

Friday Footprints

"Every man must leave a track and it might as well be a good one."

-Thomas Gilcrease

February 29, 2024



Kiowa Family by Bou-ge-Tah (Lois Smokey)

[Read about Bou-ge-Tah, or Lois Smokey, this month's featured artist, and her influences in "Did You Know?"]

"It is the women who are responsible for bringing along the next generation to carry the culture forward." Wilma Mankiller

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

March is Women's History Month, when we often highlight extraordinary women who have changed the world through science, art, leadership, or breaking barriers. Just as important, I think, are ordinary women who "carry the culture forward," through passing down cultural traditions, such as language, culinary practices, folklore and storytelling, and traditional crafts.

I've been thinking a lot about what gets passed down in families or in cultures, especially as the Gillies endeavor to leave a tangible legacy to Gilcrease Museum through our "genealogical" pottery project, as well as our President's notebooks and scrapbooks, now in the Archives, that recall past projects that supported the mission of the Gilcrease Museum. Be sure to read Susan Neal's "love letter" to the Gillies in this newsletter, as she recognizes "what we accomplished [together] and the legacy we are leaving for Tulsa."

In this newsletter you will also see the agenda and menu for the general membership meeting to be held at Oklahoma Joe's on March 15. Our Forum speaker, Dr. Kristen Oertel, Mary F. Barnard Professor of 19th-Century American History at the University of Tulsa, has explored the important roles played by women in the 19th century in her research and writing. When asked about her influences, she credited her AP U.S. History teacher in her junior year of high school who gave her the "history bug" by highlighting inspirational women, such as Martha Washington and Susan B. Anthony. As Dr. Oertel explained, "I saw myself in the past for the first time, and I will always be indebted to my teacher for that gift."

We got exciting news last week as we found out the name of our new Executive Director—Brian Lee Whisenhunt. I learned that he is a Tulsa native who credits his parents for supporting his love of art and his chosen field and remembers with fondness his and his brother's favorite aspects of the Gilcrease Rendezvous. At the reception in his honor on February 23 both Mayor Bynum and TU President Carson emphasized the significance of a new Director that already loves Gilcrease. I think it was TU President Brad Carson who remarked that in every museum in which he has worked, Brian Lee Whisenhunt has "kept faith with the traditions [of the institution]" while also making the museum responsive to the needs of the next generation.

We all have meaningful people in our lives, be they women or men, who have nurtured, supported, or mentored us. What person influenced you the most? Who was the parent, grandparent, teacher, mentor, or Gillie who passed down traditions to you? How are we "bringing along the next generation" and what can the next generation teach us?

.....Becky Hatchett

From Susan Neal

Dear Gillies,

I tried to write this “love” letter shortly after the party you threw for me at HCAR. I wasn’t successful primarily because this whole “retirement thing” didn’t seem real and I was pretty much a walking nerve ending. As I stand in one of my upstairs bedrooms surrounded still by stacks of downtown Tulsa masterplans, Arkansas River Corridor Studies, strategic plans for so many non-profits including Gilcrease, fundraising plans, early childhood education plans, Tulsa demographics and comprehensive zoning plans for the city...YIKES! I need to let it all go, don’t I? Now that I’ve had the gift of time, the ability to take a breath and fully embrace my decision to start a new chapter, I can write you without crying.

I mostly want to thank you for caring about Gilcrease...the value you bring to this organization is inestimable. But I also wish to thank you for your many kindnesses, expressions of support, concern, and friendship for me personally over a number of years. When things were tough, as they often were, I would miraculously receive a handwritten note from a Gillie - out of the blue – and it was enough, enough of a boost to keep me upright and moving forward. You don’t know how much your encouragement, how much your belief in me mattered. You and the staff helped me understand that I was never alone in this endeavor. I had an army of people who loved Gilcrease and would be there to tip at those windmills with me.

We – and I mean we – should be proud of what we accomplished and the legacy we are leaving for Tulsa. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do for the museum - - but please know what a difference you made for me at a very personal level. I am and will always be grateful.

