

# ALABAMAARTS

Volume XXI, Number 1

State Arts Awards Issue 2005



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# ALABAMAARTS

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STATE ARTS AWARDS 2005



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**On the Cover:** Gouache on paper by Annie Kammerer Butrus, Birmingham, "Fallen Fruit: Summer, red", 11" x 14", 2003. Butrus received an individual artist fellowship in 2004 from the Alabama State Council on the Arts. This work expresses changes in the contemporary Alabama landscape.

# *Alabama's Council on the Arts*

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Alabama State Council on the Arts is to promote Alabama's diverse and rich artistic resources while highlighting excellence and educational experiences.

## **The Agency**

The Alabama State Council on the Arts is the official state agency for the support and development of the arts in Alabama. It was established in 1966 by an act of the Alabama Legislature. The agency supports not-for-profit arts organizations, programming in the arts for the general public, and individual artists. The State Arts Council works to expand the state's cultural resources and preserve its unique cultural heritage and places a high priority on arts programming by and for schools. The Council's primary means of supporting the arts and making the arts more accessible to varied audiences is through a multi-faceted grants program which covers all disciplines and fields of creative expression.

## **The Council**

The fifteen members of the Council are drawn from communities throughout the state. They are appointed by the Governor for six-year terms, and selection is based on expertise in the arts, business, or community affairs. The officers of the Council are elected by its members.

The Council meets four times each year, at various locations throughout the state. It approves agency programs and policies, develops long range plans, and makes final decisions on state and federal grant dollars under its jurisdiction.



# A Celebration of the Arts

by Al Head

Alabama is blessed with an abundance of resources — many natural, some fabricated—but most are treasures that lie in the richness of our people. In fact, the personality of our state can best be reflected through examples of human endeavor that are sprinkled across our diverse landscape. Human endeavor is evident in education, the corporate world, public service, cultivating the land, but, perhaps, there is no area where the unique footprint of our people is better expressed than through the arts. In the visual, performing and literary arts, the best of the state of Alabama is represented through stories, images and sounds created by a wide range of talented artists.

The arts in Alabama are created, supported, taught, preserved and presented by some very special people. The State Council on the Arts, every other year, recognizes a group of these people and attempts to honor both personal accomplishments and contributions to the state. The task of choosing a limited number of persons to spotlight is difficult on one hand, but incredibly rewarding on the other. There are many to choose from. Their stories are remarkable. Their impact on the state is immense.

This year's program not only gives us a great opportunity to thank some outstanding individuals for their service but also provides an occasion to celebrate the arts and artists in Alabama. Public officials in the state are increasingly realizing the important role the arts play in education, early and life-long learning, cultural tourism, economic development, community revitalization and enhancing the overall quality of life for the entire population. We have a lot to celebrate and be proud of in the state. The arts are a big part of the positive activity taking place in virtually all of our communities, big and small. The richness of the arts in Alabama need not be a "best kept secret" and the wonderful people behind the scenes making the arts happen deserved to be continually appreciated.

Our state, in many ways, is the sum total of the hundreds of communities that exist within its particular boundaries. It has often been said that communities do not stay the same, either growth and progress occurs, or decline and erosion is realized. One of the consistent characteristics of a progressive community is a vibrant cultural environment. You don't have a vibrant cultural environment without creative people, visionaries, supporters of ideas and dreams, those appreciative of quality and people who will give of themselves for the common good. The Council's Arts Awards Program is all about these kinds of people and the quality of life they enhance.

Finally, we hope the awards evening will be an inspiration for other Alabamians to join with our honorees in molding communities that reflect the cultural richness of our diverse population. The arts and artists of Alabama are indeed one of our state's most valuable resources and with a bit of nurturing these resources can help our state be vibrant and progressive in all the right ways. ■

*Al Head is the  
Executive Director  
of the Alabama State  
Council on the Arts.*



THE JONNIE DEE RILEY LITTLE LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

# Gloria Narramore Moody

## MOODY HAS HEART FOR CITY, THE ARTS

by Michael Huebner

**A**utographed pictures, many with personal notes, line Gloria Narramore Moody's upstairs studio in her Redmont Park home.

Photos of Renee Fleming, YoYo Ma, Samuel Ramey, the Guarneri Quartet, John Browning, Awadagin Pratt, Emanuel Ax and other classical music greats share space with thick scrapbooks of newspaper clippings, awards and other memorabilia. Yet to be hung were the score and baton Richard Westerfield used for his final ASO appearance in May.

They're reminiscences of a remarkable musical life that began as a prodigy and led to her status as one of Alabama's most respected and influential arts philanthropists, and on May 4, she'll be recognized at the Alabama State Council on the Arts awards program when she receives the Jonnie Dee Little Lifetime Achievement Award.

President of Alabama Symphony Orchestra's board of directors since



*Gloria Moody, shown in her home in Redmont Park, is one of the state's most respected arts philanthropists.*

Photo: The Birmingham News Staff/Bernard Troncale

New York management firm that drives the careers of opera singers. She has also been active on the boards of Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Opera Birmingham, Berkshire Opera, and was president of the Tuscaloosa Symphony. Last year she was named outstanding philanthropist by the Alabama chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

2001, Moody has been named to the board of "From the Top," the NPR radio program hosted by pianist Christopher O'Riley that showcases young talent from around the nation. The Gloria Narramore Moody Foundation, established by her late husband, Frank Moody, stands at or near the top of contributor lists for numerous Alabama arts organizations.

For many years Moody was on the board of overseers for the Boston Symphony Orchestra and was vice president of Janice Mayer and Associates, a

### PRECOCIOUS PIANIST

Moody was 4 when she first sat down at the piano, playing music she'd heard on the radio and reproducing music her older sister was playing.

"That didn't make for good relations, but she lost interest in it," Moody recalls of her sibling.

She was 11 when her parents, on the advice of area musicians, sent the budding musician to renowned piano pedagogue Roy McAllister at the University of Alabama. Moody

remained his student throughout her music training at UA.

“My parents were not musicians, and they didn’t know if I was getting along well,” says Moody. “But everywhere I went I played the piano. The head of the music school heard me play at Girl Scout camp. Playing piano became synonymous with my life.”

Moody continued to teach and perform after she graduated from college and married into a prominent Tuscaloosa family. Hugh Thomas, whose father, Frank, coached the UA football team to a 115-24-7 record and two national championships from 1931 to 1946, was her husband for 12 years. But tragedy struck in 1967. Thomas, a member of the Alabama legislature, was killed at age 33 in a traffic accident on his way to a meeting of the House of Representatives.

“That was like the end of the world,” she remembers. “Hugh and I had two children. My daughter was 8 and my son was 5.”

## STEINWAY, NOT BUICK

For the next two years she immersed herself in music, for a time teaching in a private school. Then she met an old friend.

“I’d known Frank Moody my whole life,” she says. “Frank was 18 years older than I was and he had four children. We got married in 1969. It was just wonderful to be a family again.”

