



Footprints

"Every man must leave tracks and they might as well be good ones." - Thomas Gilcrease

December 2025

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Christmas Card from Josephine Trigg to Charles M. Russell
From the Charles M. Russell Research Collection
of Russell biographer, Homer Britzman,
acquired by the University of Tulsa in 2009.

*Becky Hatchett
Gillies President*

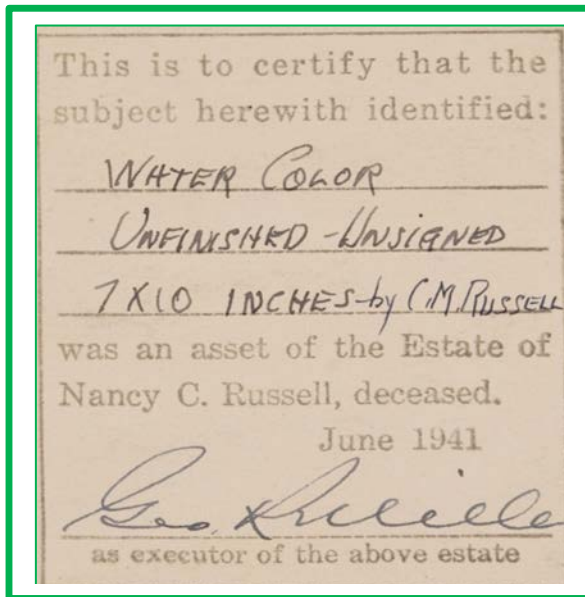
*He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight—
“Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night!”*

-From “A Visit from St. Nicholas” by Clement Clarke Moore



Reindeer watercolor by Charles M. Russell, unfinished and unsigned.

Learn more about this watercolor on the next page.



Purchased by the University of Tulsa in 2009, the Homer Britzman Collection consists of over 12,000 items amassed by Russell's biographer, Homer Britzman, following the death of Russell in 1926.

From the "Collection Overview" of the Britzman collection on Gilcrease's website: "The Russell Research Collection consists of original sketches and drawings, illustrated letters and envelopes by Russell, volumes of letters to and from Russell, photographs and negatives of Russell and various celebrities, photographs of Russell's (artwork, documentation of artwork, writings by Russell, albums of newspaper clippings and printed ephemera related to Russell, Russell family albums, and personal effects including paints, palettes, hand molded sculptures, spurs, western dress, hats, and Indian artifacts, as well as his famous ivory-handled Colt six-shooter."

You can read more about the collection and see a list of the items in the collection on the Gilcrease website [here](#). Some, like the reindeer watercolor, have been digitized.



Photo from Stephen Towns' lecture at University of Tulsa, November 5, 2025

GILLIES HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

Many thanks to Cathy Luccock, who has examined Gillies' newsletters from 2018 to the present to update our history for the Gillies website. Here are some highlights from years 2018-2025.

- From 2018 *Smoke Signals*: Gillies helped with the exhibitions, "Norman Rockwell: Behind the Scenes"; "Bob Dylan: Face Value and Beyond"; "Americans All!" which opened in September; "Albert Bierstadt: Witness to a Changing West"; and Gilcrease's Declaration of Independence. During the summer months, Gillies were at work revising the "Any Given Child" program and Greeters Manual.
- From 2019 *Smoke Signals*: Funday Sundays engaged many Gillies monthly. In September many Gillies were involved in the exhibition "Dorothea Lange's America."
- From the 2020 *Friday Footprints*: After 40 years of *Smoke Signals*, the Gillies inaugurated *Friday Footprints* each Friday of the month during the COVID pandemic to keep Gillies connected with each other and the museum. Virtual programs, such as "Paul Revere: Revealing Revere," and "The Art of Weather" became the norm and provided Gillies with continuing education during the closure due to COVID. Gillies worked hard providing 2500 bags for "Any Given Child" 1st graders with art supplies and creative exploration activities and 4000 bags for "Goshorn to Go" activities for students grades 3-12 focusing on Shan Goshorn's work to be exhibited in January 2021.
- From the 2021 *Friday Footprints*: The Gillies were excited in January to participate in the exhibit, "Weaving History into Art: The Enduring Legacy of Shan Goshorn." A team of Gillies created PowerPoints about museum artworks for OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) and presented classes once a week. "Speaking of Gilcrease" was still presented at sites where all participants were vaccinated against COVID. The Gillies Farewell Fete was held July 6 as a party and final viewing of the galleries and favorite works of art. The Gillies proudly purchased for Gilcrease Museum "Gold 'n Values" and "Illumination," two of Shan Goshorn's magnificent baskets. Tom Pendergraft (Gillie 2016 and husband of Shan Goshorn) donated his wife's research and notes for the baskets that Gilcrease owns. The final exhibition before construction of the new museum was "Enslavement to Emancipation." The Travel Committee planned outings for continuing education in Oklahoma City, Stillwater, Tahlequah, Bentonville AR, and Tulsa. October 22, 2021, after the library was carefully packed and sealed, Gillies left the building for the last time!

