

# OKEFENOKEE HERITAGE CENTER NEWSLETTER



**APRIL  
MAY  
JUNE  
2025**

An excerpt from the book:  
“The Unusual Story of the Okefenokee Heritage Center and  
Southern Forest World”, written by Susan Lott Clark  
(Article abridged by Carla Cornett)

An appreciation for the arts in their various forms ---visual, music, and drama --- first gave support to having the Okefenokee Heritage Center. We recognized the importance for cultural enrichment and enhancing the quality of life in this area. Led by Dr. and Mrs. Robert C. Smith, we insisted on having art exhibits from local and national sources that would change periodically. On the architect's earliest drawings of room space, the Smith's had named the entrance the Galleria. We insisted on a higher ceiling for better visibility of the visual arts displayed in that area.

A few years after the award of the first grant by the GCA, we received notice that a representative, Ms. Jane Feiler of Savannah, would like to come visit the Heritage Center to evaluate our art activities. One of her first questions was if we could see any difference in the appreciation of art in the area since our opening. Our response was that prior to our opening we Trustees could recall only one art exhibit, at least since the 1930s, that had ever been held in Waycross. It was a display of paintings that was hung for a short time in the 1980s in a few empty rooms of a home for nurses near the local hospital on State Street. It had been fairly well attended. Someone added that the first reception honoring individual artists after the Heritage Center opened, we had only two attendees other than Trustees, but by the time of Ms. Feiler's visit we were having as many as fifteen to twenty-five on an average.

Judge Benjamin Harrison Smith, Jr., a well-known and beloved artist himself, began organizing a Juried Art Show in 1978 for Georgia artists and that has continued. He made personal calls to raise funds for prizes. The result has been an unusually active interest in promoting the arts and has been of great importance to the Heritage Center. In 2004, he was elected to be an Honorary Member of the Heritage Center Board of Trustees and in 2010 Trustees voted to call them the Judge Ben Smith Art Competition.

Two of our earliest recognized artists were Roy Moore and his daughter Ellen Moore. He was especially fond of painting scenes that illustrate historical local events. Another early artist was Jerry Luke who wins awards often. He has held classes and has assisted us in many other ways.

One local artist, Roland Thurston(since passed), has been especially helpful in increasing interest in our art program. He has taught numerous classes and held workshops. He enjoys painting murals and has done three recently. One, in the east end of our WareHouse, is a rural scene including a steam locomotive puffing through the landscape. Another is in an abandoned highway underpass on Plant Avenue, and third is a scene in Blackshear celebrating its Sesquicentennial. He has been extraordinarily generous with his time and talent in this area. Our first art exhibit was on loan from the University of Georgia Art Bus, a mobile exhibit that featured artists from throughout Georgia using a variety of media and techniques. Among others who have exhibited with us are well-known regional artists. In a few instances, we had SITES exhibits from the Smithsonian Institution. They are listed here under Special Exhibits. A variety of exhibits called cabinet exhibits that change occasionally are displayed in the Galleria in a handsome antique oak and glass cabinet from an early merchandiser.

Charlotte de La Vergne has been involved with the museum for many years. She served as president of the museum, has generously taken many photographs for the museum and others through the years, was a charter member of our photography guild, and with her husband, Don, has been a loyal member of the Billy Bowlegs Society. At our request she has taken many of the photographs for our history. (continued on page 3)