One of Tuscaloosa’s most prominent businessmen, Frank Moody was the fourth-generation president of the First National Bank in Tuscaloosa. When Gloria graduated from high school, her father approached Frank, then a loan officer, about financing a grand piano.

“Frank just shook his head and told him, ‘You can buy a new Buick for



*Gloria and Frank Moody at their home on Overlook Road, Tuscaloosa.*

Photo: Courtesy of Gloria Narramore Moody.

Tuscaloosa,” she says. “He was chairman of all kinds of things like the hospital board and the mental health board. I was never a club person; it was always music or home. He didn’t particularly want me to have a career, but said he always felt guilty because he took my first love—my love of music and playing.”

Still, Gloria performed often and studied piano in New York during the 1980s, once accompanying flutist Ransom Wilson in recital. The couple also shared a love for travel, so after the children were grown, they bought a house in the historic town of Washington, Conn. But with music still flowing in her veins, the short drive from Washington to Lenox, Mass., where the Boston Symphony played each summer at the Tanglewood Music Center, proved irresistible for Gloria. The couple bought a summer home in Lenox in 1989.

“Tanglewood changed my life,” she said. “That’s where I got to know YoYo Ma, Gil Shaham and Itzhak Perlman. I would think, ‘Why can’t we have some-



*Gloria Moody, and UA Celebrity Series artists Itzhak Perlman and YoYo Ma.*

Photo: Courtesy of the University of Alabama.

that,” she says. “Daddy said, ‘I don’t want a new Buick. I want a Steinway.’” Gloria describes Frank as the “outside” person of the family during their marriage. “He was Mister

thing like this in Tuscaloosa?’ I wanted to share this with people I love. That’s when Frank started thinking about the foundation.”

With his health failing, Frank was determined to start a foundation and name it for his wife, whose career he believed he had curtailed. He and his family had already funded much of the construction for Frank Moody Music Building at UA.

“He wanted my whole name in there, and he said it was because of guilt,” she said. “Everything about him was far-sighted. He knew he wouldn’t live long, and he wanted me to have something to do for the rest of my life.”

## FUNDING ALABAMA ARTS

After Frank died in 1994, Gloria began funding arts in Alabama, commissioning composers, sponsoring concert series and serving on boards of directors. The same year, she commissioned William Bolcom’s “Let Evening Come” for opera legend Tatiana



Photo: Courtesy of the University of Alabama.

*Gloria and long-time friend and colleague Amanda Penick pose after duo-piano performance for UA Leadership Board.*

Troyanos, but the singer died before the premiere. The work was dedicated to Troyanos and Frank Moody and first performed in Tuscaloosa by soprano Benita Valente, violist Michael Tree (playing Troyanos’ part) and pianist Cynthia Raim.

The foundation also funded the world premiere of Gunther Schuller’s oratorio, “The Black Warrior,” an oratorio based on Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Birmingham letters.

Moody moved to Birmingham partly to help with the rebirth of the Alabama Symphony, which receives the biggest portion of the \$300,000 given annually by the foundation. During the recent interim period between executive directors, Moody rolled up her sleeves and went to work.

“I went to the office almost every day,” she said. “We’d had several staff changes, and I wanted to be sure that the morale stayed high. And it did.”

When Paul Ferrone arrived to interview for ASO’s executive director, he was impressed by Moody’s commitment to the orchestra.

“It was clear that she was incredibly passionate about the ASO,” Ferrone says. “You sensed this unconditional commitment, not only to the ASO but to music, and that rubs off on you. Every time she speaks, you find yourself leaning forward and paying attention, because what she has to say, you need to hear.”

## ROOM FOR OPTIMISM

Foundation recipients range from large organizations such as the UA’s Celebrity Series, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Opera Birmingham and Alabama Ballet to smaller endeavors like Northport’s Dickens Downtown and Birmingham’s Summerfest.

Moody’s interest in young talent spawned her sponsorship of the Alys Stephens Center’s Rising Stars Series, which showcases artists at the beginning of their careers.



Photo: Courtesy of the University of Alabama.

*Gloria Moody, pianist Garrick Ohlsson and former UA president Andrew Sorensen.*



Photo: Courtesy of the University of Alabama.

*Dr. Dennis Monk, Chair of the School of Music when the new music facility was built, with Gloria and Itzhak Perlman.*



“I was brand new in the community when I met Gloria,” says Stephens Center director Caron Thornton, who hopes to bring “From the Top” to Birmingham in the near future. “When she moved to Birmingham, I invited her to see the hall and asked her to be on the board. Shortly after, she was funding the Rising Star series. She’s your best friend, a fabulous sponsor and a wonderful human being.”

Moody is mostly upbeat about the symphony and Birmingham arts in general.

“It’s going to take a lot of close observation to figure out how to proceed,” she says. “We could shoot ourselves in the foot in a million ways. I’ve had my fears about large businesses leaving, but I’m optimistic, particularly in Birmingham.”

She will also take close looks at candidates for ASO’s music director.

“It’s terribly exciting,” she says. “The search committee will meet after each and get to know them socially. It’ll be good for Alabama nationally when all those conductors see what’s here. People are always shocked at the high quality of the orchestra. ■



Photo: Courtesy of Gloria Narramore Moody.

*Gloria Narramore Moody early in her career.*

*Michael Huebner is a Fine Arts Writer and Classical Music Critic for The Birmingham News. Copyright, Article by The Birmingham News, 2005. Originally published May 25, 2004. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission.*

## THE DISTINGUISHED ARTIST AWARD

# George Lindsey

## From Weekly Series to Lifetime Achievement

by Terry Pace

**F**ans of *The Andy Griffith Show* love and admire George Lindsey for his rib-tickling role as the beanie-capped Goober Pyle, a dimwitted but goodhearted filling-station attendant in mythical town of Mayberry, North Carolina. But by 1964, when he first earned the coveted role on television's top-rated sitcom, Lindsey—winner of the Alabama State Council on the Arts' 2005 Distinguished Artist Award—was already an experienced actor on the stage and TV and movie screens.

"I think I had to do all of that before I was ready to play Goober," Lindsey maintains. "Without that experience, I don't think the role on *The Andy Griffith Show* ever would have happened. I needed to do all of those other things—working on my range and developing my voice—before I was ready to do that show."

The Jasper native attended Florence State Teachers College (now the University of North Alabama), graduating in 1952. After finishing college, Lindsey taught for a brief time at Hazel Green High School before making the



George Lindsey with Ethel Kennedy at an Alabama Special Olympics function. Lindsey helped raise \$1.7 million for Alabama Special Olympics.

daring and momentous decision to pursue an acting career in New York—where he studied at the American Theatre Wing and eventually performed on Broadway.

"That stage experience helped me so much," Lindsey recalled, "having to perform every night for a Broadway audience. You really had to be ready—and I was ready."

Lindsey eventually moved to California and began working on net-

work television, playing a wide range of dramatic roles in episodes of *The Rifleman*, *The Twilight Zone* and *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*. *The Andy Griffith Show* series was already airing during that time, with fellow Alabama native Jim Nabors playing the show's first comical garage mechanic, Gomer Pyle.