***Sealed Fate; Treaty
of New Echota
Protest Basket***



By Shan Goshorn

- From the 2022 *Friday Footprints*: The demolition of the old museum was completed in January. On May 3 Mayor G.T. Bynum and Gilcrease Museum Executive Director Susan Neal participated in the groundbreaking ceremony for the new museum building with many Gillies in attendance. Following the closure of the museum, City of Tulsa officials asked for a volunteer workforce for other city venues, such as the Route 66 Historical Village and the Historic Hotel Crawl, sponsored by the Tulsa Foundation for Architecture. Gillies stepped up to serve. The summer months saw the Gillies' new website launch. Attendees to the National Docent Symposium in Kansas City shared what they had learned regarding new ways of looking at art and innovative ways of presenting it to the public. "Gilcrease in Your Neighborhood" continued with Gillies giving spot talks on chosen art from the museum in locations around town.
- From the 2023 *Friday Footprints*: During the museum closure, Gillies continued to "plant seeds" that came to harvest, including cataloging, indexing, and digitizing portions of the museum collection;

organizing and presenting a biannual Forum; scanning past Gilcrease journals for preservation; providing continuing education for Gillies; planning and providing educational trips; and reaching out to the community through “Speaking of Gilcrease” and “Gilcrease in Your Neighborhood.” On November 3 Gillies honored retiring Executive Director Susan Neal and thanked her for seeing us through the extensive planning and beginning construction phase of the new museum.

- From the renamed *Footprints 2024*: February began with the exciting news that Brian Lee Whisenhunt had been named the new Executive Director of Gilcrease. Many Gillies attended a reception held in Brian’s honor. Susan Folwell was chosen to receive a pottery commission from the Gillies for a gift to the museum honoring Susan Neal. Five Gillies attended the National Docent Symposium in Atlanta where they made a presentation in one of the breakout session about “Gilcrease in Your Neighborhood.” Upon their return they gave a report detailing what they had learned at a docent meeting. The Gillies helped with summer workshops for Indian Education students in Union and Tulsa Public Schools. Just before Thanksgiving, Mayor Bynum held a symbolic ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Gilcrease Museum building.
- From *Footprints 2025*: Eight new programs were introduced to “Speaking of Gilcrease” presenters: Americans All!; Gilcrease in Your Neighborhood; Horses; Rivers; Nocturnes; National Parks; Eastern and Western Landscapes; and Women in Art. Gillies helped give community members tours of the new building in its pre-opening phase. Stephen Towns, the first Gillies Artist-in-Residence, gave a presentation about his amazing quilts and paintings. Gillies operated a booth at Mayfest and helped with a Family Festival Day at Greenwood Cultural Center. Through the efforts of the Travel Committee, they attended the Inter-Tribal Council meeting of nine federally registered tribes living in Ottawa County and provided an update of the art from each tribe currently in the Gilcrease collection. Gillies participated in the Scrollathon project and helped staff the Gilcrease Family Festival in October. Also, in October they inaugurated a new PowerPoint presentation for community groups, “Welcome to the New Gilcrease.”



Photo from member coffee with Stephen Towns in conversation with Aaron Schoenfeldt, Duane King Post Doctoral Fellow, and Alex Mann, Director of Curatorial Affairs.

Construction delays? We've been there before!

By Kathy Horne

A recent project for me as a volunteer in the HCAR library and archives was to digitize the correspondence between Thomas Gilcrease and Joseph Henry Sharp (1945 -1953). These two gentlemen met in 1945 when Gilcrease first visited Taos, NM, accompanied by Woody Crumbo who was advising him on art and artifacts to purchase for his collection.

It was a profitable visit for Sharp, as Gilcrease purchased 88 paintings. The next year, he acquired 11 more paintings. By 1949, Thomas Gilcrease owned the largest single collection of Sharp paintings in existence – the perfect collection for a special exhibition in his new museum.

The Sharp exhibit opened on September 25, 1949, with over 230 paintings – the largest collection of Sharp paintings ever assembled. The Thomas Gilcrease Institute had just opened to the public earlier that year.

But...here's the kicker. What the Gilcrease-Sharp correspondence revealed is that like all building construction (cough, cough), it takes longer than first imagined.

As you read a few excerpts below from the letters Gilcrease wrote to Sharp, keep in mind that the museum opened on **May 3, 1949**.

