

Forest



Special Edition

**Please join us in wishing Doug Zook a happy retirement and enjoy this
“Walk Down Memory Lane.”**



I greatly appreciate the time I have spent at the Forest Heritage Center, but I have made the difficult decision to retire from Oklahoma Forestry Services, effective July 1, 2021. In my 26 years at the FHC, beginning as an administrative assistant working side-by-side with Michelle Finch-Walker to my current position as Historical Facility Manager/FHC Program Director, I am most proud of the partnership we now have with Tourism, our educational programming and wood art exhibits. I sincerely thank you for making my “work” at the Forest Heritage Center a real pleasure.

My career at the Forest Heritage Center began with a friendship with the late Mary Herron. We were both involved with the Idabel Arts Council at the time, and she recruited me to help decorate the feature artist room for the Owa-Chito Art show one year. Mrs. Herron also recruited me to help with an exhibit they were getting ready for at the original one room Museum of the Red River. It was Mary who recommended me to Michelle Finch, the then-director of the Heritage Center, when an administrative assistant position was needed. I was self-employed working as a systems analyst traveling between SE Oklahoma and South Texas and was ready for a change when Michelle offered me the position with Oklahoma Forestry Services to work with her at the Forest Heritage Center. I was hired full time, October 12, 1995. Had no idea at the time that the 2nd annual Beavers Bend Folk Festival was just a month away and the work involved with an event of that magnitude. I am very proud of the ongoing success of the Folk Festival and how it has grown and developed over the years to become one of Oklahoma’s premier events. Many friendships have been made through the years with the vendors and demonstrators becoming like family.

Continued on pages 2-4...

Doug Zook continued...

Making Memories with Tree Bear



The next year, Michelle and I worked with Harry Rossoll and Quintus Herron on the Tree Bear project, getting Tree Bear ready for his International debut at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta Georgia. Jeanette Bronson made us 10 miniature Tree Bears to sell at the Smithsonian marketplace and a full-size Tree Bear to promote “Good Things Come from Trees” at the Olympic plaza. Park manager Terry Walker, Michelle, Tree Bear and I loaded up in a van for the 16-hour drive to Atlanta. Our first stop on the trip was the Ocoee Whitewater Center in Tennessee that was hosting the Olympics whitewater rafting competition. We spent an afternoon rafting next to Olympians practicing for the event.

We met with Harry Rossoll at his studio in Atlanta and we got to hear many fascinating stories of his painting career. Harry told us that by far, the crown jewel of his career was working with the FHC and Quintus on the 14 dioramas at the Forest Heritage Center. We later went to his home for dinner, and he played piano for us. Meeting Harry Rossoll and visiting his home and studio was a highlight of my career. Getting to know the artist behind the dioramas in the FHC gave me an appreciation that has been passed on to thousands of visitors.



We were assigned to work with Tree Bear in the Agriculture Pavilion along with the Georgia Forestry Commission, giving away tree seedlings for several days. This pavilion was an incredible open-air structure made from a new Weyerhaeuser product at the time, Parallam.

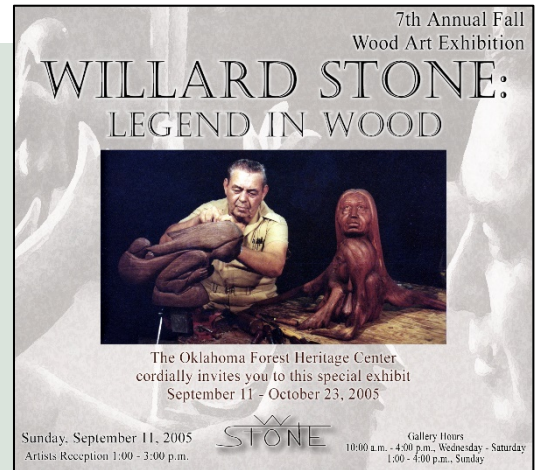
After working with Tree Bear that Saturday, July 27th in the Agriculture Pavilion, we went up-town to celebrate a birthday. We were unaware until the next morning when we couldn't get to Tree Bear in the pavilion because everything was blocked off with security, of the domestic terrorist pipe bombing attack on the Centennial Olympic park main stage. This was right next to the Agriculture Pavilion where Tree Bear was impounded in a closet by the FBI for several days before we could get him back. We took this opportunity to attend several Olympic events, Beach volleyball, weightlifting, fencing and a swimming finalist event.



Doug Zook continued...