"I was considered for the Gomer role, and I thought at the time that I should have had the part because I had more experience," Lindsey explained. "But they went with Jim, who turned out to be marvelous. But at the time, that was quite a blow."

Griffith and the show's producers later offered Lindsey the one-shot role



George Lindsey receiving an honorary degree at UNA.

of Dud Wash, the bumpkin boyfriend of Mayberry mountain girl Charlene Darling.

“Something in the sky just told me to turn that down,”

Lindsey remem-

bered. “I’m glad I did, because had I done it, I would have been too identified with that role to do anything else on the show. They never would have considered me for Goober.”

Before Lindsey officially joined *The Andy Griffith Show*, the actor won a dream dramatic role on a 1964 episode of *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour*, an expanded version of the suspense master’s long-running half-hour anthology series. Inspired by a grim, ghoulish horror story by Ray Bradbury, “The Jar” was set in the Louisiana swamps and featured Lindsey in a complex and challenging role as a gentle backwoods simpleton named Juke.

“That part had already been cast when I went in to read for it,” Lindsey noted. “I went in for the audition, and I had learned that script word for word. I put on a pair of overalls, and I hadn’t shaved for three or four days. I didn’t comb my



George with Lulu Roman, Grandpa Jones, and Gunilla Hutton during a “Hee-Haw” stage show at Opryland during the 1990s.

Photo: Courtesy of the Andy Griffith Show Renun Watchers Club (TAGSRWC) Archives.

hair. I don’t know if what I did was unique, but it worked for me.”

“The Jar” starred another Alabama-bred talent, Pat Buttram, in a rare and unforgettable dramatic role



Pat Buttram and George Lindsey doing voice work for the Walt Disney Company.

Photo: Courtesy of the George Lindsey Collection, University of North Alabama.



A cast shot of *The Andy Griffith Show*.

Photo: Courtesy of the George Lindsey Collection, University of North Alabama.

as a simpleminded farmer who exacts gruesome vengeance on his unfaithful wife. The supporting cast featured some of Hollywood’s most beloved and best-known character actors, including James Best, Collin Wilcox, Slim Pickens, William Marshall, Jane Darwell, Jocelyn Brando and Billy Barty. But in the end, it was Lindsey who stole the show from the older pros with his heartbreaking monologue about a haunting incident from Juke’s past.

“I did that in one take—no close-ups, no nothing,” Lindsey remembers with lingering pride. “When I got through, everybody on the set was crying. All of those actors on the set had tons of experience.”

“Working on that show was like being at the Forum, Yankee Stadium and the Rose Bowl all at the same time—and I scored the winning touchdown.”





The First George Lindsey Celebrity Golf Tournament held in Montgomery for the Alabama Special Olympics. Pictured left to right, Paul "Bear" Bryant, Leroy Jordan, unidentified woman, George Lindsey and Earnest Borgnine.

The "Jar" television drama was directed by longtime Hitchcock collaborator Norman Lloyd, best remembered for his sinister title role in the legendary director's 1942 thriller *Saboteur* as well as his more recent performance as Dr. Auschlander on the long-running medical series *St. Elsewhere*.

"They say that 80 percent of directing is casting," Lloyd noted in a recent interview. "In the case of directing George Lindsey in 'The Jar,' it was 100 percent. All I had to do was cast George in that role, roll the camera and let him

go. He did a beautiful job with it—absolutely magnificent."

Soon after earning critical raves for "The Jar," Lindsey finally joined the ensemble cast of *The Andy Griffith Show*. In the show's first few seasons, the character of Gomer had grown so popular that the series' producers

*Lindsey was the quarterback for the Florence State Teachers College Lions football team. He often says their main play was "Harlon, go long!" His teammate and great friend Harlon Hill, of Killen, was the end who later became a record-setting player for the Chicago Bears and for whom the NCAA Division II most valuable player of the year award is named.*

designed to launch a spinoff, *Gomer Pyle, USMC*. Nabors' departure left the door open for Lindsey to join *The Andy Griffith Show* cast as Gomer's equally unusual cousin, Goober.

"Doing a regular role on a weekly series was a big adjustment," Lindsey confessed. "For one thing, you had to adjust to Andy being in charge and doing exactly what he told you to do—and he was always 100 percent right. Also, you begin to look at the way you work differently because you're acting with the same people over and over again.

"For instance, I remem-



George Lindsey, Back



ber doing a Disney picture with a great group of actors, but after the movie was over, I never saw any of them again—ever,” Lindsey continued. “But when you’re working with your fellow actors every day on a series, your work has to maintain a certain integrity.”

After *The Andy Griffith Show* left the airwaves in 1968, Lindsey reprised his Goober character for three seasons on a highly rated spinoff, *Mayberry R.F.D.*, then joined the cast of the syndicated country-variety series *Hee-Haw*. He also appeared in memorable roles on *Gunsmoke*, *Banacek* and a popular 1972 episode of *M\*A\*S\*H*, television’s top-rated series at the time.

“I got the *M\*A\*S\*H* role on a Friday night,” Lindsey remembered, “and I had that weekend to learn the lines before we started filming on Monday.”

Lindsey now lives in Nashville, but he spends much of his time performing his live comedy act all over the country. The popular actor and entertainer will perform during an *Andy Griffith Show* cast reunion at Opryland this summer, and he’s the proud founder and host of the nationally renowned George Lindsey/University of North Alabama Film Festival at his college alma mater in Florence.

“We’re unique for a regional film festival, because we’re based at a university—so our focus is on using the festival as an educational tool,” Lindsey observed. “The festival offers a chance once a year for students, aspiring artists and independent filmmakers to come together, share and showcase their work and learn more about the art and craft of filmmaking.”



George Lindsey in an Alabama Special Olympics parade in Montgomery.

Photo: Courtesy of the George Lindsey Collection, University of North Alabama.

In its eight-year history, the festival’s special guests have included Lindsey’s longtime friend, Oscar winner Ernest Borgnine, as well as Alabama-based actor Lucas Black (*Sling Blade*), Alabama-born writer-director Tom Cheronos (*Seinfeld*), music producer Mike Curb and singer-comedian Ray Stevens. The George Lindsey Movie and Television Script Archive at UNA’s Collier Library includes one-of-a-kind personal working scripts donated by Borgnine, Black, “Jar” author Bradbury,

science-fiction legend Forrest J. Ackerman and other figures from the world of arts and entertainment.

“When I was in school, there was nothing at all available like this,” Lindsey noted. “If there had been, I might have been a lot better prepared for the professional work when I first left Alabama and went to New York.”

An inductee of the Alabama Stage and Screen Hall of Fame, Lindsey recently signed to return for his second season as host of the popular

Turner South series *Liars & Legends*. He'll also play the role of a Southern preacher in an upcoming independent feature called *When I Find the Ocean*, co-starring Lee Majors, Bernie Casey, Alabama-born actor Richard Tyson and Robert Redford's daughter, Amy Redford. The movie is being filmed in the Florence/Shoals area by Alabama-based writer-director Tonya Holly, who has worked with Lindsey on his film festival at their mutual alma mater, UNA.