November 21, **1947** – “We have completed today all the outside walls of our building and the last roofing will go on the first part of this coming week, weather permitting. We then only will have some inside work to do and it will be finished...We will begin to hang paintings early in January and will be ready to open sometime towards spring.”

February 23, **1948** – “We laid the last concrete floor in the building Friday. We expect to finish the building about the middle of March and will have our opening some time during late spring.”

June 16, **1948** – We hope to start unpacking and hanging our paintings within the latter part of this month. The building is all finished but we are now working on shelving and drawer space for the storing of statuary, beadwork, etc.”

September 23, **1948** – We are now arranging our display for the opening sometime this autumn.”

October 15, **1948** – We are putting on display paintings, bronzes and different art objects for our opening which will be within a few weeks. We may be able to decide the opening date within the next few days.”

January 13, 1949 – “We have just about completed the hanging of paintings for the opening, which has been set for May 3rd of this year.”

The Taos Society of Artists were well represented in that May 1949 opening of the new museum, and the special “one-man show” of Sharp paintings opened a few months later in September. Unfortunately, Sharp was not in good health and was unable to travel to Tulsa.

But Sharp was definitely grateful and he wrote to Gilcrease, “You have made it possible for me to carry on and do much of my best work the last several years. Also, the remuneration carries us over unforeseen obstacles, with a nice reserve for our old age – if it ever comes! My interest as well as yours is to have all those things in the Foundation. I ought to have been an Oklahoman – I **am** a pretty good one now!”

It was worth the wait!



Sharp and Gilcrease outside Sharp's Taos studio





Gillies Cook!

Frosted Pecans

Recipe from Kathy Horne

Kathy says these make a great holiday gift!

Frosted Pecans

1 lb. pecan halves
1 egg white
1 teaspoon cold water
1/3 cup brown sugar
3 T sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon

Beat egg white slightly.
Add water and beat until frothy.
Add pecans and stir.
Mix other ingredients together, then add to nuts.
Bake at 250 degrees for one hour, stirring occasionally.
Store in airtight container.



Docents' Corner

By Alana Trisler, Docent Chair

Dear Gillies and Docents,

Wasn't it great to have our Director, Brian Lee Whisenhunt, with us for our November Gillies/Docent Meeting? We are so fortunate to have a director who joins us every chance he gets and always shares information that keeps us in the loop. Thank you, Brian.

Reminder: There will be no Gillies/Docents' Meeting in December. When the museum opens, hopefully we will be able to have a festive holiday get together as in the "olden days!"

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT MESSAGE!

Among some volunteers, there seems to be some confusion about entering hours into Volgistics. In an attempt to help dispel some of that confusion, please use the guidelines outlined below:

- *If you attend an event that has a sign-in sheet and you signed in:* **You do not have to enter your hours.** A member of the IT committee will enter them for you.
- *If you do volunteer work in any area where there is no sign-in sheet (working in the HCAR Library, helping with an upcoming museum event, etc.):* **You must enter your hours yourself.**

We cannot stress enough the importance of entering every hour you volunteer. We have City of Tulsa Gilcrease enthusiasts who are keenly aware of our efforts and want city officials and TU to know how hard we work and how much we contribute to the museum.

