



Carry on

Celebrating Twenty Years of
the Alabama Folk Arts
Apprenticeship Program

20

Alabama State Council on the Arts
Alabama Center for Traditional Culture

Photography by Mark Gooch



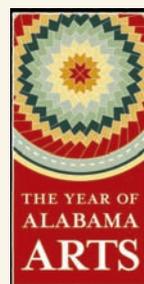
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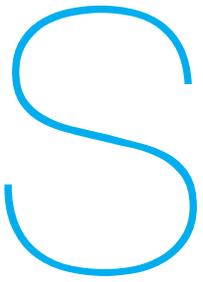
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The Mission of the Alabama State Council on the Arts is to enhance quality of life in Alabama culturally, economically, and educationally by supporting the state's diverse and rich artistic resources.

The Alabama Center for Traditional Culture, a division of the Alabama State Council on the Arts, strives to document, preserve and present Alabama's folk culture and traditional arts and to further the understanding of our cultural heritage.

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Front cover photo: Matt Downer and his grandfather, Wayne Heard of Ider.
Back cover photo: Sylvia Stephens, Ashlee Harris, and Mozell Benson; three generations of quilters at Mrs. Benson's studio in Waverly.



Since 1984, the Alabama State Council on the Arts (ASCA) has awarded Folk Arts Apprenticeship grants to more than 100 master folk artists for teaching their art forms. Prospective students who have entered into an agreement with a master folk artist have also been allowed to apply for and receive Apprenticeship grants. These grants are one of the primary “preservation” tools of the Alabama Center for Traditional Culture whose mission is “to research, document and preserve the state’s folk cultures.” The Alabama Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program was designed to ensure the transmission of a diversity of folk skills from Sacred Harp singing to pottery making, using the traditional master-apprenticeship system.

Introduction

Carry On: Celebrating Twenty Years of Alabama’s Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program

By Joey Brackner and Anne Kimzey

The master-apprentice system is a time-honored method for teaching complex skills from one generation to the next. This process allows for the most advantageous teacher-student ratio and fosters serious instruction. Artistic skills in music and crafts have been taught this way since before the invention of written language. The basic components of this learning process — direct association with the teacher and immersion in a subject — are also at the heart of what defines folk art. Art traditions that emerge from the values and aesthetics of a community are folk arts. These communities can be the family, regional, religious, and residential but all offer a context for folk art traditions.

ASCA began the Apprenticeship Program in the fall of 1984 and for the first thirteen years depended on annual grants from the National Endowment for the Arts Folk and Traditional Arts Program. Hank Willett, who also administered the first year of grants, wrote the initial NEA proposal. During this period, NEA Folk and Traditional Arts Program directors Bess Lomax Hawes, Dan Sheehy and Barry Bergey assisted ASCA with the application process. Since 1997, Apprenticeship grants have been funded with state appropriations. Joey Brackner ran the program from 1985 until 2003 and Anne Kimzey took over in 2004.

Adjudication of apprenticeship applications is a complex, competitive and difficult process. The criteria for the program stress both traditionalism and excellence and mastery of a folk art tradition. To ascertain whether an applicant meets these standards, administrators of the Apprenticeship Program have relied on fieldwork, site visits, samples of work and an expert review panel of folklorists and other scholars.

Once awarded, these grants help in a variety of ways: compensating a master artist for teaching time, helping to defray the cost of supplies and materials, or even assisting with transportation costs that might otherwise have been a barrier to the teaching relationship. A few master artists have even purchased musical instruments for their students.

Apart from the funding assistance, being selected for the Apprenticeship Program gives recognition and exposure to artists and their art forms, often leading to new opportunities for selling, teaching, performing or demonstrating their art.

There have been countless successes in the Apprenticeship Program. In some cases, apprentices have become so skilled that they have become highly regarded basket makers, quilters or musicians themselves. Several who first participated in the program as students have gone on to become recognized as masters and have received support to teach the next generation of students.

The master artists in the Apprenticeship Program represent some of Alabama's true cultural treasures. In fact, eight Apprenticeship masters have received the Alabama Folk Heritage Award, the state's highest honor for traditional arts. These artists are: Sacred Harp singing master Japheth Jackson, blues musician Johnny Shines, quilter Nora Ezell, fiddler Noah Lacy, quilter Bettye Kimbrell, Christian Harmony singing master Art Deason, blues harmonica player Bo McGee, traditional potter Jerry Brown, bluegrass gospel musicians Margie and Enoch Sullivan, and blues harmonica player Jerry McCain. In 2007, the quilters of Gee's Bend, several of whom have taught in the

Apprenticeship Program, received a special Living Legacy Award from the State Arts Council.

Three of our master artists have been recognized as national treasures, including Jerry Brown, Nora Ezell and quilter Mozell Benson, who received National Heritage Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Alabama is known nationally and even internationally for its richness in expressions of folk culture, especially for its strong traditions in shape-note singing, quilting, African-American *a capella* gospel quartet singing, and for its blues performers and bluegrass gospel groups who tour the country and overseas.

The Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program has supported these and other craft, music and dance traditions that are rooted in the Native American, African and European cultures that have shared in our state's history. In addition, the program has supported the arts brought by newer immigrants to the state, such as Southeast Asian, Indian and Latin American groups, who recognize the importance of helping their children maintain a connection to their cultural heritage. As Indian *rangoli* artist Amita Bhakta of Florence stated, "a strong tree has to have strong roots. We must nurture the young by helping them find their own identity by educating them about where they come from."

This is the value in preserving the cherished cultural traditions in Alabama. It helps us remember who we are as Alabamians and where we came from. The Alabama Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program is one way to help these important traditional arts carry on to the next generation.



Fiddler James Bryan of Mentone plays music in his garden with students Melanie Taylor (left) and Rachel Bryan.

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William Bailey

Atmore
Creek Indian Language and Culture

The Poarch community of Creek Indians near Atmore is Alabama's only federally recognized Native American tribe. For more than a decade, William Bailey has been instrumental in bringing Creek elders from Oklahoma to teach the language and to help reintroduce traditions that were no longer practiced in Alabama. The Creek language, a foundation of tribal culture, was the focus of early apprenticeship projects. William built on this effort, working with other tribal members to reestablish the stomp dance and traditional ceremonies in his community. He visited Oklahoma to work with Creek elders such as George Bunny and Sam Proctor, learning about medicinal herbs, making ball sticks and blow guns, and other traditional practices and teaching these skills through the Apprenticeship Program.



Loretta Bennett

Huntsville
Quilting

Loretta Bennett of Huntsville grew up in Gee's Bend in Wilcox County, the daughter of quilter Qunnie Pettway. She remembers pounding cotton as a child to be used as the batting, or middle layer, of quilts. At age 13, she tried making her first quilt, a Flower Garden design. But it wasn't until she married and moved away that she really developed an interest in learning the craft. She received a Folk Arts Apprenticeship grant in 2003 to study quilting with Qunnie Pettway. Together they made the intricate Pine Burr, the official state quilt of Alabama. Bennett is now recognized as a master artist, teaching others through the Folk Arts Apprenticeship program. Her quilts appear in the book *Gee's Bend: The Architecture of the Quilt*.





Mozell Benson
Waverly
Quilting

Sylvia Stephens
Opelika
Quilting

African-American quilter and 2001 National Heritage Award recipient, Mozell Benson grew up in rural Lee County near Waverly. She and her three sisters learned to quilt by helping their mother piece together scraps of cloth, “backs of pants legs, shirt backs, feed sacks and whatever anyone else would give us,” she said. Mrs. Benson prefers to use old blankets as the middle layer, tacking the quilt together with evenly spaced knots. Her work has been featured in Maude Wahlman’s book and exhibition *Signs and Symbols: African Images in African-American Quilts*. Mozell Benson’s daughter Sylvia Stephens was inspired to learn to quilt when her mother gained national recognition and mentioned to an interviewer that none of her ten children had taken up her craft. Stephens, now an accomplished quilter herself, said, “while studying with Mom, I have come to understand how quilting has served both the need to provide warm covers for family beds and also offered a creative form of expression using fabrics.”



Sharon Bounds is a champion fiddler from Northport, Alabama. A daughter and granddaughter of fiddlers, she began playing at age 11. Sharon has won many contests over the years, and is a former Alabama and Mississippi state champion and has placed in the top 10 seven times in the national Grand Master Fiddler Championship in Nashville.

She plays a variety of styles from contest and bluegrass to country, gospel, and Cajun. With more than 20 years of teaching and performing experience, she often judges fiddle contests around the Southeast. As a master artist in the Alabama Folk Arts Apprenticeship program, she taught a number of students in the Tuscaloosa area. Her son Brandon is now continuing in the family music tradition.

Sharon Bounds
Northport
Fiddle

Jerry Brown is a ninth generation potter who makes primarily utilitarian forms such as jugs, churns, and bowls, as well as face jugs and other figural forms. As a child, Jerry trained with his father and uncles in the family pottery shop. After the death of his brother and father, Jerry gave up pottery and worked in logging for 20 years until returning to the pottery business in 1982. In 1986 he was the subject of the Appalshop film *Unbroken Tradition*. He received a National Heritage Fellowship and an Alabama Folk Heritage Award. Through the Apprenticeship Program, he trained his son, Jeff Brown, and step-children, Jeff and Tammy Wilburn. He also worked with M.C. Jerkins and Joey Froelich. Jerry and his wife Sandra operate their pottery shop near Highway 78 in Hamilton.

Jerry Brown
Hamilton
Pottery



James Bryan is considered one of the nation's finest old-time fiddlers, bringing a rich tone and intense feeling to a highly traditional style of fiddling. He began playing at age 11, learning from his father Joe, an old-time musician himself. Encouraged by his father, James learned from many of Sand Mountain's old-time fiddlers. He continues to seek out tunes from old recordings and books and has developed a huge repertoire.

"I look for more obscure tunes and styles that are not heard much any more," he said.

"I try to promote traditional music on whatever level I'm able and encourage others to do the same." His work with apprentices, such as his daughter Rachel and fiddler Melanie Taylor, is further evidence of his commitment to maintaining old-time musical traditions.

James Bryan
Mentone
[Old-time Fiddle](#)

Gwen Chafin of Arab was a student of her father Jesse Thomason and later developed as a master artist in her own right. He taught her how to use white oak strips to bottom chairs and to construct several basket types, including the intricate egg basket. Later she helped him teach students including Carolyn Chafin and Beverly Thomason. She now demonstrates her craft at heritage programs in the Hoover city schools and participates in festivals such as Kentuck in Northport and Homestead Hollow in Springville. Chafin's chair bottoming and caning skills are especially in demand. Each year she teaches chair caning at the John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, North Carolina.

Gwen Chafin
Arab
[White Oak Baskets](#)

Rachel Bryan
Mentone
Old-time Music

Melanie Taylor
Birmingham
Fiddle



Melanie Taylor (left), James and Rachel Bryan.

Rachel Bryan began playing old-time music at age 14 when her father, fiddler James Bryan, recognized her natural sense of rhythm and encouraged her to learn guitar. She now regularly accompanies her father when he plays. In addition to her father, Rachel has learned from guitarist Norman Blake and mandolin player Carl Jones. She plays fiddle and mandolin as well as the guitar. In April 2007, Rachel and her father appeared on a broadcast of *A Prairie Home Companion* along with Norman and Nancy Blake.

Melanie Taylor has been around bluegrass and old-time music all her life, but didn't begin playing herself until she was an adult. She met fiddler James Bryan at Birmingham's City Stages festival and told him she was learning to play the fiddle, a conversation that eventually led to participation in the Apprenticeship Program. Melanie said that she has learned much more than technique in the process. "I've learned tunes from James that I'd never learn from anyone else."

