

October 2019

HIGHLIGHTS

THE WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

October 2018 – October 2019

by

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*“To achieve all that is possible, we must attempt the impossible.
To be as much as we can be, we must dream of being more!”*

Every year as I start to write this newsletter, I continue to ponder the meaning of the above quote and how it has applied to what we have accomplished as the Wilson Historical Society and what we still dream of for the future. Without our dedicated members and friends, we would not be where we are today. I am grateful to each and every one of you for your continued and loyal support which helps us to dream and accomplish all that we do.

Before listing some of our accomplishments for this past year, I will begin by saying that *this will be my last newsletter to you*. Twenty-one years after establishing the Historical Society and Museum, and given that George and I both have 80th birthdays this fall, we concluded that by next spring we need to be relocated closer to our family in Kansas City. It was a very difficult decision to make but one we felt necessary while we are still healthy and can make our own decisions. Having said that I want you to know that George and I are diligently working with our local members to ensure a smooth transition and have already had three ‘transition’ meetings with them and will have several more before leaving them in charge. So, please, rest assured that the Wilson Historical Society and Museum will still be much as it is now – only with new leadership and perhaps even some new goals in mind.

Having said that, I want to share the highlights of this past year.

- Shortly after last October’s newsletter went out, we held our Annual Recognition Dinner during which our Founders were recognized as well as Ron Alexander and Bruzzy Westheimer being recognized as Friends of the Museum. Ron had been mayor at the time the Historical Society was

founded in 1998 and when the Museum opened in 2001 and even though not mayor now, he has supported us fully these past many years. Bruzzy and the Westheimer Foundation have given us several grants for such things as bookcases, museum and highway signs, HVAC for the Annex, and microfilm, to name a few. Dottie Stearns was awarded the Volunteer of the Year award due to her dedication to staffing the Museum and working on various Museum projects.

- By December, we were proudly selling our 2019 “Our Proud Heritage” calendars. Our first attempt at making an historical calendar was a huge success and we had hoped to do it again this year. However, due to the transition that was not feasible. We hope to do calendars in the future.
- January again saw the Museum closed for the month for our usual cleaning and redoing various displays. That is always a challenge but very worthwhile once done.
- In February it was decided to hold a raffle in April for a vintage Singer Sewing Machine that had belonged to my grandmother, Mrs. Carl (Judy) Cumpton, Sr. This brought a lot of visitors to the Museum to see the machine and to purchase raffle tickets. The lucky winner was Terri Burch of Wilson.
- For those of you who know Jim Bob Barrett, (class of 1959) he and his wife came to the Museum for Jim to do a book signing for his first book *The Calling Birds*. This event was held in April during the weekend of the Wilson High Alumni Reunion which brought more people to the Museum. Jim made a generous donation to the Museum for allowing him to have his book signing there.
- In order to support graduating high school seniors, and foster community involvement, we initiated the Wilson Historical Museum Community Service Award. This award, to be granted to two graduating seniors, is based on community service and interviewing and writing a history of some Wilsonite. In April Morgan Nipp and Marley Nance were announced as the first recipients of the Community Service Award; they each received \$500. This is planned to be an annual award.

- During the summer, two groups came in from the Boys and Girls Club to hear a short presentation on the history of Wilson and to have a tour of the Museum. Some of the children talked about their fathers who still work in the oil fields. Since school started in August, we have had three groups of Media students along with their teachers come in for tours.
- For any of you who might live close enough to Ardmore to join us, our Annual Celebration is going to be held Saturday evening, November 2nd at 6:00 p.m. at Casa Romo Restaurant in downtown Ardmore. We have a private room reserved and would welcome any of you to attend. Each person attending will pay for their own meal. Reservations need to be made to me by Wednesday, October 30th (580-504-4076).
- As part of our transition, we elected officers at our October meeting. All of these individuals have been associated with the Historical Society and Museum for several years and have lots of experience in volunteering at the Museum, working on committees, etc. I know they will do a outstanding job of maintaining and enlarging the goals and mission of the Wilson Historical Society and Museum. The new officers are Mindy Taylor, President; Dottie Stearns, Vice-President; Denise Holt, Secretary; and Carolyn Fox, Treasurer. Susan Pinches from Kansas City, was re-elected as a member of the Endowment Board, and the group also asked George to continue as Chair of the Endowment since he has been doing that for the past twenty years. He indicated he could do that easily long distance. At the present time, the Endowment is valued at something over \$250,000. Please don't forget that any memorial donations you make in memory of someone automatically goes to the Endowment as do donations made in honor of someone. A form is included if you wish to make donations with those in mind. Donations that help increase the Endowment are very important as they ensure the long-run financial stability of the Wilson Historical Society and Museum.
- I am grateful for all of the emotional support—as well as for the artifacts, pictures, donations, and so many other things—you have provided over the years. With the transition, I encourage you to redouble your support. Please continue to donate artifacts, pictures and other memorabilia to the Museum. In addition, enclosed you will find a donation card, as well as membership and sustaining sponsor cards. Please remember to include the Wilson Historical Museum in your plans—the support we have received from you is what has made the Museum what it is today!

- And last but not least, for a few of us a good portion of the year has been spent on finishing up my history of Wilson ‘*Wilson, Oklahoma: 1913 – 1939, Anatomy of an Oil Boom Town*’. Once the manuscript was completed, the index had to be done which was a time-consuming job taken on by our daughter, Susan Pinches and her partner, Chris Hammett. They had a real challenge as there were some 8,000 names to be dealt with; consequently, it took much longer than any of us had anticipated. But, it was worth it since it helped improve the internal consistency of names in the book. Once that was done, Farah Bazzrea who had done the typesetting and enhanced all the pictures, had to finish all the last minute details. I am happy to say the manuscript is at the printer now and from information just received, we should have the books by the middle of November. No one wishes to see that in print any more than I! As you can see, an order form is enclosed should you wish to order a book; ***if an order is paid for or postmarked on or before November 4th, there is a \$10 discount.*** After we receive the books, the price will be \$90.

Again, I thank all of you from the bottom of my heart for your support, encouragement, suggestions, conversations and the list could go on. I have enjoyed meeting so many of you; I will miss you and especially those who came into the Museum periodically, but just because we aren’t here, doesn’t mean that we will forget you or the Museum. Having completed the dreams I had in the mid-nineties of establishing the Wilson Historical Society and Museum, as well as writing a history of early Wilson, George and I firmly believe the Museum will continue to flourish as it fulfills its mission of preserving the past and promoting the future of Wilson and the surrounding region.

My very best to each and every one of you.