



FALL | WINTER 2022

# OKLAHOMA HUMANITIES

CELEBRATING 15 AWARD-WINNING YEARS

CULTURE | ISSUES | IDEAS



# Etc.



## CAROLINE LOWERY

Executive Director  
[caroline@okhumanities.org](mailto:caroline@okhumanities.org)

## PERSPECTIVE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This special issue of *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine celebrates the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our award-winning and nationally recognized publication. Launched in 2008, it fosters conversation and new perspectives through articles, interviews, images, and “Extra” resources that explore diverse themes from POP CULTURE and CURIOSITY to JUSTICE and DEMOCRACY. The rich mix of scholarship, insightful narratives, and informed opinions produces a read that is smart, balanced, educational, and entertaining. As the public face of our organization, the magazine reaches each of Oklahoma’s 77 counties, including urban and rural populations, tribal nations, veterans centers, centers of incarceration, and readers and humanities councils in all 50 states.

Above all, *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine brings people together in conversation and contemplation. In local libraries, corner coffee shops, and at kitchen tables, people discuss and, yes, even sometimes debate what they have read. Some topics presented by the magazine are difficult, but the essence of the humanities is to question, examine, and confront all parts of history, particularly those that are painful. Elevating underrepresented voices and reaching underserved audiences is central to that work. The RECONCILIATION (Summer 2012), VIETNAM (Fall/Winter 2017), and HOPE (Spring/Summer 2021) issues are just three examples.

The magazine not only generates conversations, but collaborations as well. Over the past fifteen years, we have proudly partnered with many organizations: Oklahoma Educational Television Authority (OETA), National Public Radio (NPR) affiliates, public school districts across the state, and many more. We work with the Tulsa City-County Library System, the Metropolitan Library System, museums, cultural centers, independent bookstores, humanities conferences, pop culture conferences, and others to increase our reach. We recently even went global and gained an international audience when we partnered with The University of Oklahoma’s *World Literature Today* on co-published content in the HOPE issue.

So how do we ultimately measure the magazine’s success after fifteen years? The 70-plus awards won since 2008? The Pulitzer Prize-winning authors? No. To me the greatest mark of accomplishment is YOU. Because of you, this donor-driven publication remains free of advertisements and free of charge. I hope you enjoy this 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue that considers the endless possibilities of “etc.” as a *continuation* of an idea, not an end—just as the magazine will continue to inspire and enlighten readers for years to come. What will the future hold? The humanities are the limit. | Read every issue online at [okhumanities.org/programs/magazine](http://okhumanities.org/programs/magazine)

ON THE COVER: Caesalpinoid legume, Blackburne’s Earth Boring Beetle, Seven-Spotted Ladybird Beetle, Purple Emperor, and shells, ca. 1768. One of twenty watercolors drawn on parchment by naturalist-artist James Bolton (1735-1799) from the natural history cabinet of noted botanist and collector Anna Blackburne (1726-1793), who likely commissioned the images. Folio A 2016 25, no. 10. Yale Center for British Art. [britishart.yale.edu](http://britishart.yale.edu)



# OKLAHOMA HUMANITIES

Culture | Issues | Ideas

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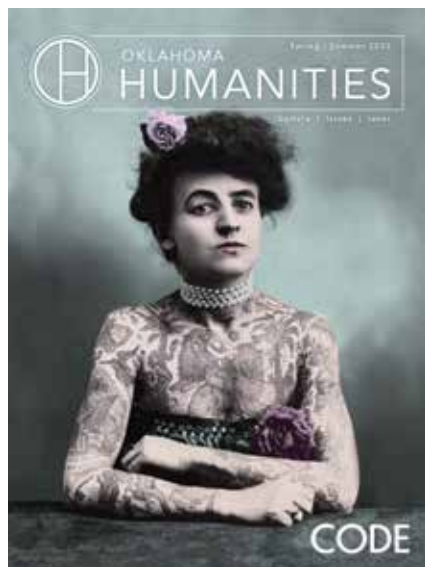
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LEFT: Cock Pheasant tapestry, 1916; John Henry Dearle, designer; workshop of William Morris. Birmingham Museums via rawpixel.com

Reader Feedback



We just went through the latest issue of *Oklahoma Humanities* [Spring/Summer 2022] and on page 42 were delighted to see a picture of my old studio at 3001 Paseo. I spent 13 years there. Of course the signage "Larsen Studio & Gallery" is gone, but not the memories. John Belt made that available to me late in 1991. Paseo was pretty rough and tumble back then, but I wouldn't trade the time I spent there. Thanks for the trip down Memory Lane.

—Mike Larsen, Perkins

I received the Spring/Summer 2022 edition of *Oklahoma Humanities*. I was initially confused, as common words rapidly evolve and develop obscure, abstract, and intangible meanings. I did not really understand what the tattooed woman on the cover had to do with CODE. I was enlightened by your clear explanation in "The Editor's Desk," page 6, and am delighted and surprised by the synchronicity across the wide variety of topics the articles explore. Very clever issue!

—Christina Linz, Muskogee

I really enjoyed this issue [Spring/Summer 2022]. Eric Singleton's article on tattooing was really interesting and educational. While I don't think that I will ever get a tattoo, I can appreciate them more now. Candace Greene's article on coded messages was an interesting take on what we see every day and what can be hidden in the picture. Thanks for the continued scholarship and helping Oklahomans learn about each other.

—Ken Ferguson, Altus

Our Western Jewish Studies Conference [supported by OH grant funding] was very successful. We had 173 registrants and it yielded a lot of attention to our Center. The panels were very stimulating, and our visitors received the most recent issue of *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine.

—Alan Levenson, Schusterman/Josey Chair of Jewish History Director, Schusterman Center for Judaic and Israel Studies, University of Oklahoma

Congratulations to all for the [2022 Great Plains Journalism] awards. I have really enjoyed the CODE issue . . . so many interesting takes on the subject.

—Carol Hamilton, Midwest City



"Got some amazing reading done on vacation! Just wanted to share." From our good friend Jeremy Springer, on location at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. Thanks, Jeremy, for this visual evidence that *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine has an international reach!

Happy 15 Years

From a Devoted Reader

Oklahoma Humanities was quite courageous, 15 years ago, to launch a new print publication when so many others were struggling or disappearing entirely. A decision was made to try something new. It was, and still is, unusual: informed, intelligent, and balanced content. The formula has worked well.

My first exposure to *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine was when the Summer 2010 issue appeared in my mailbox, for a still unknown reason. I've been looking forward to the next issue ever since. Not having seen the inaugural issue, I looked it up online. Then Executive Director Ann Thompson said the hope was the magazine would "inform, motivate, and inspire." Editor Carla Walker encouraged readers to "find a new perspective and pass it on." In my experience, those aspirations have all been realized with virtually every issue.

Themes and articles vary from the serious to the whimsical. The content is always thoughtful and intelligent. When I have disagreed with an article and taken the time to write, I have always received a gracious acknowledgment and response. Were I to go back through the old issues, I could easily write pages about what I have learned and how my views have adjusted because of *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine. Why, this retired engineer is even occasionally reading poetry thanks to the Spring/Summer 2017 POETRY issue.

So—congratulations to *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine for 15 years of inspired content and too many awards to count. Thank you to the Oklahoma Humanities Board for supporting this excellent publication. A special thank you to Ms. Carla Walker who, I know for a fact, pours her heart into every issue. And a cheerful welcome to Associate Editor Kimberly Roblin, who will help grow this enterprising endeavor. To paraphrase Elphaba and Glinda, "Because I read you, I have been changed for good." With warmest wishes.—Bill Woodard, Bartlesville

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
Caroline Lowery  
caroline@okhumanities.org

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR  
& EDITOR  
Carla Walker  
carla@okhumanities.org

ASSOCIATE EDITOR  
& COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER  
Kimberly Roblin  
kimberly@okhumanities.org

SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER  
Kelly Burns  
kelly@okhumanities.org

PROGRAM OFFICER  
Sarah Olzawski  
sarah@okhumanities.org

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES  
MANAGER  
Khylee Forgety  
khylee@okhumanities.org

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT  
Shana Keith-Ward  
shana@okhumanities.org

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*Oklahoma Humanities* magazine is an award-winning collection of culture, issues, and ideas—a rich mix of humanities scholarship, insightful narratives, informed opinions, and beautiful images, for a read that is smart, balanced, educational, and entertaining. Subscribe online: okhumanities.org or call (405) 235-0280.

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*Oklahoma Humanities* awards include 44 Oklahoma Society of Professional Journalists awards, including multiple first place honors for Best Writing, Best Cover, and Best PR Publication; 18 Great Plains Journalism awards, including firsts for best Magazine Feature Writing and best Magazine Page Design, and as a finalist for the Great Plains Magazine of the Year; 3 Central Oklahoma IABC Bronze Quill Awards; the State Historic Preservation Officer's Citation of Merit; and an Oklahoma Heritage Distinguished Editorial Award.

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## CONGRATULATIONS ON 15 AWARD-WINNING YEARS OKLAHOMA HUMANITIES MAGAZINE

### ANNIVERSARY GREETINGS FROM NEH CHAIR SHELLY C. LOWE

Congratulations from all of us at the National Endowment for the Humanities on the 15-year anniversary of *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine. This award-winning publication reflects the concerns and experiences of every county in Oklahoma and serves the state's residents through engaging articles that foster reflection and informed community discussion.

We are grateful to *Oklahoma Humanities* for partnering with NEH's own magazine, *Humanities*, to bring NEH initiatives and grant-funded projects to the attention of Oklahomans. We look forward to more thought-provoking and inspiring content from *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine in the years to come. – Shelly C. Lowe (Navajo), Chair, National Endowment for the Humanities



Photo by Chris Richards

SHELLY C. LOWE



NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE  
HUMANITIES



TOM COLE

### A MESSAGE FROM CONGRESSMAN TOM COLE

I am proud to congratulate *Oklahoma Humanities* on 15 years of devoted content celebrating the unique history and culture of our great state. Several years ago, I was honored to pen an essay that was featured in the DEMOCRACY issue. As a regular reader over the years, I greatly appreciate the continued dedication and educational service the magazine offers to communities statewide. [Editor's note: Congressman Cole's thoughtful essay "Together" discussed tribal sovereignty in our Fall/Winter 2016 issue.]



OKLAHOMA  
HUMANITIES

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# NOTEWORTHY



## FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Suzette V. Chang, Chair

Serving as the Oklahoma Humanities (OH) Board Chair continues to be an enlightening, rewarding experience. As we transition from “pandemic times,” OH staff and Board members are expanding upon “silver lining moments.” We have a conscious focus to strengthen relationships with institutions and individuals that extend qualitative humanities experiences to all Oklahomans. We’re developing new relationships with communities that have not yet partnered with OH. As a melonated native-Californian/adopted-Oklahoman, it warms my spirit to work side-by-side with OH staff and Board members to plan “what comes next.”

It is a time of enthusiastic anticipation: What will the next five years bring, and what do we want to accomplish? Grant applications for OH program support are multiplying. *Let’s Talk About It* is serving new host sites and new audiences. We’re in discussions with partners in public television and public radio to mutually augment our reach with cross-content in *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine. Applications are open to host our next *Museum on Main Street* exhibit—and if the past is an indicator, we’ll

have more applicants than tour slots. It’s a wealth of opportunity.

So how do we increase programming with the limits of a small staff and finite funding? To explore that question, we have just completed strategic planning meetings ahead of a site visit from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) in 2024. Every five years, NEH staff and other evaluators comb through our strategic plan, talk with grantees and partners, and monitor the effectiveness of our programming and budget to determine whether we are good stewards of federal funds and donor contributions. It’s a time of measurement and discussion on the impact we make currently and what we can do to increase access to humanities programming for all who live in our state. We welcome this feedback because we have pride and satisfaction in our successes and enthusiasm and drive to meet future challenges. Like our Oklahoma ancestors, we are optimistic and committed to what the future holds.

Watch this space for the results of our reflection—developments that will inspire our most important partner: you! Thank you for ALL that YOU do!



## THE 2022 EDITOR’S CIRCLE

Donors who designate gifts of \$500 or more for *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine are printed in the Editor’s Circle. Thanks to these generous donors, we distribute this award-winning publication, free of charge, to Oklahomans in all 77 counties. Thank you—we’re grateful for your generosity!



## OKLAHOMA CITY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

### OH RECEIVES OCCF GRANT

Oklahoma Humanities is proud to be a first-time recipient of an Oklahoma Culture & Community iFund grant through the Oklahoma City Community Foundation. The \$25,000 funding will support our reading and discussion program, *Let's Talk About It* (LTAI), in numerous central-Oklahoma communities. LTAI is a free program that provides

libraries, veterans centers, community nonprofits, and centers of incarceration with the resources needed to implement a literature-based book club. Oklahoma Culture & Community iFund grants are awarded to expand community access to programs, projects, and activities that preserve, utilize, and share Oklahoma's unique cultural heritage.



## KIRKPATRICK FAMILY FUND

### MATCHING GRANT AWARDED

Oklahoma Humanities is excited to announce we have been awarded \$20,000 in matching funds from the Kirkpatrick Family Fund to grow our

endowment at the Oklahoma City Community Foundation. We are grateful to Kirkpatrick Family Fund for investing in our organization's long-term viability and stability.

### ABOUT OKLAHOMA HUMANITIES

Oklahoma Humanities (OH) strengthens communities by helping Oklahomans learn about the human experience, understand new perspectives, and participate knowledgeably in civic life. As the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, OH provides and supports programming for the general public that uses humanities disciplines (such as history, literature, ethics, and philosophy) to deeply explore what it means to be human.

OH accepts grant applications from nonprofits across the state for programs that may take the form of museum exhibits, film festivals,

teacher institutes, oral history projects, or other formats that best serve local communities.

OH also administers programs that provide free access to cultural humanities content, including: *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine; *Let's Talk About It*, a reading and discussion series; the *BrainBox* podcast; and *Museum on Main Street*, a collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution to provide traveling exhibits to small rural communities.

Visit our website to find an event near you, read magazine archives, listen to the *BrainBox* podcast, or explore OH programs and grant opportunities. We look forward to hearing from you. (405) 235-0280 | okhumanities.org | ohc@okhumanities.org



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## THE EDITOR'S DESK

CARLA WALKER

carla@okhumanities.org

I. Am. Overwhelmed. It's an emotion shared by all scholars and writers who have important, meaningful information to impart and too little space to accomplish it. Thus, the ubiquitous use of the Latin phrase *et cetera*.

*Et cetera* translates literally as *et* (and) *cetera* (the rest). It is the stalwart stand-in for sundry forms of *and*: and others, and the like, and so on, and so forth—or whatever logically follows the who/where/what in the list just itemized.

American parlance uses a convenient one-word spelling: *etcetera*. Through the ages, we writers and list-makers have leaned heavily on the even further shortened *etc*. According to *Columbia Journalism Review*, the abbreviation announces that the author/s expects us to know he/she/they are not being comprehensive. It asks us to excuse abbreviating the subject.

In this issue of *Oklahoma Humanities*, we're parsing, extracting, and examining the details left unsaid by *etc*. It's the perfect way to celebrate our first 15 years of publication, when the volume of cultures, issues, and ideas we've investigated—the sheer ground we've covered—could only be described as “all that, etc.” Where do I start?

I could say that in a decade and a half we have featured the work of state scholars, national authors, a few poets, etc. But that brevity hides the particulars that among those have been four Pulitzer Prize winners (Carl Bernstein, N. Scott Momaday, Viet Thanh Nguyen, Fredrik Logevall), more than a few heavy-hitters, best-sellers, and Emmy-winners (Krista Tippett, Anita Hill, Bryan Stevenson, Walter Isaacson, Lynn Novick), and a poesy of poets laureate representing the United States (Joy Harjo, William Stafford) and the State of Oklahoma (Carol Hamilton, Carl

Sennhenn, N. Scott Momaday, Jim Barnes, Eddie Wilcoxon, Nathan Brown, Benjamin Myers, Jeanetta Calhoun Mish).

Saying that we feature the work of artists, photographers, illustrators, etc., glosses over the magic of the masters (Van Gogh, Cézanne, Monet, Manet), the aspirations of the Americans (John Singer Sargent, Norman Rockwell, Charles M. Russell), and the creativity of the contemporaries (Sara Bowersock, David Holland, Derek Russell, Diane Levesque, Denise Duong, Benjamin Harjo, Jr.). Hidden would be the intimacy revealed by the cameras of White House photographers, the wonder of galaxies captured by NASA astronauts, the despair of the Dust Bowl recounted in the images of Dorothea Lange, and the Oklahoma experience recorded by state centennial photographer Mike Klemme, whose award-winning photos were there from the beginning—on our first two covers (upper right, moving clockwise), most recently on our CROSSROADS cover, and more than a few others along the way.