"I had written the role of the preacher as very small—basically just a

brief appearance and a single line of dialogue," Holly explained.

"But after I talked to George and thought about putting him in the film, I realized how much he could do with that particular part. So I went back and rewrote and expanded that scene just for him. Now it's one of my favorite parts of the script."

Lindsey's return to feature filmmaking marks the fulfillment of a longtime dream for the veteran actor, whose big-screen credits over the years range from live-action roles in *Ensign Pulver* (1964) and *Treasure of Matecumbe* (1976) to

voiceover work on the Disney classics *The Aristocats* (1970), *Robin Hood* (1973) and *The Rescuers* (1977).

"I always thought I'd end up a movie character actor, like a latter-day Chill Wills or Slim Pickens," Lindsey concluded. "I'd like to do more movies, and I know I've still got it in me. I just have this feeling that there are young directors out there who are going to say, 'I'll bet George Lindsey could really play the heck out of this part.' So I'm keeping my instrument tuned." ■

Photo: Courtesy of the George Lindsey Collection, University of North Alabama.



From left to right, Bill Jarnigan, Tom Cheronos and George Lindsey. Tom Cheronos, who had directed George in *NewsRadio*, was being inducted into a hall of fame at the University of Alabama, where he now teaches each spring. Tom was the first featured guest for the George Lindsey UNA Film Festival. He was also a former director of *Seinfeld*.

*Terry Pace is the entertainment editor of the TimesDaily, a New York Times Regional Newspaper in Florence, Alabama. His is also an actor, director and producer who serves on the steering committee of the George Lindsey/UNA Film Festival and teaches film courses in the continuing-studies program at UNA. His written work has appeared in Cult Movies, Scarlet Street, Starlog, Fangoria and other national magazines.*

# Betty Grisham

## Teacher, Patron and Artist Extraordinaire

by Clayton Bass

Alabama has a growing, national reputation as a place where a great diversity of the arts is fostered. Many individuals and institutions can claim responsibility for propelling this reputation forward. However, few people in Alabama have made contributions to the arts with such statewide impact as Mrs. Betty Grisham, a native of Athens, Alabama. Mrs. Grisham is a generous patron, advocate and volunteer whose dedication has nurtured and benefited numerous arts organizations across Alabama during the past fifty years.

Following her graduation with a BA degree from the University of Montevallo in 1942, and a MA from Columbia University Teachers College in 1945, Mrs. Grisham taught art at the High Museum, the Westminster School and the public school system in Atlanta. She was an original member of the Board of Directors of the Birmingham Museum of Art and initiated its art education program. Her efforts established a vital role for the Museum and reinforced a growing trend in Museum programs offered for community enrichment. Following her move to Huntsville in 1963, she spearheaded the establishment of the Huntsville Art League and supported



*Mrs. Grisham addressing visitors at the opening of The World of Betty Grisham.*

the Huntsville Museum of Art since its founding in 1970. She also served on the Museum's Foundation Board and in the Women's Guild. She and her husband Charles also provided funds to name a major gallery in the new Museum in 1998.

An accomplished artist in her own right, her creative journey has had many interesting stages culminating with a presentation of a solo exhibition by the Huntsville Museum of Art (HMA) which closed in early 2005. Betty Grisham's personal art combines traditional handwork such as embroidery and fabric dying with modernist elements such as abstraction and the use of bold patterns. Her work evokes an earlier time when great value was placed upon objects that were hand made. An accomplished painter and printmaker, Mrs. Grisham has numerous exhibitions to her credit, including 14 successive solo shows in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and Texas.

Fascinated with textiles since childhood, she developed this passion into successful businesses in the 1970s and 80s that produced original women's apparel sold under the label "B. Grisham" in Alabama, New York and elsewhere, as well as exquisite hand printed silks for use in interior design. Speaking of her influences and motivations Betty said,

Photo: Courtesy of the Huntsville Museum of Art.



“Winter’s fiery sunsets, I see and enjoy them everyday. Then I do drawings that become other works. Things that are growing—nature, I come back to it more and more. Changes of the seasons and the subtlety of nature inspire my work. I have studied art history and see great value in all periods. Georgia O’Keeffe was an influence. Inspiration comes from many sources.”

Although “unique” is often overused, when it comes to Grisham’s art works or dyed fabrics, the term truly applies, for each work is distinctive, yet contains her daring use of color, gesture and design. Her work is alive with her spirit, vitality and sense of humor.

Through her generous support to the University at Montevallo, the Art Department was able to expand its printmaking program to include large format prints on silk fabric. Works created by students from this program were donated to the Huntsville Museum of Art and are on display in its Great Hall and conference facilities.

During the past two decades Mrs. Grisham devel-



*This exquisite lion is one of 13 Buccellati animal sculptures donated to the Huntsville Museum of Art by Betty Grisham. As a result of Mrs. Grisham’s donation, the Museum has the world’s largest collection of Buccellati Animals.*

Photo: Courtesy of the Huntsville Museum of Art.

oped a strong interest in the exquisite jewelry and silver creations of Buccellati in Milan, Italy. Although she began purchasing pieces for her own enjoyment, in recent years, Mrs. Grisham has given the Huntsville Museum of Art numerous silver Buccellati animals. This group of works is now the largest collection of its type in the world. In a recent interview Mrs. Grisham explained her initial attraction to the work. “Having designed and made jewelry myself, I saw a great sensitivity in Buccellati’s craftsmanship and designs. His silver animals can inspire children because they can relate to them. Children can even make their own animals out of paper inspired by the silver ones. It’s the art teacher in me that wants to help children connect to their creativity.”

Mario Buccellati, who founded the House of Buccellati in 1919, originated the “Buccellati style” which is comprised of techniques from the Renaissance period, a combination of luxury materials, plus an exten-



*Betty Grisham, (b. 1921, Birmingham, AL) Converging Patterns, 1975 silk gros point, 19 x 17 inches. Collection of the Huntsville Museum of Art, gift of the artist.*

Photo: Courtesy of the Huntsville Museum of Art.





Photo: Courtesy of the Huntsville Museum of Art.

*Betty Grisham (b. 1921, Birmingham, AL), Portrait of Snowy, 1956, oil on canvas, 42 x 54 inches. Collection of the Huntsville Museum of Art, gift of the artist, image of her beloved cat.*

sive use of texture engraving to create objects of extraordinary beauty. Buccellati's unique style is favored by discriminating clientele that include the Vatican and the Royal Houses of Italy, Spain, Belgium, England and Egypt. The Buccellati tradition is carried on today by Mario's son Gianmaria, who serves as the primary designer. An internationally renowned silversmith, he has dedicated his life to the creation of extraordinary objects that keep the

tradition of Italian craftsmanship alive. Buccellati silver animals replicate creatures from earth, sea and sky in a highly realistic manner that captures details like feathers, hair, or different types of skin. The Huntsville Museum of Art will begin a major national traveling exhibition of its Buccellati collection beginning in 2007.