Wood Art Exhibits and Classes

At my first Owa-Chito festival, I met Evelyn Stone Holland who was a vendor selling jewelry and promoting her father's woodcarvings. We became friends and talked about showing her father's artwork at the FHC. I didn't realize who her father was or how well known of an artist he was, but her father was Cherokee artist, Willard Stone. Michelle and I worked with Evelyn and her family to host an exhibit of Willard Stone's artwork. We wanted this showing to be professionally displayed for the park guests and the many we sent invitations to. We hired a cabinet maker to build pedestals, acrylic covered vitrines and display cabinets. I installed track lighting in the gallery room and designed the invitations for our first wood art exhibit, "The Life & Works of Willard Stone." The cabinets and pedestals were delivered just a few days before the artwork was to be delivered and I remember Terry helping paint the pedestals and drying them with a hair dryer late one night before the exhibit opening in a few days. This Willard Stone exhibit in 1996 was so well received, that it became the beginning of our annual wood art exhibits. We had a second showing of Willard Stone's woodcarvings in 2005 that featured "Trilogy" three carvings shown together for the first time that form a symbolic history of the Cherokee people; Uprooted, Exodus and The Transplanting.



2nd Willard Stone Exhibit Flyer



We started receiving annual project support grant funding from the Oklahoma Arts Council and had an opportunity to add a new program and decided to add a woodturning program. Woodturning was an art form I was familiar with as my Grandfather taught me to turn one summer when I was 11 years old. One of my first projects was turning 100 Amish doll bodies for an Amish lady who had found out about me learning to turn in my Grandpas shop.

I began working with Joe Millsap who was a member of the Central Oklahoma Woodturners, on a month-long woodturning curriculum to teach local high school students the art of woodturning. This seemed like a perfect outreach program that would complement our FHC programs. We spent over a year talking with other woodturners and developing the program to teach hands on woodturning. This program was so successful and had so much interest from the community, that the Southeast Oklahoma Woodturners organization was formed by the end of the first year's classes. This past spring was our 19th successful woodturning class.



Doug Zook continued...

A Special Project

After the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah building in 1995, Mark Bays took on the responsibility to look after the Survivor Elm Tree at the bombing site. Mark connected me with Kari Watkins, executive director of the Oklahoma City National Memorial Museum who I worked with to create the Beacon of Hope award that would be presented to former President Bill Clinton in a special ceremony, May 2009. The award was turned from a pruned limb of the Survivor Elm and placed on a base of granite salvaged from the Murrah building. Several years later, when Mark Bays had a truck load of prunings available, we distributed pieces of the Survivor Elm to various artist and woodturning students to create artwork that was exhibited in a national tour "Project New Growth" to honor and recognize the bombing survivors. This project gave the woodturning students an opportunity to connect and be a part of this historic event.



Doug Zook has been a treasured member of the Forest Heritage Center staff for the past 26 years. We look forward to many more years of friendship and collaboration.

Happy Retirement Doug!

Exhibits and Programs



Master Woodworking Artist of the Year

The Master Woodworking Artist of the Year title went to Jim Anderson of Steilacoom, WA for his sculpture entitled “Armillary Sphere.” Woodworking has been vital to this veteran’s recovery from PTSD and he uses his work to raise awareness of veteran suicides and PTSD. In second place was Wayne Delyea of Granbury, TX for his “Mockingbird on a Pecan Tree” marquetry cabinet, and the third-place award went to Steven Knott of Mena, AR for his “Majestic Eagle” intarsia.

Local Woodworking Artist of the Year

Mike Love of Idabel, OK was named “Exemplary Local Artist of the Year” for his box elder woodturning entitled “Blackest Black.” Darrell Whisenhunt of Mena, AR took second place for his “Support” sculpture, and Steven Knott earned the third-place award for his “Majestic Eagle” intarsia.

The awards were presented in a virtual presentation on March 7. To view this presentation, including photos of the award-winning pieces go to <https://youtu.be/waGrWDinkUI>



Beginning Woodturning Program Gives Students Tools for the Future

During this year’s Beginning Woodturning classes at Broken Bow and Wright City Schools, students gained hands-on artistic and functional skills while crafting wooden bowls, pens, and spindles. Mentors introduced the classes to woodturning safety before guiding them through their first cuts on the lathe and then equipping students with the skills to bring their artistic visions to life. Instructors were in the woodshop at each school for two weeks and have followed up with periodic visits to see the progress of the students’ independent work and to answer questions.



In a partnership with the Southeast Oklahoma Woodturners, Wright City School purchased two new lathes for their shop. Tools belonging to late Master Woodturner Butch Lindsey were presented to the school, so students from both schools now have the tools and resources to continue their woodturning journeys long after the classes have ended.

The Beginning Woodturning classes are a partnership of the Oklahoma Arts Council, Southeast Oklahoma Woodturners, and the Forest Heritage Center.

Education

Schools Resume Tours at the Forest Heritage Center

The halls of the Forest Heritage Center rang with the sounds of students enjoying end-of-the-year field trips at the Forest Heritage Center. Some schools chose informal self-guided tours while Lukfata school enjoyed learning about Oklahoma's forest heritage with the help of a guide. After their indoor tour, Hugo Middle School learned about the role of the forest in a healthy ecosystem with the help of US Forest Service's Alex Schwartz (pictured right) and Oklahoma Forestry Services' Logan Robertson.