I have run out of space to name even a fraction of the archives of Oklahoma, America, and the world, from which we have shared paintings, manuscripts, political cartoons, newspaper archives, ledger art, courtroom sketches, campaign buttons, bumper stickers, posters, and postage stamps. We have brought you the stories of presidents, immigrants, veterans, protesters, folk singers, and the incarcerated. I could go on, but *et cetera* will have to do. Take this as encouragement to dig deeper with free online access to all that we have collected, curated, and printed for posterity. | archives: okhumanities.org

These 15 years have been award-winning (75 total and counting), thrilling to work with the people noted above (those, and more), but most of all they have been inspiring, broadening my perspective and teaching me lessons I will carry for the rest of my life. I hope it is the same for you. Let me know, I'd love to hear your *Oklahoma Humanities* anniversary story. | carla@okhumanities.org







# PAUL HARVEY

## *The Rest of His Story*

Becoming “The Voice of Middle America”

TERRY PHELPS

For more than five decades Oklahoman Paul Harvey informed and entertained millions around the world with radio commentaries. Perhaps most memorable are his five-minute spots, *The Rest of the Story*, providing the back stories of people and events, historical or current at the time. His own story is similarly fascinating.

In 1923, at age five, Paul Harvey Aurandt built his own cigar box crystal radio to listen to Tulsa station KVOO and the growing medium of radio. He later made and sold crystal radios as a Boy Scout to make money. His broadcasting career started at age 14, thanks to Tulsa Central High School speech and theatre teacher Isabelle Ronan, who recognized his inflection and elocution. Years later, Harvey recalled:

She took me by the hand and marched me down to KVOO, and said, “This young man ought to be on the radio.” She just wouldn’t accept no. So I did my school chores in the daytime and hung around the radio station so many hours at night that they finally put me on the payroll to limit those hours.

Ronan taught him vocal exercises with phrases like “Me-me-mama-moo . . . Wolf-one-two-three-four . . . Diddle-de-diddle-dee,” which he vocalized in a sing-song voice before every on-air appearance for 75 years.

“Paul Harvey, radio and television news commentator,” *Oklahoma Times*, Feb. 13, 1969. From the Oklahoma Publishing Company Photograph Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society



In one way my job is to leaven the cold, hard facts with a little lighter shading, to let people know that tomorrow has always been better than today.  
—Paul Harvey, “Good days for Paul Harvey,”  
Rick Kogan, Aug. 4, 2002, *Chicago Tribune*

For his audition at KVOO, he was to introduce a Richard Wagner opera broadcast from New York. He was given a script that included the parenthetical (Monitor Fade In) to remind him to listen as the local program wound down, then to say a few words as the opera was transmitted. He read:

We join the Blue Network to bring you the Metropolitan Opera broadcast now in progress. This afternoon you will hear the immortal opera *Tannhauser* by Moan-ee-tore Fahd-een.

Despite chuckles Harvey was hired, spot announcing for free at first “because of child labor laws,” he recounted years later. By age 16 he was one of KVOO’s most popular announcers during evenings and weekends. He did remote, live onsite announcing for Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys at Cain’s Ballroom, but his appearances at those performances were suspended until his face cleared of acne. After graduating high school, he was hired as a full-time announcer while attending the University of Tulsa.

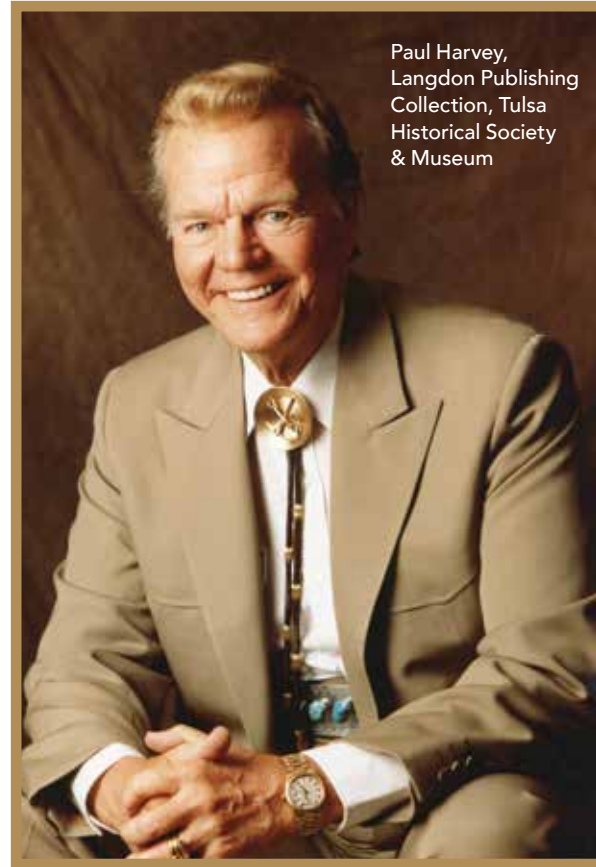
#### FROM MIDWEST STATION TO BROADCAST NATION

The following year, Harvey was hired as station manager for KFBI radio station in Salina, Kansas. Three

years later, realizing that he wanted to focus on newscasting, he moved to Oklahoma City to work at KOMA, a strong Midwest station, where he covered the University of Oklahoma’s first football bowl game and first time in the basketball Final Four. Happy in his home state, he planned to stay—until his KOMA boss took the top position at KXOK in St. Louis and hired him as newsmen. At KXOK Harvey covered floods, mock bombing exercises, and performances by Frank Sinatra, Glenn Miller, and other notables.

In a serendipitous elevator encounter, he met Lynne Cooper, hired to develop an educational program for the station. She was an aspiring writer, who had authored a novel at age eleven. Harvey took her to dinner and proposed on that first date. Not taking him seriously, “Angel,” as Harvey came to call her, turned him down. A year later, in 1940, they married. As his producer and partner, she would be integral in charting Harvey’s lengthy career.

After stints in Missoula, Montana, with KGVO and in Michigan with WKZO, Harvey joined the Army Air Corps in 1943. While he was away, Angel lived with his mother in Tulsa and ran a CBS affiliate station. When



Paul Harvey,  
Langdon Publishing  
Collection, Tulsa  
Historical Society  
& Museum

Harvey returned in three months due to a medical discharge, he dropped his Aurandt surname, following the leads of Cary Grant (Archibald Alexander Leach), George Burns (Nathan Birnbaum), and Jack Benny (Benjamin Kubelsky). As he later noted, “Ethnic names were not very popular, no one could spell it.”

In 1944 Paul and Angel moved to Chicago, where he went to work for NBC affiliate WENR to launch *Paul Harvey News*, a 15-minute weeknight program. The 10 p.m. broadcast time, then common with television newscasts, introduced the concept of a late evening radio newscast—Angel’s idea—so listeners could hear the news to wind down their day. In 1951 the show was renamed *Paul Harvey News and Comment* after WENR joined ABC’s national network. That same year, Harvey heard that security was lax at the Argonne National Laboratory, a top-secret nuclear energy development facility. To investigate the story, he went to the facility and was caught scaling the security fence. He was arrested and charged for “making public information regarding national defense,” but was ultimately not indicted.

#### STYLE AND SUBSTANCE

Harvey began his ABC broadcasts with “Hello, Americans” and signed off with “Paul Harvey (dramatic pause) *good day.*” Before broadcasts he ran up and down the studio corridor wearing a weight belt while simultaneously exercising his vocal cords with chants and chatter, all to lend excitement to his delivery. His 2009 *New York Times* obituary described Harvey’s style as “stop-and-go, with superb pacing and silences . . . punchy sentences, occasional exclamations of ‘Good heavens!’ or ‘Oh, my goodness!’



and pauses that squeezed out the last drop of suspense.”

*The Rest of the Story* had its roots in the bits of history Harvey included in his early newscasts. Angel proposed the five-minute historical feature, which began on ABC during the 1976 bicentennial celebration and continued as a nightly feature for 33 years. With the new show added to other broadcasting commitments, Harvey said he didn’t have time to write scripts. His son, Paul Jr., an aspiring concert pianist at age 28, was recovering from an automobile accident and started writing the scripts. Paul Jr. credited his radio scripts to “a temperament that is musical. It is the same mentality and the same substance.” He wanted precision, lyrical tone, and cadence in each piece.

*The Rest of the Story* vignettes were informative, amusing, ironic, and surprising. Fellow Oklahomans made regular appearances:

Will Rogers had been a troublesome youngster who went to multiple schools but never finished.

Inductees into the Emerson Radio Hall of Fame for 1990, left to right: Dick Clark, Charles Osgood, Frank Stanton, and Paul Harvey. Courtesy the Radio Hall of Fame, formerly the National Radio Hall of Fame created by the Emerson Radio Corporation in 1988

After (Carlos) Chuck Norris was bullied, he became a world karate champion and martial arts instructor—then a movie star.

Mickey Mantle had the bone disease osteomyelitis as a youth, but his miner dad convinced him not to give up.

Ron Howard started film acting at age 3 in Germany.

Harvey was also known for inventing words: *guestimate*, *tendency*, *skyjacker*, and *snoopervision*. He referred to computers as *confusers* and said he only used one to check stock quotes. Many of his comments are memorable and quotable for their wisdom and humor:

If there is a 50-50 chance that something can go wrong, then nine times out of ten it will.

Ever since I made tomorrow my favorite day, I've been uncomfortable looking back.

Times like these it helps to recall that there have always been times like these.

I am fiercely loyal to those willing to put their money where my mouth is.

Like what you do. If you don't like it, do something else.

Referred to as “The Voice of Middle America,” “The Apostle of Main Street,” and “The Voice of the Silent Majority,” Harvey was a staunch conservative, whose opinions may be judged today as politically incorrect. He supported McCarthyism in the 1950s and spoke out against what he called “moral decay” that included left-wing radicals, Black militants, and homosexuality. He favored some more liberal causes, such as abortion rights and the Equal Rights Amendment, and he criticized the Christian right for imposing its views on others. “I have never pretended to objectivity,” he said in a 1998 interview. “I have a strong point of view, and I share it with my listeners. I have no illusions of changing the world, but to the extent I can, I'd like to shelter your and my little corner of it.”

## ALL THE REST

Harvey was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame in 1955, the National Association of Broadcasters Hall of Fame in 1979, and the Radio Hall of Fame in 1990. At age 72, he decided to skydive and, after a quick lesson, did a tandem jump with an instructor, landing flawlessly. “I now know why birds sing,” he said afterwards.

Angel was inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame in 1997, the first producer to receive the honor. In 2000, the Harveys signed a ten-year contract with ABC for \$100 million. Six months later, with a virus in his vocal cords, Harvey lost his voice for almost four months. When he returned to the air he sang, “It's been a long winter without you,” and joked that he was considering singing the news from then on.

In 2005 Harvey received a Presidential Medal of Freedom, America's highest civilian award, in a White House ceremony. Part of Harvey's citation read, “The United States honors Paul Harvey for his extraordinary career in broadcasting and for his contributions to the intellectual and political life of our Nation.” Upon receiving the medal, Harvey remarked, “This is the highest honor I have received since 60-some years ago, when Angel said, ‘I do.’”

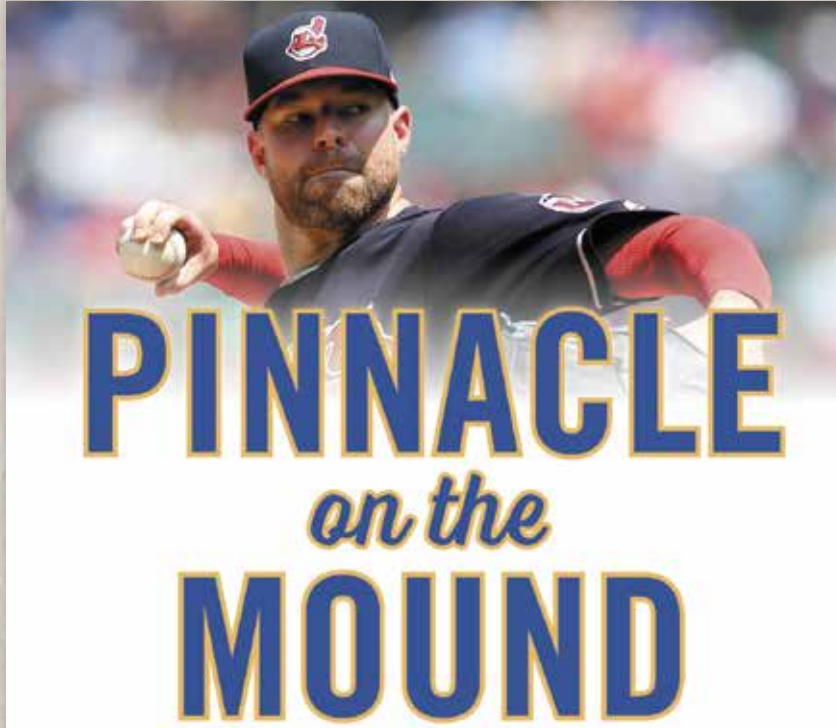
Angel Harvey died on May 3, 2008, and ten months later Harvey followed. At his funeral, Paul Jr. delivered a eulogy in which he recalled his father once saying to Angel, “I wish I was Peter Pan and could come to your window and take you to Neverland.” Paul Jr. concluded, “Now, they're on their way.”

And now you know the rest of the story.

TERRY PHELPS is a professor of English at Oklahoma City University, where he teaches creative writing, scriptwriting, grammar, and freshman composition. He has published numerous articles in newspapers, magazines, and academic journals. Find his innovative book, *Grammar Upside Down*, on Amazon.

## EXTRA! READ | THINK | TALK | LINK

- “Paul Harvey (1918-2009),” *The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*. Brief biography of Harvey's accomplishments and short audio clip of his broadcast and famous sign-off. [okhistory.org/publications](http://okhistory.org/publications)
- “Paul Harvey on *Larry King Live*,” January 30, 2003. Harvey reflects on his career and answers questions from viewers. [youtube.com](http://youtube.com)
- Paul Harvey Archives. A collection of audio and video recordings featuring Harvey's lilting enunciation and storytelling. [paulharveyarchives.com](http://paulharveyarchives.com)



# PINNACLE *on the* MOUND

*Cy Young Award Winners Talk Baseball*



DOUG WEDGE

**B**efore the playoffs begin at the conclusion of each season, members of the Baseball Writers' Association of America consider which pitcher from the American and National Leagues, respectively, was best at his craft and deserving of the year's Cy Young Award. No parameters define "the best" for this honor; just because a pitcher has the most wins or strikeouts doesn't mean he earns Cy Young honors. It is left to writers' discretion to decide which pitcher has been most outstanding throughout the season.

Dennis Eckersley of the Oakland A's. Courtesy of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum



Established in 1956 by Major League Baseball Commissioner Ford Frick, the Cy Young Award has recognized eighty-three different pitchers. Don Newcombe of the Brooklyn Dodgers was the first recipient. Robbie Ray of the Toronto Blue Jays and Corbin Burnes of the Milwaukee Brewers are the most recent.

In my book *Pinnacle on the Mound*, I interviewed ten award-winning pitchers to learn more about their experiences while at the peak of their profession. Interviews span fifty years of baseball history as I chatted with players from the 1960s (Jim Lonborg and Mike McCormick), 1970s (Randy Jones and Ron Guidry), 1980s (LaMarr Hoyt), 1990s (Dennis Eckersley and Jack McDowell), the 2000s (Barry Zito and R. A. Dickey) and today (Corey Kluber).

Observing celebrated Cy Young Award-winning pitchers and their different strengths and backgrounds illustrates that there is more than one way to succeed. Jim Lonborg was twenty-five years old and threw hard and inside when he was a Cy Young Award winner. In contrast, R. A. Dickey was in his sixteenth season of professional baseball at thirty-seven years old, with a fleck of grey in his goatee and knuckleballs that fluttered unpredictably to the plate.

By studying these master athletes and distilling common threads, we discover the principles that helped shape them into better pitchers, principles that transcend the baseball diamond. Each pitcher displayed resilience, valued teamwork, adapted, and embraced preparation—qualities we can all appreciate as inherent to success in any profession.