In recent years Mrs. Grisham and her late husband Charles supported the establishment of the new Jule Collins

Smith Museum of Art at Auburn University, adding yet another jewel in the State's crown of arts organizations. When asked to reflect on her contributions to the arts in Alabama she said, "Now we have art museums in many cities across the state. When I started out there were none. It is thrilling to see how much things have changed. Art museums are here to benefit everyone. You don't have to be rich to walk in the door. My involvement in helping to

bring several art museums into existence in Alabama has been very satisfying. Now we have many great museums for people to enjoy.”

Truly Betty Grisham’s commitment to the arts and culture in Alabama continues to redefine and enhance the arts for Alabama’s citizens, visitors and for generations to come. Her generosity and creativity touch thousands of people everyday—many who know her and many that never will. She is truly one of a kind. ■

*Clayton Bass is President and CEO of the Huntsville Museum of Art.*



Photo: Courtesy of the Huntsville Museum of Art.

*In October 2004, the Huntsville Museum of Art presented The World of Betty Grisham. This exhibition presented a selection of fabrics, paintings, works on paper, needlework, and wearable art created over the artist’s remarkable 50-year career.*



Photo: Courtesy of the Huntsville Museum of Art.

# Bobby Horton

## Understanding the Soul of American Music

by William M. Jarnigan

**E**nsley was a vibrating, magical place for a young boy, saddled to his bicycle, to grow up in the 1950s. Bobby Horton lived “a mile from everything.” In a young child’s kingdom, he was rich. He was near such attractions as the Birmingham International Raceway (or BIR, as the locals called it), the state fairgrounds and Rickwood Field where the Barons and the Black Barons played. Five Points West was about a half mile away. What more could a lad want when he and his pals could listen to the vroom of the stock car engines revved by future NASCAR greats, eat cotton candy and ride the Ferris wheel or catch a Southern League baseball game with future major league stars like Jimmy Piersall.

And when he closed out the day at the Horton home in Belview Heights, he would be influenced by the mournful country tunes of the late Hank Williams, favored by his father, and the '30s and '40s jazz played by America’s big bands, many peopled by musicians schooled by John “Fess” Whatley at nearby Industrial High School (now Parker). Within a baseball’s throw of his neighborhood was the famed Tuxedo Junction which Ensley native Erskine Hawkins and former Montgomery-based Army Air Corps

lieutenant Glenn Miller had made famous. Horton’s mother would also have classical music playing.

He knew his father had been a trumpet player, but he had never heard

him play. The loss of the senior Horton’s bottom front teeth during World War II had stolen his embouchure. Young Bobby wanted to emulate his dad; he wanted to play the



Photo: Courtesy of Bobby Horton.

*Bobby Horton and his music has been featured in numerous magazine and newspaper articles.*





*An assortment of Bobby's many musical instruments.*

horn after finding it tucked away, like a dream of yesterday.

During his early summers, he experienced another musical influence. His maternal grandfather "Pop" Camp was an old time picker, who played what he called double knocking banjo, referred to today as drop thumb flailing or claw hammer style. Often when Camp would be sitting on the front porch of his Clay County home, dropping his thumb, neighbor Howard Hamil would pull up in his pickup, deposit his hat on the dashboard, yank a fiddle from the back of the vehicle, set a spit can on a paper sack and join the picking, kicking off with "Leather Britches."

Young Horton was also blessed with another of his grandfather's musical interests. In that Lineville country

house, the old man would ritualistically rise every Sunday morning at 5:30 and wake up the whole house to the gospelizing of the Chuck Wagon Gang on a radio, played very loud to compensate for his fading hearing. Then they would watch the Wally Fowler show on TV. Another feature was the Florida Boys who would host several southern gospel greats on *The Gospel Jubilee* syndicated show.

On his father's side of the family, Horton's great-great aunt Mary was married to Paine Denson, one of the famed Sacred Harp songwriters and singers from Winston County.

When he was eight, during the centennial of the Civil War, the sixth generation Alabamian learned that his ancestors had fought on the side of the

Confederates. A mushrooming interest in the history of that conflict began consuming him.

All the cultural and musical influences that immersed him were just a part of life for a Southern lad.

Then in the seventh grade, the formal music training started with band director Joel B. Harrison, who, Horton today says, was "wonderful," especially by how he inspired the students to play well. Harrison formed a Dixieland band, with Horton as a member, and took them to Jackson, Mississippi to perform for the first time. The "performance bug" had bitten the youngster.

In the socially and politically turbulent Sixties, Horton played in rock and roll bands around Birmingham. While in school in Ensley, he first met Jerry Ryan, who was in his initial year there as a basketball coach. Ryan would sit in occasionally with Horton's band. After high school, Horton enrolled across town at Samford University to study accounting and economics. Ryan got a job there as the freshman basketball coach. When Samford public relations guy Warren Musgrove asked Ryan if he knew someone who could play banjo, the latter replied to the affirmative and got Horton, then a junior, to accompany him to play at Musgrove's budding Horse Pens 40 folk music festival. They made \$10 for twice playing a seven-song set. As a result, the duo began getting gigs to play bluegrass music. After adding an upright bass player, they took the name Three On a String around 1971, and began developing a stage act that was musically based, but accented with comedy. Meanwhile,



Horton graduated and began programming mainframe computers for Liberty National insurance company, a day gig he held for seven years. Ryan had become a high school principal.

As the demand grew for their playing, Horton says they “stumbled and bumbled” their way in a full-time career as musicians.

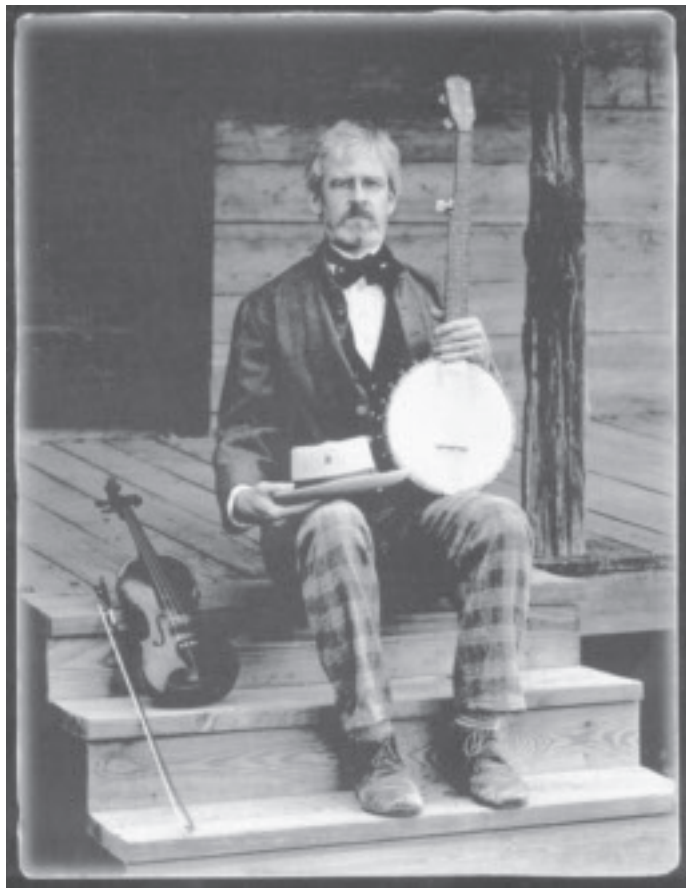
With Ryan’s close ties with Musgrove, they were able to build a fan base at Horse Pens 40 in Blount County and at the Lowenbrau House in Birmingham. Through those gigs, they became friends with such genre greats as self-proclaimed father of bluegrass Bill Monroe, his popular disciples Flatt & Scruggs, the prominent Ralph Stanley, Grand Ole Opry stalwarts Sam and Kirk McGee, Doc Watson and the young upstarts, Ricky Skaggs and Mark O’Connor.