Art Deason

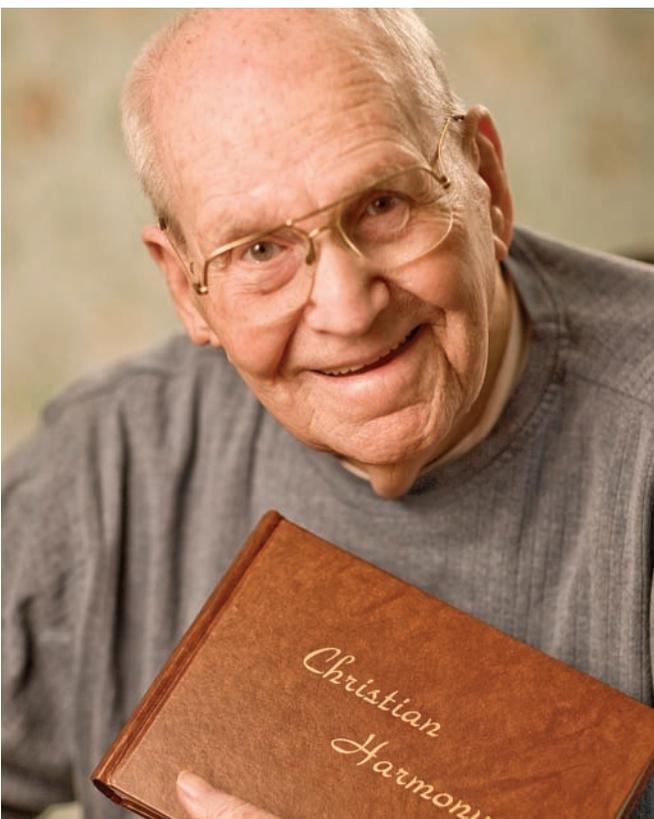
Centreville
[Christian Harmony Singing](#)

Arthur L. Deason is a revered singing school master, composer and dedicated promoter of his family's tradition of Christian Harmony singing, the oldest of the active seven-shape traditions in the South. The *Christian Harmony* songbook, originally published in 1866 by South Carolinian William Walker, is now published in Alabama (1958 and 1994 revisions). Art Deason chaired the 1994 revision committee. He has taught singing schools in at least nine counties in west central and northwest Alabama. He founded the annual Capitol City Shape Note Singing in Montgomery where singers have gathered every July for 20 years to sing from the four shape-note hymnals published in Alabama. In 1997, Mr. Deason received the Alabama Folk Heritage Award from the Alabama State Council on the Arts.

Matt Downer

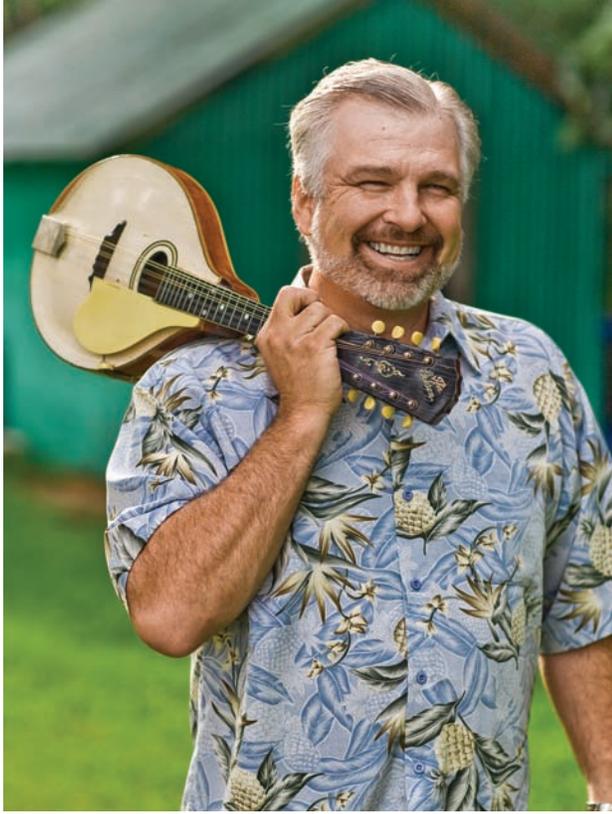
Ider
[Guitar, Dobro](#)

Sand Mountain native Matt Downer has a deep appreciation for the musical heritage of his family and community. He learned rhythm guitar from his grandfather, Wayne Heard, a skilled dobro player and songwriter. In 1998, he began seeking out and recording northeast Alabama's elder traditional musicians, including Jess Moore and Chester Lacy. He later began working with Cast King, a highly regarded Sand Mountain country singer and guitarist. Their apprenticeship resulted in an ongoing musical partnership. In 2006, they recorded a CD that that was well received by critics and brought Mr. King's songs to a new audience. In an apprenticeship with his grandfather, Matt studied Mr. Heard's style of dobro playing and large repertoire of traditional songs.









Dennis George, a native of Sand Mountain, is a talented musician who plays mandolin, guitar, fiddle and dobro. He does his apprenticeship teaching at the local high school, where he has involved other excellent area bluegrass and old-time musicians. His students are learning a variety of old-time string band instruments. George is an original member of the Melody Men, a southern gospel group that was once featured on *A Prairie Home Companion*. In addition to old-time string music, George is also a singer of both Sacred Harp and seven-shape note gospel convention music and is a published songwriter of the latter genre. He was one of the Sacred Harp singers featured on the soundtrack of the film *Cold Mountain*.

Dennis George
Fyffe
Bluegrass



Allen Ham is one of the Ham family of potters who have been making pottery in Alabama for more than 150 years. He is the also the grandson of potter Hendon Miller and was trained mainly in his maternal grandfather's shop in Brent. He, his uncle Eric Miller, cousins Kenneth Miller and Sherman Hughey made pottery at the Highway 5 shop during the 1970s and early 1980s. In 1992 Allen Ham went to work for the Alabama Department of Transportation and now makes pottery on weekends at the Miller pottery or at a pottery shop in Clanton. He is planning to open his own shop in Perry County. His Apprenticeship students have included Benjie Harrison, Elizabeth Ham, Nancy Harrison, and Eddie Dozier.

Allen Ham
Selma
Pottery

José Hernandez
Mariachi Garibaldi
Montgomery
Mariachi

José “Evaristo” Hernandez was born in Nicaragua and received formal music training at the national Conservatory in Managua. He was introduced to the music of mariachi while playing for the well-known group Cocibolca in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Ecuador. He immigrated to New York in 1988, forming his own band Mariachi Garibaldi. They moved south, eventually settling in Montgomery. Hernandez plays the *vihuela* and sings, but usually has other band members take leading roles in performances. Mariachi Garibaldi is a professional group that performs six days a week, often at Mexican restaurants and private parties. They are also in demand at Hispanic cultural and religious events such as Cinco de Mayo and the festivities for Our Lady of Guadalupe.



José Hernandez (second from left) and his band, Mariachi Garibaldi.

Mary Hicks
Eutaw
Pine Needle Baskets

Annette Jordan
Eutaw
Pine Needle Baskets



Annette Jordan (left) and Mary Hicks with their pine needle baskets and hats.

Mary Hicks of Eutaw in Greene County is a practitioner of pine needle basketry. From the late Mabel Means, she learned to make basic coiled baskets out of bundles of pine needles bound together with thread or raffia. But she has expanded her work, adding decorative elements, such as corn shuck bows, and coming up with her own designs. In addition to baskets she now makes hats, placemats, letter holders and purses. Mary Hicks has taught many students through the Apprenticeship Program, including daughters Annette Jordan, Wanda Hughes, and Jeannette Lancaster. Wanda and Jeannette have since moved out of state, but Annette and her mother continue to teach students. Annette Jordan has served as a master artist on the Apprenticeship Program for many years. She and her mother have taught workshops and given demonstrations in schools in Hoover, Eutaw and Boligee. They also show their work at Tannehill State Park, the Black Belt Folk Roots Festival in Eutaw, and festivals in Thomasville and Grove Hill.

Wayne Heard

Henagar
Dobro

Wayne Heard of Henagar learned to play the dobro more than 65 years ago.

Like many other Sand Mountain musicians, he learned from a relative, his uncle Marvin. Heard plays a large repertoire of traditional songs and tunes. He is a fine songwriter as well. Although he never played professionally, he frequently made music with those who earned their living as musicians, including Charlie and Ira Louvin and Cast King. Now in his eighties, Mr. Heard has a deep knowledge of north Alabama's traditional music. His student Matt Downer, who is his grandson, found this wealth of information just as important as the style of playing he learned. Through the Apprenticeship Program, grandfather and grandson continued the rich musical heritage of their region.

David Ivey

Huntsville
Sacred Harp Singing

David Ivey has played an important role in sustaining the tradition of Sacred Harp singing in north Alabama. A singer since his childhood in Henagar, he attended singing schools under such notable singing masters as Hugh McGraw and Leonard Lacy. Through the Apprenticeship Program, he taught singing schools in numerous Alabama communities for several years. Mr. Ivey often takes part in all-day singings around the state, regularly "pitching" or "keying" music as a front bench tenor. He has held leadership positions with local and state singing conventions, the Sacred Harp Publishing Company, and the Sacred Harp Musical Heritage Association. He also co-founded and directs Camp Fasola, an innovative program in which children and adults learn Sacred Harp singing in a summer camp setting.





The first time he ever saw a fiddle as a child, Gene Ivey knew he was meant to play the instrument. By the age of 9 he was working out his first tunes on a tin fiddle from Sears and Roebuck. More than seven decades later, he is still playing music, most often on a fiddle he made himself. As a master artist in the Apprenticeship Program, he has worked with more than two dozen apprentices, several of whom learned instrument making as well as fiddling. Mr. Ivey is also responsible for hosting an annual picnic in his hometown of Ider on Sand Mountain that draws fiddlers from around the Southeast to swap tunes and play together.

William E. “Gene” Ivey
Ider
[Fiddle, Instrument Making](#)

Henry Japheth Jackson of Ozark is a leader in the African-American Sacred Harp community of southeast Alabama. He was taught the music by his father, the famous Judge Jackson, who authored *The Colored Sacred Harp* in 1934. The research of folklorist Joe Dan Boyd brought the singers national attention when they were invited to perform at the Smithsonian’s Festival of American Folklife in 1970. Since then, the Wiregrass Sacred Harp Singers have performed all over the United States. Jackson, along with the late Dewey Williams, worked to keep this community tradition alive through singing schools, television and radio programs and by issuing three reprints of his father’s songbook. Japheth Jackson received the Alabama Folk Heritage Award in 1988.

Japheth Jackson
Ozark
[Sacred Harp Singing](#)

Brother and sister Floyd Jackson and Freda Randall of Demopolis teach their family tradition of white oak basketry to students in Marengo County. As younger members of the Johnson-Jackson family of basket makers, they often teach with their great uncle R.C. Johnson and mother Estelle Jackson. R.C. Johnson said he and his brother, the late Sterling Johnson, learned to make baskets from their father. He remembers at age 6 sitting underneath an overturned cotton basket, helping to pull the oak strips through from the inside. Back then, they made cotton baskets all winter long and sold them for 25 cents a basket. Sterling Johnson taught his wife Mary Ella and his children the craft. His daughter Estelle said she worked all day at her job and then made baskets all evening to help her parents finish an order. In 2000, Auburn University's Rural Studio architecture program built a basket shop for the family. They sell baskets at festivals in Livingston, Marion, Thomaston and at Gaineswood in Demopolis.

Seated left to right: Terrell Jackson, R.C. Johnson, Estelle Jackson (holding photo of her father Sterling Johnson).
Standing in back: Floyd Jackson, Freda Randall. Children standing: Anthony and Mary Randall.



Floyd Jackson
Demopolis
[White Oak Baskets](#)

Freda Randall
Demopolis
[White Oak Baskets](#)

Marcus Johnson (left) and the Bay City Brass Band.



Trombonist and bandleader Marcus Johnson has been a force in reviving the brass band tradition in Mobile. When he joined the Olympia Brass Band in 1994, it was one of two brass bands in Mobile. Their music was heard at Mardi Gras and rarely any other time. Johnson refined his understanding of brass band music while playing with Olympia. In 1997, he started the Bay City Brass Band, which has become one of Mobile's most active bands, playing for parties, Mardi Gras parades and in traditional funeral processions. He has taught his improvisational style to more than 20 students through the Apprenticeship Program. Due to his music preservation efforts, he was selected to participate in the 2006 Community Scholars Institute.

Marcus Johnson
Bay City Brass Band
Mobile
Brass Band

George Jones

Florence

Broom Making

George Jones is the fourth generation of his family to make brooms in Lauderdale County. He harvests broomcorn, a variety of sorghum, and makes his brooms using the same traditional techniques, tools, and materials that his grandfather used. But he is innovative in making the handles. “I look for handles that have had vines twist the stick like a cork screw,” he says. “These are truly prized because they are harder to find. I also look for straight handles that I can carve.” He makes 20 styles of brooms, all of which are characterized by imaginative use of natural markings or carved or painted handles. Jones taught in the Apprenticeship Program in 1996 and received an ASCA Craft Fellowship in 2007.



Bettye Kimbrell

Mount Olive (Jefferson County)

Quilting

Bettye Kimbrell is one of the South's outstanding traditional hand quilters known for her precise needlework and dedication to her craft. Born and raised in Fayette County, Bettye learned quilting from her grandmother. She later moved to Mount Olive in Jefferson County where she founded the North Jefferson Quilters' Guild. She has won many prizes for her work, including a Best of Show award at the Kentuck Festival in Northport and the Constitutional Quilt Contest sponsored by the Southern Highland Handcraft Guild. She received the Alabama Folk Heritage Award in 1995. A master artist on the Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program, she also teaches classes at the Mt. Olive Community Center and at the John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, North Carolina.