## OHC Calendar

<b>APR</b>	<b>Steve Bean Exhibit</b>	<b>Art</b>	<b>Gallery</b>
Tues -	Line Dance Classes		6PM
2 -	OHC Board of Trustees		12PM
3 -	Performing Arts Mtg		6PM
8 -	OHC Photography Guild		6:30PM
16 -	Clover Heritage @ OHC		4-6PM
17 -	Improv Class		6PM
19 -	Handgun Safety Class		9-12PM
20 -	Easter		
22 -	OHC Art Guild		5:30PM
25 -	OHC History Guild		6PM
26 -	OHC Clean Up Day		9AM-12PM
27 -	Steve Bean Art Reception		2-4PM
<b>MAY</b>	<b>REIMAGINE Art Exhibit</b>	<b>Gallery</b>	
Tues -	Line Dance Classes		6PM
1 -	Performing Arts		6PM
3 -	Okefenokee Folk Festival		10AM-3PM
7 -	OHC Board of Trustees		4-6PM
8 -	OHC Learning Series		10:30AM / 6PM
12 -	REIMAGINE Art Begins		To 6/20
13 -	OHC Photography Guild		6:30PM
14 -	Clover Heritage @4-H		4PM
15 -	REIMAGINE Ribbon Cutting / BHA		5PM
20 -	Black Heritage Committee		6PM
23 -	OHC History Guild		6PM
27 -	OHC Art Guild		5:30PM
<b>JUNE</b>	<b>REIMAGINE Art Exhibit</b>	<b>Gallery</b>	
Tues -	Line Dance Classes		6PM
4 -	OHC Board of Trustees		12PM
5 -	Performing Arts		6PM
7 -	WayGreen Local Fare Mkt		10AM-1PM
10 -	OHC Photography Guild		6-9PM
24 -	OHC Art Guild		5:30PM
27 -	OHC History Guild		6PM

## **NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR:**

The first quarter at OHC has flown by! Our campus was a "Winter Wonderland" in January, and in February we had a very successful Black History Month Art Exhibitions at OHC as well as Ameris Bank and Antioch Baptist Church. A lifelong OHC Board member, Mr. Dave Callaway passed away in February. He will be greatly missed by the entire community. We held our 10th Annual Okefenokee Color Run in March and it was a HUGE success! In April we will, once again, host the much anticipated Steve Bean Youth Art Exhibition, with reception on April 27th. May proves to be a VERY exciting month with the 2nd Annual Okefenokee Folk Festival, the REIMAGINE Contemporary Art Exhibition, sponsored by the Georgia Council for the Arts. AND, we will hold our OHC 50th Anniversary Golden Bowl Celebration on Saturday, May 31st!! We hope you all will come out and celebrate this amazing accomplishment of 50 YEARS!! Here's to the next 50!

The Okefenokee Heritage Center, we're on the right track!!

Carla Garrett Cornett, Executive Director



## **CHECK OUT WHAT'S HAPPENING!**

### **Basic Handgun Carry & Fundamentals Class**



Training Provided By:  
**Dale Wiley**  
Certified Firearms & Active Shooter  
Instructor  
[www.wileyinvestigations.com](http://www.wileyinvestigations.com)

- When: Saturday, April 19 from 9-12 am
- Location: Okefenokee Heritage Center
  - 1460 North Augusta Avenue, Waycross
- Cost: \$35
  - Includes Free 1-year OHC Membership
- Covers Law, Safety, & Fundamentals of Shooting
- Classroom Only



To Register, call the OHC at  
(912) 285-4260



## Annual Steve Bean Youth Art Show

April 2025

Presented by the Okefenokee Heritage Center

Artwork will be on display in the gallery in April at the Okefenokee Heritage Center's art gallery.

All art mediums and styles welcome!

Elementary - Highschool Students

\* Entries must be submitted at the Okefenokee Heritage Center at 1460 N Augusta Ave. Waycross by 2PM, March 29th.

Art Reception to follow gallery show on April 27th from 3-5pm.

For more information:  
912-285-4260 | [okeheritage@gmail.com](mailto:okeheritage@gmail.com)

## 2nd Annual Okefenokee Folk Festival

~ Sue Clark Day ~

**SATURDAY, May 3rd, 10AM - 3PM**

Partnering with WayGreen and the Local Fare Market

Okefenokee Heritage Center  
1460 N. Augusta Ave.

For more information:  
912-285-4260

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## The Okefenokee Heritage Center presents

### 50th Anniversary Golden Bowl Celebration

**Saturday, May 31, 2025 ~ 6PM**

FUN ~ FOOD ~ FESTIVITIES

Honoring Our Past  
Celebrating Our Future



## Special Events:.



**OHC Board of Trustees ~ 2025**



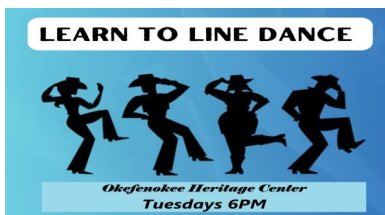
**Snow at OHC ~ Jan 2025**



**John Jordan Art Exhibition ~ March 2025**



**10th Annual Okefenokee Color Run Winners ~ 2025**



OHC Board member, Dave Callaway  
Mr. David Ben "Dave" Callaway, Sr., 74, died  
February 16, 2025. ~ He will be greatly missed.



