

BUSINESS STRATEGY

First Americans Museum a significant achievement

This weekend marks the grand opening of the First Americans Museum in Oklahoma City with public events Friday and Saturday. The celebration includes a tribal parade, remarks by tribal and state leaders, appearances by U.S. Poet Laureate Joy Harjo, actors Lil Mike and Funnybone from the TV series *Reservation Dogs*, and musical performances by Prairie Blossoms and the Red Men Blues Band.

Attendees will have the first look at this incredible 175,000-square-foot facility that offers a multimedia experience showcasing past and

present cultures and contributions of the 39 Indigenous tribes and nations of Oklahoma. Visitors will walk through the 110-foot glass Hall of the People, an architectural representation inspired by the grass houses built



CATHY O'CONNOR

by Wichita and Affiliated people. On winter solstice, the east-west orientation of the building will allow rays from the setting sun to precisely penetrate a tunnel at the base of the large mound on the museum grounds to illuminate the Touch to Above sculpture in the Hall of the People.

Throughout the museum are stories and exhibits that help people better understand the legends, history, perseverance, impact and evolution of all of the tribes of Oklahoma. Artwork commissioned by Native American artists can be found throughout the museum. The illustration on copper panels "Indigenous Brilliance" by Joseph Erb can be found at the entrance to the galleries. A massive mural by Amber DuBoise-Shepherd, "Reunion with Our Ancestors," greets visitors with colorful imagery.

A theater with a wrap-around screen shows the faces and voices of individual tribal members who share stories and memories of their tribal music, artwork, culture, education, history and way of life. The authenticity was preserved through contributions, artifacts and artwork from all 39 tribes and an 11-member, all-tribal curatorial team. It's an outstanding result of years of planning, public-private partnership and inclusion of many perspectives.

The museum tells the survival story of forced tribal removals and other historic events including the Dust Bowl and land runs. It also celebrates the culture and people who have faced cultural disruptions and economic loss and have risen more resilient as a result.

I encourage you to explore the educational opportunities, art and history that can be found at the First Americans Museum. Tickets for opening weekend must be purchased in advance at famok.org.

Cathy O'Connor is the president of The Alliance for Economic Development of Oklahoma City.

ON THE TOWN

Renaissance Ball truly a Romanesque success

The Roman gladiators in chariots that greeted guests as they walked into the Oklahoma City Golf and Country Club for the recent Renaissance Ball let people know that they were being transported in spirit back to ancient Rome for a fun evening of dancing, food, wine and more.

The 45th annual Renaissance Ball, benefiting the Oklahoma City Museum of Art, celebrated the museum's current exhibit "The Painters of Pompeii" with images of Roman frescoes and live action scenes depicting a Roman fountain complete with a goddess, a scene



LILLIE-BETH BRINKMAN

with Hercules and more.

The exhibit, in Oklahoma City through Oct. 17, comes from the National Archaeological Museum, Naples, Italy, and showcases the ancient Roman frescoes preserved when Mount Vesuvius erupted in 79 A.D.

Due to spreading COVID-19 concerns, the ball and its related Late Night after-party were moved outside

on the country club's back patio and out by its pool, which felt a bit like a large Roman fountain itself; the lighting on the pool changed colors to match the decor. I can't imagine a more perfect setting for this elegant and fun ball.

Partygoers were offered a glass of Italian lemon liqueur limoncello or a sparkling wine at the door, danced to Souled Out and enjoyed stunning floral arrangements from Trochta's Flowers on the tables, stairway railings and throughout.

The menu included foods with an Italian flair – a wedge salad featuring prosciutto di parma, filet of beef and crab-stuffed jumbo shrimp, a selection of "verdure grigliata" (grilled vegetables), Italian bread and a volcano tart for dessert. Wines selections came from the Stoller Family Estate, Beau's Wine Bin and Mary and Stan Stack.

Hats off to the ball chairman and committee members who spent months planning so many wonderful details and then navigated the scene change just two weeks before it was supposed to happen.

Lindsay and Jeffrey Graham and Susan and Ramsey Drake were Renaissance Ball co-chairs, and Liz Cromwell Acklin and Justin

Acklin were Late Night chairs. Committee members included Kirk Hammons, Caroline and Durward Hendee, G.P. Johnson Hightower, Jennifer Homsey, Virginia A. Meade, Penny McCaleb and Caroline Patton.

Friends of Helen

Friends of Helen Ford Sanger Wallace, longtime party and society columnist for *The Oklahoman* and also my very talented mother, gathered recently at JRB Art at the Elms in Oklahoma City's Paseo District to thank donors and celebrate the funds they raised in her honor for the University of Oklahoma Gaylord College of Journalism. All in all, a group of committee members for the "Helen Project" rallied the people Wallace touched in six decades of covering parties and raised about \$95,000 for the school to commemorate her career upon her retirement from *The Oklahoman* this year.

The money is going to two endowed scholarships in her name and to name the rotunda in the college after her.

Have an item for On the Town? Email lillie.beth@yahoo.com.

GUEST COLUMN

Endowments create long-term bond between donors, nonprofits

This year, the Oklahoma City Community Foundation will distribute more than \$10 million among 370 nonprofits that enrich the lives of thousands of people across central Oklahoma.



NANCY ANTHONY

For many organizations, these funds are vital to their budgets, helping to pay salaries, cover rent, and keep the lights on. The best part is nonprofits can count on the funding every year, no matter what. No grant applications, fundraising dinners or golf tournaments are required. All they must do is drop by and pick up their check.

The Oklahoma City Community Foundation has been managing endowments for 45 years, paying out more over the years than what was originally contributed, thanks to the power of investment. Each year, we allocate 5% for distributions, while the rest continues to grow.

Managing money for our contribu-

tors and for area nonprofits is at the heart of what we do, and the beauty of it is that our annual distributions keep getting bigger and the size of our endowments continues to grow. Today, the OCCF is managing nearly \$272 million in endowed accounts that range from \$20,000 to \$67 million.

We are proud of being a financial resource for so many agencies and organizations that affect quality of life in our community, but that is not the only reason John Kirkpatrick established the OCCF in 1969. He also envisioned the Community Foundation as a resource for local benefactors who want to make a difference.

Whether contributors want to support the arts, Alzheimer's research, pet adoption, public parks, private education or myriad other interests, there are endowed funds established and ready to help. Thousands of people donate every year with contributions ranging from very small to very large, but the size of a gift is not what's important. What matters most is that people are getting involved, and that is what Mr. Kirkpatrick had in mind so long ago.

There are many ways to give. Aside from immediate contributions

through checks and credit cards, many include the OCCF in their wills or in their estate plans, stipulating gifts for specific funds. Those who qualify can also capture tax advantages through qualified charitable distributions from traditional IRA accounts. Also, contributions to certain OCCF funds are often matched by the Kirkpatrick Family Fund.

People feel good about giving to an OCCF endowed fund because the money will continue to make a difference long after they are gone. So, in a few weeks, when hundreds of nonprofits make the annual trip to pick up this year's distribution, thousands of contributors will quietly celebrate the moment, knowing that their favorite causes are being supported.

Because of their contributions and so many others, more energy will go into benefiting the community and a little less effort will be required to write the grant proposals and to plan the fundraisers that nonprofits in other communities rely on for survival.

Nancy Anthony is president of the Oklahoma City Community Foundation (www.OCCF.org).

IN PRINT. ONLINE. IN PERSON.

For subscription information
call 1-877-615-9536