



NATIONAL VETERANS CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL

ArtsGram

A Daily Publication of the 2003 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival Monday, October 6, 2003

Welcome to

Oklahoma City

- the City Born in a Day!

At noon on April 22, 1889, the central section of Oklahoma Territory was opened for settlement in the Great Land Run. Fifty thousand people from around the world gathered along the borders of the "unassigned lands." On foot, by wagon and even by bicycle, these pioneers raced into the two million acres opened for settlement to stake their claim. Those who snuck over at night to stake out prime land early, hiding from the army patrols, became known as "Sooners." By sundown on the first day, Oklahoma City had a population of almost 10,000. Thus, Oklahoma City was born!

Just a little over a century ago, the site of Oklahoma City was a grass and timbered land of gently rolling hills flattening out into prairie in the west. Today, Oklahoma City sprawls across 625 square miles of America's heartland. Its metro population numbers over a million--a third of the entire state's population! In case you were wondering, the name Oklahoma, first suggested by the noted Choctaw Indian leader Allen Wright, means "home of the red people."

Major economic influences on the city include: the arrival of the railroad and the Santa Fe Railroad's boxcar depot, Oklahoma Station, in 1887; the livestock marketing and processing center, established during

World War I, now called the Oklahoma City Stockyards; and the discovery of the Oklahoma City Oil Field in 1928.

Cultural and artistic influences on the city are varied. According to the author of the book *Singing Cowboys and All That Jazz*, much of American jazz developed in Oklahoma in the late 1920s with a group called the Oklahoma City Blue Devils, who were considered the best jazz group in the world. A two-day jazz festival is held every July in a part of Oklahoma City called Deep Deuce. Oklahoma City's cultural momentum continues through such institutions as the Black Liberated Arts Center and festivals such as Red Earth, the largest Native American cultural and arts exposition in the world. The Greek Festival is also held every October at St. George Greek Orthodox Church.

Oklahoma City VAMC Welcomes You!

What a thrill and a privilege it is to finally welcome you to Oklahoma City after so many months of planning, preparation and anticipation. The Oklahoma City VA Medical Center is honored to be your host for the 2003 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Here in Oklahoma City, we think of ourselves as the "friendliest people in the world," so if you need help or have a question, do not hesitate to ask. We are honored to serve your needs. We expect to have an inspirational and rewarding Festival week, and we are especially looking forward to seeing you shine at the gala performance and art show on Sunday. So, climb aboard and **Hitch Your Wagon to a Star!**

Maureen Harvey, 2003 Host Site Coordinator



**"Hitch your wagon to a star."
- Ralph Waldo Emerson**



Welcome performers! This week, we expect more than 85 of you and we are thrilled you are here!

Cultural expression can define a nation's image, presenting an enduring look at the spirit and creativity of a people. Who better to help define that image than you! This week is sure to be both fun and rewarding as you prepare for Sunday's stage

presentation at the Rose State College Performing Arts Theater.

In addition to coachings, costume fittings and rehearsals, you will also enjoy a trip to Oklahoma City's Cowboy Hall of Fame and Western Heritage Museum on Wednesday, and the Oklahoma City National Memorial on Friday.

As you prepare for the stage show, here are a few tips to remember:

- Always be on time for your rehearsals;
- Work hard to improve by listening to critiques and suggestions;
- Practice on your own;
- Encourage other performers; and

-- Keep smiling – no matter what!

We hope this week will not only help you become an even better performer, but allow you to meet many wonderful and talented people.

Tomorrow, you will perform for the first time at the Festival and meet your fellow performers. Please get to know as many as possible, have a fantastic week and enjoy the excitement of being part of a wonderful show!

— *Auditions for narrations, solos and production numbers begin on Wednesday. See Tuesday's ArtsGram for details!* —

Welcome from the Festival Director!

The veterans gathered in Oklahoma City this week represent 120 first place-winners from 46 VA facilities nationwide. They are part of a total of 2,903 veterans from 103 VA facilities who originally entered the various categories within the divisions of art, music, dance and drama during the local level competition phase this past winter. Following the local competition, their entries advanced to the national level of competition where they were eventually awarded first place, or gold medal status, in their specific category. These veterans have definitely experienced a "journey to the Festival," to quote my friend, Jennifer Lewis, who also serves as the program's national music chairperson. Now that journey will continue as we all come together this week.