January 9, 2026, Gillies/Docent Meeting

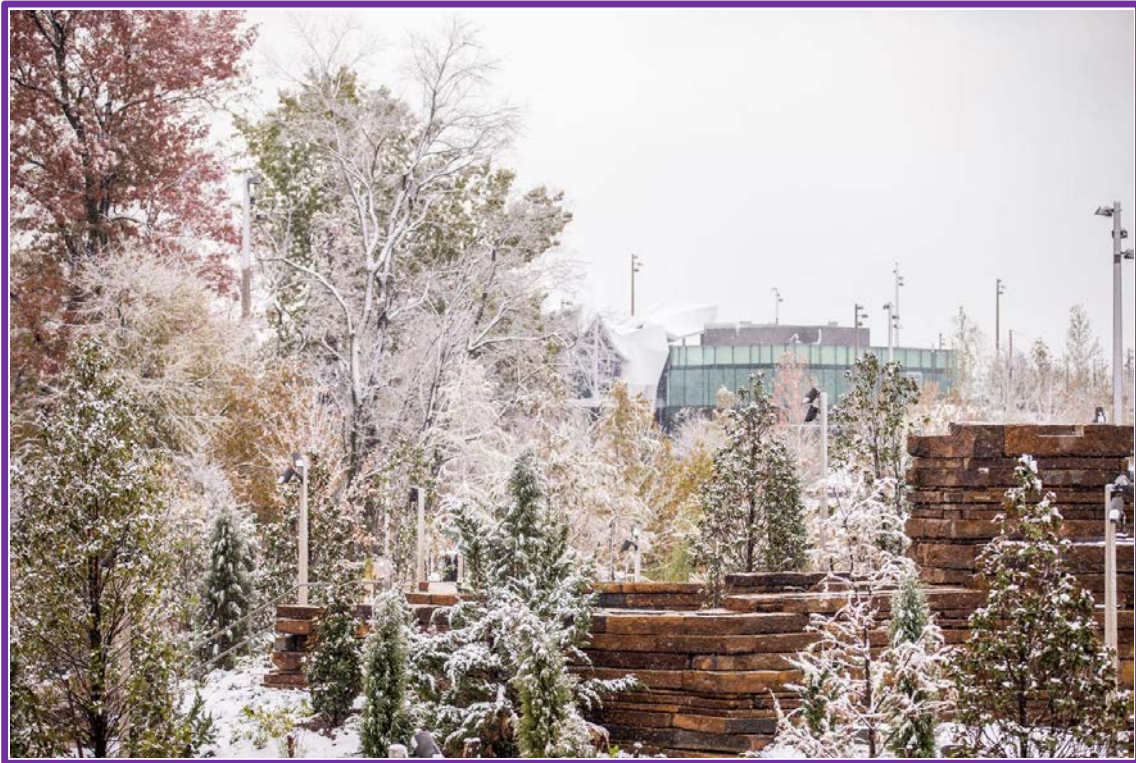
If you attended the November 6th Coffee and panel discussion with Stephen Townes and Aaron Schoenfeldt, facilitated by Alex Mann, you are already acquainted with our January guest presenter. If not, **Aaron Schoenfeldt, Ph.D.** is the current Duane H. King Postdoctoral Fellow in The University of Tulsa's Helmerich Center for American Research while also serving as the President of the Guardians (volunteers) at the Museum of Tulsa History (MOTH). Please join us on the **second Friday of 2026** as Aaron discusses his particular focus on researching the role of the perpetrators of the 1921 Tulsa race massacre using HCAR's Eddie Faye Gates collection as well as other sources.



Places to Go



Click [HERE](#) for a list of holiday lights in and around Tulsa from *Tulsa Kids* magazine.



Click [HERE](#) for information about Winter Wonderland at the Gathering Place.



Click [HERE](#) and scroll down for Oklahoma Historical Society events throughout the state during the Christmas season, including the Distinctive Homes Tour (one example shown above), part of Guthrie's Territorial Christmas.



Brian Lee Whisenhunt at Gillies/Docent meeting, November 7, 2025.

OFFICER NOMINATIONS FOR 2026-2027

It's time to begin thinking about who you want to lead the Gillies in 2026-2027 in the new Gilcrease Museum! As you know, our current President Elect, Teresa Pena, will step into the role of President. However, the positions of President Elect, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer will need to be filled. Our Nominating Committee Chairperson, Judy Howard, would like you to begin thinking about whom you would like to nominate to serve in these leadership positions.

How do you nominate someone to fill a leadership position? First, speak with the Gillie whom you'd like to nominate and make sure they are willing to serve. If you would like to serve, speak with another Gillie and ask them to nominate you! If you or they have any questions about the duties for the position, just check the Gillies website for details [HERE](#). Then scroll down and click on Gillies Organization.

Once they have agreed, please draft a nomination letter on their behalf and send it to Judy Howard via email or snail mail. (*see below*) Your nomination letter should include information about the nominee such as offices held, specific assignments, chairmanships, other leadership roles held, and any other information you think would be helpful for the Nominating Committee to know. **All letters of nomination are due to Judy by January 31st.** The Nomination Committee will meet in early February 2026 to review all the nomination letters and select a slate of officers. Membership will vote on the slate during our annual membership meeting in March of 2026.

Please send your letters of recommendation to Judy Howard via email to: jmhcp@yaho.com or to her home at: 6001 N. State Highway 97, Sand Springs, OK 74063. If you have any questions, feel free to call Judy at 918-851-5593.

All letters of nomination must have been received by January 31, 2026.

Mark Your Calendar

Christmas Tea at Harwelden	December 2, 2025	2:00-4:00 p.m.	
January 2026			
Executive Committee meeting	Friday, January 9	8:30 a.m.	Jackson Room/HCAR
Gillies/Docent meeting	Friday, January 9	10:00 a.m.	PACCAR/HC
Refreshments		9:30 a.m.	
Board of Directors meeting	Thursday, January 15	10:00 a.m.	Zoom

Secretary's Report

One person was removed from the membership roster: The total is now 131 members.
A sympathy card was sent to Executive Director Brian Lee Whisenhunt.

Please send changes in contact information (address, phone and email) as well as news about a Gillie who is ill to Gillies Secretary Julie Gentz at julie.gentz55@gmail.com.