Cast King grew up on Sand Mountain where he formed his first band around the age of 15, which played for local audiences. He performed in a succession of bands after that, playing bluegrass and country music throughout the region. “I guess I rode a million miles under a bass fiddle,” he recalled. As the founder and leader of Cast King and the Country Drifters, he recorded a number of sides for Sun Records in the early 1950s. An accomplished guitarist and fiddler, he has also written more than 500 songs and is a skilled arranger. In recent years he has worked with apprentice Matt Downer. Their 2006 CD, *Sawmill Man*, which he recorded at the age of 79, was well received by critics.

Cast King
Pisgah
Country Music

Willie King of Old Memphis in Pickens County is a blues musician, songwriter, community activist, and mentor to scores of young people. Born in Prairie Point, Mississippi, Willie was raised by his grandparents, who were sharecroppers. He took an early interest in music, making an improvised guitar by fastening bailing wire to a broom handle. By age 13, he had a real guitar and was playing house parties. In addition to working with the Apprenticeship Program, he takes the blues into classrooms through the Alabama Blues Project, and hosts the annual Freedom Creek Blues Festival near his home in west Alabama. In 2004 he received a music fellowship from the Alabama State Council on the Arts. He is the subject of the 2007 Dutch documentary film *Down in the Woods*.

Willie King
Aliceville
Blues



Sheila McFerran, an Irish step dancer from Madison, was born in Dublin, Ireland and moved to Alabama in 1980. She began dancing at the age of 5 at the Caldwell School of Dance in Dublin and danced with the award-winning Caldwell student troupe until the age of 17. In Alabama, she found that she was the only native Irish step dancing teacher in the state. During the late 1990s, her McFerran School of Irish Dance taught 76 students, ages 3 - 73, in the Huntsville area. She and her students performed for the Olympic torch ceremony at Jasmine Hill in 1996. Sheila and her students have performed from time to time at Celtic music events throughout the South.

Sheila McFerran
Madison
[Irish Step Dancing](#)

Eric McKinney, a native of Fort Payne, got his first guitar at the age of 8. When Eric was ready for an audience, his father recruited his colleagues at the local police station. By the time he was 10, Eric and a friend were playing concerts in the back yard. Over the years, Eric developed a distinctive flatpicking style. These days when he performs, he's on stage with bands such as J.D. Crowe and the New South or Illrd Tyme Out. He continues to teach guitar and said that he also learns from the process. *Guitar Shop*, his first CD, garnered positive reviews and Eric has been the subject of an article in *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine*.

Eric McKinney
Fort Payne
[Guitar](#)

Tina Ray Miller
Arab
Fiddle

Betty Moon Sampson
Holly Pond
Instrument Making, Bluegrass



Betty Sampson (left) and Tina Miller at the family home in Holly Pond.

Betty Moon Sampson of Holly Pond has participated in the Apprenticeship Program both as a student and as a master artist. The daughter of noted fiddler and instrument maker Arlin Moon, she learned to make and repair instruments from her father. As a master artist, Betty has taught more than a dozen students to play old-time string band and bluegrass music. She and her daughter Tina Ray Miller, a championship fiddler who also learned from her grandfather Arlin Moon, carry on the family music tradition. Their vocal duets are reminiscent of harmonizing families like the Carter Family or the Ledford Sisters. Their band was part of the *Sisters of the South* tour in the mid 1990s sponsored by the Southern Arts Federation and they often perform around the Southeast. Tina now lives in Arab, Alabama.

Eric Miller

Brent
Pottery

Traditional potter Eric Miller learned to make pottery from his father Hendon Miller and older cousins Kenneth Miller and Sherman Hughey. When Eric was young, his father moved the family pottery shop from Perry County to Bibb County on Highway 5 near Brent. Eric worked with sons Steve and Wayne on the Alabama Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program. Steve has since become a production potter. Even though the Millers moved their shop more than 40 years ago, Eric and Steve still dig clay in Perry County and bring it to Brent. The Millers make glazed utilitarian ware, such as pitchers, bowls and jugs, as well as a wide variety of unglazed horticultural ware such as bird baths and flower pots.

Lucy Mingo

Boykin
Quilting

Lucy Mingo was a member of the Freedom Quilting Bee of the 1960s and 70s and is a current artist at the Gee's Bend Quilting Cooperative in Wilcox County. At 14, she learned to piece string quilts from scraps of fabric on her mother's treadle sewing machine. Today she still prefers to make quilts from old clothing and searches thrift stores for the right materials. While raising her family, she worked in the local school cafeteria and then for the county extension service teaching people how to prepare and store food. Photos of Mrs. Mingo's work are included in the book *Gee's Bend: The Women and Their Quilts*. In the Apprenticeship Program, she taught quilting to her daughter Polly Raymond, a schoolteacher in Demopolis.





The *khene* is a bamboo wind instrument used in the traditional music of Laos. Music performed on the *khene* accompanies singing and dancing during many Lao celebrations and ceremonies. *Khene* player Reagan Ngamvilay grew up in Laos and received his musical training from his uncle. A captain in the Lao army, he was jailed after the communist takeover of his country and escaped from prison in 1979, leading 11 other political refugees to freedom in Thailand. In 1981, he was sent from the refugee camp to live in Mobile where approximately 50 Lao families were resettled. His music is often in demand at parties and celebrations. Through the Apprenticeship Program, Mr. Ngamvilay taught three young men to play the *khene*.

Reagan Ngamvilay
Mobile
[Lao Khene Music](#)

Through the Apprenticeship Program, Annie Pettway studied with Creola Pettway of Boykin. An experienced quilter herself, Annie Pettway described Creola as “one of the best quilters in Gee’s Bend.” Creola Pettway has been making quilts for more than 60 years. She and her sisters learned by watching their mother, Delia Bennett. At first she copied her mother’s patterns, but as her confidence in her skills grew, she began to create her own variations. The quilts she made then were for family use, stitched together from scraps of fabric taken from flour sacks or cast off clothing. Today her quilts are exhibited in museums around the country. Creola Pettway is a singer as well, performing with the White Rose gospel group.

Annie E. Pettway
Boykin
[Quilting](#)



Qunnie Pettway of Boykin is considered one of a select group of accomplished quilters from Gee's Bend. Her quilts have traveled in the *Quilts of Gee's Bend* exhibit to Houston, Atlanta, Boston, Milwaukee, Cleveland, Washington, D.C., and the Whitney Museum in New York. The daughter of quiltmaker Candis Pettway, Qunnie quilted with her mother and also worked for many years with the Freedom Quilting Bee making patterns such as "Bear's Paw" and "Crazy Z." Through the Apprenticeship Program, she taught her daughter Loretta Bennett to quilt. Together they made the official state quilt, the "Pine Burr," which contains more than 3,000 pieces of fabric. She remains an active quilter and continues to pass on her skills to others.

Qunnie Pettway
Boykin
Quilting

Sudha Raghuram of Montgomery performs and teaches Bharatanatyam, a classical dance of southern India characterized by rhythmic footwork, hand gestures, facial expressions and poses. She grew up in Bangalore, India where she began her dance instruction at the age of 10. She trained and danced for 15 years, performing in leading roles in major cities across India. When she returns to India to visit family, she continues her training and has added Kathak, a classical dance of northern India to her repertoire. Sudha teaches several students of Indian heritage each year at her Shivalaya School of Dance. She and her students perform at the Indian Cultural Center in Montgomery, the Hindu Temple of Alabama in Birmingham, and several festivals.

Sudha Raghuram
Montgomery
Bharatanatyam Classical Indian Dance

Odessa Rice

Eutaw
Pine Needle Baskets

Odessa Rice of Eutaw first learned to make pine needle baskets from the late Mabel Means in the mid 1980s. She now teaches others through the Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program. Making the baskets is “very relaxing,” she said. “I just get pleasure out of making them and decorating with them. And I get pleasure out of seeing other people enjoy them.” She gathers the pine needles and boils them in a solution of water, salt and vinegar. This “gives them a gloss and helps to preserve them.” It takes her three to four hours to make a small basket by bundling pine needles together, wrapping thread around them and forming coils that she sews together, adding more pine straw as she goes.



Jerry Rogers

Eastaboga
Fiddle

Jerry Rogers grew up in a family where, he said, “music was as important as the three ‘R’s.” He learned fiddling from his grandfather, Benny Rogers, who taught him many tunes. After his grandfather’s death in 1961, Mr. Rogers stopped playing fiddle for a while. More than a decade later he attended a bluegrass and old-time music festival at Horse Pens 40 in Steele and rekindled his interest in fiddle tunes. He began playing again and resolved to help preserve the music he learned from his grandfather. Through the Apprenticeship Program he has taught his traditional northeast Alabama fiddling style and repertoire to Natalie Couch, Erin Burells, Olivia Burrells, J.D. Ford and Robert Nobely, Jr.



Jeff Sheppard

Anniston
Sacred Harp Singing

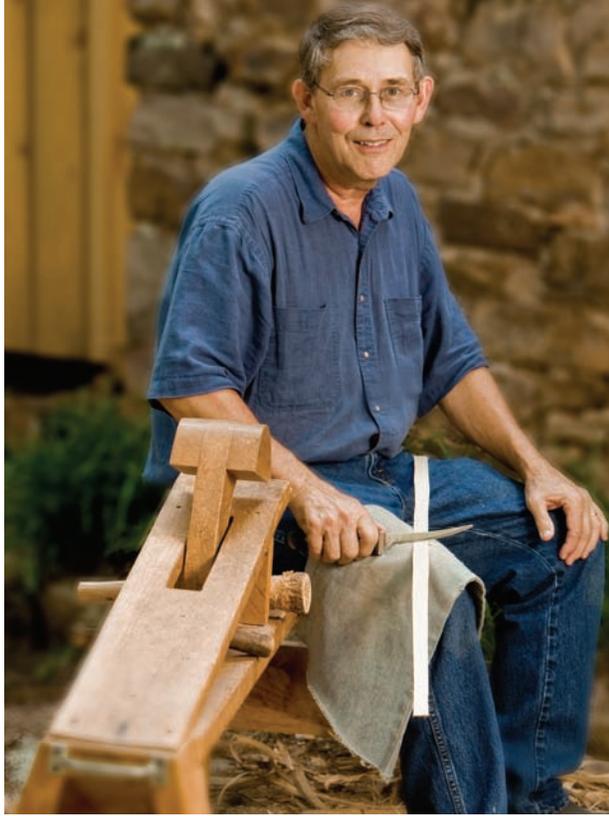
Jeff Sheppard conducted Sacred Harp singing schools at Muscadine Methodist Church, the Golden Springs Community, Oak Grove Primitive Baptist Church in Sylacauga and Cane Creek Primitive Baptist Church in Heflin during the late 1990s. He is a highly respected singing master in the “Denson book” tradition and has served as president of the Sacred Harp Musical Heritage Association and on the music committee of the Sacred Harp Publishing Company. He and his wife Shelbie have taught singing schools throughout the United States and were featured in *Awake, My Soul*, a documentary about the Sacred Harp tradition. Along with David Ivey, he has been instrumental in establishing Camp Fasola, an annual Sacred Harp educational retreat near Anniston.

Solomon Sholanke

Birmingham
Nigerian (Yoruban) Drumming

Solomon Sholanke, a native of Abeokuta, Nigeria, is a Yoruba dancer and drummer. He began learning to play drums and dance at the age of 7 as a rite of passage in the Yoruba culture. He has lived in Birmingham since 1975. His Apprenticeship students have included members of the African community of Birmingham as well as other interested youngsters. He and his Osumare African Cultural Drum and Dance Ensemble perform at festivals throughout the Southeast as well as for educational programs in schools and at teachers’ workshops. Solomon Sholanke is most known for his mastery of the *dundun*, or “talking drum,” an hourglass-shaped drum whose tones can be changed by squeezing cords that run along its length.





Basket maker Bill Smith began his apprenticeship with Blount County basket maker Jesse Thomason in 1992. Over the next decade, he and his wife Mary, also an apprentice, worked with Mr. Thomason, learning every aspect of the basket making process. Like his mentor, Bill enjoys the challenge of working with varied forms and materials.

Both he and Mary are capable of “going from tree to basket,” but usually they work on separate parts of a basket. Bill does the splitting and preparing materials while she designs and weaves the baskets. In addition to traditional styles such as Mr. Thomason’s egg, or “bow” basket, they often adapt other functional forms, such as a back pack, to white oak.

Bill Smith
McCalla
[White Oak Baskets](#)

When Mary Ann Smith first approached the late Jesse Thomason about learning to make white oak baskets, the master basket maker handed her a small piece of wood. “He told me to take it home, split it, and try to make a basket,” she recalled. “He wanted to know that I understood the amount of work involved.” She returned with her first attempt and began working with Mr. Thomason. More than 15 years later, Mary Ann and her husband Bill are the resident basket makers at Tannehill State Park near their home in McCalla. Their work reflects Mr. Thomason’s influence and includes some innovations of their own, such as incorporating various types of bark to add color and texture to their designs.