### ADAPTING

Although they may have been the best pitcher on their team or even in the major leagues, these pitchers were open to trying new ideas. In some cases, it was to hang on and stay in the big leagues. For others,

it was listening to suggestions that led to improvements, and, in some instances, those improvements propelled great to exceptional. Sometimes, it meant making on-the-fly tweaks and buckling down to execute these adjustments. Though the circumstances varied, the pitchers had the humility to recognize that they didn't have all the answers, and they had the curiosity and willingness to consider different ways for improving their craft.

Mike McCormick was one of the best left-handed pitchers in the late 1950s and early 1960s. But a shoulder injury compromised his ability to pitch, much less at a dominant level. He had to find a different way to be successful. And he listened to his pitching coach George Susce, who encouraged him to develop the screwball as an off-speed pitch. R. A. Dickey offers a similar illustration. After shuttling back and forth from the minors to the majors, he accepted the advice of Buck Showalter and Orel Hershiser and shifted from conventional fastball, curveball, and changeup pitching to becoming a knuckleballer. Like McCormick, devoting hours to practicing a new release for a new pitch, Dickey poured himself into working with mentors, learning, and practicing.

Although he didn't learn a new pitch, Dennis Eckersley changed roles drastically midstream in his career. He went from starting 30 to 35 games a season to relief pitching, ultimately as a specialist to get the final three outs of the game and became one of the game's all-time great closers. Corey Kluber, the only active pitcher profiled, vouches for being open to new ideas. "Having that mind-set of trying to always learn, there's always an opportunity to gain things from different people, no matter what their role is."

Trying a new pitch, a new role, a new approach to facing a batter, the pitcher risks failing. He may embarrass himself

as the hitter greets the experiment by teeing off for a dinger. Amid the newness, the pitcher may have moments of feeling out of sync and unnatural. He may want to reject the suggestion and return to the known and the comfortable that have carried him to this already advanced point.

Nonetheless, these pitchers accepted trying alternatives. They were willing to explore whether a new factor or approach made them better. Importantly, a fear of failure or of feeling uncomfortable as they tried something new didn't stop them. They pushed through the awkward stage. And then they flourished.

#### PREPARING

Not one of these pitchers relied on talent alone to carry them to success. All of them prepared for the grind of standing on the mound, April to October. Jack McDowell spent his offseason firing a baseball against a church's brick wall and fielding 200 groundballs. Ron Guidry sprinted to catch fly balls during batting practice. LaMarr Hoyt rode a bicycle on the streets of Columbia, South Carolina, during the off season. Randy Jones enjoyed running pass patterns and catching a football for his cardio workout. Dennis Eckersley was a distance runner, logging four miles daily. Barry Zito embraced stretching, yoga, and long toss. Jim Lonborg skied to develop and maintain a strong core. R. A. Dickey trained to and then climbed the highest mountain in Africa. Each pitcher found a way to exercise and maintain his body for the 162-game schedule.

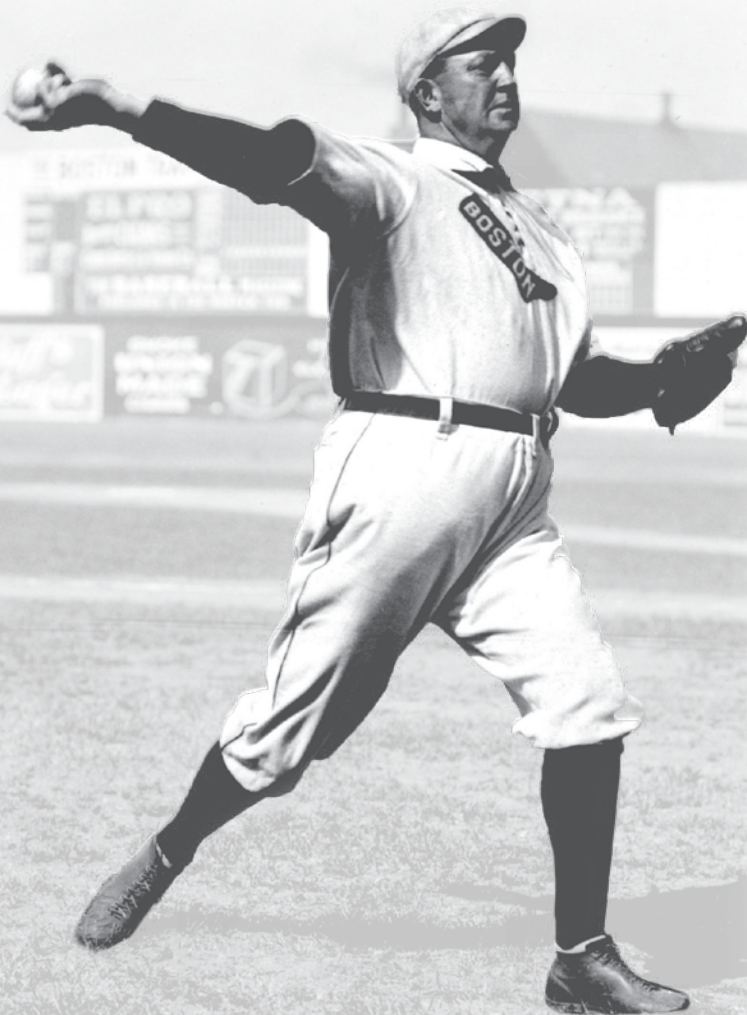
Not only did these pitchers prepare their bodies to physically perform, but they also prepared mentally to pitch. Randy Jones watched hitters and noted their likes and dislikes and "made a living" pitching to their weaknesses.



R. A. Dickey demonstrates his knuckleball grip. "A knuckleball is like trying to hit a butterfly in a typhoon. . . . The thing that makes a knuckleball effective is that you cannot predict which way the ball is going to move, which makes it an extremely hard pitch to hit. . . . It can be really ugly when it's ugly, but when it's on, it's fantastic." R. A. Dickey, "Winding Up' As the Mets' Knuckleball Pitcher," April 10, 2012. *Fresh Air*, NPR. Photo by Doug Wedge



ABOVE: 1956 World Series Pennant; Mears Auctions. Don Newcombe won the first Cy Young Award in 1956, but he and the Brooklyn Dodgers lost to the New York Yankees in the World Series that year. BELOW: Cy Young, Boston American League, July 23, 1908; Library of Congress



LaMarr Hoyt had a similar eye of observing the pitches that hitters wanted and which ones they preferred avoiding and, in turn, feeding them what they didn't want. During bullpens, R. A. Dickey envisioned the upcoming lineup he was going to face, and he practiced for those situations down to what and where he would throw for a first pitch to a specific hitter.

Pitchers took the work they did before the game—both physical and mental—seriously. Understanding their opponent and knowing how to attack them was key. Hollywood may present idyllic moments of a young Roy Hobbs raring back and blasting the ball past the Whammer in *The Natural*, and indeed some pitchers can rely on a God-given ability to smoke a ball with tricky movement past hitters. But these pitchers typically used a blended approach of building their arm and their body to be in a position to perform and, while doing so, made informed decisions about the pitches they were throwing, tailored to that batter, to improve the chances of getting an out instead of someone getting on base.

#### HAVING A NETWORK

Pitching can be an isolated experience—one man, alone, on the mound, holding a ball in his hand, looking at his catcher and executing a game plan to prevent the batter from making hard contact. Despite the solitary nature, these men connected with others as a source of support. And finding that larger connection made them stronger pitchers.

Ron Guidry had multiple networks. When Guidry reached the big leagues, relief pitchers Sparky Lyle and Dick Tidrow took him under their wings and welcomed him and made him feel comfortable. They gave him a nickname. They joked with him and lit his shoelaces on fire. They showed him a new pitch, and they made the new major leaguer better. Likewise, Guidry leaned on his coaching staff for guidance. Lucky to have Yogi Berra and Elston Howard with a combined 33 years of big-league catching experience serving on the coaching staff, Guidry regularly checked in with his elders for advice on what he could be doing better.





# DENTON T. "CY" YOUNG

## DENTON TRUE YOUNG

Pitcher: Cleveland Spiders, St. Louis Cardinals, Boston Red Sox, Cleveland Indians, Boston Braves  
 Born: March 29, 1867, Gilmore, Ohio Died: Nov 4, 1955, Newcomerstown, Ohio  
 Ht: 6'2" Wt: 210 Eyes: Gray Hair: Brown Bats: Right Throws: Right  
 Nicknames: Old Cy; Uncle Cy; The Tuscarawas Rail Splitter; Farmer Cy Young; Old Boy

## CAREER STATS

Games	Innings Pitched	Wins	ERA	Strikeouts	Winning %	No Hitters	Perfect Game
906	7356	511	2.63	2803	.619	3	1

Cy Young, Cleveland Naps, 1911, American Tobacco Company, sponsor; Library of Congress. Stats: National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum

Legendary pitcher Denton T. Young earned his famous nickname during tryouts as a young man in Canton, Ohio. "I thought I had to show all my stuff the first day, and almost tore all the boards off the grandstand with my fast one," he recalled. "Someone called me 'Cyclone,' and that was shortened to 'Cy.' It has been with me ever since." While his pitching and stature cut a fierce, intimidating figure on the mound, he was known as a kind and humble player who was a fan favorite.

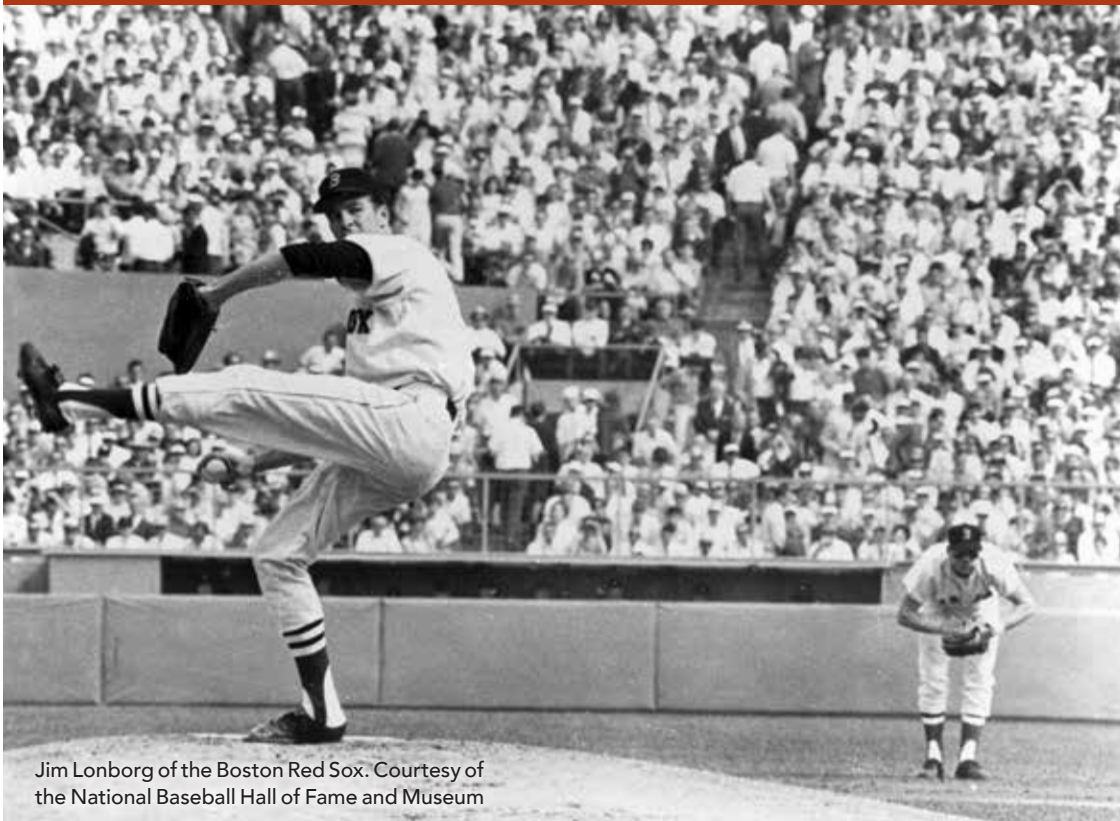
Like the Cy Young Awardees profiled here, he worked hard and adapted throughout his career—at its earliest in 1893, when he navigated the newly increased distance of 60'6" between the pitcher's plate and home plate, and at its latest as Father Time drew near: "When I began to see my speed going, I learned a pretty fair curve and used it to considerable advantage late in my career. After I learned the curve, the batters never credited me with having one,

and kept constantly looking for the fast ball. I crossed many a good hitter with a dinky curve when he was looking for me to cut loose with my speed."

Inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1937, Young has been immortalized in plaques, awards, and even poems, inspiring sportswriter and baseball balladeer Grantland Rice to honor him as "The Grand Old Man of Balldom":

Fame may be fleeting and glory may fade;  
 Life at its best is a breath on the gale.  
 One hero passes, another is made;  
 New stars arise as the old one sets pale.  
 So when a stalwart steps out from the throng,  
 On with the tribute, let garlands be flung.  
 Here's to the sturdy and here's to the strong;  
 Here's the to the king of them all, Denton Young.

(From "Denton (Cy) Young," *Base-Ball Ballads*, The Tennessean Co., 1910)



Jim Lonborg of the Boston Red Sox. Courtesy of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum

As a rookie, Jim Lonborg shared a locker with Earl Wilson, a veteran with five years of experience. “Earl taught me about how to conduct yourself,” Lonborg says. “He was always talking about creating a presence on the mound. One of intimidation and self-confidence. And you had to feel that way on and off the field. You had a responsibility to be something more than just an athlete. You had to be a citizen. You had to do things for the team and always conduct yourself in a gentlemanly way.”

It’s crucial to have a network to tap into. If the pitcher has someone else to look to for help, be it guidance, support, and/or laughter, it’s essential. It makes the pitcher better. True, the individual or singular path may produce exceptional success. In theory, a pitcher could rely entirely on himself and retire batter after batter with strikeouts or easy comebacks to the mound, and the pitcher could jog toward

the first baseline to get all 27 outs in the game. But the pitcher is only *one* part of the team. And I, me, and my are only so effective. The pitcher is stronger and the team is stronger when the pitcher relies on the team, not himself.

### **TRUSTING YOUR PARTNER**

For each pitch, the pitcher looks to the catcher, who performs multiple duties. The catcher should present a good target. He should understand the pitcher’s strengths and weaknesses as well as the batter’s while also factoring in the home plate umpire’s strike zone and make informed suggestions for pitch selection. He should work in rhythm with the pitcher. If the pitcher likes a fast pace, the catcher needs to keep up accordingly.

The catcher needs to be a resource for the pitcher, someone who senses when it’s time for a breather, when it’s time for encouragement, and when it’s time for a kick in the ass. The

bottom line is the catcher should be the pitcher's partner whom the pitcher trusts so that when the catcher signs for a pitch, the pitcher doesn't second-guess or even think. He can be on autopilot and focus entirely on executing the pitch. This type of partnership isn't instant. It takes time to develop.

### **DEALING WITH FAILURE & HAVING RESILIENCE**

Baseball is a game of failure, mixed with the wins and triumphs, but undoubtedly a pitcher will fail. He will lose games. In crucial situations, he may give up a hit and allow the go-ahead run to score. Maybe he threw the wrong pitch. Maybe the defense was poorly positioned. Maybe the defense muffed the play. Maybe the umpire missed a call. Maybe the manager made a tactical mistake. Regardless, the breaks aren't always going to fall the pitcher's way. And the successful pitcher will find a way to put the disappointment or failure behind him. The pitcher can't let it carry over to the next game or even to the next at-bat. Learn from it at the appropriate time and move on.

Mike McCormick bounced back from an injury, a trade, and a demotion to the minor leagues to stick with his craft, learn a new way of performing it, and return to succeed with a different approach. After R. A. Dickey experienced a difficult outing, he journaled about the game or talked with his wife to decompress the experience. Or he stepped straight under a showerhead, still in full uniform, and let the water stream over him, the water washing away the performance he wanted to forget.

Which leads to resiliency and a drive to keep pushing, despite setbacks and bad breaks. These pitchers found a way to turn the page and not let the negativity infect their games or their outlook. How? R. A. Dickey says one way is through practice. "Practicing it and working with people that have done it and being vulnerable enough to say I don't have it figured out."