(Continued from page 1)

Rev. Larry Lane was a leader in forming the photography guild and has been a faithful teacher of photography classes. He moved away in 2009 but has continued to be interested and active.

Wayne Morgan has been a Trustee since 2008. A skilled photographer, he has won first place in the juried shows for his work for the past three years, 2008, 2009 and 2010.

Marie Matthews, one of the premier watercolorists in Georgia, grew up in Waycross and is a graduate of Smith College. She won two first-place awards, in the Okefenokee Heritage Center's annual juried show in 2006. She had a one-person show at the Heritage Center in 2008 and conducted a workshop at the Center in 2010. She is a signature member of the Southern Watercolor Society and Georgia Watercolor Society and has won numerous awards including the gold medal from the Southern Watercolor Society, first place from the Georgia Watercolor Society, and five first-place awards from the Atlanta Artists Center. Her work appears in many collections throughout the country, including the McKenna Museum of African American Art in New Orleans. Marie teaches watercolor, portrait, and plein art classes at Chastain Arts Center in Atlanta. H H

Angela Renée Moses spent most her youth in Waycross, where she graduated from Waycross High School in 1981. Throughout her youth, she always showed an interest in and a talent for drawing, in particular portraits and the human form. Renée is a realist whose drawings and painting emphasize light and shadow. In addition to appearing in juried exhibitions, several of her pieces are among the permanent collection of the Social Science Department of Kennesaw State University. She also has pieces in private collections in Georgia, Arizona and Kansas. Renée currently resided in Lithonia, Georgia with her husband and two children.

Gail Walker, a new resident to Waycross, has won two top ribbons each year in the last three juried art shows.



**Black History Month Art Exhibition ~ Feb '25**



# Okefenokee Heritage Center

1460 N. Augusta Avenue  
Waycross, GA 31503  
912-285-4260

[www.okefenokeeheritagecenter.com](http://www.okefenokeeheritagecenter.com)

## OHC Mission Statement:

The Okefenokee Heritage Center is a cultural art center and local history museum for all people, which seeks to promote an appreciation of the arts and an increased understanding of history and development of the Okefenokee region through its cultural and educational programs, collections, and exhibitions.

*Proudly serving Atkinson, Bacon, Brantley, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Pierce & Ware.*



## **OHC Board of Trustees 2024/25**

Stephen Winge, Chairman  
Dale Wiley, Vice Chair  
LaFerrell Barnes, Treasurer  
Alan Jones, Past Chair  
Mr. Joseph Johnson, Jr., Legal Counsel

*Nancy King	Allen Allnoch
*Dr. S. William Clark	Vicki Kuhbander
*John Jordan	Steve Strickland
Frank Bartanowitz	Rosa Douglas
Leslie Ranew	Phyllis Perry
Susan Newman	Kristy Foreman
Jenny Sweat	Robert Brown
Keith Jeffers	Donna Cox

\* Denotes Life Member

### Ex Officio Members:

Dr. Brandon Carter, RESA  
Greg Smith, City of Waycross

Honorary Member: Zane Williams

### Staff:

Carla Garrett Cornett, Executive Director  
Sherian Barnes, Office Manager



A special thanks to ALL of our  
**OHC Members!!**  
**Thanks to YOU....**  
**“We’re on the Right Track”!**

## Invite a friend to join the Okefenokee Heritage Center

Individual	\$36
Family	\$60
Heritage Club	\$100
Sue Clark Society	\$200
Small Business	\$150
Business Sponsor	\$500
Corporate Sponsor	\$1,000
Corporate Partners	\$5,000
* Join one of our many Guilds	

**All donations are tax deductible**

## RENT OUR SPACE

You can rent the facilities at the Okefenokee Heritage Center for parties, reunions, etc.

Community Room	\$250
Community/Kitchen	\$300
Depot	\$300
The Venue	\$250
Warehouse/ Depot	\$400
Grounds	\$200

(Tables & Chairs available for rent)  
For more information call:  
912-285-4260

**Visit us on Facebook**  
For Updates on Events



**And on YouTube**  
For video interviews  
[okeheritage@gmail.com](mailto:okeheritage@gmail.com)