To learn more about scheduling a tour or taking a self-guided tour, call the FHC at 580-494-6497.

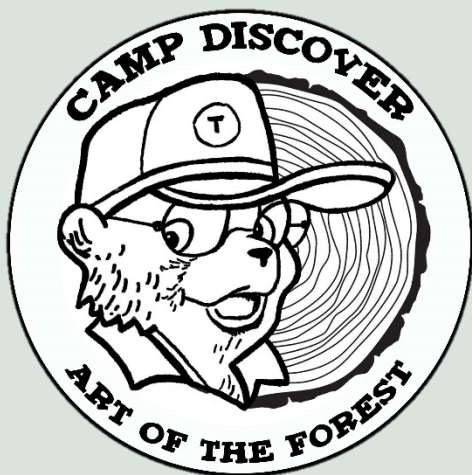


Americorps Lends a Hand in Beavers Bend State Park

Ten young adults helped with projects in Beavers Bend State Park on Thursday and Friday, March 11 and 12 as part of their Americorps service. On Thursday they worked with BBSP maintenance staff to make a form and pour a small concrete slab to hold a bench at the park's popular "Cold Hole." In the afternoon they assisted with trail cleanup, and on Friday the group worked independently on trail cleanup. Two members of the group helped out on Saturday by greeting guests at the Master Woodworking Artist of the Year exhibit.



**Camp Discover
Applications Available
Through June 20.**



Camp Discover is scheduled for July 6-8 for students age 9-11. For questions or to apply call 580-494-6497.



Society of American Foresters OSU Chapter

In a fun, innovative approach to learning about the forest industry, the OSU chapter of the Society of American Foresters held a meeting at the campus arboretum with guest speaker Calista Stephens of the Forest Heritage Center. Calista described the Forest Heritage Center's approach to spreading the message of sustainable forestry through history, education, and wood art and described some of the diverse opportunities for forestry careers in Oklahoma.

We applaud these young people for their dedication to finding a way to learn about forestry inside and outside of the classroom!

Forest Heritage Center Scholarship Recipients Announced



Fred Dierks Educational Scholarship for College Students

Fred Dierks Educational Scholarship recipient Miko Brandon served in the U.S Navy from Dec. 2014 - July 2019 and worked as an aircraft engine mechanic on both the P-3 Orion and P-8 Poseidon aircrafts. He completed two deployments, working in over 10 different countries. He started school at OSU right after the military and has been on the Dean's Honor Roll every semester. During the spring, 2021 semester Miko was proud to earn his first 4.0. While attending college at Oklahoma State University he works for the Center for Sovereign Nations where he helps connect Native students with resources, scholarships and network opportunities, all while teaching the importance of Tribal sovereignty. He also works as a Forestry student intern with the Bureau of Indian Affairs where he gains hands-on experience working in the field of Forestry within Indian country.

Miko's short-term educational goal is to pursue a Masters in Environmental Science. He believes that having a strong foundation in Forestry will allow him to be better at learning water quality, watersheds and building quality Natural Resource management plans. He believes Oklahoma is in a unique position as home to 39 Tribal Nations, and that with the new McGirt ruling, Tribal jurisdiction is looked at heavily. These Tribal Nations have great Natural Resources and through collaboration, not conflict, growth for all Oklahomans can be made. Miko's long-term goal is to be a part of this growth.

Quintus Herron Educational Scholarship for Graduating High School Seniors

The Quintus Herron Educational Scholarship for graduating high school seniors was awarded to Samantha Stephens of Broken Bow, OK. Samantha has been a part of the Forest Heritage Center since she first attended Camp Discover in 2013. She went to Forestry Youth Camp for three years and participated in the FHC's first Forestry Field Days.

She graduated as valedictorian of her 2021 class at Wright City High School. For two months this summer Samantha will serve as an Americorps VISTA volunteer at the Forest Heritage Center, and she will begin her college journey in the fall at Oklahoma State University where she plans to earn a degree in forestry.

Samantha cites her love for growing things as her reason for pursuing a degree in forestry.




Forest Heritage Center Museum

Oklahoma's Only Forestry Museum

Located Inside Beautiful Beavers Bend State Park

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 @forestheritagecenter

580-494-6497



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Broken Bow, OK 74728

Forest Heritage Center Courtyard Project is Completed

The final step of the Forest Heritage Center's courtyard update was made on May 26 with the installation of interpretive signage. The project included the concrete walking path, expansion of the Wildland Firefighter Memorial interpretation, addition of the Dierks-era cedar shake mill, addition of the fire tower cab replica, the new courtyard viewing deck, and the interpretive signage.

The courtyard updates were made possible by the Forest Heritage Center Board of Directors, Oklahoma Forestry Services, and a Heritage Preservation grant from the Oklahoma Historical Society.