### **PREPARING FOR A MOUNTAIN CLIMB**


Rarely is success overnight. It is earned through years of work and preparation. Ron

Guidry spent parts of six seasons in the minor leagues before joining the Yankees to stay. Corey Kluber played parts of seven minor-league seasons prior to establishing himself as one of Cleveland's starters. LaMarr Hoyt toiled in the minors for parts of eight seasons as he worked to earn his big-league roster spot. Eight seasons after he began focusing on throwing the knuckleball, R. A. Dickey was recognized as the best pitcher in the National League.

A journey led these pitchers to the pinnacle of winning the Cy Young Award, and the journeys were gradual, marathon-like climbs, not immediate sprints. True, some reached the peak sooner than others—Barry Zito was 24 years old and in his third big-league season when he won the Cy Young Award. But Zito's road to the Cy Young involved hours of practicing with his dad, absorbing insights from Randy Jones during pitching lessons, rolling up a pair of socks and pitching them in front of a mirror to see that his form was correct, performing thousands of repetitions.

Not one of these pitchers simply arrived on the summit as the best pitcher in the American or National League. All devoted themselves to a climb involving hours on a field, working with their catchers, teammates, and coaches; experimenting and finding things that worked well that they made a part of their game; and practicing them. They learned to deal with pressure and failure, and after years of this work, they earned and achieved exceptional success, reaching that pinnacle on the mound.

DOUG WEDGE has written three books on baseball history: *The Cy Young Catcher* (with Charlie O'Brien; Texas A&M Univ. Press, 2015), *Baseball in Alabama: Tales of Hardball in the Heart of Dixie* (The History Press, 2018), and *Pinnacle on the Mound: Cy Young Award Winners Talk Baseball* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2022). He graduated from the University of Tulsa and lives in Norman, Oklahoma. Follow him on Instagram (@dougwedge22) or online (dougwedge.com). This article is excerpted from *Pinnacle on the Mound: Cy Young Award Winners Talk Baseball* by Doug Wedge. Used by permission of publisher Rowman & Littlefield. All rights reserved.



Eleanor Roosevelt, ca.  
1945. Library of Congress

# THE DAYS OF ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

DANNY HEITMAN

In a newspaper column that spanned decades, the pioneering first lady explored what it's like to be an American

When humorist Will Rogers died in a plane crash in Alaska in 1935, millions around the world mourned his passing. For V. V. McNitt, Rogers's death was a practical as well as a personal loss. McNitt managed the McNaught Syndicate, which distributed Rogers's highly popular column to newspapers across America. What would McNitt do now without his star writer?

He thought he'd found a replacement with Alice Roosevelt Longworth, the sharp-tongued daughter of the late President Theodore Roosevelt. In short order, her new feature, "What Alice Thinks," was in 75 newspapers, a seemingly auspicious beginning.

Then a rival company, United Feature Syndicate, recruited First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt to compete with her cousin. Longworth's column



quickly fizzled, and ER would go on to write her column, “My Day,” six days a week for nearly 30 years.

“My Day” far outlasted Eleanor’s time in the White House, ending only with her death in 1962. The sheer frequency of “My Day,” which ran with very few interruptions during its decades of publication, also extended ER’s influence immeasurably. She would become an almost daily presence in the lives of her audience in a manner that anticipated the social-media age.

When Roosevelt’s name was floated as a possible vice-presidential running mate for President Harry Truman in 1948, she demurred. “As an elected or appointed official,” biographer David Michaelis notes, “she would have felt that any office was a demotion or a constraint. Now free to speak her mind, she was uniquely influential because her audience was listening. Through her column she could give her opinion on matters six days a week. Firmly, unscoldingly she was there each day to remind people that a powerful America was supposed to be above racism, had a responsibility to find ways to give basic decencies to the poor.”

Roosevelt shattered many precedents in her time as first lady from 1933 to 1945. As the wife of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, she was the first first lady to drive her own car, travel by plane alone, and hold her own press conferences. Though from a wealthy family, Eleanor also insisted on earning her own money through speeches, radio appearances, and her writing, which included books and magazine and newspaper articles.

Her work as a newspaper columnist invites obvious ethical questions. In routinely using her column to promote a presidential administration in which she also had a key role, ER was clearly playing both sides of the fence. Critics also accused her of using her media gigs to financially profit from her role as first lady.

Roosevelt shrugged off the complaints, suggesting that, regardless of her White House duties, she’d be writing and speaking, anyway. “I did both before my husband became the President,” she wrote in a 1938 column, “and I hope I shall continue to do so after he ceases to be President. I have no illusions about being a great speaker or a great writer, but I think in some of us there is an urge to do certain things, and

if we did not do them, we would feel that we were not doing the job which we had been given opportunities and talents to do.”

ER also defused criticism by donating much of her money to favored causes. Her earnings usually exceeded FDR’s presidential salary.

“If she made hundreds of dollars per broadcast and thousands per lecture, and many more thousands for her daily column,” writes biographer Blanche Wiesen Cook, “only Republicans chafed—especially when they learned that she gave virtually every dollar she made away to causes she believed in, through the American Friends Service Committee.”

Roosevelt’s modesty about her writing skills also served to lower expectations. She wasn’t often considered, even by many of her admirers, a memorable literary stylist.

“There were no grace notes or obvious influences,” Michaelis observes of her prose. “‘My Day’ was not writing for effect, or to be remembered; it was to get something done.”

“She was no writer; her prose style was pedestrian and awkward,” Hazel Rowley declares in a generally flattering book about Eleanor and FDR. “She was no intellectual; the ‘My Day’ column would contain plenty of platitudes. But in the long run these things did not matter. She was a great communicator with a beguiling fireside quality that she shared with her husband.”

Eleanor’s first “My Day” column was, literally, a fireside chat. Here’s the opening passage from her debut on December 30, 1935:

I wonder if anyone else glories in cold and snow without and an open fire within and the luxury of a tray of food all by one’s self in one’s room. I realize that it sounds extremely selfish and a little odd to look upon such an occasion as festive. Nevertheless, Saturday night was a festive occasion, for I spent it that way.

The house was full of young people, my husband had a cold and was in bed with milk toast for his supper, so I said a polite good night to everyone at 7:30, closed my door, lit my fire and settled down to a nice long evening by myself. I read things which I had had in my briefcase for weeks. . . . I went to sleep at 10:30.



Eleanor Roosevelt, Edith Benham Helm (center) who served as White House social secretary for three administrations, and friend and aide Malvina Thompson who typed thousands of ER's "My Day" columns, April 1, 1941, Washington, D.C. FDR Public Domain Photographs/Wikimedia



Eleanor Roosevelt spoke to a mostly female audience at the Hollywood Bowl, Los Angeles, about the need to engage in charitable work, October 1, 1935, *Los Angeles Daily News*, UCLA Library Digital Collections

To read such a passage is to wonder if Roosevelt was a better writer than even her champions knew. At first glance, it seems little more than a homely reflection on the coziness of a winter hearth. But the essay, like its writer, points to a presence more complicated than its surface.

There is, for starters, the subversive declaration by the wife of the most famous politician in the world that what she really enjoys is being alone. It's not a sentiment that was often openly voiced by a public figure in 1935—nor, for that matter, is it something many of today's celebrities would candidly admit.

Also vivid is that passing reference to "my husband," which would become a favorite euphemism in "My Day" for the president. This was a time

when chief executives were routinely hailed as minor deities. Yet in this first column, as in countless ones to follow, ER has slyly cut the commander-in-chief down to size. In her telling, the leader of the free world is also a man who gets colds like the rest of us, in bed early on a Saturday night.

A glamorous picture of White House life, this is not. One might assume that ER's vignette is a calculated study in populism, assuring Americans that the Roosevelts were, at base, pretty much like everyone else.

Yet small details, surely obvious to ER when she included them, argue otherwise. The first lady delights in a tray of food in her own room, and her readers surely know that she didn't fetch that tray herself. She has

servants to bring her dinner during a global depression leaving many citizens hungry.

That's the thing about the "My Day" columns; they express the life of a woman who doesn't seem to be making herself larger or smaller than she really is. Their candor captures a quality often evoked in our present-day culture but seldom realized: authenticity.

If FDR exemplified the heroic presidency as a champion of the New Deal and wartime leader on a global stage, then his wife tended to offer an alternative vision. Her columns suggested that presidents and first ladies, for all the trappings of high office, still lead much of their lives in the lowercase. They get tired. They get sick. They sometimes don't want to be bothered.



*First Lady of the Land, First Lady of the Air, who has enjoyed the refreshing ease and comfort, the time- and money-saving economy of almost 100,000 miles of air travel in the past four years. Mrs. Roosevelt says: "I never cease to marvel at the airplane."*

"I never cease to marvel at the airplane." Air Transport Association advertisement featuring then First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt promoting commercial air transportation in the United States, *Time* magazine, September 4, 1939. Air Transport Association, Chicago, IL/Wikimedia

## IT PAYS TO FLY

*Time* magazine, commenting on "My Day," lauded "Mrs. Roosevelt's ability to make the nation's most exalted household seem like anybody else's."

The sheer dailiness of so many of its doings made "My Day" a fixture of national life. E. B. White paid it a wry homage in 1941 when he titled one of his *Harper's Magazine* essays "My Day," then offered an account of his farm chores and chats with neighbors. Though White was a far better writer than Eleanor Roosevelt, he came to understand, as she did, that the domestic concerns of his writing were a respite for his harried readers. "To the prisoners of newspapers where wars are always raging," Mary Marshall told readers of *The Nation* in 1938, "My Day' is like a sunny

square where children and aunts and grandmothers go about their trivial but absorbing pursuits and security reigns. In the sense of security it generates lies the deepest appeal of 'My Day.'"

As White and Roosevelt also grasped, successful writing usually requires a great deal of work to make it seem effortless and casual. "My Day," for all its illusion of a few lines dashed off like a friendly note, was often a pain to get to press.

Although the words of "My Day" were Roosevelt's own, she typically dictated her column to longtime assistant Malvina "Tommy" Thompson. Because ER's schedule as first lady was crammed, she often didn't get around to composing the column until midnight approached. Eleanor's

daughter, Anna, once parted a curtain on the "My Day" production line: "I used to cringe sometimes when I'd hear Mother at eleven thirty at night say to (Thompson), 'I've still got a column to do.' And this weary, weary woman would sit down at a typewriter and Mother would dictate to her. And both of them so tired."

That sense of vulnerability informed the column, which is what often made it seem so real. Eleanor's high-pitched speaking voice could frequently irritate listeners. When she decided to take lessons to improve it, she wrote about her challenge in "My Day" with a frankness unusual for the times. "It seems stupid," she told readers, "not to have done this before. . . . One must take advantage of anything which can make life



LEFT: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt ride in a convertible with Mayor Frank Shaw after arriving in Los Angeles by train, October 1, 1935. *Los Angeles Daily News*, UCLA Library Digital Collections. RIGHT: Dr. Vada Somerville (second from left, civil rights activist and the first African American woman to graduate from USC School of Dentistry), Eleanor Roosevelt, Anne O'Ferrall (President of the Metropolitan branch of the National Association of Colored Women, 1948 to 1952), and James Roosevelt (Democratic Party politician, businessman, and oldest son of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt) at the Somerville home, Los Angeles, January 1950; photo by Blakeley Avalon Photographers. Miriam Matthews Photograph Collection, UCLA Library Digital Collections

easier for oneself and pleasanter for other people.”

When the king and queen of England made a visit to the U.S. in 1939, a dinner at the Roosevelts' Hyde Park estate nearly went off the rails when a huge assortment of china crashed to the floor. Sara Roosevelt, FDR's mother, wanted the embarrassing mishap kept secret, but Eleanor wrote about it in “My Day” as a way to tell hostesses everywhere that in spite of the best laid plans, such things happen. ER also addressed the minor scandal she had caused by serving hot dogs to the royals at a family picnic. Roosevelt wondered what all the fuss was about. “I am afraid it is a case of not being able to please everybody,” she wrote, “so we will try just to please our guests.”

Roosevelt revealed much of herself in her column, but, like most writers, she didn't discuss everything. Lorena Hickok, a former journalist who had encouraged ER to write the

column, was impressed by the charm of Roosevelt's letters and thought her conversational style could be adapted into the kind of feature that “My Day” became. Some of the many letters the women exchanged suggest they shared physical intimacy, pointing to a more complicated family life than the one portrayed in Roosevelt's public writings. FDR's extramarital relationships were obviously not “My Day” material, either.

Elliott Roosevelt, writing a decade after his mother's death, argued that the woman of the “My Day” columns was just one version of their author. “She pictured herself as a calm, contented woman deeply concerned with the world and her family. . . . Only deep below the surface of her careful prose could be found an occasional clue to her conflicts.”

Perhaps a talent for knowing what to say—and what to keep unsaid—is the mark of a natural politician, which Eleanor Roosevelt surely was. It's one

reason her column remained popular even after she was widowed and no longer in the White House.

Her “My Day” column was renewed after FDR died, but with a provision that it would be dropped if it were no longer viable for her syndicate. “Strangely,” writes Rowley, “it would prove more successful than ever. Eleanor Roosevelt's columns carried the whiff of a more heroic age in American history—an age when the whole of the free world looked to the White House for reassurance and inspiration.”

Roosevelt maintained a high profile early in her widowhood as an official at the fledgling United Nations. She later worked as a volunteer supporter of the U.N. and in many civic and Democratic party causes.

Beyond their quaint domestic observations, her “My Day” columns could also be boldly political, especially after she returned to life as a





Eleanor watches as the President carves the turkey at their annual Thanksgiving feast at Warm Springs, Georgia, November 29, 1935. FDR Public Domain Photographs/Flickr



Eleanor and FDR on the south lawn at Hyde Park, August 1932; photo by Oscar Jordan. FDR Public Domain Photographs/Flickr



Eleanor Roosevelt and Clementine Churchill during a radio broadcast at the Second Quebec Conference, September 1944. ER broke first lady boundaries in radio as well as newspapers, hosting broadcasts that earned her an independent income with which she could support the charities she championed. FDR Public Domain Photographs/Flickr



## MY DAY *Eleanor Roosevelt*

WASHINGTON, Monday—Today is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the very notorious day when Hitler, in Nazi Germany, ordered the burning of all books by such authors as Pearl Buck, Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud, Ernest Hemingway, Selma Lagerlof, Sinclair Lewis, Thomas Mann, Stephen Vincent Benet and Sigrid Undset.

In doing this, Hitler thought he would destroy the ideas that inspired these authors and that came to the world through their words. He succeeded in Germany, but in the world, he stimulated interest. Instead of making people pay less attention to what these authors had to say, it made many more people read them, who, perhaps, had never read them before. Their contributions to the thinking of the world are probably far greater than they would have been without Hitler's effort at suppression.

In the democracies of the world, the passion for freedom of speech and of thought is always accentuated when there is an effort anywhere to keep ideas away from people and to prevent them from making their own decisions. One of the best ways of enslaving a people is to keep them from education and thus make it impossible for them to understand what is going on in the world as a whole. ER

"My Day, May 11, 1943" (excerpt), The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Digital Edition (2017). [erpapers.columbian.gwu.edu/my-day](http://erpapers.columbian.gwu.edu/my-day). PHOTO: At the height of its popularity, ER's "My Day" column, which ran from 1935 to 1962, had more than four million readers in 90 newspapers. Eleanor Roosevelt at her desk, ca. 1932-1933. Harris & Ewing, Library of Congress



Eleanor Roosevelt, E. Gross (left), and P.C. Jessup arriving in Paris for the Second Plenary meeting, United Nations General Assembly, September 22, 1948. FDR—Public Domain Photographs/Wikimedia



Eleanor Roosevelt at United Nations, ca. 1946-1947. FDR Public Domain Photographs/Flickr

President Harry Truman appointed Eleanor Roosevelt to serve as the only woman among the five American delegates at the historic first meeting of the United Nations in London, January 1946. As Chair of the UN Human Rights Commission, she worked to develop the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted December 10, 1948. "During my years at the UN," she later wrote, "it was my work on the Human Rights Commission that I considered my most important task."

private citizen and felt at even greater liberty to speak her mind.

The concerns she voiced remain an enduring part of the national conversation. In 1959, when a Long Island tennis club refused to let the son of prominent African-American diplomat and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Ralph Bunche become a member, Roosevelt vented her displeasure. "How can we in the North ask of the South the sacrifices that we are now asking if we countenance this kind of snobbish discrimination?" she asked. "If you can't play tennis with Negroes, how come you are willing to let them be drafted into your army and die for you? I am ashamed for my white people. I am one of them, and their stupidity and cruelty make me cringe."