Three On a String allowed Horton to begin spreading his wings. He added trumpet to his repertoire. They were playing bluegrass, big band, swing, classical, Irish, folk and old-timey music, without limiting the style and instead, concentrating on the tune. As the unique three-part harmony of Three On a String became more and more popular, they even performed with the Alabama Symphony. Meanwhile, Horton began doing side projects with a little four-track recorder he had bought and set up in a spare bedroom.

1984 was his watershed year. Milt Bagby hired him to compose the soundtrack for *Shadow Waltz*, a feature film about a War Between the States love story set in southern Indiana in

1863. Horton laid down the foundation for the score with a finger-picking guitar part before going into a studio to add strings and woodwinds. That session convinced him he could do more of this. While researching for period music to use in the film, Horton discovered thousands of songs dealing with the travails of the war. He was also collecting an assortment of period musical instruments, including brass and percussion pieces, strings of all kinds and whistles.

At the behest of friends in the Sons of the Confederacy, he recorded some of the tunes and began selling cassettes. A passion became an obsession to meet the demand. Dressed in period costume and playing instruments of the period, Horton began performing a one-man concert/lecture series, “Songs and Stories from the Civil War,” coast to coast, from the Vermont State House to Baruch College in New York and San Diego State University in California. The Delta Queen and Mississippi Queen steamboats had him on their inland river cruises. By the



*Bobby Horton in period costume.*

Photo: Courtesy of Bobby Horton.

time he produced half a dozen volumes of the music, he attracted the attention of *American Heritage* editor Richard Show, who was serving as an advisor of Ken Burns’s Civil War documentary project. Show suggested Burns contact Horton. As a result, he was able to get a version of “Dixie” on the soundtrack. That and his other Civil War music projects led *Blue and Gray Magazine* to term Horton “the premier artist of Civil War music.”

Horton was captivated by the richness of the Civil War music. The songwriters “wrote about every aspect of life.” The songs were sung by the people

while one of the most “horrendous times to be an American” was occurring. Afterwards, they wrote more tunes about what they had experienced. The story song tradition is one that has been the language of time, tying together generations and cultures.

Now Horton has recorded 14 volumes of the Civil War period music, with six being of Confederate songs.

Burns was impressed enough with Horton’s *Civil War* contribution to query him about providing a rendition of “Take Me Out To The Ballgame” for an upcoming documentary on baseball. And he did, to excess. He provided the filmmaker numerous versions of the song in a variety of styles—classical guitar, a “Mozarty sort of thing,” Southern rock, big band, etc.

More Burns projects followed for Horton—*Thomas Jefferson*, *Lewis & Clark*, *Frank Lloyd Wright*, *Not for Ourselves Alone: The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony* and *Horatio’s Drive*. A chance performance with a Samford opera singer provided Horton with “Beech Spring,” a 1759 hymn that he shaped for the opening of the *Lewis & Clark* film, of which he also composed “Clark’s Theme” and the conflict theme.

Burns has said, “I don’t believe I’ve met anyone quite like Bobby in the ability to understand the soul of American music.”

Author and historian William C. Davis, of *Civil War Journal* fame, adds, “Bobby Horton is unfailingly entertaining and unself-consciously informative. If you want to understand Johnny Reb and Billy Yank, you can

read a dozen books, or spend an hour listening to Bobby Horton.”

Horton has scored two A&E projects and 10 National Park Service videos. Calling on his past career, he worked on two computer games of Civil War battles.

American to the core, Horton scored the music for the James Earl Jones-narrated *The Voice of Gladdened Hearts*, the story of the 1896 rescue of the E.S. Newman of the coast of North Carolina by the only all-black U.S. Coast Guard lifesaving crew in American history. The film premiered in February 2005.

As this fun-loving, Renaissance man, brings his diverse talents to these recording projects, Horton is also preserving a part of American musical history that might otherwise be lost forever, because sheet music, the only recording of the works at the time, deteriorates or is discarded. The Alabama Music Hall of Fame has previously recognized his and Three On a String’s contributions to music with a Governor’s Achievement Award. Now the Alabama State Council on the Arts is presenting him a Governor’s Art Award for his undying contributions.

To paraphrase the last couplet of “Stonewall’s Requiem,” one would hope that Bobby Horton’s “music shall live forever link’d with reverence and love.” ■



Photo: Courtesy of Bobby Horton.

*Bobby Horton on acoustic bass.*

*William M. Jarnigan is the University of North Alabama Director of University Relations, is a former executive director of the Muscle Shoals Music Association and a former board member of the Alabama Film Commission and the Alabama State Council on the Arts.*

# Jimmy Lee Sudduth

## His Work is REALLY Down to Earth

by Margaret Lynne Ausfeld

Photo: Courtesy of Georgine and Jack Clarke.



*Samples of Sudduth's work are displayed around a tree at the Kentucky Festival of the Arts, Tuscaloosa. Jimmy Lee Sudduth was a major draw for the festival with collectors traveling great distances to purchase his paintings.*

Jimmy Lee Sudduth, a native of Fayette, is a well-known figure in Alabama art circles and has been for many years. Anyone who has visited the annual Kentucky Festival of the Arts in Northport will remember him—he's the one surrounded by dozens of anxious admirers lined up hoping to buy a painting. However at ninety-five years of age Jimmy Lee is not just well known in his home state—rather he is one of the “elder statesmen” of black folk art in America. His paintings are distinctive, created primarily from various colors of clay that he dug from the

earth and refined, mixing them with sugary liquids to solidify them and bind them to the support. Over time he came to utilize various types of paint and other natural materials and processes, and in studying his work today we discover a compendium of styles and techniques to rival the most adventurous of schooled artists. In addition to his technical experimentation, Jimmy Lee's work is characterized by the most ineffable of elements—a sense of joy in living. His works are honest, powerful expressions of appreciation for his environment and his fel-

low man that force the viewer to stop, consider, and appreciate the simple beauty of the world we all share.