Mary Ann Smith
McCalla
[White Oak Baskets](#)



Stanley Smith of Ozark is a Sacred Harp singer and composer who grew up attending both white and black singings in the Wiregrass region of the state. Mr. Smith is a relatively young singing master active in the “Cooper book” tradition, a revision of B.F. White’s *The Sacred Harp*. He served on the revision committee for both the 1992 and 2006 printings of the Cooper book. As part of the Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program, Stanley Smith conducted singing schools at the Pioneer Museum of Alabama in Troy in 1990 and 1995. He is also past president of the Alabama State Gospel Singing Convention and has written and published a number of compositions in this seven-shape note “new book” genre.

Stanley Smith
Ozark
Sacred Harp Singing

Gail Thrower is a Poarch Creek Indian from Escambia County who served many years as historian and librarian for the tribe. She is the only granddaughter of the last tribal medicine man and has extensive knowledge of tribal lore. She is an accomplished maker of pine needle baskets, an expert on Native American foodways and knows the traditional uses of wild plants and herbs, skills she learned from her grandmother and tribal elders. Mrs. Thrower maintains an herb garden and is generous in sharing her heritage with others, often giving talks and foodways demonstrations at schools, festivals and other groups. In 1992, Gail Thrower received the Alabama Folk Heritage Award from the Alabama State Council on the Arts.

Gail Thrower
Poarch
Pine Needle Baskets





Enoch Sullivan
St. Stephens
Bluegrass Gospel

Margie Sullivan
St. Stephens
Bluegrass Gospel



Margie and Enoch Sullivan are pioneers of bluegrass gospel music. Born in Winnsboro, Louisiana, Margie began traveling at age 13 with evangelist Hazel Chain, singing and playing guitar at camp meetings and revivals. She married fiddle and mandolin player Enoch Sullivan and they performed with his father, the Reverend Arthur Sullivan, until his death in 1957. Margie and Enoch have performed together for more than 58 years as the Sullivan Family band, playing for congregations in small country churches as well as entertaining audiences at festivals across the U.S. They have appeared on the Grand Ole Opry and were inducted into Bill Monroe's Bluegrass Hall of Fame and the Old Time Country Music Hall of Fame. In 2005 they received the Alabama Folk Heritage Award from the Alabama State Council on the Arts and a Distinguished Achievement Award from the International Bluegrass Music Association. They continue to keep a busy touring schedule and to teach young musicians in the bluegrass gospel tradition.

Barry Taylor

The Birmingham Sunlights

Birmingham
Gospel

The Birmingham Sunlights represent a long-standing Jefferson County tradition of a *cappella* gospel quartet singing. Initially, they developed their singing style in the Church of Christ, where no musical instruments are used in worship services. The group was founded by brothers James Alex, Barry, and Steve Taylor, who grew up in a musical family. Their father sang in several Birmingham quartets and knew many of the singers in the area. Other members of the group, Reginald Speights, Wayne Williams, and Bill Graves, grew up in similar traditions. The Sunlights were already accomplished singers when they apprenticed with the Four Eagles and the Shelby County Big Four, both respected quartets in the Birmingham area. Their style and repertoire shows the influence of these mentors as well as their own approach to the songs. The Birmingham Sunlights have performed both nationally and internationally, at the National Folk Festival, the Library of Congress, Carnegie Hall and to audiences in the Caribbean, Africa, Australia and France.

Left to right: Wayne Williams, Reginald Speights, James Alex Taylor, Bill Graves, Steve Taylor, Barry Taylor.



Deborah Traylor

Woodland
Rag Rug Weaving

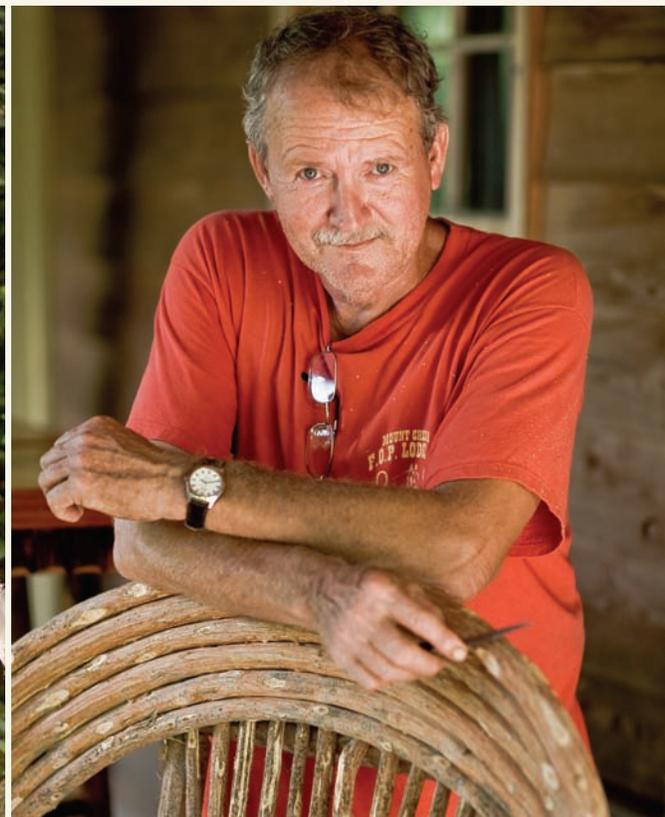
Deborah Traylor recalls sitting on the floor as a child, watching her great-grandmother's hands as she made rag rugs from strips of fabric. Eventually she began making rugs herself. At 16, she inherited three rugs made by her great-grandmother. She took them apart and reassembled them several times to ensure that she memorized the techniques. She has made innovations, however, incorporating shapes and patterns of her own. What began as a hobby has become a cottage industry for the Traylor family. She and husband Joe Bob travel to craft festivals displaying, making and selling her rugs and his willow furniture. She enjoys teaching others to make rugs and finds it rewarding that her children have learned the tradition.



Joe Bob Traylor

Woodland
Bent Willow Furniture

Joe Bob Traylor has always been good at working with his hands and had some experience making what he calls "primitive furniture." When he saw bent willow furniture on display more than twenty years ago, he told himself, "I can do that." The first attempt was not a success, but he continued to work by trial and error until he was satisfied with the result. He learned to construct the chairs, rockers, swings, and other forms that are traditionally made from willow. Joe Bob taught his son Josh and other students to pay attention to balance and detail along with the basics steps in constructing the furniture. "A piece of furniture has to sit good and look good," he said.



Gary Waldrep

Kilpatrick
Bluegrass

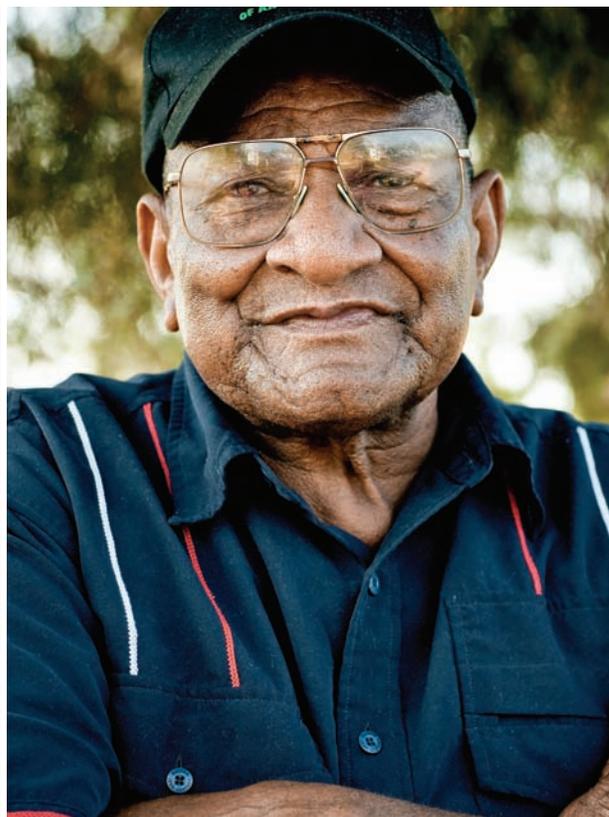
Gary Waldrep came naturally to the role of master artist in the Apprenticeship Program, teaching his students the way he learned himself. He grew up on the family farm near Boaz, absorbing Sand Mountain's musical traditions from his mother's family, the McCulloughs. When Gary was 5, one of his uncles began teaching him the mandolin. He eventually mastered the fiddle and guitar as well, but is best known for his skill as a banjo player. In 1990 his album *Vintage Bluegrass* received a Grammy nomination. As leader of the Gary Waldrep Band, he maintains an active touring schedule that includes his own Festival on the Farm. He continues to work with students when the band is not touring.



J.C. Williams

Boligee
White Oak Baskets

J.C. Williams, a native of Mount Hebron, near Eutaw, is a traditional white oak basket maker from the Black Belt region of Alabama. After a career working with gravel operations on local rivers, he learned basket making from the late John Cox. Mr. Williams is skilled at the entire basket making process: starting with selecting and cutting down the white oak tree, then splitting up the log into long strips, shaving the splits into thin enough strips to weave, shaping the rim and attaching the handle. Through the years he has worked with a large number of students including his son-in-law Robert Hicks, who now helps him with the work.



Annie Mae Young
Alberta
Quilting

Shaquetta Young
Alberta
Quilting



Quilter Annie Mae Young was born in 1928 in Wilcox County and grew up as one of 12 children in a farming family. She learned to make quilts from her mother, Lula Pettway, by sewing together strips of old clothing. Mrs. Young is one of the most well-known Gee's Bend quilters. Her quilts have traveled to museums across the country with *The Quilts of Gee's Bend* exhibit and one of her quilts was depicted in the American Treasures stamp series issued by the U.S. Postal Service. In 1993 Annie Mae Young and her quilts were photographed by Roland Freeman for his book *A Communion of Spirits: African-American Quilters Preservers and Their Stories*. With her in the photo was her 3-year-old great-granddaughter, Shaquetta Young. Now in her late teens, Shaquetta has apprenticed with her great-grandmother, becoming a skilled enough quilter to teach other young women in her community. Not only do she and her great-grandmother like quilting together, but they enjoy singing together also.

Alabama Folk Arts Apprenticeship Grantees 1985 – 2007

Myrtle Aldridge

Glen Allen

[Quilting](#)

1993

Quilter Myrtle Aldridge (1913 – 1994) taught school for 36 years in Fayette County, starting in a one-room schoolhouse near Bankston and eventually teaching second grade at Hubbertville for 25 years. Her passion for quilting began at age 11, when Aldridge learned from her mother and grandmother how to sew tiny stitches. By the time she was 13 she had pieced her first string quilt, sewn onto the pages of a Sears Roebuck catalog. Her favorite patterns included Dutch Girl, Log Cabin, Windmills, Spider Web, House on the Hill, Tulip, and Iris. She made and gave away eight Lone Star quilts, and had two of her original patterns published in quilt books, including “Buck and Wing” inspired by her husband, a buck dancer. She taught apprentice Janice McDaniel to make a “Sugarloaf” quilt, recounting that sugar once came in loaves wrapped in blue paper that quilters would then use to dye fabric.

William Bailey

Atmore

[Creek Indian Language and Culture](#)

(Student of Sam Proctor,

George Bunny and others)

1994, '96, '97, '98, '99, 2000, '01,

'04, '05, '06

See page 10.

Loretta Bennett

Huntsville

[Quilting](#)

(Student of Quinnie Pettway)

2003

See page 10.

Mozell Benson

Opelika

[Quilting](#)

2007

See page 11.

Amita Bhakta

Florence

[Rangoli](#)

2007

Originally from India, Amita Bhakta has been living in Florence since 1983. She learned the art of *rangoli* from her mother, who created colorful designs on floors and porches using powders, pigments and spices. It was a temporary art that was swept up the next day. Her mother always did *rangoli* for special occasions such as Diwali, the five-day festival of lights. In Alabama, Ms. Bhakta is called upon to provide *rangoli* designs for weddings and special occasions in the Indian community and has taught *rangoli* to nine students of Indian heritage. She has shown her art at the Global Art Exhibition at University of North Alabama, Arts Alive at the Kennedy-Douglass Center in Florence, and the Helen Keller Festival in Tuscumbia.

Calvin Bodiford

Brantley

[Old-time String Band Music](#)

1997, '98, '99, '01, '02, '04

Calvin Bodiford taught fiddle, guitar, dobro and mandolin lessons to

dozens of students in the Wiregrass region. Born in 1932, he grew up in rural Crenshaw County. He took up fiddle and guitar at age 11 when he and his friends learned to play instruments by listening to country music on records and the radio. Music remained a major part of his life during his 20 years in the U.S. Army. In Korea, his band stayed busy playing dances every night of the week. Upon returning to Alabama, Bodiford worked 22 years for the State Revenue Department. He volunteered at the Pioneer Museum of Alabama in Troy, where he also taught music four days a week. He has now retired from teaching but enjoys playing music at home, in churches and at the museum.