Many of Roosevelt's "My Day" columns can be read online, and they've also been curated in several books, such as editor David Emblidge's *My Day: The Best of Eleanor Roosevelt's Acclaimed Newspaper Columns, 1936–1962*.

They're written with a simplicity that ER's critics found banal and her fans found appealing. Stella Hershan, who fled Nazi-occupied Austria and arrived in the United States penniless, learned about her new country by reading "My Day."

"Her writing was so simple, even I could understand it. From her," Hershan said of Eleanor Roosevelt, "I learned about America."

More than half a century after her death, Roosevelt's "My Day" columns are a continuing instruction in the privileges and obligations of life in a free republic.

Shortly after her husband's death in 1945, Eleanor Roosevelt offered a few words in her column about the power of civil discourse. What she said aptly summarized how she wrote—and how she lived:

Of one thing I am sure: Young or old, in order to be useful we must stand for the things we feel are right, and we must work for those things wherever we find ourselves. It does very little good to believe something unless you tell your friends and associates of your beliefs. Those who fight down in the marketplace are bound to be confused every now and then. Sometimes they will be deceived, and sometimes the dirt that they touch will cling to them. But if their hearts are pure and their purposes are unswerving, they will win through to the end of their mission on earth, untarnished.

DANNY HEITMAN is the editor of Phi Kappa Phi's *Forum* magazine, a columnist for *The Baton Advocate*, and the author of *A Summer of Birds; John James Audubon at Oakley House* (LSU Press, 2008). He writes for *The Wall Street Journal*, *Humanities* magazine, and other national publications. This article was originally published in the Summer 2021 issue of *Humanities* magazine, a publication of the National Endowment for the Humanities: [neh.gov](http://neh.gov)



# The Celestial Seasonings School *of* Philosophy

*Finding words—and wisdom—in the wild*

DAVID SKINNER

**W**HEN PEOPLE TALK OF “THE  
CRISIS IN THE HUMANITIES,”

I suspect they mean a crisis on college campuses. Not that the university campus is unimportant; it is very important. But the humanities as a more general phenomenon—the culture of reading, a passion for history, a conviction that education (including self-education) is important for the good life *everywhere*—in my estimation are pretty vibrant. Maybe I’m just a glass-half-full kind of person, but one can also point to the activities of state councils like Oklahoma Humanities as evidence that the humanities have a strong, even pulse.



rawpixel.com

What I see—searching online, reading newspapers, talking to friends, and even watching TV—is an everyday culture fairly congenial to *most* types of humanistic learning. We twenty-first-century Americans may not be like those monks of the Middle Ages who revived Greek and Roman thought to give rise to the Enlightenment, but we are not total ignoramuses either. We do, though, choose odd subjects for our attention. Not everything that passes for learning these days is to my taste: fanaticism for the arcana of comic book universes, encyclopedic knowledge of internet memes, a frenzied curiosity about the human drama of the most recent news cycle.

We are, however, more than our entertainment and news consumption. For one thing, we are incredibly friendly to well-phrased maxims. A member of Congress will say something clever about, for example, the budget process and it will be repeated by a hundred journalists and deconstructed by an army of Twitter scribes. A successful entrepreneur will package her insights in a feel-good memoir with a memorable phrase and readers en masse will repeat her magic words until they harden into cliché. In short, we believe in the power of words to give form to deep underlying truths.

It seems an important qualifier to some of the doomsaying around the humanities that we acknowledge our success in preserving the wisdom and currency of great lines. We do this commercially, embossing hand towels and T-shirts and throw pillows with favored quotations so we can easily recall these little formulae. Even our coffee mugs

have become billboards for such inspiration—as well as the occasional early-morning, foul-mouthed growl. (In a nice magazine like this, I can't repeat the quip on the coffee cup my wife recently brought home.)

Quotations, however precious or ephemeral, speak to our shared past by giving it place in the here and now. I owe some of the first sparks of my own education, incomplete as it may be, to this secondhand market in the words of the good and wise. As a child in the 1980s, I first became aware of the transcendentalists and other schools of thought when my mother and older sisters began drinking herbal tea. The Celestial Seasonings packaging was frequently inscribed with philosophical observations from the likes of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau.

At a distance of four decades, I don't recall specific quotations, but I do recall reading them closely and, even when I wasn't sure of their meaning, thinking they were beautiful. Life-affirming, sometimes reveling in paradox, and always perfectly worded, they spoke about things that no one else in my life spoke to me about: the joys of observing nature, the benefits of patience and honesty, a certain wonder in being alive. Also, they let me know that the written word was special and powerful, and that its power could be found everywhere—even in miniature, on the flimsy paper tag at the end of the string on a teabag.

The thing you set your mind on is  
the thing you ultimately become.

—Nathaniel Hawthorne

A search online or a stroll down the coffee aisle at my local grocery yields a fresh crop of noted wisdom. Reading over my little harvest of famous words, I enjoy the lines as much as ever for their honorable subjects and literary manner. Standing apart from their original contexts these quotations surely lose *some* meaning, but as compensation they gain assertive power. Stated abruptly and without equivocation, they announce what you might have known without it being said.

That it will never come again is what makes life so sweet. —Emily Dickinson

You might quietly dissent from the sentiments, but, as language goes, these quotations are catchy little earworms. As a young tea drinker I loved to read them aloud—an urge I find hard to resist even now.

A friend is a person with whom I may be sincere. Before him I may think aloud.  
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Their style must have influenced my own. Even after I became a more serious reader, a friend of mine accused me of dabbling in the Celestial Seasonings School of Philosophy. She observed that, in talking about politics or people or whatever the subject, I had a tendency to take something thorny and complicated and simplify it with an all-too-pat formula that sounded nice while saying little. To this day, I wonder if there is something to that accusation. Now that I think about it, this essay is incontrovertible proof that she was absolutely right.

Before writing this article, I reached out to Celestial Seasonings, thinking I might learn something about their process for selecting quotes. I didn't get very far. The email reply warned me not to violate the copyright of their packaging, which, they said, was done out of house. Being the editor of a magazine, as I am, teaches you more than you want to know about copyright, so I never worried I might "infringe" on their quotations, since all the ones I have seen are beyond copyright and were never theirs to begin with.

What *has* been said publicly about Celestial Seasonings's origins suggests a friendlier vibe than their email. Mo Siegel was a broke, uneducated teenager who liked the outdoors when he began making tea blends with chamomile, peppermint, and other herbs picked along trails around Boulder, Colorado, with his friends. The company was founded in 1969 and idealism was bred into its culture. Like other entrepreneurs in the natural and organic foods market, Siegel and company wanted their products to promote health

and do good in the world—and something of this early ambition, it is said, was expressed in its use of literary quotations.

In the last few years, this history has taken something of a knock after reports of Mo Siegel's longstanding affinity for *The Urantia Book*, what Wikipedia describes as a "spiritual, philosophical, and religious book" positing a colorful and not-altogether-attractive narrative of creation that some people read as science fiction. It's unclear whether this influence has anything to do with the brand's taste in literary quotations, most of which seem to have been cherry-picked from the works and letters of canonical authors and historical figures. That said, it's not exactly a contradiction to quote Jane Austen on one's teabags while also following a spiritual yearning for world-encompassing metanarratives down strange paths strewn with the mystery of the occult.

Celestial Seasonings remains successful. During the pandemic, the pajama-clad bear on the box of its popular Sleepytime tea enjoyed a certain vogue thanks to internet memes, suggesting the brand, now part of an international conglomerate, has not lost its association with the wholesome values of its early years.

I still drink herbal tea from time to time, usually before bed, and no matter the brand it puts me at ease, even more so when I get a nice literary quotation in the bargain.

DAVID SKINNER is the editor of *Humanities* magazine, published by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Previously, he was a staff editor at *The Weekly Standard*, for which he wrote articles and personal essays. A former member of the usage panel of the *American Heritage Dictionary*, he is the author of a book and numerous articles about dictionaries, language, and history.



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# I. MILLER

## SHOEMAKER TO THE STARS

MICHELLE TOLINI FINAMORE

Women at I. Miller shoe store  
show-window, New York City,  
ca. 1920-1938. New York  
Historical Society

## Building an empire of style and design

As any *Sex and the City* fan knows, Carrie Bradshaw is fixated on beautiful shoes. She has a particular affinity for Manolo Blahniks and the show is widely credited with making the designer a household name. If the series had been made in the 1920s, Carrie's signature shoes would undoubtedly have been designed by the New York City-based shoe firm I. Miller. Although not well known outside of fashion history circles, I. Miller's presence loomed large in New York's flourishing theater world, celebrated by luminaries of stage and film as Miller-Made shoes became synonymous with status and style.

Israel Miller was born in Grodno, Poland, a city that at the time of his birth was part of the Russian Empire. After training in Paris, he emigrated to New York City in 1892 and spent four years working with shoe craftsman John Azzimonti before branching out on his own in 1895. In a brownstone on Broadway in 1911, Miller opened his first retail shop under the auspices of I. Miller & Sons, Inc. There, according to the *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, Miller made his mark in the theater district:

At first he made shoes almost exclusively for people of the stage and through the excellence of his designs and workmanship soon became known as a master workman in his special field. Many of the leading stars of the theatre were his regular customers, and orders for shoes for the entire casts of dramatic productions came to him in increasing numbers. (James T. White and Company, 1935)

The Miller Building, which still stands at Broadway and West 46<sup>th</sup> Street, is a tribute to the importance of its star clients. In an expansion and redesign, Miller incorporated the façade's inscription, "The Show Folks Shoe Shop Dedicated To Beauty In Footwear," in a nod to the foundational years when I. Millers were *the* shoes commissioned for theatrical productions.

Demand from the general public was not far behind as the elegant shoes clad more and more starlets' feet. In an old-school example of crowdsourcing, Miller asked retail customers to vote on their favorite actresses and commissioned sculptor Alexander Stirling Calder to carve their likenesses to be set into niches at the top of the building. Stage actress Ethel Barrymore (as Ophelia for drama), comedian Marilyn Miller (as Sunny for musical comedy), film actress Mary Pickford (as Little Lord Fauntleroy for motion pictures), and singer Rosa Ponselle (as Norma for opera) were chosen, and Calder fashioned life-size marble statues "in character" of their iconic roles.

### HOORAY FOR HOLLYWOOD

By 1927, Miller extended his reach within the entertainment industry by going directly to Hollywood, opening a Showfolk's Shoeshop in Los Angeles at 525 West Seventh Street. Although Miller is not credited as a shoe supplier in films, the firm's presence and frequent mention in popular magazines such as *Motion Picture News* and *Photoplay* are evidence that I. Miller shoes adorned many a movie star in the 1920s and 1930s. Hollywood design houses that aligned with the budding film industry soon realized that star promotion was the



Israel Miller's passport application photo, 1918. [ancestry.com](https://ancestry.com)

ticket to increased visibility and sales. I. Miller worked very closely with movie “exploitation” departments and actively participated in cross-promotion strategies. In 1930, for example, a *Motion Picture News* ad stated that I. Miller Shoes was among national retailers displaying photographs of movie star Ruth Roland, “beloved of over a million fans,” to promote her return to film.

At the time of Miller's death in 1929, I. Miller & Sons had a national following, carried in over two hundred stores across the country and supporting burgeoning factories in Brooklyn, Long Island, and Massachusetts. It was a company with a conscience:

[Israel Miller] took a personal interest in the material and moral welfare of his associates and employees, aided many of them to achieve success and maintained laudable conditions in his business and through an association known as Millerites, Inc., which had an excellent system of insurance, bonuses and pensions for the benefit of the firms 4000 workers. (*National Cyclopaedia*)

Like many businesses during World War II, I. Miller augmented its shoe factories to concurrently produce bulletproof vests, flight suits, gloves, leather helmets, electric boots, and parachutes for the armed forces.

Even with war raging, the firm retained links to Hollywood and stayed actively engaged with the film industry. Alfred Hitchcock's 1945 film *Spellbound*, starring Gregory Peck and Ingrid Bergman, was used as a promotional vehicle to sell a special “Spellbound” shoe featured in I. Miller shop windows. The film notably included a special dream scene designed by Surrealist artist Salvador Dalí with costuming by Howard Greer and Ann Peck. There is no mention of the shoes worn, but it

is likely that Bergman donned I. Miller shoes in the film. Association with the entertainment industry was a shrewd move that undoubtedly aided the firm's continued success.

## DAZZLING BY DESIGN

I. Miller & Sons' business achievements came at a time when shoe design was at its peak in creativity, due in no small part to rising hemlines. Women's legs—and shoes—were in full view after being hidden for much of history. The firm was a patented innovator in shoe technology, as with its sleek pump that came with three interchangeable heels. Miller was said to have inspired the vogue of shoes fashioned in reptile skin. The company was also an incubator for important shoe designers, sparking the careers of Beth Levine, André Perugia, David Evins, and countless lesser-known designers, like Arsho Baghsarian, who worked at I. Miller over the course of its history. Generations of shoemakers and designers trained at I. Miller and went on to impact American design throughout the twentieth century.

A pair of 1920s I. Miller shoes [p. 34] featured in the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art's 2022 exhibition *Fashioning America: Grit to Glamour* is a stunning example of the impressive craftsmanship associated with the firm. The shoes feature silk satin uppers with a gold sunflower appliqué adorning the top. The sheer complexity of construction and craftsmanship—with leather soles and lined with soft kid leather—indicate that these are *not* shoes to be worn on the city street. The light wear also suggests that they were valued and likely reserved for special occasions.

I. Miller is often compared to one of the most prestigious, recognizable brands today: Salvatore Ferragamo. There is evidence that Israel Miller and Ferragamo knew each other, and the trajectory of these “shoemakers to the stars” are remarkably similar. Ferragamo left Italy in 1915, where handcrafted shoes still reigned supreme,



to learn the secrets of ready-made shoes, recalling in his memoirs: “I would go to America, and among the machines I would find my fortune.” U.S. factories turned out hundreds of shoes for every painstaking pair Ferragamo made in Italy. He quickly realized that his heart remained with handmade shoes and set out for Hollywood.

Ferragamo began working in the motion picture industry when he convinced the American Film Company’s wardrobe director that he could make a better cowboy boot. His creations adorned the feet of movie stars such as Dolores del Rio, Mary Pickford, and Pola Negri. Israel Miller and Salvatore Ferragamo learned similar lessons in the effective use of star promotion, innovative design, and ergonomic comfort.

### THE “I” IN ICONIC

With such a long and storied history, I. Miller & Sons’ connections with the art world are not surprising. In the mid-1950s, a very young and as-yet-unknown Andy Warhol started his art career there. Warhol worked as a window dresser for the New York City store and created distinctive, and now famous, shoe drawings for advertising campaigns. Decades after Israel Miller’s death, the company was still associated with high-fashion shoemaking and design, clear in this excerpt from Wright Morris’s novel *Man and Boy*—sentiments that our modern Carrie Bradshaw might feel toward her Manolos:

From a bookcase beneath the stairs, the top shelf holding books, the remaining four shelves full of I. Miller shoes, she selected navy blue pumps with cuban heel and small bow. *Oh, we’re all of the flesh, Mrs. Dinardo, but between men and shoes you can give me shoes—I. Miller’s preferably.* (Knopf, 1951)

Although featured in the movie magazine *Photoplay* into the 1960s, I. Miller & Sons was on the wane by the 1970s and finally shuttered its doors in the 1980s. But there was one last tribute

## I. MILLER BEAUTIFUL SHOES™

### Step this Way

**STAGECRAFT:** Miller advertisements evoked the company’s theater origins with dramatic prose, from the simple maxim “To see them is to love them . . . and to buy them,” to their women’s 1924 line of spring shoes, including the Chapsford, a fringed Oxford “suggesting the cowboy’s chaps and the cowgirl’s charm.”

**TOE THE LINE:** An advertisement from May 10, 1921, alluded to a fashion “rule”: “We must clear our shelves for White Shoes before Decoration Day on May 30<sup>th</sup>.” The implication? White shoes were not worn *until* Decoration Day, the original term for Memorial Day.

**LEAPING LIZARD:** In 1923, Miller launched the “fascinating fashion” of lizard leather, “stronger than the natural skin, and even more beautiful in its delicate tones.” Fifty styles priced from \$12.50 to \$14.50 incorporated the new material.