Jimmy Lee was born March 10, 1910, at Caines Ridge, a small community in west Alabama near Fayette. His mother, Balzola, was a medicine woman of Native American descent who used wild plants in her medicinal preparations. While accompanying his mother in the woods one day, the young boy created his first painting in mud on a tree stump. This painting survived until their next visit and his mother believed that this was a sign he should continue to paint.

He did so, but his art remained an avocation for many years until he was afforded more time to pursue it later in life.

The history of Jimmy Lee's art making career is integrally connected to the experiences of a long and productive existence. It is clear that his art was inspired by his own interests, and not by the marketplace. In 1963, Robert Martin, a young reporter for the *Florence Times Tri-City Daily* newspaper (July 14, 1963), interviewed the artist, who recalled his artistic beginnings. “I started when I was eight, just drawing on the ground,” he said. “Later on though, I began to draw on paper.” He told the reporter he had never had



any training in art, “except what I’ve learned myself in the experience.” At the time of the interview, he was employed as a gardener, after having worked many years as a farm laborer, and then in a local gristmill and, still later, a lumber mill. Typically, the reporter left his interview with a painting by Jimmy Lee in his car, the artist’s gift to a young admirer. Jimmy Lee reveled in the happiness his paintings brought and he gave them away freely to those who asked for them.

Perhaps the most important influence on his evolving career as a rec-



*Georgine Clarke, Visual Arts Program Manager, Alabama State Council on the Arts, visits with Jimmy Lee Sudduth, a regular exhibiter at the Kentuck Festival of the Arts, 1996, Tuscaloosa.*

Photo: Courtesy of Georgine and Jack Clarke.



Courtesy of the Fayette Art Museum.

*Jack Black, his wife Margaret and daughter Clair help Jimmy Lee Sudduth celebrate his 94th birthday at the Jimmy Lee Sudduth Gallery, Fayette Art Museum.*

ognized artist was Jack Black, who was a neighbor and the publisher of the local newspaper. It was Mr. Black, who was also the founder of the Fayette Art Museum, who encouraged his friend to continue to paint and sought out recognition for his work. He helped to arrange Jimmy Lee’s first exhibition at the Stillman College art department in 1969. He was featured at the Smithsonian Institution’s Bicentennial Festival of American Folklife in 1976. This was followed by a one-person exhibition at the Birmingham Museum of Art in 1978, and by an appearance on NBC’s Today show in 1980. Thereafter his work received increasing exposure and the market was established. Over the years he has been included in almost fifty exhibitions in the United States and Europe.

Although painting using natural clays was his primary

means of self-expression it was by no means the only one. In previous years he created porch decorations, Christmas displays, and painted the walls of his house with decorative patterns. He has musical talents as well—he’s been known to entertain his visitors by singing and playing the blues on his mouth harp (harmonica). Appreciation for Jimmy Lee’s work obviously spread beyond west Alabama many years ago, but the local community embraced the artist and his creativity. Thanks to the Kentuck Festival and the Fayette Arts Festival, his works have found homes very close to his own home. “You drive around town, you’ll see my work all over the place. I can hardly believe it myself,” he once said.

To make paintings Jimmy Lee traditionally used a combination of clays he dug from the surrounding area mixed with a sugary substance as a binder (and sometimes incorporating commercial paint) as a medium. His own term for this distinctive blend is “sweet



mud.” Over the years he has practiced a variety of means in using these simple materials. He applied them with his fingers, sticks, brushes and other implements. He used soft clay rocks to draw his designs and provide a soft, pastel-like finish to works that contrast strongly with those created from heavily applied coatings of mud. He’s employed plant materials as stains and even charred the surfaces of boards to make a rich, silky, deep black finish. Seemingly his ingenuity is endless—when he was dissatisfied with shades of black achieved by other methods, he reportedly used lawnmower exhaust to smoke a passage to the desired color.

Some of the earliest known works from the 1960s suggest his fascination with architecture and with architectural forms. He made pencil drawings on the back of the plywood boards he used as supports, reproducing the planes of houses in perspective to suggest depth in space. On the reverse of these boards he created carefully crafted depictions of the structures using clay, paint, organic materials, and sometimes affixing actual stones to the surface. Some of his most distinctive and powerful works are buildings familiar from his local environment—everything from the modest vernacular log houses that were once common in west Alabama, to the majestic Fayette County Court House, with its classically-inspired colonnade and dome.

Jimmy Lee’s choice of subjects beyond architecture remains complex and wide-ranging: from people, animals and situations familiar to resi-



Photo: Courtesy of Georgine and Jack Clarke.

*Playing the blues on his harmonica is a favorite pastime for Sudduth.*

dents of west Alabama, to the larger world he knows mostly from popular media. He also created images that convey his very different urban experiences, especially his visit to the American Folk Life Festival in Washington, D. C., in 1976. His memories of that trip and Washington’s multistory urban buildings are evident in many of his compositions after that trip. Throughout his career, wildlife such as squirrels, turtles and snakes are portrayed, along with many images of

a series of dogs he has owned as pets, collectively known as “Toto.” He has also made many portraits of people, obviously reveling in the diversity of their presentation and dress. An enthusiastic man of positive outlook, he conveys his fascination with the people he portrays by spontaneous, gestural depictions of their features, hair and clothing. In recent years the artist has been less able to do the hard work of digging and preparing clay, and thus has turned to painting his

favorite subjects with acrylic paints on plywood boards.

Jimmy Lee Sudduth is one of a group of artists whose creativity has expanded the boundaries of what was once considered mainstream art in the twentieth century. These artists, now usually categorized as self-taught, have an enthusiastic audience of collectors and admirers who appreciate the strength and heart-felt sincerity of their productions. Both the artists and collectors are passionate advocates of basic human values and emotions, expressed in an astounding array of media and subject matter. Work like that by Jimmy Lee was once considered merely odd or eccentric—now it is cherished for its originality, its sense of joyous spirit, and its evocation of the ways of life in the rural South. ■

*Margaret Lynne Ausfeld is Curator of Paintings and Sculpture at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts.*



Photo: Courtesy of Georgine and Jack Clarke.

*Relaxing in his studio, and sharing a story or two, Jimmy Lee is always happy to stop for a visit.*

Photo: Courtesy of Georgine and Jack Clarke.



*Samples of Sudduth's paintings.*



Photo: Courtesy of Georgine and Jack Clarke.

*Jimmy Lee Sudduth completing a piece of work with his unique signature and a paint pen.*

THE ALABAMA FOLK HERITAGE AWARD

# Margie and Enoch Sullivan

## Pioneers of Bluegrass Gospel Music

by Anne Kimzey

Every two years the Alabama State Council on the Arts presents the Alabama Folk Heritage award, its highest honor for the folk and traditional arts. The 2005 recipients are Margie and Enoch Sullivan, of the legendary Sullivan Family band from St. Stephens, Alabama.