Debbie Bond

Tuscaloosa

[Blues](#)

(Student of Eddie Kirkland)

2002

Debbie Bond and her Kokomo Blues Band perform throughout the South. She has worked with Alabama blues artists Johnny Shines, Little Whitt & Big Bo, Jerry McCain and Willie King. A well-known blues advocate, she promotes the music through the Alabama Blues Project's educational programs. For her Folk Arts Apprenticeship, Bond studied guitar with Eddie Kirkland, a Georgia blues musician with Alabama ties.

Kirkland was born in Jamaica and raised in Dothan, Alabama. He toured and recorded with John Lee Hooker and later joined Otis Redding's band. He recorded for Prestige and Stax with such notable songs as “It's the

Blues Man” and “Hawg.” Kirkland continues to tour the U.S. and Europe and has performed at Birmingham’s City Stages Festival.

Sharon Bounds

Northport

[Fiddle](#)

1996, ’99, 2000, ’02, ’03
See page 12.

Deborah Brodeur

Blountsville

[White Oak Baskets](#)

(Student of Jesse Thomason)

1994

Deborah Brodeur of Blountsville was a student of white oak basket maker Jesse Thomason. Since Brodeur was employed during the week, the two worked on baskets together on Saturdays. During her Apprenticeship, Brodeur accompanied Thomason to several major festivals and workshops. See Jesse Thomason, page 57.

Jerry Brown

Hamilton

[Pottery](#)

1985, ’86, ’87, ’88, ’89, ’94, ’95, ’97, ’99, 2000, ’01, ’03
See page 12.

James Bryan

Mentone

[Old-time Fiddle](#)

1989, ’90, ’97
See page 13.

Rachel Bryan

Mentone

[Old-time Music](#)

(Student of James Bryan)

2004, ’05

See page 14.

Daniel Carwile

[Fiddle](#)

2001

Daniel Carwile, formerly of Athens, is a U.S. Grand Master Fiddle Champion and was named “Fiddle King” at Athens’ Tennessee Valley Old-Time Fiddlers Convention seven times. He is a master of many styles including old-time, bluegrass, Celtic, and classical. He has performed as member of both the Huntsville Youth Orchestra and the Huntsville Symphony. He received a Bachelor’s Degree in Music Education from Vanderbilt’s Blair School of Music in 1995. Later he toured with the Celtic band Full Moon Ensemble for eight years. In 2001, as a master artist in the Apprenticeship Program, he worked with six apprentices. Daniel and his wife Amy now teach students at their Carwile String Studio in Lexington, KY.

Gwen Chafin

Arab

[White Oak Baskets](#)

(Student of Jesse Thomason)

1996, ’97, ’98, ’99

See page 13.

Savath Chanthavane

Irvington

[Lao Temple Decorations](#)

1991

Savath Chanthavane grew up in Savannakhet, Laos, where her mother taught her to make the

decorations used in Buddhist temples. Chanthavane escaped the communist occupation of Laos in 1976 and came to the U.S. two years later. She and her husband settled near Mobile, where she took up her craft again, improvising with new materials. Now, instead of using banana leaves to cover the cone-shaped *mak beng*, she uses shiny green and gold paper. Her creations decorate the Buddhist temple in Irvington. When people in the Lao community have a special occasion to celebrate, such as a wedding, they hold a string-tying ceremony called a *baci*. Chanthavane makes the *pha khouan*, the centerpiece essential to this celebration.

George Connor

Aliceville

[Blues](#)

2001, ’03, ’06, ’07

“Birmingham” George Conner, a native of Aliceville, began playing music at an early age. As a young man he moved to Chicago, where he lived for 30 years and operated a blues club. He was influenced by blues greats Howlin’ Wolf, Muddy Waters and Albert King. In the early 1980s he lived in Memphis for a few years before returning to Alabama. Conner has taught blues guitar, harmonica, bass and singing to many students in west Alabama and nearby Mississippi. He is active in the cultural life of his community and was a founding artist of the Black Belt Folk Roots Festival in Eutaw more than 30 years ago. He recorded a CD with fellow Aliceville bluesman Willie King and performs at King’s annual Freedom Creek Festival.

Heang Kong Cottrell
Cambodian Dressmaking

1990, '91

War and resettlement disrupted the lives of the nearly 400 Cambodian refugees who now live in the Bayou La Batre area of coastal Alabama. As a result, many Khmer traditions are not being carried forward, such as making traditional clothing. While many of the women now wear Western clothing, some would prefer to wear the traditional dress on special occasions, such as weddings, funerals and parties. Heang Cottrell learned to make traditional Khmer women's clothing, the *ao* (blouse) and *samphout sri* (skirt), while living in a refugee camp in Thailand. She taught several young women in her community how to make traditional Khmer clothing so they can preserve this aspect of their ethnic identity.

John Cox

Clinton

White Oak Baskets

1986, '87

John Cox (1888 – 1989), a native of the Clinton community in Greene County, learned the craft of white oak basket making from his father during the early 1900s. He recounted that his father could make four or five cotton baskets a day, which sold for 50 cents apiece. In the 1980s, he taught a number of students on the Alabama Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program, including J.C. Williams, Eliza Hill, and Mary Freeman. Cox made cotton baskets, picnic baskets and also wove chair bottoms with white oak splits. Cox was a frequent

participant in the Black Belt Folk Roots Festival in Eutaw.

Lucy Curtis

Safford

Quilting

2002, '03

Lucy Curtis, along with a group of experienced quilters, taught quilting to a dozen or more women at the Safford Community Center on Highway 5 in rural Dallas County. Most of the members of the quilt group were senior citizens who gathered at the Center daily. They had learned to quilt from their mothers and grandmothers and enjoyed explaining the "old way" of quilting and continuing to use the techniques and patterns they learned within the family and community. Through the Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program, they worked with students Eva Moore, Louise Smith, Bennie Gladney, Cassandra Curtis, Berdie Armstead, Boss Lane, Letitia McGuire, Mary Gladden, Sarah Hall, Mattie Hall, Iola McCarter and Julia Rand.

Art Deason

Centreville

Christian Harmony Singing

1989, '90, '91, '92, '93, '94, '95, '99

See page 15.

Amanda Denson

Haleyville/Birmingham

Sacred Harp Singing

1996, '97, '98, '99, 2000

Amanda Denson has been involved in Sacred Harp singing since

childhood and began leading songs at an early age. She is a favorite leader among singers due to her warm yet commanding presence and engaging style. She is a descendent of the famous Denson family of Sacred Harp singers, who have played an important role in keeping the tradition alive through publishing an important revision of B.F. White's *The Sacred Harp*, composing songs, teaching singing schools, and participating in singings. Amanda herself has been a stalwart supporter of the tradition, attending singings large and small. Through grants from the Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program, she conducted a series of singing schools in the Winston County area in the late 1990s.

Matt Downer

Ider

Guitar

(Student of Cast King and Wayne Heard)

2004, '06

See page 15.

Kent DuChaine

Blues

(Student of Johnny Shines)

1991

Kent DuChaine was a student of Alabama blues great Johnny Shines. A native of Wayzata, Minnesota, DuChaine began learning guitar at age 13 and soon discovered the music of blues legend Robert Johnson. After that he sought out the music of blues artists such as Muddy Waters, T-Bone Walker and Bukka White, and from 1972-75 performed in a

band that backed up blues headliners of the day. He met Shines in 1989 and worked with him for three years until Shines' death in 1992. During this period, DuChaine, Shines and Snooky Pryor won the W.C. Handy award for their CD *Back to the Country*. Kent DuChaine performs across North America, Europe and Scandinavia and has recorded six albums. He now lives in Georgia.

Nora Lee Ezell

Mantua

[Quilting](#)

1989, '90, '91, '94, '95, '96, '97, '98, '99, 2000, '04, '06

Nora Lee Ezell (1917-2007) of Mantua (Greene County) was one of the South's most distinctive quilters. She received the Alabama Folk Heritage Award in 1990 and the prestigious National Heritage Fellowship in 1992. She learned to quilt in her family and made traditional pieced and appliqué designs before turning in the 1980s to the "storytelling" quilts for which she became known. Among these were quilts depicting the histories of the University of Alabama, Stillman College, the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and "A Tribute the Civil Righters of Alabama." Her work was featured in one-woman shows at Stillman College, the Birmingham Museum of Art, and the Alabama Artists' Gallery in Montgomery. In 1998, her book *My Quilts and Me* was published by Black Belt Press.

Gloria Fowler

Poarch

[Pine Needle Baskets](#)

1986, '87

Gloria Fowler, a member of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians in Escambia County, taught pine needle basketry along with Gail Thrower. Together they conducted workshops for younger members of the Creek community. Fowler was instrumental in bringing Sam Proctor, William Bunny and other Oklahoma Creek tribal elders to Poarch in order to revive some of the cultural knowledge and skills that had been lost in Alabama.

Dennis George

Fyffe

[Bluegrass](#)

2006, '07

See page 18.

Shannon Haggard

Waterloo

[Fish Traps](#)

(Student of Wayne Haggard)

1997, '98

Shannon Haggard, son of commercial fisherman Wayne Haggard, apprenticed with his father to learn to make slat-box fish traps from white oak. The elder Haggard learned this vanishing craft from his father, who fished commercially on the Tennessee River for more than 30 years. In a slat-box fish trap, each box has two cone-shaped funnels, a "false funnel" that directs fish into the box and the "holding funnel" in which the ends come together so the fish can't get back out. The traps are

baited with scrap cheese and sunk in the river. Every few days the men check the boxes, empty the catch, which is mainly catfish, and re-bait the trap. Haggard has also fished with trot lines, hoop nets and gill nets.

Allen Ham

Selma

[Pottery](#)

2000, '01, '02

See page 18.

Howard Hamil

Mellow Valley

[Fiddle](#)

1991

Howard Hamil (1917 – 1992) was born near Ashland in Clay County and began playing the fiddle when he was 5 years old. He played in a string band with his father and uncles until he married and moved away. He worked a variety of occupations as a farmer, textile mill worker, carpenter, and school bus driver. Hamil was a popular square dance fiddler and also enjoyed playing music informally with friends. He was the lead musician at Saturday night gatherings in Lineville at the "Red Barn" where folks came to listen to country and bluegrass music. He also played Sunday nights at his church. He was featured on the 1988 album *Poosum Up a Gum Stump* and taught in the Apprenticeship Program in 1991.

David Hand

Guntersville

[Bent Willow Furniture](#)

1987

David Hand was a third generation willow furniture maker from Guntersville whose work was sought by collectors nationwide. He learned the craft from his father who harvested willow from the swamps in the 1930s and built his rustic “hobo furniture,” which he bartered for food during the Depression years. A construction worker by trade, David remembered his father’s creations when he found himself out of work during an economic downturn in the 1970s and began building his own willow furniture. By the time of his death in 1991, his pieces were found in the Alabama Governor’s Mansion and at state welcome centers bordering Tennessee and Georgia. He taught willow furniture making to his son Matt through the Apprenticeship Program.

Judy Harden

Hodges

[White Oak Baskets](#)

(Student of Deborah McCarley)

1994, '95

Judy Harden of Hodges was a fourth grade teacher at Vina High School in Franklin County. She learned how to make white oak baskets and baskets made from vines, such as honeysuckle, from Deborah McCarley of Haleyville. Mrs. Harden’s interest stemmed from teaching her students about pioneer skills, leading her to invite McCarley into her classroom to demonstrate basket making for her students. They also went to visit

elementary schools in Guin and Winfield. Harden now lives out of state.

José Hernandez

Mariachi Band Garibaldi

Montgomery

[Mariachi](#)

2000, '03, '04

See page 19.

Winky Hicks

Grove Hill

[Bluegrass banjo](#)

2007

James “Winky” Hicks of Grove Hill is a champion bluegrass banjo player, with many first place wins at fiddlers’ conventions in Atmore, Frankville, Saraland, and the Mississippi State Fair in Tupelo. A native of Clarke County, he started playing the guitar at age 7 and began picking banjo at age 14. In 1987, Hicks had the opportunity to play with banjo legend Earl Scruggs at his Nashville home. Winky’s band, the Martin Hicks Bluegrass Gospel Band, plays concerts and festivals throughout the region. Hicks is also a skilled wood worker and makes turkey calls and musical instruments. He is especially known for his mandolins. His current banjo apprentices are Juliane Banks and Hicks’s daughter, Anna Marie.

Mary Hicks

Eutaw

[Pine Needle Baskets](#)

1992, '93, '94, '95, '96

See page 20.

Terry Hilley

Section

[Fiddle](#)

(Student of Noah Lacy)

1993

See Noah Lacy, page 51.