**WINDOW DRESSING:** Before Gene Moore created Tiffany’s iconic window displays in the 1950s, he worked as an assistant window dresser for the four Miller stores in New York, changing displays every week.

**PUMP ART:** Known for his iconic soup cans, Andy Warhol first sketched shoes in a pivotal marketing campaign for I. Miller. According to former head of retail Geraldine Stutz, it modernized the brand from “*passé*” to “up-to-date.”

**STEP-BALL-CHANGE:** “Perugia invents . . . I. Miller presents . . .” began the 1956 advertisement for pumps with a “wardrobe” of changeable heels. Caviar beading or enamel polka-dots by day, rhinestones by night. Women could switch styles with a simple slide and click.

**STEAL-LETTOS:** On February 22, 1917, a group of men including several Miller employees stole approximately \$15,000 worth of leather and cloth from the company’s Brooklyn factory. Conscience prompted a twenty-year-old factory clerk’s confession and the loot was recovered.

**SHOES MAKETH THE MAN AND A FORTUNE:** Miller left most of his \$7,000,000 estate to his wife and children. His will also bequeathed money to Jewish charitable organizations, relatives in America and abroad, and two employees.



Illustration of I. Miller store from *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, October 20, 1929. [newspapers.com](http://newspapers.com)



to the legacy of luxury shoes that donned the feet of thousands of fashion consumers throughout the twentieth century. In 1973, singer Betty Gray Davis wrote and released a hard-rocking funk single called “Steppin’ In Her I. Miller Shoes.” The associations with aspirational fashion are clear in the opening lyrics:

Steppin’ high in her I. Miller shoes. / She could’ve been anything that she wanted. / A cutie thing from her head down to her toes.

From his theater niche to the American mass public, from the opulent to the practical, Israel Miller built a shoe empire of style and substance—creativity that would mark the I. Miller brand as iconic footwear, now considered artworks coveted by museums and collectors around the world.

MICHELLE TOLINI FINAMORE is a Fashion and Design historian based in Salem, Massachusetts. She is the curator of the exhibition *Fashioning America: Grit to Glamour* at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas, on view Sept. 10, 2022–Jan. 30, 2023. [michellefinamorefashion.wordpress.com](http://michellefinamorefashion.wordpress.com)



ABOVE: In 1999, the Landmarks Preservation Commission determined that “the I. Miller Building has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City,” and designated it an official New York City Landmark. Photo: Epicgenius/Wikimedia. SHOES: Jimmy Raye Collection, Salem, Massachusetts; photography by Joel Benjamin. (top) Herbert and Beth Levine shoes, ca. 1950s. Leather and faux pearls. Beth was a former designer for I. Miller. (bottom) I. Miller shoes, ca. mid-1920s. Leather, silk satin, metal, and rhinestones.

**EXTRA! READ | THINK | TALK | LINK**

- I. Miller shoes are officially art. Search the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s online collection of shoes representing the Miller-Made century of style. [metmuseum.org](http://metmuseum.org)
- See details of I. Miller shoes, labels, and advertisements on the Shoe Icons website. [eng.shoe-icons.com/resources/brands](http://eng.shoe-icons.com/resources/brands) (select: I. Miller)
- Between 1955 and 1957, Andy Warhol was the sole illustrator for shoe manufacturer I. Miller and made new drawings of shoes each week for ads in the *New York Times*. Explore his portfolio. [moma.org](http://moma.org)

# THE LIFE AND AFTER-TIMES OF ELMER McCURDY

PLUMBER, OUTLAW, MOVIE STAR, ETC.

ELAINE WARNER

There are two irrefutable facts about Elmer McCurdy's passing: He died on October 7, 1911. He was buried on April 22, 1977. In the span of those 66 years, McCurdy redefined the term "busy-body."

The facts surrounding McCurdy's early life are obscure. Biographer Richard J. Basgall (*The Career of Elmer McCurdy, Deceased*) pieced together snippets of history that indicate he was born out of wedlock in Maine, circa 1880, and was taken in by relatives but apparently never accepted. By age fifteen, his predilection for alcohol had gotten him in trouble and by twenty he was on the road. A stop in Iola, Kansas, led to a job with a plumbing company. He learned enough to join a trade union and was making decent wages until his desire



for drink and rumors of past misdeeds caught up with him.

McCurdy's next career move was in the tri-state area of southeastern Kansas, southwestern Missouri, and northeastern Oklahoma, a major center of lead and zinc mining. From pick and shovel to blasting granite, the work was dirty, exhausting, and dangerous—so much so that the Army must have looked like a better option. After induction, McCurdy was attached to Company E, Third Infantry, stationed at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Service records are sparse, but, based on his mining experience, his duties likely included training in explosives and demolition. He was honorably discharged in November 1910.

Out of the army and out of a job, McCurdy crossed the state line to

PREVIOUS PAGE AND BELOW:  
Elmer McCurdy (purportedly).  
Newspaper Archives. Oklahoma  
Historical Society



St. Joseph, Missouri, where he contacted a still-enlisted army buddy, Walter Schoppelrie, who secured a pass and came to visit. The two men stood out from the solid citizens of the town. Railroad detectives, always on the lookout for itinerant criminals moving by rail, were suspicious of the two men carrying a large bag that clanked as they walked. Opening the bag, the detectives found tools commonly used by safecrackers, “yeggs” in the local vernacular. So, with yegg on their faces, Schoppelrie and McCurdy were hauled off to the cooler for several months, awaiting trial. That’s where McCurdy found another kindred soul serving a short sentence for drunkenness—Walter Jarrett, an outlaw-wannabe with a record and grandiose plans.

By the time McCurdy and Schoppelrie came to trial, they had concocted a fanciful explanation for possession of the suspicious-looking implements: they were working on plans to invent a new type of machine gun. Satisfied with the story (or lack of vigorous prosecution), the jury found the two innocent and McCurdy left to join Walter Jarrett, who had gone south to Lenapah, Oklahoma. Jarrett and a couple of accomplices were plotting to rob the Iron Mountain train that ran from Little Rock through Oklahoma to Kansas City. With explosives experience, McCurdy would be useful as the safecracker.

On March 23, 1911, the bandits halted the train a few miles north of Lenapah. McCurdy went to work in the express car for an evening’s misadventures that rivaled the Keystone Kops. He set the first charge and ran out with the other robbers. Following the big bang, they reentered the car to find the safe—still safe. Two more tries failed. The fourth blew the safe door through the car and, when the smoke cleared, the heat had melted about \$4,000 in silver coins into one large unmovable lump. The big payoff? About \$450 and a gold watch McCurdy stole from the mail clerk. Shortly after, the *Cherryvale Republican*, reprinting the story from the *Coffeyville Journal*, reported that a “corps of special agents” had

# HAVE TRAIN ROBBERS

Three Members of the Cedar Creek Gang Arrested for Iron Mountain Hold Up.

Coffeyville Journal: The mystery surrounding the robbery of the Iron Mountain train near Lenapah, Okla., on the evening of March 23, is rapidly being cleared by the corps of special agents for the corps of army and express company postoffice inspectors. As a result of the investigation made at the Jarrett cabin in the Cedar Creek hills following the arrest of Glenn Jarrett and Lee Connors on the charge of having robbed a general merchandise store at Centralia, Okla., sufficient evidence has been secured to firmly fix the responsibility of the

## TRAIN ROBBER ENTRAPPED.

Special Officers of Missouri Pacific Hold Men for Train Robbery.

DEAD BODY #76-14812	READS NO. 765-0028	LONG BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT
<b>POLICE REPORT</b>		
NAME (IF NOT BUSINESS) DOE, John	AMOUNT OF LOSS *****	CHECKS AGAINST
RES. PHONE NUMBER Unknown *****	RES. PHONE NUMBER *****	<input type="checkbox"/> PROPERTY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PERSON
NAME OF PREMISES	OCCUPATION	

## Charged with Train Robbery.

Coffeyville, Kan., April 12.—The special agent of the Missouri Pacific has arrested three men, Lee Jarrett, Glenn Jarrett and Albert Connor, near Eudena, Oklahoma in connection with the hold up on Missouri Pacific passenger train of March 24. The detectives have been following the clue continuously, but refuse to

## AS IN THE DAYS OF OLD

The Iron Mountain Train Robbery Was Thrilling and Dramatic.

Automobiles Gave a Modern Touch to the Train Robbery Episode.

**\$30,000 LOOT**

SATURDAY LAST NIGHT A BUSY ONE FOR BANDITS

a brief \$20,000 TRAIN ROBBERY LISHED 6 M. FROM COFFEYVILLE

ment dred

## OSAGE OUTLAW BEING EXHIBITED

Embalmed Remains Of Frank Curtis, Killed 20 Years Ago, On Coast

PAWHUSKA, Aug. 6.—Special—Nearly 20 years ago bullets from an Osage county posse thudded through a hay barn, north of here, and blotted out the life of one of Oklahoma’s most notorious train robbers and safe blowers, Frank Curtis.

Now after he has been dead for a score of years, Curtis’ remains are being exhibited at the

At one of the told the assents they of Frank Curtis, outlaw, who re alive, drank poison after he had been mortally wounded.

The poison fused with the acids of the body and caused it to become mummified, the splaler said.

## MODERN MUMMY SHOWN AT PATTERSON CARNIVAL

Out at the carnival grounds, where Patterson’s Shows are exhibiting un-

roll

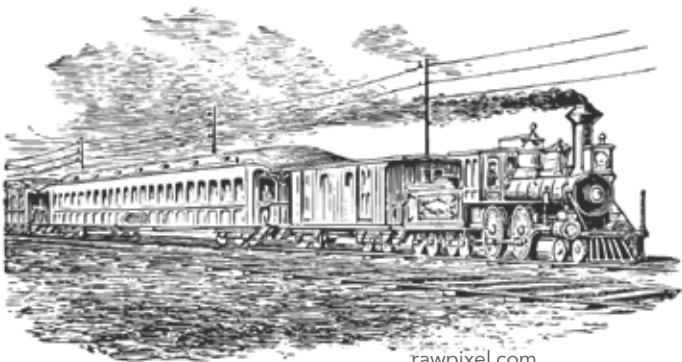
Hutchinson Was



Poor Elmer. The dead outlaw was first laid out, resplendent in a new suit. Once it became clear the body would not be claimed by relatives, the suit was removed and McCurdy’s old clothes placed back on his corpse.

searched the Jarrett cabin and were combing the scene for evidence that would soon have the culprits in hand:

After the robbery of the train pieces of dynamite were found on the scene of the robbery and pieces of dynamite to match were found in the Jarrett cabin. The empty rifle shells picked up at the scene of the robbery were also of the kind and calibre as the ammunition found in the search made of the Jarrett place.



With the law hot on their trail, the gangsters split up.

McCurdy arrived in Pawhuska, Oklahoma, sometime in September 1911. Like iron to a magnet, he was drawn to mischief and soon joined up with Amos Hayes, a man with little reputation but big aspirations. Hayes had his eye on Citizens State Bank in Chautauqua, Kansas. Again, bad luck dogged McCurdy. He used enough explosive to blow the outer door of the safe (and a good deal of the bank furniture, too), but the safe's inner door stayed firmly shut. Hearing shouts, the marauders grabbed money from a counter till and hightailed it with a paltry \$150 for their pains.

Riding back across the Kansas border, McCurdy found refuge in a barn on the ranch of Charles Revard, a farmer-rancher with a high tolerance for low company. McCurdy spent days

resting and drinking, waiting for the next opportunity to come along. And it did. Undaunted by their less-than-successful bank job, Amos Hayes had another exploit in mind—this time in Oklahoma.

Pawhuska was the tribal capital of the Osage Nation, where Oil Boom drilling dotted Native lands. Every quarter, payments for mineral rights totaling \$100,000 to \$400,000 were sent from Washington to Pawhuska by train, promising a lucrative, if risky reward. The gang of three, possibly four, lay in wait near the tracks. Spotting their signal fire, the engineer halted the train. The raiders forced the fireman to uncouple the train, leaving the passenger cars on the track while the locomotive and front cars of baggage and mail moved on about a mile.

Confusion ensued. There was no large cache of money on the #29 train; it was slated for a later express train. Frustrated, the burglars ransacked the mail and went through the baggage, a grand theft netting \$46, a watch, a pistol, and the conductor's coat, plus a few kegs of beer and two jugs of whiskey. They dispersed in different directions with McCurdy returning to the Revard farm where he was tracked down several days later. The October 8, 1911, issue of *The Oklahoman* stated:

In a desperate rifle battle with three Osage County deputy sheriffs, Elmer J. McCurdy . . . gave his life rather than submit to capture.

McCurdy's life of crime was at an end—but his travels had just begun.

At autopsy it was determined that a single shot to McCurdy's right chest was the cause of death. The body was taken to the Johnson Funeral Home in Pawhuska, where it was embalmed and dressed in a new suit—laid out to await the arrival of relatives. No one came.

McCurdy's nice suit was removed and his shabby clothes put back on his corpse. Arsenic had been added to embalming fluid since Civil War times, used to preserve bodies for shipment

from the battlefields; as a result, McCurdy's body personified the term "stiff." Johnson propped him up in a corner and he became a curiosity and photo op for locals. Over time, carnival and sideshow operators tried to buy the body, but Johnson refused. Finally, in 1916, a man claiming to be a brother convinced Johnson and local officials—by smooth talk or greased palms—that he was a rightful relative.

A few days later, Elmer McCurdy made his showbiz debut in the Great Patterson Carnival Show.

Fast forward to December 7, 1976, Long Beach, California. The set crew for Universal Studios' television series *The Six Million Dollar Man* was preparing to film a scene in a rundown amusement park, the Laff-in-the-Dark Funhouse. A painted, glow-in-the-dark dummy hung in the way, blocking the shot. In the attempt to move the figure, a crew member accidentally pulled the arm off, revealing that this was no dummy—it was a mummy, bone and all.

Police were notified and the arm taken to the Los Angeles County Coroner's office. Finding that the bone was human, the rest of the body was brought in and designated John Doe #255, case 76-14812. An autopsy reaffirmed the Pawhuska account: the victim died from a bullet that entered the right chest and traveled left and down, through the right sixth rib, right lung, diaphragm, liver, and intestine. The

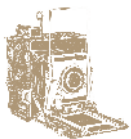
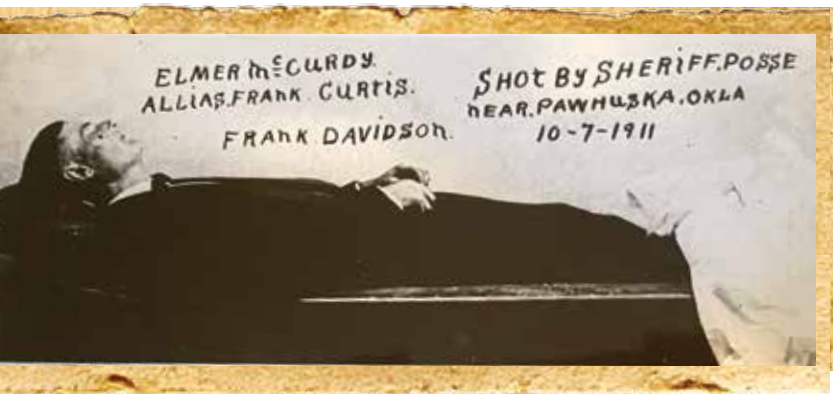
autopsy report indicates the internal organs were "hard as rock" and "perfectly preserved."

Further examination revealed a macabre twist: a 1924 penny and ticket stubs, one from Louis Sonney's Museum of Crime, were found in the mouth of the cadaver. From these clues and public response to newspaper accounts, police began reconstructing the mummy's origins. Sleuthing started with the funhouse and worked backward.

McCurdy's identity had been lost during six decades of peregrinations. From 1916 to 1922, he was on the road with the Great Patterson crew, crisscrossing the continent multiple times. Biographer Mark Svensvold guesstimates the desperado's travels logged "the equivalent of one-and-a-half times around the globe." In 1922, McCurdy's body was spotted in Washington state, acquired by Louis Sonney, seedy entertainment entrepreneur and proprietor of the Louis Sonney Wax Museum of Crime, a traveling exhibition until permanently installed in Los Angeles in 1927.

McCurdy got no rest. Occasionally he was sent on the road with Sonney's son Edward. One jaunt set him up in locations along the route of the infamous Bunion Derby, a 3,423-mile endurance run from Los Angeles to New York City—a route that took him through Oklahoma. As McCurdy's museum homepage was falling into disrepair, Sonney turned his dubious talents to exploitation films. In the Hollywood parlance of blockbuster movies and B-movies, Sonney's films fell much farther down the alphabet. A couple included shots of McCurdy, his first role being in the short film *March of Crime*, which toured small-town theaters as an added attraction to feature-length movies.

