary

By Louis Gray

It comes as no surprise that I'm often asked about the movie "Killers of the Flower Moon." I am a descendant of one of the key characters.

I was an extra in the movie, and perhaps ironically, I used to write reviews for a living. However, I never wrote about a film I was connected to. I had already seen the film several times, but when asked to write about it, I went back to watch it with the intent of reviewing it.

Like any professional reviewer, I worked to remove my inherent biases and see it and discuss it for readers. I have been discussing it with family and fellow Osages for months, but that's a different discussion. If I am honest, this is a fool's errand.

What do I really think about "Killers of the Flower Moon"? It is an amazing motion picture. The acting by Robert DeNiro, playing William Hale, was chilling. For those who haven't seen it - and this isn't a spoiler - he breaks into perfect Osage speaking at times. During that day, it was quite common. I remember as a young boy, my grandmother would go into a late-night diner and talk Osage to the owner, who had been doing business among Osages 50 years.

The Osage Nation Language Department worked with film Director Martin Scorsese's actors to teach key actors to speak Osage. I was heartened to hear my language spoken by Osages and world-class actors. This piece of the film is unshakeable with me and stands as a lasting testament to what the Nation has done to revitalize the language since my brother,



Jim Gray, left, and Louis Gray pose for a photo in traditional Osage attire.

Jim Gray, was chief.

DeNiro, as Hale, played a clever and conniving man, trying to separate the Osage wealth from a people whom he believed did not deserve it. In truth, he was the top of a crime

syndicate, and his actions made him a ruthless serial killer. Scorsese's writers asked me after it was completed what I would have changed. I told them, "You left out terror and dread." People did not know who was

next, and many fled. Some aspects of that were depicted, but Scorsese is certainly the type of director to apply terror. It would have helped.

Leonardo DiCaprio plays Ernest Burkhart, Hale's nephew, who is returning from the war to look for work. DiCaprio plays his character as a bit dim-witted, almost likable, with an "aw-shucks" reaction to everything - including marrying an Osage for money. This wasn't just any Osage; it was an Osage from whom Hale wanted a fortune, whose inheritance would flow into one sister, DiCaprio's wife. I guess Ernest never figured out that once the bodies start piling up, he would be added to the top.

Depending on whom you believe, some say there was true love between Ernest and his bride, Mollie Kyle - and that is coming from her family. I am compelled to mention that having met Ernest Burkhart personally, my impression was that he was not dim-witted at all, but was very confident and aggressive, even in his older age.

Mollie is played by Lily Gladstone, and the glowing reviews are real; she is amazing. She is mesmerizing in her scenes with DeNiro and DiCaprio, as the web of lies and murder envelops everyone involved. What was never lost on me was her bravery. In the 1920s, for any woman to stand up and say, "Somebody is killing my people, and nobody is doing anything about it" is a profile in courage. To be a Native American woman in a place where Native women were routinely assassinated, it is crazy. Not satisfied with the response of local law enforcement, Mollie hired a private investigator. This was not treated as good news by Ernest and Hale.

After sending an emissary to Washington, D.C., with tragic results, members of the tribal council decided to go themselves and ask directly. In response, a little-known, brand-new group called the Federal Bureau of Investigation sent a team of agents to the Osage to find out what was going on. The team in the movie was led by Jesse Plemons as Tom White. Here is what Scorsese forgot to include: White and his detectives



Jim Gray, former Osage Nation chief, displays his official portrait.

discovered many potential murders. But J. Edgar Hoover had his headlines and his first case. He was not interested in being bogged down with hundreds of murders, so they walked away. No one knows the true number of Osages killed; we'll never know at this point.

I am the great-grandson of Henry Roan, and I've always been proud of that, despite his tragic end. I didn't care for how his life was characterized in the movie, because it was almost as if he had it coming. Grandpa

was an imperfect man, but there are many sides to a person. The filmmakers chose to show only one, and that was unfair.

So, go see the movie, but remember: It's not a documentary. It's not a feel-good movie, not a date movie. However, it is an important piece of history finally told, and if viewed as one facet of a many faceted tale, it's almost told right.

To be sure, there are endless stories about the Osage Reign of Terror to be told. Scorsese told one.



Meet the Author

Louis Gray and his brother, Jim, former Osage Nation chief, were advertising executives for TDP in the early 1990s. Louis has also served as managing editor and general manager of the Osage Nation News; co-publisher of the Native American Times; managing editor and general manager of the Oklahoma Eagle; and was the only Native American managing editor of the Pawhuska Daily Journal Capitol. He is retired and serves on several boards, as well as engaging in volunteer work.

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1500 E. Downing St. #101
Tahlequah, OK

Tahlequah Health Center

918-431-0202

M - F: 8 AM to 5 PM
1500 E. Downing St. # 214
Tahlequah, OK

NSU Medical Center

918-444-2126

M - F: 8 AM to 5 PM
529 N. Oak Ave.,
Tahlequah, OK

Tahlequah ENT

918-453-9002

M - F: 8 AM to 5 PM
1203 East Ross Bypass
Tahlequah, OK

Pharmacy

918-772-2727

M - F: 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM
1 PM - 5 PM
131 E. Main St
Hulbert, OK

NeoHealth Muskogee

918-683-0470

M - F: 8 AM to 5 PM
922 N. York St.
Muskogee, OK

Salina Family Medical Center

918-434-7440

M - F: 8 AM to 5 PM
101 E. Ferry St.
Salina, OK

Westville Family

Medical Center

918-723-3997

M - F: 8 AM to 5 PM
1779 Buffington Rd.
Westville, OK

Tahlequah Pediatrics

918-456-7700

M - F: 8 AM to 5 PM
Tuesday: 8 AM to 7 PM
Saturday: 8 AM to 2PM
1310 E. Boone St.
Tahlequah, OK

Behavioral Health

NSU Medical Center

918-444-2126

M - F: 8 AM to 5 PM
529 N. Oak Ave.,
Tahlequah, OK

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NeoHealth accepts Medicaid, Medicare, most commercial insurances, & patients without insurance. Patients may qualify for a discount.

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serving local people since 1907!