William Howell

Fort Payne

[Banjo](#)

1991, '92, 2000

William B. Howell (1959 – 2005) was a champion banjo player from Ft. Payne. He primarily taught bluegrass style banjo and was once named the Kentucky State Bluegrass Banjo Champion. He performed throughout the Southeast with bluegrass bands Dixie Grey and Fox Mountain Express. Howell’s exceptional skill on the banjo led to performances with country music greats such as Curly Fox, Bill Monroe, and the Stoneman Family. Howell was a respected musician in his community and an active and influential figure in the local music scene. He taught for three years in the Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program.

Wanda Hughes

Eutaw

[Pine Needle Baskets](#)

2004, '05

Wanda Hughes and her sisters Annette Jordan and Jeanette Lancaster learned to make pine needle baskets from their mother, Mary Hicks. In 2004 and 2005, Wanda Hughes received funding from the Apprenticeship Program to teach pine needle basketry to

students Sharon Hicks, Theresa Phippen, Christen Batch, Brittany Phippen, Keisha Hicks, Debra McGhee, and Phillip Green of Clinton, Eutaw and Tuscaloosa. Wanda Hughes now lives in Georgia but often returns to Alabama to participate with her family in festivals and demonstrations of their craft.

David Ivey

Huntsville

[Sacred Harp Singing](#)

1991, '96, 2000, '02, '04, '05, '06
See page 21.

William E. "Gene" Ivey

Ider

[Fiddle, Instrument Making](#)

1995, '96, '97, '98, '99, '01, '02, '05, '06, '07
See page 22.

Michelle Lee Jacks

Fort Payne

[Fiddle](#)

(Student of James Bryan)

1993

See James Bryan, page 13.

Floyd Jackson

Demopolis

[White Oak Baskets](#)

(Student of Estelle Jackson and Mary Ella Johnson)

2001, '04, '05

See page 23.

Henry Japheth Jackson

Ozark

[Sacred Harp Singing](#)

1989, '90, '91, '92, '93, '94, '95, '96, '97, '98, 2000

See page 22.

Gary Jarnigan

Muscle Shoals

[Wood Craft](#)

(Student of William Jarnigan)

1989, '90

Gary Jarnigan, formerly of Tuscumbia, was a student of his father, master wood craftsman William Jarnigan. During his apprenticeship Gary learned to make traditional Southern biscuit bowls, tool handles, walking canes and rolling pins. He is a steam plant operator for the Tennessee Valley Authority.

William Jarnigan

Red Bay

[Wood Craft](#)

1997

William Jarnigan (1919 – 2006) was a noted woodcarver who lived his entire life, except for his time in the U.S. Army, near Red Bay in Franklin County. He created hand-made utilitarian products that included tool handles, rolling pins, walking canes and his famous Southern biscuit bowls. He learned much of his craft from his maternal grandfather, Jimmack Kuykendall. While he would make biscuit bowls from 40 different types of wood, he preferred tupelo gum or cypress. He used only hickory for tool handles. In addition to being a cotton and cattle farmer, he worked security at a fertilizer plant in Cherokee. With the Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program

he taught his craft to his two youngest sons, Phillip and Gary.

Minna Catherine "M.C."

Jerkins

Florence

[Pottery](#)

(Student of Jerry Brown)

1986

Potter M.C. Jerkins, of Florence, worked as a student of folk potter Jerry Brown in 1986.

See Jerry Brown, page 12.

Marcus Johnson

Bay City Brass Band

Mobile

[Brass Band](#)

2005, '06, '07

See page 24.

George Jones

Florence

[Broom Making](#)

1996

See page 25.

Annette Jordan

Eutaw

[Pine Needle Basketry](#)

1997, '98, '99, 2000, '02, '03, '05

See page 20.

Bettye Kimbrell

Mount Olive (Jefferson Co.)

[Quilting](#)

1991, '94, '95, '96, '97

See page 25.

Willie King

Aliceville

[Blues](#)

1998, '04, '05, '06

See page 28.

Kinn Kranh

Bayou La Batre

[Cambodian Fish Traps](#)

1990

Kinn Kranh (1922 – 2000) grew up in the rural Battambang province in Cambodia. He escaped his country in 1979 and lived in a refugee camp in Thailand until 1981 when he was re-settled to Bayou La Batre. Mr. Kranh could make 10 types of fish traps for catching fish in lakes, rivers and rice paddies. In Cambodia, traps are made from bamboo lashed together with vines. Although he was limited here due to the smaller size of bamboo, Mr. Kranh adapted the smaller baskets to materials found in this region. He cut bamboo into long splints and tied them to a frame using colorful telephone wire instead of vines. He taught several students and participated in the 1990 Alabama Folklife Festival.

Noah Lacy

Ider

[Fiddle](#)

1992, '93

Noah Lacy (1908 - 1993) exemplified the musical heritage of his native Sand Mountain as both an old-time fiddler and a Sacred Harp singer. Born in Jackson County to a family of musicians, Mr. Lacy took up the fiddle at age 15. As a young man, he played for dances and also entered

and won many area fiddlers' conventions. In his later years, he played music every day, often with his son Chester Lacy. Recordings of his music are archived in the Birmingham Public Library and the Library of Congress. Lacy was honored in 1991 with the Alabama Folk Heritage Award. In 1992 and '93 he taught apprentices Tammy and Ray Westmoreland and Terry Hilley.

Jeannette Lancaster

Eutaw

[Pine Needle Baskets](#)

2006

Jeannette Lancaster grew up in Greene County and learned how to make pine needle baskets from her mother, Mary Hicks. She taught pine straw basket weaving to four students in Greene and Tuscaloosa counties: Mary Hall, Queen Hall, Michael Brown, and Mia Allen. She appreciates the historic aspects of pine needle basketry and is pleased to be able to pass on this part of her family and community heritage to others. Ms. Lancaster now lives in Georgia, but returns home to help her mother with basket making demonstrations at festivals and other venues.

John Lawrence

The Four Eagle Gospel Singers

Birmingham

[Gospel Quartet Singing](#)

The Four Eagle Gospel Singers, led by John Lawrence, are an African American gospel quartet in the Birmingham *a capella* harmony

tradition, formed in the late 1930s by workers for U.S. Steel in Jefferson County. They have carried their music to churches across the South, to the Smithsonian's Festival of American Folklife, the National Folk Festival, and the Alabama Folklife Festival. For 30 years the Four Eagles reached audiences on WVOK and later had a program on WENN. Through the Apprenticeship Program they worked with the Birmingham Sunlights, a younger quartet in the same gospel tradition.

Al Lester

Muscle Shoals

[Fiddle](#)

1985, '86, '87, '88, '89

Al Lester (1932-1991) was a Muscle Shoals fiddler who grew up in the Poor Valley of southwest Virginia. He learned to play fiddle from his father and grandfather and, as a young man, worked as a staff musician at WCMS in Norfolk. For most of his life he lived in north Alabama where he made his living as a barber and became involved in the Muscle Shoals music industry, recording with Willie Nelson, Mac Davis, Wilson Pickett, Boz Scaggs and others. His career included performances with Bill Monroe, the Original Dixie Gentleman, Mac Wiseman, and Alabama bluegrass group the Warrior River Boys. He taught a number of students in his backyard studio who went on to perform in regional bluegrass and country bands.

Robert Long

Oneonta/Hartselle/Boaz

Bent Willow Furniture

1994, '95, '97

Robert Long carries on a regional tradition of bent-willow furniture making. He learned his craft from his father-in-law Tillman Hand, who built furniture as a livelihood during the Depression. Long's rustic pieces have been as sought after as decorator items as they are for their sturdy utility. His two sons, Jason and Ronnie Long, worked with him through the State Arts Council's Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program.

Robert participated in the Alabama Folklife Festivals in the early 1990s, and in the 1994 National Folklife Festival in Chattanooga. The two apprentices assisted their father during the festival and demonstrated their skills by building a bent-willow chair and answering questions from the festival audience.

Daniel Maharrey

St. Stephens

Bluegrass Gospel

2003, '05

Daniel Maharrey plays lead guitar and mandolin for the multi-generational bluegrass gospel band the Maharreys. He also sings, arranges music and co-wrote two of the band's biggest hits on the gospel charts, "Jesus Can Heal Your Achy Breaky Heart" and "I Was A Man of Constant Sorrow." The family's gospel tradition came out of the brush arbor meetings and tent revivals of the early 1900s when Daniel's grandfather preached and

his family played string-band music. Daniel's father, Paul Maharrey, toured several years with the Sullivan Family of St. Stephens and then formed the Maharreys. An award-winning instrumentalist, Daniel taught flat top guitar, mandolin, and upright bass. Two of his students, Cliff and Clint Spicer, now tour with the band.

Jerry McCain

Gadsden

Blues Harmonica

1998, '99

Jerry "Boogie" McCain, born in 1930, has played blues harmonica for more than 70 years. He toured Europe several times, performs at national blues festivals and has been featured on the cover of *Living Blues* magazine. He earned the nickname "Boogie" playing harmonica on the streets of Gadsden at the age of 5. His early influences were Sonny Boy Williamson, Sonny Terry and Little Walter, whose records were on the jukebox at his father's barbecue stand. McCain first recorded in 1953 on the Trumpet label, followed by releases on Excello, Rex, Okeh and Jewel. In the 1980s and '90s he recorded with Ichiban Records and released *This Stuff Just Kills Me* in 2000 on Jericho. Recently he started his own label, Boogiedown Records. He recorded his best-known song, "She's Tough," in 1960, which was covered by the Fabulous Thunderbirds. In 2007, McCain won the Alabama Folk Heritage Award.

Deborah McCarley

Haleyville

White Oak Baskets

1995

Deborah McCarley is a master of several basket-making techniques including weaving traditional white oak baskets. She also makes baskets from vines such as honeysuckle. McCarley makes dyes from black walnut and other natural materials to add color and contrast to her baskets. She worked with apprentice Janice Tipton of Hodges, an elementary school teacher.

Mike McCracken

Tuscaloosa

Blues

(Student of Little Whitt Wells and Big Bo McGee)

1999

Mike McCracken, a guitarist from Tuscaloosa, was a student of blues artists Jolly "Little Whitt" Wells and Big Bo McGee.

Janice McDaniel

Winfield

Quilting

(Student of Myrtle Aldridge)

1993

Janice McDaniel was born in Reform, Alabama, but spent most of her childhood in Mississippi. She taught school for more than 35 years, the last 32 years at Guin Elementary in Franklin County, working mainly as the K-6 music and arts teacher. From the 1970s through the 1990s, Janice documented folk and traditional

artists in northwest Alabama, often using the material in the classroom. She studied quilting with Myrtle Aldridge of Glen Allen, and for 10 years took students to Mrs. Aldridge's home to hear old Christmas stories and see her quilts. In 2006, McDaniel was selected as an Alabama Community Scholar by the Alabama Folklife Association. Her ongoing scholars project is the editing and transferring of her videotaped documentation to DVD.

Sheila McFerran

Madison
[Irish Step Dancing](#)
1996, '97, '99
See page 29.

Bo McGee

Eutaw
[Blues Harmonica](#)
2000, '01, '02

Bo McGee (1928 - 2002) was one of Alabama's most recognized blues artists. He first heard the blues on 78 rpm records of Washboard Sam and Blind Lemon Jefferson. His grandmother taught him to play the harmonica. Bo and blues guitarist "Little Whitt" Wells formed the band Little Whitt and the Downbeats. They performed together for years and eventually recorded *Moody Swamp Blues*, picked as "CD of the Year" in 1995 by British blues magazine editor Scott Duncan. "Big Bo" played blues festivals in the U.S. and toured Europe twice. He taught Folk Arts Apprentices Mike McCracken and Deonchey McCoy, as well as many students through the Alabama Blues Project. Bo

McGee received the Alabama Folk Heritage Award in 2001.

Eric McKinney

Fort Payne
[Guitar](#)
1994, '95, '96, '99, '04
See page 29.

Mabel Means

Eutaw
[Pine Needle Baskets](#)
1987, '88, '90

Mabel Means (1906 – 1991), a resident of the Union community near Eutaw, learned to carve axe handles and weave split oak baskets as a child. She also helped her disabled father with farm work like plowing and chopping cotton. As a young woman she took courses in domestic training and nurse's aide training and, over the years, served her community as a midwife and practitioner of traditional medicine. After her retirement, she returned to the crafts she learned growing up and shared them with others. Means was highly regarded as a pine needle basket maker. She taught her art to a number of students, including Mary Hicks and Odessa Rice, who both went on to become master artists themselves.

Eric Miller

Brent
[Pottery](#)
1990, '91, '92, '93, '95, '96, '97, 2000
See page 31.

Tina Ray Miller

Holly Pond/Arab
[Fiddle](#)
(Student of Arlin Moon)
1990, '92, '93
See page 30.

Lucy Mingo

Boykin
[Quilting](#)
2006
See page 31.