Stay healthy so we can all be at the grand re-opening! In the meantime, my contact information is:

Susan Neal
1003 East 30th Place
Tulsa, Ok 74114
918-557-2024
Susan54neal@gmail.com

Onward!

Susan



Introducing: New Gilcrease Executive Director

Brian Lee Whisenhunt

More than 30 Gillies, along with Gilcrease staff, University of Tulsa staff, and Tulsa dignitaries, welcomed new Executive Director Brian Lee Whisenhunt at a reception on Friday, February 23, in the LaFortune Room at the Tulsa Performing Arts Center. Both Mayor G.T. Bynum and TU President Brad Carson welcomed Whisenhunt, who then made brief remarks before joining the crowd for informal conversations. Below are some of our Gillies, enjoying being together and meeting our new Director.



Whisenhunt with Beverly Wilcox



Kathe Crapster, Becky Hatchett, Deanna Storm, Carol Stookey, Whisenhunt, Nancy Setter, Wennette Pegues, Sharon Patch, Alana Trisler, Deb Glass



Whisenhunt with Nancy Setter



Nancy Setter, Judy Baggett, Sharon Patch, Robin Leech, Alana Trisler, Pat Nye, Carol Stookey, JoAnne Goin



Sharon Patch, Robin Leech, Alana Trisler, Carol Stookey, JoAnne Goin



Lana and Dick Clark



Beverly Wilcox, Deb Glass (and husband), Kathy Horne



Becky Hatchett, Carol Stookey, Judy Baggett



Wennette Pegues, Nancy Roberts

Thanks to Kathe Crapster, Robin Leech, and Nancy Setter for the photos.

Docent Corner

Greetings all Gillies and Docents,

Just a reminder that March is a month with no Gillies/Docents meeting. Instead, please plan on attending the General Membership meeting to be held on March 15. (Look for meeting details in another section of this newsletter.) Our next Gillies/Docents meeting will be held on Friday, April 5, in PACCAR of the Helmerich Center for American Research. Our guest speaker will be Chelsea Herr, Jack and Maxine Zarrow Curator for Indigenous Art and Culture. Please look for more details on Chelsea's presentation in the Footprints newsletter that will be published at the end of March. I hope to see you on March 15th!

...Alana Trisler, Docent Chair



**Mark your
Calendar**

**Thursday, March 7 – Executive Committee by Zoom, 9:00 a.m.;
Board of Directors by Zoom, 10:00 a.m.**

**Friday, March 15 – Membership Meeting and Forum, Oklahoma
Joe's, 6175 E. 61st St., meeting begins at 10:00 a.m. The Forum
speaker will be Dr. Kristen Oertel, Mary F. Barnard Chair in
19th-Century American History at the University of Tulsa.**

Report of the 2024-2025 Nominating Committee

Dale Brown (Chair), Faye Finley, Cherita Harris, Glenda Kilmer, Roberta Hovis, Past President Nannette Tresner.

The proposed slate of officers for next year is:

President Elect	Becky Hatchett
Vice President	Robin Leech
Secretary	Julie Gentz
Treasurer	Sharon Patch

Current President Elect Kathe Crapster will become President.

They also selected Faye Finley as Chair of the Nominating Committee for 2025-2026. Other committee members are JoAnne Goin, Judy Howard, Keith Bowers, Dick Clark, and Dian Peacock. Alternates are Bill Hellen and Tom Duncan.

Gillies General Membership Meeting & Forum

Friday, March 15, 2024

Oklahoma Joe's BBQ

6175 East 61st Street, Tulsa

AGENDA

- 9:45 Meet and Greet
- 10:00 Call meeting to order
Approval of the minutes of the General Membership Meeting –
September 15, 2023
Secretary's Report – Lynn Cyert
Treasurer's Report – Tom Duncan
Vote on 2024-2025 Proposed Budget
Appointment of Auditor
Nominating Committee Report and Election of Officers
Approval of the 2024-2025 Nominating Committee
- 10:30 Remarks by Interim Director Jennifer Bennett
- 10:45 Forum Speaker: Dr. Kristen Oertel, "The 'First' Emancipation Proclamation:
Resistance, Removal, and Freedom during the Seminole Wars"
- 11:45 Lunch

Buffet Menu for March 15 General Meeting

Chopped Brisket

Barbecue Beans

Fried Okra

Salad

Coffee, Tea, & Water

If a soft drink is wanted, it will have to be purchased by the individual.