Please join me and the other national steering committee members in expressing our deepest appreciation to the Oklahoma City VA Medical Center staff and volunteers, and the community of Oklahoma City. Without their enthusiasm and absolute willingness to extend their talents, energies and resources well beyond the norm, we would not have this chance to bask in the glow of the inspiring environment of Oklahoma. I'm sure you will find, as I have, that Oklahoma City has a rich western heritage and an artistic uniqueness all its own. A special thank you to Steven Gentling, medical center director, and Maureen Harvey, host site coordinator, for making their dream of hosting this Festival a reality.

Congratulations to the veterans! We are here because of you and we thank you for allowing us to share this part of your journey. We will do everything we can to serve you and make this experience both inspiring and rewarding, as our way of thanking you for your service to us.

All the best to each of you in the week ahead!

Liz Mackey

Director, National Veterans Creative Arts Festival



More than 35 participants are at the Festival this week who won first place in an artistic category. We are glad you are here!

We have many activities scheduled for you, including sessions in acrylic painting, dry brush, a craft workshop and Native American crafts, as well as trips to the Oklahoma City National Memorial, the Cowboy Hall of Fame and Western Heritage Museum and Crystal Bridge/Myriad Gardens.

Welcome, artists! We hope you enjoy your week.





Welcome Dinner is Tonight

This evening, all artists, performers and special guests are invited to the Welcome Dinner for the 2003 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. The dinner will be held in the 18th & 19th Century Ballroom on the second floor of the Westin, beginning at 7:00 pm. At the dinner, all 116 participants (37 artists and 79 performers) will be welcomed to the Festival by our local hosts from the Oklahoma City VA Medical Center, including Maureen Harvey, host site coordinator, and Steven Gentling, medical center director. In addition to ceremonial activities, guests will be treated to remarks by local Native American artist Enoch Kelly Haney (see story below).

We look forward to meeting everyone at tonight's dinner and opening meeting.

Note: Anyone who has not registered before the dinner must complete their registration by 9:00 pm!

Guest Speaker and Artist Enoch Kelly Haney

Enoch Kelly Haney is an internationally recognized artist who has exhibited throughout the United States, Europe and Asia. Haney owns and operates Haney, Inc., an art business in Seminole, Oklahoma and has earned the title of "Master Artist of the Five Civilized Tribes." Haney's 22-foot bronze sculpture "The Guardian," was selected by the Arts Standard Committee of the Capital Preservation Commission to top the Oklahoma State Capital Dome.

A member of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, Haney has served in the Native American community as a business consultant, councilman and planner/business manager. His grandfather, Willie Haney, was chief of the Seminole Tribe in the 1940s. Haney has received numerous awards for his leadership, artistry and service to the community.

Haney has served the State of Oklahoma as a candidate for governor in 2002; served four terms as a state senator in the Oklahoma Legislature from 1986 to 2002; and was a member of the Oklahoma House of Representatives from 1980 to 1986. Over the years, he has received numerous awards for his leadership, artistry and service to the community. We are honored to have him kick off this week's Festival at tonight's opening event!



Today's (Monday) Schedule

ALL DAY	Arrival of participants and staff
Noon - 9:00 pm	Registration at the Westin Hotel – Second Floor Sandwiches, snacks & beverages in Hospitality Room (Room 318)
5:30 pm	Team leaders' meeting - Plaza Room
7:00 pm	Dinner at hotel – 18 th /19 th Century Ballroom
8:00 pm	Opening Meeting Introductions and announcements Guest speaker Enoch Kelly Haney Team meetings – 18 th /19 th Century Ballroom

Tuesday's Schedule

Breakfast will be served from 7 - 8:30 am in the Century Ballroom.

Continuing Education courses begin Tuesday.
See Tuesday's ArtsGram for details.

Medical Support Room

The Medical Support Room is in room 1111. If you have a medical concern or issue, please contact your team leader (identified for you this evening). Medical support has a registered nurse on duty 24 hours a day. You can call the nurse at extension 1111 or go directly to the room.

Meet with Your Team Leader

Meet with your team leader every morning (except Sunday) at 8:30 am on the 2nd floor of the hotel.
Sunday meetings are at 11:30 am.

Hospitality Room

The Hospitality Room, manned by friendly volunteers, offers snacks, soft drinks, juices and coffee for all Festival participants, staff and volunteers.

Open daily from 9 am to 10 pm in room 318.



Opening Celebration Dinner

Choice of:

Roasted Raspberry Half
Chicken
With Peanut Couscous and
Julienne Vegetables

-- or --

Vegetarian Selection

Assorted Breads with Butter

Chocolate or Banana
Caramel Baby Bundt Cakes

Westin blend Starbucks Coffee
and Ice Tea

*Before dinner, sandwiches,
snacks and beverages will be
available in the Hospitality Room.*