Arlin Moon

Holly Pond
[Fiddle, Instrument Making](#)
1985, '86, '87

Arlin Moon, born in 1917 in the Cullman County town of Holly Pond, grew up in a family in which his mother, father, and uncles played fiddles, banjos, pianos and every other instrument available to them. During the Depression, they had no cash for purchasing instruments, so Moon began supplying them with handmade instruments. Over the years, Moon has made violins, mandolins and banjos from native woods such as cherry, mulberry, dogwood, persimmon and walnut. His instruments have been featured in museums and galleries throughout Alabama, and a Moon banjo is on permanent display at the headquarters of Future Homemakers of America in Washington, D.C. Through the Apprenticeship Program he taught his daughter Betty to make instruments and his granddaughter Tina to play the fiddle.

Jess Moore

Henagar

[Fiddle](#)

1996

Jess R. Moore (1911 – 2006) lived on Sand Mountain near the town of Henagar. Moore was the fiddler in a family band that included his father (banjo), his mother (guitar), and two sisters (mandolin and piano/organ). They performed “old-time” country music at community gatherings such as schoolhouse events and ice-cream socials. In the 1930s he began taking home top prizes at the DeKalb County Fiddlers’ Convention. He served in the Army Signal Corps during World War II and developed an interest in broadcasting. In 1950 he became the chief engineer of WZOB in Ft. Payne, where he invited local musicians to perform live on the radio. He stopped playing fiddle for many years, but took it up again in 1975.

Robert “Scooter” Muse

Florence

[Banjo](#)

1995, '96, '97, '99, '01

Robert “Scooter” Muse, a banjo and guitar player from Florence, is a master of several musical styles. His roots are in bluegrass, and he won nine State of Alabama and Tennessee Valley Championship titles on the five-string banjo in both the bluegrass and old-time music categories. About 30 years ago he began exploring Celtic music and formed the band Full Moon Ensemble, which toured throughout the U.S., Canada and Scotland from

1994 – 2002. When the Full Moon Ensemble disbanded in late 2002, Scooter Muse joined another distinguished Celtic group, Henri’s Notions. He has since released a solo album, *Saddell Abbey*, which includes 12 original compositions for acoustic guitar. Through the Apprenticeship Program he taught many students in the Shoals area.

Reagan Ngamvilay

Mobile

[Lao Khene Music](#)

1990

See page 32.

Lureca Outland

Boligee

[Quilting](#)

1988, '89, '90, '91, '92, '94, '95, '97, '99, 2000, '01, '02, '04

Quilter Lureca Outland was born in 1904 and her father died a year later. Outland and her two sisters were raised by their mother and grandmother, who taught them how to quilt and to work in the cotton and cane fields of Greene County. They quilted on frames hung from the ceiling by ropes and later on frames supported by saw horses. She makes a variety of traditional patterns, such as Strips, Strings, Stars, Teacups and the regional Donkey pattern. Her quilts were included in Maude Wahlman’s African-American quilt exhibit, “Signs and Symbols.” She and her senior citizens group exhibited annually at the Folk Roots Festival in Eutaw and taught many students, including home economics classes at the county schools and the

Arrowwood Apartments’ Housewives Association.

Addie Pelt

Eutaw

[Quilting](#)

1988

Addie M. Pelt (1921 – 1999), a native of the Clinton community near Eutaw, worked with quilting students in 1988. She made quilts along with Mary Maxtion and Lureca Outland at the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) center in Greene County.

Annie E. Pettway

Boykin

[Quilting](#)

2004

See page 32.

Mary M. Pettway

Alberta

[Quilting](#)

(Student of Lizzie Major)

2006

Mary M. Pettway studied quilting with Lizzie Major of Alberta, who had previously worked with the Freedom Quilting Bee. Lizzie Major, the great-granddaughter of slaves, is featured in the book *Gee’s Bend: the Women and Their Quilts*, where she states that she learned to piece quilts when she was 17 years old. Born in 1922, Major was photographed making corn shuck mats in 1939 by Marion Post Wolcott. Apprentice Mary Pettway learned pattern making, piecing, quilting and hemming from Major. Her completed project was a green and black quilt called “Job’s Tears.”

Mary Ann Pettway

Alberta

Quilting

(Student of Rita Mae Pettway)

2007

Mary Ann Pettway studied quilting with Rita Mae Pettway of Alberta. Rita Mae Pettway, who is featured prominently in *The Quilts of Gee's Bend*, learned quilting from Annie Pettway, the grandmother who raised her. She remembers sitting inside during the winter and piecing quilts with her grandmother without the benefit of a pattern by the light of a kerosene lamp. Rita Mae Pettway, born in 1941, is one of the more active of the older Gee's Bend quilters and makes a variety of quilt patterns including variations of the Housetop. She taught her apprentice Mary Ann to make a Housetop quilt. Mary Ann's quilt is brown, beige and cream cotton fabric, pieced together on the machine and quilted and hemmed by hand.

Pamela Pettway

Selma

Quilting

(Student of Lorraine Pettway)

2007

Pamela Pettway of Selma received a Folk Arts Apprenticeship grant to work with master quilter Lorraine Pettway of Alberta. Lorraine Pettway was born in 1953 and learned to quilt from her grandmother. She is an active, lifelong quilter who will sometimes take on work for other quilters such as quilting tops or repairing old quilts. Her work is featured in the book *Gee's Bend: The Women and Their Quilts*. Under

Lorraine's instruction Pamela completed a quilt that was a variation on a four-patch design in red, yellow, blue and green.

Ruth Potts

Florence

Quilting

1992

Born in 1919, Ruth Potts of Florence is an active quilter and is teaching her granddaughters the craft. At age 10 she learned to quilt and sew from her mother and grandmother because the belief was "every daughter should make at least one quilt." In 1992, she received an Alabama Folk Arts Apprenticeship grant and taught quilting to about 30 students in classes held at the Kennedy-Douglass Center. She is a charter member of the Batting Brigade Quilt Guild, established in the early 1980s. She enjoys being creative and the feeling of accomplishment that quilting gives her. She quilted by hand until she developed arthritis. Now she sends her quilt tops to be hand quilted rather than use a sewing machine. Her favorite patterns include Rocky Mountain, Cathedral Window, and crazy quilts.

Sudha Raghuram

Montgomery

Bharatanatyam

Classical Indian Dance

1994, '95, '01, '02, '03, '04, '05, '07

See page 33.

Freda Randall

Demopolis

White Oak Baskets

2006

See page 23.

Jimmie Rice, Sr.

Eutaw

Chair Bottoming

1986, '87, '88

Jimmie Rice, Sr. (1909 – 1997), a native of the Clinton community near Eutaw, farmed for a living while he and his wife Edna Mae raised 13 children. He was a skilled woodworker who repaired furniture and made handles for axes, hoes and other tools in a shop behind his house. He was also a blacksmith and shoed horses. Mr. Rice was known widely for his skill at bottoming chairs. As far back as his family can remember, people brought their chairs to him so he could weave new seats out of twine. He participated in the Black Belt Folk Roots Festival in Eutaw every summer, where he demonstrated and sold his work. Through the Apprenticeship Program, he taught several students to bottom chairs.

Odessa Rice

Eutaw

Pine Straw Baskets

1994, '95, '98, 2000, '02, '05, '07

See page 34.

Jerry Rogers

Eastaboga

Fiddle

2001, '02, '04

See page 34.

Betty Moon Sampson

Holly Pond

[Instrument Making](#)

1988

[Bluegrass](#)

1989, '94, '95, '97, '98, 2000, '02

See page 30.

Pheng Sananikone

Irvington

[Lao Classical Dance](#)

1992

Classical dance is an important part of traditional Lao celebrations and holidays. The dances are performed slowly, incorporating fluid movements and formal gestures that have specific meanings to the dancers and the audience. At the age of 13, Pheng Sananikone began four years of dance training with the masters at the Natasine School in Vientiane, Laos. She and her family fled Laos and eventually settled in south Mobile County. She has performed at the International Festival in Mobile as well as at cultural events in her community. Through the Apprenticeship Program she taught dance to six young women of Lao heritage in the Bayou La Batre and Irvington area. These students performed at the 1992 Alabama Folklife Festival in Montgomery.

Bettie Seltzer

Boykin

[Quilting](#)

2005

Bettie Seltzer is one of the well-known quilters of Gee's Bend. She also serves as postmaster of

Boykin, the official name of the Gee's Bend community. She learned quilting from her mother, Annie Bendolph, who, while carrying water in 1937, was the subject of a famous Arthur Rothstein photograph. Bettie began making quilts when she was 10 by observing her mother, who pieced quilt tops at home then gathered with other women to quilt them. Originally, Seltzer made quilts from old clothing, but in the 1970s she began using new store-bought cloth. In 2005, she and Quinnie Pettway taught quilting to Tewanda Bendolph, Dewanda Bendolph and Tanasha Pettway with an ASCA Apprenticeship grant.

Jeff Sheppard

Anniston

[Sacred Harp Singing](#)

1991, '94, '97, '98, '99

See page 35.

Johnny Shines

Coaling

[Blues](#)

1991

John Ned "Johnny" Shines (1915 - 1992) was one of the last of the old style blues musicians, a colleague of the legendary Robert Johnson with whom he toured in the mid 1930s. His life mirrored blues history, from his beginnings in Memphis juke joints to his move to Chicago blues clubs, to his rediscovery in the 1970s by a new generation of fans. Shines lived his last 24 years in Alabama, influencing scores of young musicians. A stroke in 1980 affected

his guitar playing, but not his singing, and he continued to perform with accompaniment. Johnny Shines received the 1989 Alabama Folk Heritage Award and participated in the Apprenticeship Program. He and apprentice Kent DuChaine toured from 1989 until Shines' death in 1992.

Solomon Sholanke

Birmingham

[Nigerian \(Yoruban\) Drumming](#)

1995, '96, '97, '99, 2000, '02, '03, '04

See page 35.

Bill Smith

McCalla

[White Oak Baskets](#)

(Student of Jesse Thomason)

1992

See page 36.

Donald Smith

Centreville

[Primitive Baptist Hymn Singing](#)

1996

Elder Donald Smith (1939 – 2003) grew up in West Eoline in Bibb County and was raised in the faith and traditions of Little Hope Primitive Baptist Church. Sacred music was his gift, especially when singing from Benjamin Lloyd's *The Primitive Hymns*, William Walker's *Christian Harmony*, or B.F. White's *The Sacred Harp*. His favorite shape-note songs were "The Golden Harp" and "Fair Fields of Eden." Elder Smith worked many years for GM&O Railroad and later in the insurance business. In addition, he was a Primitive Baptist

minister and served 12 churches in the region. A respected leader in the community of singers, Elder Smith served as secretary of the committee that revised the 1994 edition of the *Christian Harmony*. His uncle John Deason had been one of the revisers of the 1958 edition.

Mary Ann Smith

McCalla

[White Oak Baskets](#)

(Student of Jesse Thomason)

1993

See page 36.

Rosa Smith

Bellamy

[Quilting](#)

2003

Sumter County quilter Rosa Smith of Bellamy grew up in nearby Coatopa. She learned to quilt with her grandmother Roberta Essex Wright. Some of the patterns Mrs. Smith likes to make are the Eight-pointed Star, Six-pointed Star and Bird quilt, but her trademark is the "Fifty State Quilt," which contains rectangular blocks depicting each state. These are very labor-intensive, because she embroiders details on each state, including the state flower and state bird. She received a Folk Arts Apprenticeship grant in 2003 to teach students Patricia Smith, Janie Bell, Rosie Wright, and Eloise McKnight. When teaching novice quilters, Mrs. Smith starts them off with a simple pattern, such as a Nine Patch.

Stanley Smith

[Sacred Harp Singing](#)

1990, '95

See page 37.

Enoch Sullivan

St. Stephens

[Bluegrass Gospel](#)

1993, '94, '95, '97, '99, 2000, '01, '06, '07

See page 40.

Barry Taylor

The Birmingham Sunlights

[Gospel](#)

(Students of the Four Eagles and the Shelby County Big Four)

1985, '89, '90

See page 41.

Melanie Taylor

Birmingham

[Fiddle](#)

(Student of James Bryan)

2002, '03

See page 14.

Jobie Thomas

The Shelby County Big Four

Bessemer

[Gospel Quartet Singing](#)

1985

Jobie Thomas (1913 – 2003) sang with The Shelby County Big Four, one of the legendary African American *a cappella* gospel quartets of Bessemer. From the mid 1920s through the 1950s, the style of quartet singing developed in Bessemer and Birmingham gained widespread popularity through commercial recordings and national

concert tours. Jobie Thomas was singing with the Bessemer Big Four in 1941 when Robert Sonkin of the Library of Congress recorded the group. In 1985, after The Shelby County Big Four celebrated its 50th anniversary, Thomas and the quartet received an Apprenticeship grant to work with the Birmingham Sunlights, a younger, emerging quartet. The Shelby County Big Four also worked with a youth quartet of singers chosen from neighborhood church choirs.