Louis Sonney died in 1949, leaving his business—and the body—to his son Dan. McCurdy was mostly ignored—pulled out now and then as a film prop or practical joke. Two Canadians, Ed Liersch and Don Crysedale, purchased Sonney's inventory and in 1971 took a year's lease on The Pike, a vast amusement park founded in 1902 that had outlived its glory days despite attempted revival and rebranding as Nu-Pike. The Canadians installed a wax museum with McCurdy on display as "The Thousand-Year-Old Man." The business failed and the two decamped, leaving their wares to the leaseholder, Long Beach Amusement Company.



Postmortem photography was common in the nineteenth century. Prior to its invention, only the wealthy could afford to memorialize loved ones through commissioned portrait paintings. Photography offered an economic alternative. It also allowed entrepreneurs to capitalize on public interest in notorious figures, including desperados like Jesse James and Elmer McCurdy. Just two days after James's murder, advertisements selling his postmortem photograph began appearing in newspapers. Photo courtesy Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries

When the company revamped the funhouse, McCurdy was hung, complete with noose, as a prop until found by the Universal television crew.

When Los Angeles Coroner Thomas Noguchi, well-known for his office's celebrity autopsies, put out a press release and a request for information on the identity of the corpse, newspaper articles describing the find came to the attention of a group of Oklahoma history buffs in Guthrie: writer and historian Glenn Shirley, director Fred Olds of the Oklahoma Territorial Museum, and banker Ralph McCalmont. Shirley was the first to suggest that the body might be that of long-lost outlaw Elmer McCurdy.

A call to Noguchi precipitated a trip to Los Angeles by Olds and McCalmont, accompanied by forensic anthropologist Dr. Clyde Snow. Armed with a written physical description, a prison mug shot, and photos of McCurdy after his death, the men headed west to identify and claim the body. Using two video cameras to superimpose a photograph of McCurdy with that of the mummy, a technique refined in Snow's laboratory, the results and other evidence proved to Noguchi's satisfaction that John Doe #255 was indeed Elmer McCurdy. All that was left to do was to cut through the red tape necessary to move the body to Oklahoma and accompany McCurdy on his penultimate trip.

On a rainy Friday, April 22, 1977, carried in a glass-sided horse-drawn hearse with participants on horseback and in carriages, the body ended its travels in the Boot Hill section of Guthrie's Summit View Cemetery. There, on a wind-swept knoll, Elmer McCurdy was finally laid to rest.

ELAINE WARNER is author of two books: *Insiders' Guide to Tulsa* and *More Than Petticoats: Remarkable Missouri Women*. She is a freelance travel writer and her work has appeared in a variety of newspapers and magazines, including the Fall/Winter 2018 CURIOSITY issue of *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine.

**EXTRA!** READ | THINK | TALK | LINK

- "Elmer McCurdy: Traveling Corpse," Heather Thomas, July 24, 2018, Library of Congress. McCurdy's story through newspaper clippings, including speculation that the DC Comics character Hex was based on McCurdy's life. [loc.org](http://loc.org)

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

I first heard of Elmer McCurdy on a trolley tour of Guthrie, Oklahoma, in the early 1990s. The few details given by the tour guide piqued my curiosity and I went digging for more of the story.

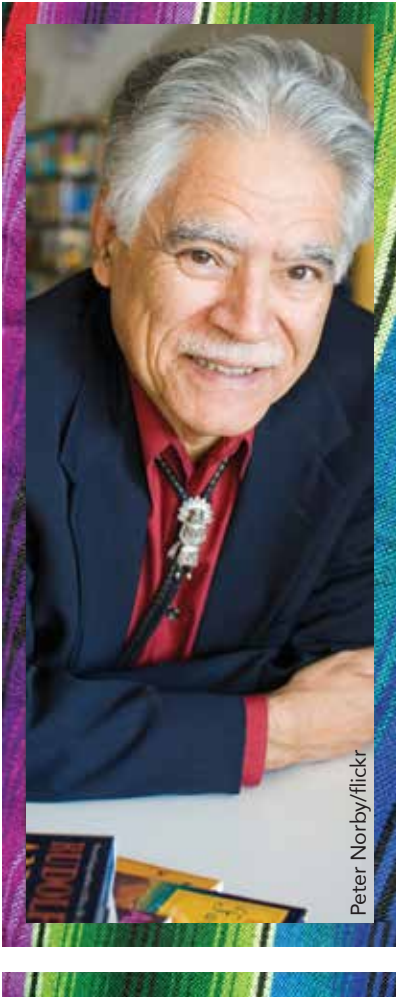
I interviewed Fred Olds, then-director of the Oklahoma Territorial Museum in Guthrie, who participated in the process of identifying the McCurdy corpse and bringing it back to Oklahoma. He recounted McCurdy's infamous activities and suggested I read Richard J. Basgall's book (*The Career of Elmer McCurdy, Deceased*, Trail's End Publishing Company, 1989). Since then, I discovered a newer volume by Mark Svenvold with extensive footnotes and sources (*Elmer McCurdy: The Misadventures in Life and Afterlife of an American Outlaw*, Basic Books, 2002).

Between Olds, the Basgall and Svenvold books, and my own research (finding 1911 newspaper accounts and obtaining copies of the 1976 Los Angeles police and autopsy reports), I had assembled a collection of curiosities that just wouldn't die (pun intended). Over the years, I would run into McCurdy each time I visited the Territorial Museum. Rewatching my dad's favorite movie—*Support Your Local Sheriff*—would remind me of Elmer. He just sort of "hung around." So when Editor Carla Walker asked if I had a curious story, Elmer McCurdy seemed ripe for "resurrection."

Recently, I interviewed Michael Williams, Assistant Curator and Elmer McCurdy expert at the Territorial Museum. The museum holds a collection of papers from author Richard J. Basgall, papers from the family of Deputy Stringer Fenton who shot McCurdy, and the gun that delivered the fatal shot. Williams says that many of the details of McCurdy's life are based on reasonable assumptions rather than verifiable facts. With contemporary technical resources, Williams's research has added context and nuance to the tale.

Williams notes that McCurdy wasn't necessarily a bumbling burglar, he was reasonably skilled. The explosives McCurdy worked with were notoriously difficult to use successfully. McCurdy apparently made a decent living but, according to reports, chose to live rough. There is speculation that he may have been involved in a number of other robberies in the area.

Williams, the historian, and authors of the past delved into the "why" behind the story. I hit the high-lights and went for the "ha." — *Elaine Warner*



# RUDOLFO ANAYA

## Giving voice to the Latino community

ROBERT CON DAVIS-UNDIANO

Rudolfo Anaya's classic first novel, *Bless Me, Última*, came out in 1972, fifty years ago, but he is still arguably the most important Latino writer in America. Why? For many people in the U.S. and abroad, Rudolfo Anaya (1937-2020) defined the era he lived in. He published 50 volumes that range over novels, plays, poetry, essays, and children's books. In a key moment in the civil rights era, these works gave the Latino community a face and a voice. They also helped the Latino community to see what was good and powerful in their own lives.

He was particularly fond of reminding everyone that there have been Mexican-Americans in the U.S. for as long as there has been a Mexico. Through the 1960s, however, there was little recognition in America of this hyphenated identity. Latinos in general were not being represented in the media as real people with contributions to make beyond their food and the portrayals of them as inferior, "off white" people there to serve the mainstream.

Anaya helped to change all of that. Through his major work—including *Bless Me, Última* (1972), *Heart of Aztlán* (1976), *Tortuga* (1979), *Albuquerque* (1992), *Rio Grande Fall* (1996), *Shaman Winter* (1999), *Billy the Kid and Other Plays* (2011), and *Poems from the Rio Grande* (2015)—he invited

mainstream culture to see Latinos in a new light. He did this by highlighting characters with dynamic, evolving worldviews, hopes, and dreams. He assisted mainstream readers to appreciate a range of well-rounded characters and lives previously unknown to them.

He believed that without knowledge of the history of the Americas that shaped it, there could be no true understanding of mixed-race identity, which, as we now know from DNA sampling, is everyone in the world. He believed in the formative power of culture to make this case and show that the contributions of the Incas and Mayans, the ancient peoples of the New World, shaped culture in this hemisphere much as the Greeks did for Western culture as a whole.

A large circle of writers, artists, and readers saw Rudy Anaya as the key figure for rethinking Mexican-American lives in the U.S. They particularly saw hope in the values that he held dear—pride in Mexican-American identity, recognition of hybrid Latino culture, and honoring the hemispheric scope for understanding our culture. It is no wonder that he still has so many readers and followers.

ROBERT CON DAVIS-UNDIANO is Neustadt Professor and Presidential Professor at the University of Oklahoma, where he is Director of Latinx Studies and Executive Director of *World Literature Today*.



# THE ESSAYS ~

## By Rudolfo Anaya

### INTRODUCTION

I dedicate this collection to the writers, artists, teachers, students, community activists, politicians, and all who have worked purposefully and diligently to achieve social and political justice for the Mexican American community.

Our civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s included an outpouring of artistic work. We called our efforts el Movimiento Chicano, the Chicano Movement. We marched and demanded equality in all fields of endeavor from the mainstream society.

One of my objectives was achieving equal educational opportunities for Mexican Americans. Looking back, Chicanos and Chicanas involved in the Chicano Movement can say we did make a difference. In many positive ways we influenced this country's relationship to our community.

Old prejudices began to fall away as many heard our call and joined the struggle.

We fought for justice, not only for our community, but for all people. Now it's up to new generations to work at making this a better world. Much remains to be done. ~

### "STILL INVISIBLE, LORD, STILL INVISIBLE"

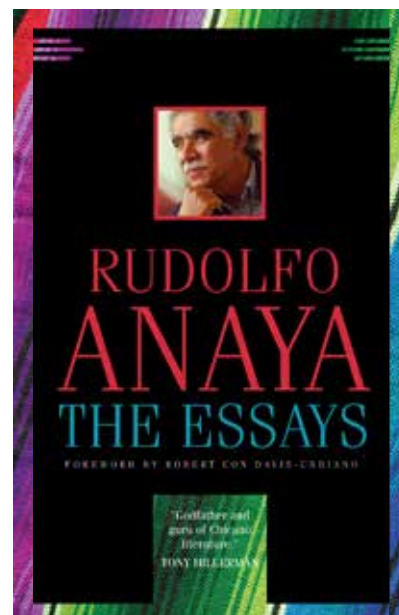
One day my grandfather was called on urgent business to Albuquerque. He asked me if I wanted to go with him, and, of course, I said yes. I was a child, and for me, Highway 66, which cut through our small village, was a magical road. While herding our milk

cow towards the river, I would often stop by the roadside and watch the cars which carried the gringos from the east as they sped by on their way to their vacations in California. In late summer I saw them return, sunburned and tired, and I envied them because they had traveled that magical road.

Now it was my turn. I was filled with excitement. I went everywhere with my grandfather, but never had we attempted such a long trip. "How will we get there, grandfather?" I asked. He smiled and said, "We stand by the highway, and one of these good turistas will give us a ride. We will be there in no time at all."

So I put my small hand in his brown, wrinkled hand, received my mother's kiss and benediction, then together my grandfather and I walked to the highway where we were to get a ride which would take us to the wondrous and faraway city of Albuquerque. Oh it was a day filled with excitement. It was also a day for learning a lesson.

We stood all day on the shoulder of the highway. My grandfather held up his hand and signaled each time a car approached, but the people from the east passed us by without so much as a look. We stood all day in the hot sun. By late afternoon we still didn't have the ride which we so urgently needed. I was very tired. I broke our silence and asked my grandfather, "Why don't they give us a ride?" He looked at the cars that sped by us and replied, "They don't see us, my son, they don't see us."



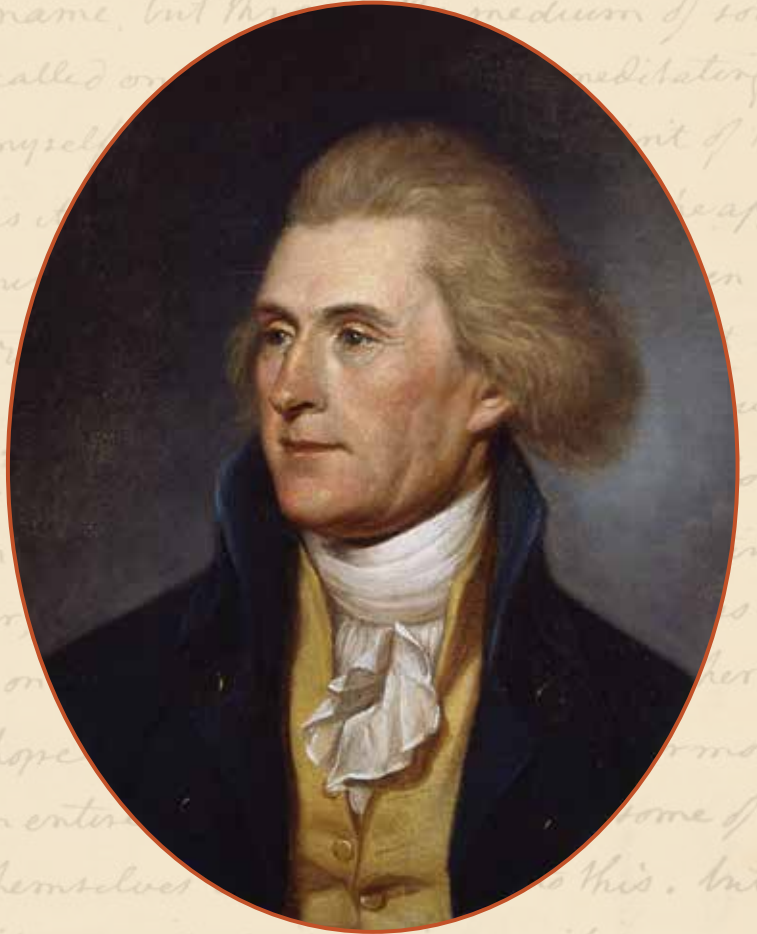
Excerpt used with permission from The University of Oklahoma Press © 2022. Originally published in *AMAE Journal* (Journal of the Association of Mexican American Educators) (1982–83): 35–41.

### EXTRA! READ | THINK | TALK | LINK

- Rudolfo Anaya Digital Archive, University of New Mexico. Collection of Anaya's manuscripts, an "Introduction to Chicano Literature" by Sophie Ell, and more. [anaya.unm.edu](http://anaya.unm.edu)
- *From Curandera to Chupacabra: The Stories of Rudolfo Anaya*, New Mexico PBS, April 1, 2007. Short film exploring the alchemy and agency of Anaya's storytelling. [youtube.com](http://youtube.com)
- *A Conversation with Rudolfo Anaya*, directed by Lawrence Bridges, 2009. Anaya discusses his novel *Bless Me, Última*, considered one of the great works of Chicano literature. [youtube.com](http://youtube.com)
- *Rudolfo Anaya: The Magic of Words*, documentary directed by David Ethan Ellis about Anaya and his work. [anayafilm.com](http://anayafilm.com)

I addressed a letter to you, my very dear & ancient friend, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March: not indeed to you by name, but thro' the medium of some of my fellow citizens, whom occasion called on for meditating the matter of the address, I often asked myself, "What if etc.?"

# The Shorthand of Thomas Jefferson



## A Declaration, Etc.

KIMBERLY ROBLIN

*What if etc.  
wasn't an end,  
but a beginning?*

I met Thomas Jefferson in the Osage Hills just north of downtown Tulsa. As a curator at Gilcrease Museum, I worked primarily with the archival collection—photographs, rare books, maps, and manuscripts, including letters and journals. The manuscripts captured not only precise moments, but the personalities and idiosyncrasies behind them. To me, each was an introduction, one-sided and long-distanced though it may be. I met Cherokee Chief John Ross and Choctaw Chief Peter Pitchlynn. Artists George Catlin, Thomas Moran, and C.M. Russell. Muscogee poet Alexander Posey and Lt. Colonel George Armstrong Custer. They have all stayed with me, but Jefferson more than most and a single line from a letter to his old friend William Fleming above the rest:

... my country will have my political creed in the form of a 'Declaration &c which I was lately directed to draw.