Price: \$17.00 (includes tax & gratuity)

RSVP by March 12 to channonclark@prodigy.net

If you wish to donate to the fund to commission Santa Clara potter Sue Folwell to create a piece to be displayed in the new museum in honor of Susan Neal, you may bring your check to Treasurer Tom Duncan at the membership meeting.

Forum Speaker: Dr. Kristen Oertel



Dr. Kristen Oertel will be our Forum speaker on March 15 following our general membership meeting. Dr. Oertel is the Mary F. Barnard Professor of 19th-Century American History at the University of Tulsa. She received the Outstanding Teacher Award at TU in 2022 and was praised for supplementing traditional reading and writing assignments with innovative projects, such as skits and debates, and a variety of study materials, such as film and podcasts, that help students relate the study of the past to the issues of today.

The title of her Forum presentation is “The ‘First’ Emancipation Proclamation: Resistance, Removal, and Freedom during the Seminole Wars.” It comes from her forthcoming book, *Seeking Freedom in Indian Country*, which examines the intersection of Black and Native history in Indian Territory/Oklahoma. Dr. Oertel’s research, much of which she did at HCAR, “uncovered an emancipation order issued by General Thomas Jesup in 1838, twenty-five years before Lincoln’s proclamation, that freed hundreds of enslaved blacks who eventually moved to Indian Territory with their former [Seminole] masters.”

She has written three previous books: *Bleeding Borders* about how Native Americans, African Americans, and women reacted to slavery on the Kansas-Missouri border before the Civil War; *Frontier Feminist* about Clarina Nichols, a journalist involved in the abolition, temperance, and antislavery movements of the mid-19th century; and *Harriet Tubman: Slavery, the Civil War, and Civil Rights in the 19th Century*, a biography of the famous conductor on the Underground Railroad.

Some of you may have audited classes with Dr. Oertel at TU. In her acceptance email, she said, “I have had several Gillies in my classes over the years, and they always added a wonderful and insightful perspective to our discussions.” Join us on March 15 to hear how the Gilcrease archives helped Dr. Oertel to tell the story of “The ‘First’ Emancipation Proclamation.”

For Your Information

- As you may have heard, Pulitzer Prize-winning author, N. Scott Momaday, died at his home in Santa Fe, New Mexico, on January 24. Born Navarre Scott Mammedaty in Lawton in 1934, Momaday was originally raised among Kiowa relatives on a family farm in Oklahoma. Momaday was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1969 for his first novel, *House Made of Dawn*. Robin Leech recommends the viewing of Momaday's biography, *Words from a Bear*, on the PBS series, *American Masters*, which may be viewed on the PBS streaming service or on YouTube [here](#).
- The exhibit, "Lighting Pathways: Matriarchs of Oklahoma Native Art," opens Friday, February 16, at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City and will be on view through April 28. The exhibition features Mary Adair (Cherokee Nation), Sharron Ahtone Harjo (Kiowa), Adeline "Allie" Chaddlesone (Kootenai), Ruthe Blalock Jones (Shawnee/Delaware/Peoria), Brenda Kennedy (Citizen Potawatomi), Jane Osti (Cherokee Nation), and Virginia Stroud (Keetoowah Cherokee/Muscogee). You can read more about the exhibition [here](#).
- "Action/Abstraction Redefined: Modern Native Art, 1940s to 1970s" opens at the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts in Little Rock on Friday, February 16. Several events, including a Family Festival and a dance performance, are planned. Read more about the exhibition [here](#).
- The Travel Committee is working on three trips to take place this spring: the re-scheduled tour of the Creek Council House in Okmulgee, a trip to the Will Rogers Memorial Museum in Claremore, and a visit to the Oscar Jacobson House in Norman possibly combined with a tour of Fred Jones Museum of Art at OU. Details to come.
- Curations by Gilcrease is now open at 101 E. Archer. The store hours are Wednesday-Saturday, noon-5:00 p.m. It is closed on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday. Visit during the upcoming First Friday Art Crawl on March 1, when Curations will be open until 9:00 p.m. The First Friday Art Crawl is held in the Tulsa Arts District the first Friday of each month from 6:00-9:00 p.m.

