



arts • gram

A DAILY PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL VETERANS CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL

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S P E C I A L E D I T I O N

2002 SHIRLEY JEFFERIES AWARD RECIPIENT JEAN CALHOUN

The recipient of the 2002 Shirley Jefferies Award is Jean Calhoun, music therapist at the VA Medical Center in Tomah, Wisconsin.

As a young girl, Calhoun began her musical experience by taking flute, piano and guitar lessons. Music has always been a source of true inspiration to her, and she was drawn toward using it as a way to make a positive difference in people's lives. Because of the importance of music in her own life, Calhoun decided early on to pursue a career in the field of music therapy.

Her first year of college, Calhoun attended the University of Iowa, and then transferred to Kansas University where she earned her degree in music therapy. She interned at the North Chicago VA Medical Center, transferring to the Tomah VA Medical Center when she completed her internship. She has been a dedicated therapist at the Tomah facility for nearly 25 years. Throughout that time, she has continued to make a positive therapeutic impact on thousands of veterans' lives.

Her positive influence has extended beyond the fields of health care and music. She was instrumental in the development of the Tomah VA Medical Center's child care center, "Kids and Company," and served as the chairperson of the center's Board of Directors. Her active involvement in her local community's Alzheimer's Association led to her role as president of that organization for two years, and a board member for eight. She



Jean Calhoun, from Tomah, Wisconsin, this year's Shirley Jefferies Award recipient

served on the Board of Directors for a Wisconsin Bible Camp, actively organizes and conducts community hand bell groups, and has been a dedicated "swim mom" to her two sons for a number of years as well.

Jean Calhoun first became involved with the National Veterans Creative Arts Competition and Festival in 1995, when she attended her first Festival in Coatesville, Pennsylvania. At that time, she was there to learn more about the program since the Tomah facility was planning to host the Festival two years later. She soon fell in love with this remarkable event, and has held an active role in every Festival since. In 1996, she worked at the event as a visual arts assistant. In 1997, when Tomah hosted the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, Calhoun served as the host site

coordinator, organizing all local aspects of that year's week-long program. Since then, she has served the national drama chairperson (in 1998), a performing arts assistant (in 1999), the national dance chairperson (in 2000 and 2001), and this year she assumed the role of national art chairperson.

Each year, Calhoun has enthusiastically encouraged veterans from the Tomah VA Medical Center to get involved with the creative arts competition, and assists them in preparing their entries in both the local and national levels of the competition. As national art chairperson, she has served as a positive influence and source of creative motivation for veterans from all across the nation.

Reflecting the qualities of true leadership, therapeutic excellence, and steadfast dedication to America's veterans, Jean Calhoun makes us all very proud.

GOING HOME

All participants should check their departing transportation schedules in the Event Operations Center in the President's Room, second floor. You'll need to know when your plane, train or bus is leaving prior to checking the shuttle schedule. Luggage should be packed well in advance of the shuttle departure time. If help with luggage is needed, please call the front desk. Arrive in the lobby at least 30 minutes before shuttle departure time.

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

ABSOLUTELY FANTASTIC!

I am so proud of you! What an amazing performance you gave today! You richly deserve the standing ovation, the cheers, and the long applause. That tells you how much the audience appreciated your hard work and stirring performance. Now YOU can be proud too!

What do you do next?

I'm hoping that you will take home all of the ideas that you have collected at our Festival, and become an even finer performer. Continue to work at further enhancing your artistic skills. And how about next year's show? We'd love to have you back. You should be an even stronger competitor next year!

What's happening with me?

I will continue teaching and coaching singers and actors. Coming right up, I will again stage and conduct the Des Moines Metro Opera fund-raiser; this year it will be Menotti's charming holiday opera, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. And, who knows, I may be back as show director for the Festival again next year.

Is the Festival over tonight?

Not at all. Festival week is concluding, but it will stay in your heart forever. You'll remember the great times and think of them often. Why not get the addresses of special friends you've met and write to them, or perhaps call them occasionally? After several months you'll receive a complimentary video of the show. This will remind you of our wonderful accomplishment and the important part that you played in its success.

My heartfelt thanks!

To performers, staff, volunteers and artists: It's been a grand experience for me to work with you. I deeply appreciate your dedicated efforts which gave all of us such a grand experience and a memory to treasure. Sincerest thanks!

-- Paul Dieke

GOODBYE AND GOOD LUCK FROM THE 2002 MEDIA CENTER CREW!

As we end this wonderful week, we want to thank all of our participants, therapists, staff and volunteers for all your help this week – with chasing down facts and figures, displaying great patience with our requests for interviews and photos, and most of all, for sharing your inspiring stories with us. During the week, we have prepared more than 90 hometown news releases for those veterans who wished to have one, gotten photographs of all performers and artists, produced eight copies of the *ArtsGram*, placed all information on the Festival website (www.va.gov/vetevent/caf/2002), contacted more than 200 media outlets to publicize the event, produced a bio booklet (with photos) on all of our talented participants, and perhaps most importantly, made so many wonderful friends all week. We have enjoyed your conversations, been awed by your talent, and are very grateful for all you have done to help

us do our jobs all week. When you get home, please let us know if any of your local newspapers run a story about your involvement in the 2002 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. An envelope containing your news release, photos, and other materials was given to each participant today. It also includes a stamped, addressed envelope for you to send back any news stories that appear about your participation in this event. We hope you will do that so we will know if our efforts were successful.

Please have a safe trip home, continue to pursue your talents, and enter the national creative arts competition again next year. We would love to see you again!

Sincerely,

Andy Scheller (ArtsGram editor), Kim Byers, Ivonne McDowell, Laura Bishop, Toby Norris, Susan Fleece, Rose Blesener, Cheryl Thieschafer, Linda Duffy, DeAnne Pavel, Jane Rheault, Carole Mitchiner, Gene Davies, Eric Eisen, Diane Mock, Robert Turtill, and Sherilyn Fails.

OKLAHOMA CITY HOSTS FESTIVAL IN 2003



The Oklahoma City VA Medical Center will serve as the proud host of the 2003 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. To provide fun and recreation for all participants, medical center hosts will take advantage of the many interesting resources Oklahoma has to offer. The state's Native American culture will be a central focus at this special event.

Festival participants will stay at the new Westin Hotel in downtown Oklahoma City, and the stage show will be held at Rose State Performing Arts Center. The city boasts a mild climate and generally experiences beautiful autumn weather.

Various activities in 2003 will include a tour of the Oklahoma City Bombing Memorial, the Crystal Bridge, Omniplex

Museum, and a barbecue dinner at the National Cowboy Hall of Fame and Western Heritage Center.

Other items of interest to participants are a drum workshop and sessions in Native American crafts such as beadwork, basketweaving and flute making. A special highlight of the week will be an authentic Pow Wow featuring Native American dancing!

We're all looking forward to serving as next year's host. Maureen Harvey, 2003 Host Site Coordinator says, "We anticipate a great Creative Arts Festival and are anxious to welcome you to Oklahoma City in 2003! The Oklahoma City Festival will be held October 6-12.