It is the Revolution in real time, no foregone conclusions or footnotes. A vivid reminder that the past was once someone's present.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Th. Jefferson".

Jefferson's penmanship lacks the refinement of his rhetoric. It is sharp, small, and slightly askew. Nearly every line rises steadily, ending a degree or two higher from where it began. Time has rusted the iron gall ink, once black, but the words show no signs of aging. They are immortal. They pulse with an energy and urgency. As his quill scratched across the page, plunging and peaking, it generated a jagged pattern suggesting an EKG readout. In this letter to William Fleming, he evoked the heartbeat of a new nation.

To Jefferson, it was not history, it was his day to day, uncertain and volatile, with outcomes that could result in triumph or treason. On July 1, 1776, his "country" wasn't yet the United States, it was Virginia. It wasn't yet *The Declaration*, but "a." Even more interesting, it was a Declaration "&c." The shorthand for *et cetera*, that little Latin phrase meaning "and the rest" or "and so forth" that's consigned to list-making and note-taking, not nation-founding. Milk, bread, eggs, etc. Paper, pens, staples, etc.

Why would someone as deliberate as Jefferson pair the pedestrian with the profound? The theory of relativity might hold the answer. No, not physics—history. To determine the why, we must consider the who, what, when, and where. Context is everything and everything is relative. We must sleuth, analyze, and assess because history is not a noun, it is a pursuit. *Etc* might be an end for some, but it is also a beginning—an invitation from Jefferson to learn more about *history*.

### *Philadelphia. July 1. 1776.*

In the summer of 1776, the American Revolution was gaining momentum as opposition to the Crown increasingly replaced the loyalty once pledged to it. King

George III had declared the colonies to be in open rebellion. The British Navy lurked offshore. The British Army regrouped after losing Boston, and rumors circulated of German mercenaries making their way across the Atlantic. Ties between friends and even family members frayed with the realization that there would be no reconciliation. This would be a civil war. The colonies faced a choice: submission or self-governance?

At the Pennsylvania State House in Philadelphia (now Independence Hall), the decision fell to the Second Continental Congress when Virginia delegate Richard Henry Lee proposed a resolution for independence in early June. Congress recessed for three weeks to essentially settle their respective affairs before voting upon their return. In expectation of the resolution passing, a Committee of Five (John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Robert Livingston, Roger Sherman, and Thomas Jefferson) was appointed to ready and present a document that laid out in clear terms why the colonies desired and deserved independence.

At 33, Jefferson was one of the youngest delegates but, as Adams recalled, he "brought with him a reputation for literature, science, and a happy talent at composition. Writings of his were handed about, remarkable for the peculiar felicity of expression." It made Jefferson the obvious choice to serve as scribe for the committee's collective ideas. According to Adams, however, Jefferson took some convincing: "I am obnoxious, suspected



AT LEFT: *Thomas Jefferson, from life*, ca. 1791-1792, by Charles Willson Peale; Independence National Historical Park. *Letter from Thomas Jefferson to Samuel Adams (1801)*; Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library. FROM TOP: *Independence Hall*, ca. 1878; Library of Congress. *Declaration of Independence* by John Trumbull, 1826; Architect of the U. S. Capitol



LEFT: *Thomas Jefferson, 1786*, by Mather Brown; National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution. RIGHT: *William Fleming* by Robbie L. Nurnberger, 1963; Commonwealth of Virginia Art Collection

and unpopular,” Adams insisted. “You are very much otherwise.” Adams further pressed, “Reason 3d: You can write ten times better than I can.”

Jefferson relented and retreated to the Graff House on the city’s outskirts. Located at Seventh and Market Streets, it was a newly built, three-story home in a location well suited to Jefferson’s needs. Close enough to the State House to arrive within a few minutes, but far enough away to avoid the congestion and noise. He rented the second floor consisting of a furnished bedroom and parlor. It was here he nudged the document into existence at a desk he’d designed and commissioned.

The Committee reviewed the draft, made some changes, and, on June 28, submitted “A Declaration by the Representatives of the United States of America in General Congress Assembled.” Adams confessed he was “delighted with its high tone, and the flights of Oratory with which it abounded.” Discussion, debate, and edits ensued, and a vote on Lee’s resolution was anticipated when Congress reconvened at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, July 1.

### *Dear Fleming*

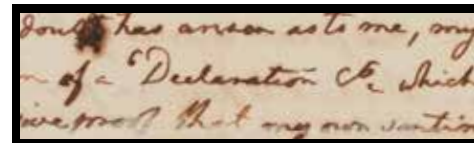
Jefferson rose with the sun that morning, as he always did. He was a creature of habit, elevating routines to near rituals. Mornings were for cold foot baths, recording the temperature (81.5 degrees), and writing. The city and the country stirred outside as he read and answered correspondence in the parlor. Just arrived was a letter postmarked from Williamsburg. He recognized his friend’s handwriting immediately.

Jefferson and William Fleming had known each for more than a decade and their lives paralleled in many ways. They were from old Virginia families, had studied law, were ambitious, and directly involved in shaping the current course of human events: Jefferson as a delegate to the Second Continental Congress; Fleming to the Fifth

Virginia Convention. Jefferson on a committee to write the Declaration of Independence for the colonies; Fleming on a committee to write a Declaration of Rights for Virginia.

Life had become complicated since their college days at William and Mary, but some things remained the same. Separated by three hundred miles, Jefferson sat down “to converse in black and white with an absent friend,” as he once described their correspondence. In an informal tone, Jefferson updated Fleming on the state of affairs—from smallpox to the Canadian campaign, from General Howe’s whereabouts to conspiracies—and defended himself against those back home who might question his loyalty to the Revolution.

It is in response to these perceived accusations that Jefferson wrote the line that compels our curiosity. The “Declaration &c” he was “directed to draw” would be decisive proof of his commitment to the cause. He followed it with, “Had the post been to go a day later we might have been at liberty to communicate this whole matter.” *Liberty?* A choice word to convey the freedom to discuss? Or a wink and a nod to the vote for independence he took pains not to mention?

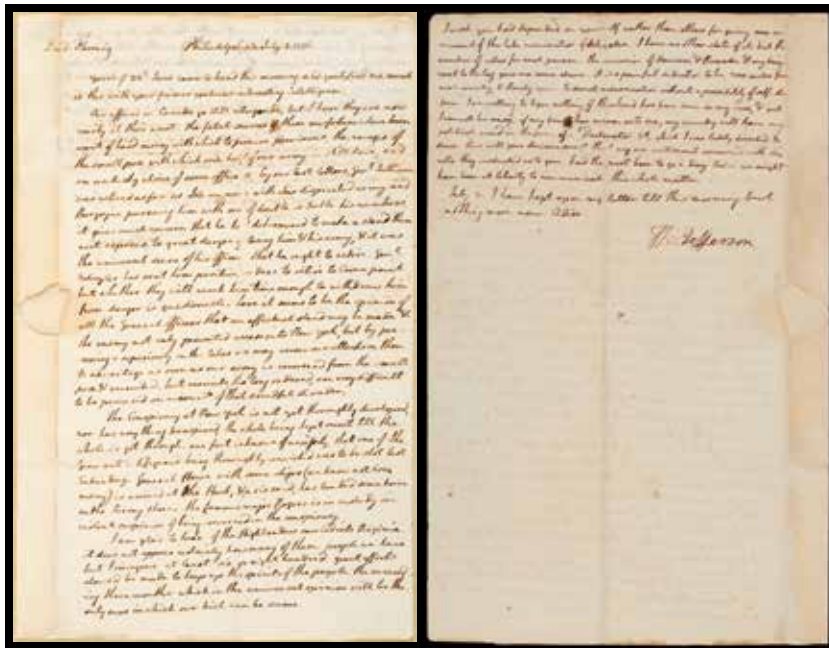


Congress voted on July 1, but politics rarely go as planned. The resolution stalled amid divisions, absent delegates, and one abstention. Jefferson had hoped to share news of the vote in the correspondence to his friend. “I have kept open my letter till this morning,” he wrote on July 2, “but nothing more new. Adieu.”

Hours later, after edits and persuasion crystallized into consensus, the vote was cast, the Rubicon crossed, and the Lee Resolution for independence adopted. On July 4, the Declaration followed. It was a defining moment not only for the country, but for Jefferson. Shortly before his death, the founding father and former president penned his own epitaph and listed only three achievements:

*Here was buried Thomas Jefferson  
Author of the Declaration of American Independence  
of the Statute of Virginia for religious freedom  
& Father of the University of Virginia.*

In a truth stranger than fiction, both he and John Adams died on July 4, 1826.



LEFT: Letter from Thomas Jefferson to William Fleming, dated July 1 and 2, 1776 (detail, far left); GM3826.71; Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma. DESK: Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence on this portable desk of his own design. Fashioned by Benjamin Randolph in 1775-1776, it features a hinged writing board and locking drawer for papers, pens, and inkwell. National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution. BELOW: Declaration House (Graff House), exterior; National Park Service



### Th: Jefferson

Now, almost 250 years on, we arrive at the pivotal question: Why did Jefferson use the shorthand of *etc*? He rarely employed it in other correspondence, so why here? We can't rule out that he was simply in a hurry that morning. It was a big day. He had places to go and history to make. Maybe it was unnecessary to spell it out since Fleming already knew to what he alluded. Possible still is Jefferson's own familiarity with the Declaration. He knew every word, so attached to his original unedited version that he circulated it among friends and colleagues. He'd been living and breathing it for weeks. Maybe it was strange, formal to write out the document's title in its entirety—like addressing Fleming by his first and last name.

Maybe Jefferson allowed himself for a moment to consider the full weight of what the Declaration would mean. Literally, the Declaration *and the rest*: The start of a new experiment. The framework of a new nation. The end of British rule. Maybe he could find neither the words nor the time to adequately express all that it represented, what he characterized in later years as “the genuine effusion of the soul of our country at that time.”

We will never know with certainty. Unlike the truths espoused in the Declaration, Jefferson's use of *etc* is not self-evident, even with context. It's an essential lesson for any who prospect the past: History traffics more often in ambiguities than absolutes. Questions are as important as answers. And the purpose lies in the pursuit.

I can think of no better word to epitomize the study of history than Jefferson's. Whether individuals and events are famous or infamous, everyday or extraordinary, there is always more. More to learn. More to discover. More to contemplate. *The rest is history.*

KIMBERLY ROBLIN is associate editor of *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine and the communications officer for Oklahoma Humanities. Before joining the organization, she worked as a curator in major museums. She received a BA in history and MA in museum studies from the University of Oklahoma. Her writing has appeared in *The Journal of Gilcrease Museum*, *True West*, *STATE*, *Oklahoma Humanities*, *History Scotland*, and several books.

GILCREASE MUSEUM, Tulsa, Oklahoma, generously provided the images of Thomas Jefferson's letter to William Fleming. See the letter online at [gilcrease.org](http://gilcrease.org)

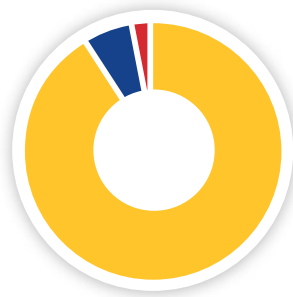
#### EXTRA! READ | THINK | TALK | LINK

- Find correspondence, maps, ciphers, and more, in the Thomas Jefferson Papers digital collection at the Library of Congress. [loc.gov](http://loc.gov)
- Browse the resources, images, online exhibits, and virtual tours that explore Thomas Jefferson's life, his Monticello home, and his complex and controversial legacy. [monticello.org](http://monticello.org)
- Read a transcript of Thomas Jefferson's letter to William Fleming, his side of the conversation between the two friends. [bit.ly/3ddeBYa](http://bit.ly/3ddeBYa)
- Learn more about the July 1 letter in this video from Dr. William Smith, Associate Director of the Helmerich Center for American Research at Gilcrease Museum. [bit.ly/3QnwWjw](http://bit.ly/3QnwWjw)



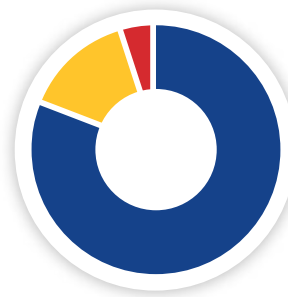
# FY 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

NOVEMBER 1, 2020 - OCTOBER 31, 2021



**REVENUE: \$1,545,958**

- Federal, Foundation, & Corporate Support 91%
- Other 6%
- Donor Support 3%



**EXPENSES: \$1,616,268**

- Programs 81%
- Administration 14%
- Fundraising 5%

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Oklahoma Humanities extends its appreciation to the following individuals for support of our organization and programs:

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Suanne M. Wymer  
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Karen Youmans  
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# THE YEAR IN NUMBERS



**27,630** MAGAZINES

Delivered to individuals, educators, and non-profits



**3,878** LISTENERS

Tuned into our *BrainBox* podcast



**10,915** VISITORS

Explored the *Museum on Main Street* exhibit



**813** BOOK LOVERS

Attended *Let's Talk About It* discussion events in 16 Oklahoma communities



**408,360** INDIVIDUALS SERVED

Community Grants totaling \$218,719 were awarded through 38 organizations. Included 2 disaster relief grants awarded for a total of \$6,000 and 3 partnership grants of \$25,000 with an audience of 12,773.

Oklahoma Humanities is the state affiliate for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The NEH was established as a federal grant-making agency by the U.S. Congress in 1965 to support research, education, preservation, and public projects in the humanities. As the state affiliate, Oklahoma Humanities receives an annual General Operating Support Award to facilitate grantmaking for humanities education, lifelong learning, and public programs at the local level.

The federal appropriation administered by Oklahoma Humanities in fiscal year 2021 was \$840,500.

## IN MEMORY

*In Memory of Dr. David Cawthon*  
Judy Cawthon

*In Memory of Marilyn Deere*  
Betty Turmon

*In Memory of Clara Eaton*  
Kalenda Eaton

*In Memory of Danney Goble*  
Constance Murray

*In Memory of Amy Langenbach*  
Kelly Brown

*In Memory of Judith Ritter Leigh*  
Jane Lipman

*In Memory of Dr. M. Ali Matto*  
Nyla Khan

*In Memory of Tom May*  
David & Lynne Levy

*In Memory of Dr. Patrick McGinnis*  
Rita McGinnis

*In Memory of Peter G. Pierce III*  
Paul G. Pierce

*In Memory of Peter G. Pierce III*  
Richard Riggs

*In Memory of Bill Reichardt*  
Sandra Ewing

*In Memory of Dr. Willis Wheat*  
Libby Thomas-Wheat

*In Memory of Jim Yoch*  
Nancy Yoch

## IN HONOR

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Janis Farr

*In Honor of Darrell Barton*  
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*In Honor of Kelly Burns*  
Judy Burns

*In Honor of Pamela Chew*  
Martin R. Wing

*In Honor of Jeanne Hoffman Smith*  
Harbour & Mickey Winn

*In Honor of Caroline Lowery*  
Ken Busby

*In Honor of Caroline Lowery*  
Dr. Nathan & Linda Grantham

*In Honor of Caroline Lowery*  
Matt Lowery

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*In Honor of Ann & Chuck Neal*  
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Jay & Valerie Hannah

*In Honor of Carla Walker*  
Jane Allen Huffstetler

*In Honor of Carla Walker*  
Dr. W. Michael McShan

*In Honor of Pete & Joani Whipple*  
Rev. Richard & Peggy Ziglar

*In Honor of Martin Wing*  
Thomas E. Young

*In Honor of Harbour Winn*  
Gay Hellman

## FOUNDATION AND CORPORATE SUPPORT

**\$10,000+**

Federation of State  
Humanities Council

Kirkpatrick Family Fund

**\$5,000 TO \$9,999**

Anne & Henry Zarrow  
Foundation

McCasland Foundation

Kirschner Trusts Affiliated  
Fund

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Foundation

Pauline Dwyer Macklanburg  
and Robert A. Macklanburg,  
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**\$1,000 TO \$4,999**

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**NEXT UP: FOOD FOR THOUGHT | SPRING/SUMMER 2023**

Hemingway's feast was moveable. Ours will be readable. In the next issue of *Oklahoma Humanities* magazine, sample articles and essays that explore food in all its forms and functions—morsels that nourish and sustain us physically *and* mentally. The power of food to unite and comfort during the Dust Bowl. Gardens as places of peace and protest in Japanese-American internment camps. An edible tour of Oklahoma's summer and fall food festivals. All this and more is on the menu.