Jesse Thomason

Blountsville

[White Oak Baskets](#)

Jesse Thomason (1921 – 2006) made split oak baskets for nearly 70 years in Blount County. He learned the craft from his father Frank on Berry Mountain just west of Oneonta. In the 1940s he bought a farm and moved to Blountsville. He farmed all of his life except for a brief stint in the U.S. Army. In addition, he bottomed chairs and made oak baskets and fish traps. His repertoire was very broad and he enjoyed the challenge and variation afforded by working with narrow oak strips. He made egg baskets, locally called "bow baskets," a rare form among Alabama basket makers. In the 1980s, Mr. Thomason began participating in craft festivals and quickly developed a following among aspiring basket makers and patrons.

Tina Thrower

Poarch

Pine Needle Baskets

1986, 1987

(Student of Gail Thrower)

1988, '92

Tina Thrower is a Creek Indian basket maker from Poarch, Alabama. She practices the traditional type of coiled pine needle basketry that she learned from her mother-in-law, Gail Thrower. She uses the long-needle pine straw abundant to the region and binds it with raffia, a natural grass that is now supplied commercially. She makes a variety of small basket shapes and sometimes incorporates pinecones into her pieces as a decorative element. Thrower's work has been featured at Talladega's Heritage Hall, the Alabama Center for Traditional Culture, and the Alabama Folklife Festival. She participated in the Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program first as a student and then as a master artist. She has since moved out of state.

Gail Thrower

Poarch

Pine Needle Baskets

1986, '87, '88

See page 37.

Deborah Traylor

Woodland

Rag Rug Weaving

2003

See page 42.

Joe Bob Traylor

Woodland

Bent Willow Furniture

1996, '97, '98, '03, '06

See page 42.

Vanthong Vongsakhamphouy**Lao Goldsmith**

1991

Vanthong Vongsakhamphouy grew up in Vientiane, Laos, where he worked for the Royal Lao government as a surveyor. His father, a goldsmith, recognized that few people knew his craft and wanted his son to learn. Vanthong studied under his father for a year, and apprenticed for two more years with a Chinese goldsmith in Laos. He learned to fashion 24-karat gold into bracelets, necklaces, rings, earrings, belts and hair ornaments, using traditional designs. He escaped the communist occupation of Laos in 1984 and lived in a refugee camp in Thailand for three years. There he taught goldsmithing to his brother, nephew and others. When he settled in Mobile, he brought his tools with him and makes jewelry to order.

Gary Waldrep

Kilpatrick

Bluegrass

1988, '89, '91, '94, '95, '97, '99, 2000, '01, '02, '03, '05, '07

See page 43.

Whitt Wells

Tuscaloosa

Blues Guitar

1999

Blues guitarist Jolly "Little Whitt" Wells was born in 1931 in Ralph, Alabama, in Tuscaloosa County. He had a lifelong friendship with blues harmonica player Bo McGee and the two formed a band in the 1950s. For 40 years they played community events such as local festivals and parties, but never toured outside Alabama. They worked with the Alabama Blues Project, a blues advocacy and education organization. In 1995 they recorded *Moody Swamp Blues*, which was named "CD of the Year" by the British magazine *Blueprint*. In the 1990s they toured Europe twice and played festivals in the U.S. until Bo McGee's death in 2002. Apprentice Mike McCracken of Tuscaloosa was a student of Little Whitt's in 1999 through the Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program.

Ray Westmoreland

Fyffe

Fiddle

(Student of Noah Lacy)

1992

See Noah Lacy, page 51.

Tammy Westmoreland

Fyffe

Fiddle

(Student of Noah Lacy)

1992

See Noah Lacy, page 51.

J.C. Williams

Boligee

[White Oak Baskets](#)

1986, '87, '88, '93, '95, '98, '99, 2000, '03, '04, '05

See page 43.

Terry Wootten

Ider

[Sacred Harp Singing](#)

1996

Terry Wootten is a leader in the Wootten family of Sacred Harp singers, an important family in the Sacred Harp tradition on Sand Mountain and nationally. Folklorist Alan Lomax documented the Wootten family in 1959 and again in 1980. More recently the Woottens were the subject of the documentary film *Sweet is the Day*, which was shown on public television. In the film Terry tells how he practiced every song in *The Sacred Harp* by propping the songbook on the steering wheel of his tractor and singing while plowing. Terry Wootten raises chickens and he and his brothers operate a farm supply store in Ider. He is an experienced singing school teacher and teaches shape-note singing at Camp Fasola near Anniston.

Ruth Wyers

Brent

[Christian Harmony Singing](#)

2007

Mildred Ruth Wyers grew up in West Eoline in Bibb County where she began singing from the seven-shape hymnal the *Christian*

Harmony at an early age. Her mother, Clara Deason Smith, her uncle John Deason and grandfather Wiley Deason were active singers, and the family attended all-day singings many weekends. John Deason, along with O.A. Parris, published a 1958 revision of the *Christian Harmony* songbook in Alabama, which had originally been published in 1866 by South Carolinian William Walker. Wyers hopes to revive interest in Christian Harmony by conducting summer singing schools, much like the ones she attended growing up. Through a Folk Arts Apprenticeship grant, she organized a two-week singing school in July of 2007 at Pleasant Hill Upper Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Centreville.

Shaquetta Young

Alberta

[Quilting](#)

(Student of Annie Mae Young)

2005

See page 44.



Bluesman Willie King of Aliceville with student Katherine Taylor Davis of Macon, Mississippi.

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Mark Gooch Photographer

Birmingham photographer Mark Gooch traveled Alabama during the summer and fall of 2007 to document the folk artists featured in *Carry On: Celebrating Twenty Years of the Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program*.

For the past 28 years, Mark Gooch has photographed people for advertising agencies, magazines and design firms throughout the U.S., creating work that reflects the respect he has for each subject.

He started life in Mississippi, then moved to Alabama to study history and folklore at Samford University and anthropology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Gooch was awarded a research grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and a photography Fellowship from the Alabama State Council for the Arts.

His studio is located in Birmingham's historic Woodlawn neighborhood.

We would like to thank the following Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program grants review panelists who have served since 1984:

Gail Andrews, Joy Baklanoff, Deborah Boykin, Joey Brackner, Roland Braithwaite, Alan Brown, Jim Brown, Peggy Bulger, Loretta Burns, David Campbell, Teresa Cannon, Jim Carnes, Joyce Cauthen, Willie Collins, Jim Connor, Stephen Cottrell, Debra Eatman, Johnny Ford, William Foster, Fred Fussell, M. D. Gorman, Steve Grauberger, Russell Gulley, Susan Boyer Haley, Patty Helton, William Holman, Kern Jackson, Gregory Jeane, Mary Elizabeth Johnson Huff, Bill Jarnigan, Anne Kimzey, Carole King, Betty Ann Lloyd, Stephen Martin, J. C. McAleer, Brenda McCallum, Jerrilyn McGregory, John Price, Tom Rankin, Lori Sawyer, Aimee Schmidt, Ana Schuber, Jack Solomon, Bessie Jones Washington, Hank Willett, Chiquita Willis-Walls, Kim Willis and Eugene Wilson.

Special thanks to the all of the master artists and apprentices who carry on the artistic traditions of their families and communities and make Alabama a richer place.

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Carry On: Celebrating Twenty Years of the Alabama Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program
Music CD

01 “Leather Britches” – Noah Lacy (fiddle) and Chester Lacy (guitar)
Recorded by Joyce Cauthen, 1988.

02 “Angel Band” – The Sullivan Family
from album *Working on a Building*.

03 “Key to the Highway” – Whitt Wells
with Ralph Lucian accompaniment.
Recorded June 1993 at City Stages
Festival, Birmingham.

04 “Blackberry Blossom” – Eric
McKinney from his CD *Eric McKinney
Guitar Shop*.

05 “All Night” – Birmingham Sunlights.
Recorded by Steve Grauberger,
May 1995 at “In the Spirit”
concert, Gadsden.

06 “Restoration” – Dennis George,
from his CD *There is a Happy Land*
©2002 by Morning Trumpet
Recordings CD0201

07 “Sally Johnson” – Sharon Bounds
and friends. Recorded by Steve
Grauberger, December 2001 at the
State Capitol, Montgomery.

08 “Mercy Seat” – Don Smith and
Doug Wyers. Recorded by Anne
Kimzey, October 1994 Little Hope
Baptist Church, Eoline.

09 “I’m the Cause of It All” – Willie
King and Liberators. Recorded by
Steve Grauberger, August 1998 at the
Blackbelt Folkroots Festival, Eutaw.

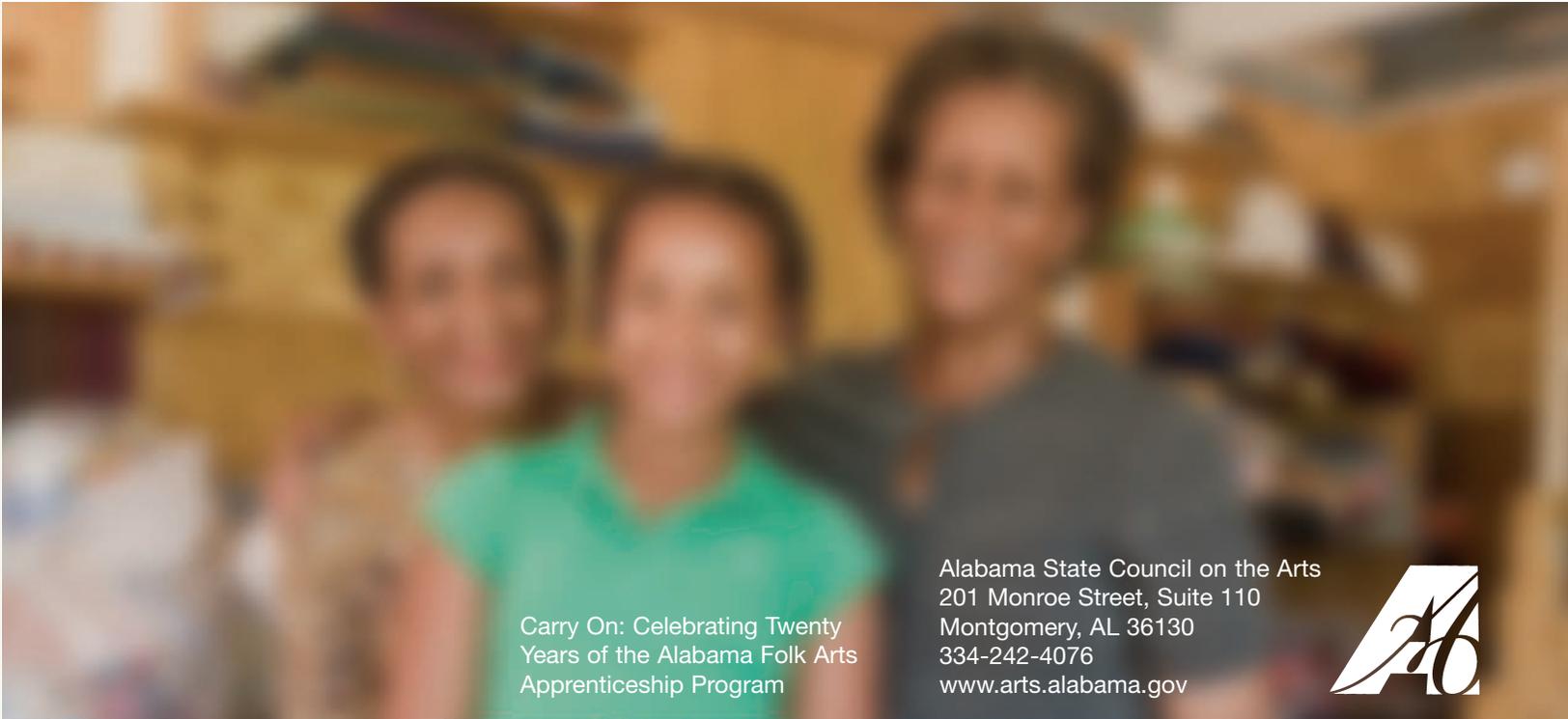
10 “El Pastor” – Mariachi Garibaldi,
Juan Cervantes, soloist. Recorded by
Steve Grauberger, 2005 at Old
Alabama Town, Montgomery.

11 “John Henry” – Gary Waldrep from
his CD from *Droppin’ the Thumb!*, 2000.

12 “The Unclouded Day” – #303 in
The Christian Harmony. Recorded by
Steve Grauberger, February 2006
during the Rotunda Singing at the State
Capitol, Montgomery.

13 “Trot Along” – James Bryan (fiddle)
and Rachel Bryan (guitar). Recorded
by Anne Kimzey, 2004 in Mentone.

14 “Saints” – Bay City Brass Band
from their CD *Mardi Gras*, 2003, Mobile.



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Years of the Alabama Folk Arts
Apprenticeship Program

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