MESSAGES:

Get well cards were sent to Jim Elder and Doug Kisling.

Please send changes in contact information (address, phone, and email) as well as news about a Gillie who is ill to the Gillies Secretary Lynn Cyert at cyert@nsuok.edu.

Gillies 2024-2025 Proposed Budget

2/18/2024

Income

Capital Reserves Allocation	7097
Interest from Bank	24
Total Receipts	<u>7121</u>

Expenses

Hospitality	500
Postage	75
Forums	1,000
Memorial & President Book	150
Supplies	150
Tech Support	
Zoom Annual Account	150
Vlogistics Subscription	660
GoDaddy	150
Aqua Vita	150
Travel & Education	2,000

Total Operating Expenses **4985**

Designated Funds:

<i>Memorial Tree Fund</i>	670
<i>Memorial & Pres. Book Fund</i>	650*
Travel & Education	816
Total Designated Funds	<u>2,136</u>

TTL Operating & Designated Funds Required **7121**

*Due to museum closure no books have been purchased since 2019-2020

These were the previously budgeted amounts for books:

2019-2020 - \$100

2020-2021 - \$100

2021-2022 - \$150

2022-2023 - \$150

2023-2024 - \$150

Did You Know?

- Essays by Jordan Poorman Cocker are attached to many Indigenous artworks in the Gilcrease online collection, including three essays on Bou-ge-Tah (Lois Smokey)—for *Kiowa Family* [here](#), *Mother and Two Children* [here](#), and *Lullaby* [here](#). Poorman Cocker was the Henry Luce Foundation Curatorial Scholar for Indigenous Painting Collection Research at Gilcrease and is now Curator of Indigenous Art at Crystal Bridges.
- Bou-ge-Tah (English name Lois Smokey) was the only female member of the Kiowa Five (later the Kiowa Six) invited to study under Oscar Jacobson at the University of Oklahoma. She was also advised by another art professor at OU, Edith Mahier, who encouraged her to use her own memory and experience instead of models, which as Poorman Cocker says, “affirmed Plains traditions of pictorial art as...personal narrative.” Bou-ge-Tah met many of her subjects through her family, as she was raised in a Kiowa community in southwest Oklahoma.
- *Mother and Two Children* is a pochoir version of *Kiowa Family*. Pochoir, which is French for “stencil,” is a technique by which color is applied to the print through a series of stencils, one for each color. Oscar Jacobson encouraged the Kiowa Six to learn printmaking, and the pochoir technique made possible a larger number of copies of a single painted image.



Lullaby

Lois Smokey

Mid-20th Century

tempera on paper

- *Lullaby*, with its depiction of devoted motherhood, parallels the closeness of Bou-ge-Tah and her mother, who traveled with her as a chaperone and stayed with her during her period of tutelage under Oscar Jacobson at OU.
- Later in her life Bou-ge-Tah became a Kiowa beadworker, transforming the detailed beadwork she had once depicted in her paintings into wearable art.

Happy Leap Day!

- Did you ever wonder why it's called Leap Day? According to the Smithsonian, “a common year is 52 weeks and 1 day long. That means that if your birthday were to occur on a Monday one year, the next year it should occur on a Tuesday. However, the addition of an extra day during a leap year means that your birthday now ‘leaps’ over a day. Instead of your birthday occurring on a Tuesday as it would following a common year, during a leap year, your birthday ‘leaps’ over Tuesday and will now occur on a Wednesday.” Of course, if you are born on February 29, you only have a “real” birthday every 4 years!



Editor: Becky Hatchett,
Gillies President
Publisher: Rod Schneider