The Sullivans, pioneers of Bluegrass Gospel music, have performed together for more than fifty years. Enoch attributes their long and successful career to “good friends, and the good Lord, and hard work.” Through the years, the Sullivan Family band has played for congregations in small country churches and entertained audiences at major festivals across the U.S. and Europe. They have appeared on the Grand Ole Opry and were inducted into Bill Monroe’s Bluegrass Hall of Fame in Bean Blossom, Indiana and the Old Time Country Music Hall of Fame in Anita, Iowa. They continue to keep up a busy touring schedule, and are on the road nearly 300 days per year.

When they are not touring, the Sullivans live on the old home place in St. Stephens where they raised their five children. The property includes a 69-acre bluegrass park, complete with camping facilities. There they host



*Margie and Enoch Sullivan at a festival in Gadsden.*

two festivals a year: the Dixie Bluegrass Gospel Fest in May on Mothers’ Day weekend and the Sullivan Family Homecoming on the third weekend in October.

Margie Sullivan was born Margie Brewster in Winnsboro, Louisiana. She first learned music within her family.

“My Daddy played guitar and we would gather around in the living room by the old fireplace and he would take the guitar and we’d all sing together,” she said. “And when I showed an interest in learning, at about the age of 8 or 9, he started showing me the chords and the timing.” Margie’s first talent was singing. “I wanted to accompany myself, not necessarily become a master musician,” she said. Her soulful alto creates a depth of feeling in her songs. She was influenced by country musicians she heard on radio KWKH - Shreveport, such as Mac Wiseman, Johnny Wright, Kitty Wells, Jack Anglin and

the Bailes Brothers. “They were a great influence on me because they sang a lot of gospel music,” she explained.

Margie and her father sang together in church. When she was 13, her father died, and she left home to travel with evangelist Hazel Chain, who needed a singer and musician. “My mother

Photo: Aimee Schmidt



thought it would be a good thing for me to do, which it proved to be,” Margie said. She and Sister Chain traveled to revivals and camp meetings throughout Louisiana, east Texas, Mississippi and Alabama.

Enoch Sullivan began playing music at a young age also, first learning the guitar, then mandolin, then fiddle. He was eight years old when he began “church work.” He also came from a musical family. His father, the Reverend Arthur Sullivan, played mandolin, fiddle and guitar. His grandfather played banjo in the old dropped-thumb, or clawhammer, style. His grandfather and cousins used to play “what we

called ‘frolics’ then. You know, regular, old-fashioned dances in neighbors’ homes on the weekends,” he said. “But

when my Dad converted, he was really a fundamentalist. Pentecostal Holiness people didn’t believe in playing worldly music. We completely stopped playing anything but religious music or gospel music, sacred music.”

Margie and Enoch met at a revival

service in Sunflower, Alabama in 1946. She was 13 and he was 15. Three years later the two married. Very soon after, they began performing with Arthur Sullivan for a live radio program on WRJW in Picayune, Mississippi. Later they performed every Sunday for seven years on WPBB in



*The Sullivan Family often performed at churches throughout the Southeast.*

Photo: Courtesy of Margie and Enoch Sullivan.

Jackson, Alabama and five mornings a week in Thomasville. They worked with Enoch’s father, Arthur, who continued to play music and preach the gospel until he died, suddenly, in 1957. The group wondered if they could continue, but “the people insisted we keep going, keep playing,” said Enoch. The Sullivan Family band also included Enoch’s brother Emmett who played banjo with the group until his death in 1993.

Many of the songs the Sullivans perform today are the time-honored, gospel standards they have been playing since their early days, such as “This World is Not My Home,” “Just Over in Glory Land,” and “Where the Soul Never Dies.” One song that brings back memories for Margie is “Brush Arbor.” “I learned that from George Jones,” she said. “I related to that because, in my early life, I went to the brush arbors,” which she described as “a makeshift place to have church.” She said, “I think brush arbors were put up as community places where everybody could come regardless of what your faith was, and enjoy good gospel singing and good preaching.” These arbors were constructed with poles and rafters, “and then they put brush over the top,



*Dressed and ready to perform in an earlier photograph.*

Photo: Courtesy of Margie and Enoch Sullivan.

which helped with the sun. It didn't do much for the rain." At night they were lit with kerosene lamps, she said. She likens these outside meeting places to the outdoor festivals where they perform now.

Over the years, the Sullivan Family has nurtured a number of younger musicians in the bluegrass gospel tradition, including country music star Marty Stuart, who got his start with the Sullivan Family when he was 12 years old. Would-be apprentices audition for the valuable opportunity to go with the band on the road. "They have to have a natural talent. No matter how much they've learned by the book, unless they have a natural talent and feeling for the music, it's hard for them to play this kind of music," said Margie. She credits Enoch with a sense for picking out students who will learn and stick with it. He can tell if young musicians have "the heart and soul for it." He has a gift for working with people, she said. "But more important, he had the knowledge that unless younger people were taught and learned the feel of the music and how to do it, that would be something that would be lost in the shuffle. And he felt like it was really important for our people always to

have this kind of music." This desire to pass the tradition on to the next generation has coincided with the goals of the Alabama State Council on the Arts' Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program, which has provided past recognition and support for Enoch Sullivan's work with apprentices.

are available for purchase through their website at [www.thesullivanfly.com](http://www.thesullivanfly.com). One of their recordings, *The Sullivan Family Remembers the Louvin Brothers* pays tribute to fellow Alabamians Charlie and Ira Louvin. The Sullivans first met the famous brother duo while performing on a Grand Ole Opry



*The Sullivan Family during a touring and performance break.*

In addition to the Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program, the State Arts Council has had a long association with the Sullivan Family, presenting the group at state folklife festivals and traditional music concerts and promoting them through the statewide Arts Touring roster.

The Sullivan Family has made numerous recordings, many of which

Show in Mobile. "They sang with so much feeling and Ira wrote so many good gospel songs," said Margie. "They were of the people. They sang about regular people like you and me." After Ira Louvin's death, the Sullivans helped Charlie with his festival near Ider, Alabama.

The Sullivan Family had the opportunity to play with many notable fig-



A recent photo of Margie and Enoch still enjoying performing for audiences.

ures in country and bluegrass, including “the Father of Bluegrass Music,” Bill Monroe. It is said that Bill Monroe was the first to describe the Sullivan’s music as “bluegrass gospel.”

“We had a lot of good years. And sometimes back in the early years, it was lean times,” said Enoch. “But there was one thing we always had going for us. We didn’t mind working. We loved the work, and we enjoyed meeting people and being on the road.” Margie agreed, and added, “What we had going for us too, was a lot of people that really loved us and supported us. And most of all we had the blessings of the good Lord on what we did. And I credit that being the reason for the success we’ve had.” ■

*Anne Kimzey is a Folklife Specialist for the Alabama State Council on the Arts.*



An early photograph of the band. Enoch’s father, the Reverend Arthur Sullivan is standing on the right, holding the mandolin.

#### Sources for this article:

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THE ALABAMA HALL OF HONOR SPECIAL AWARD

# Vestal Goodman

"The Queen of Gospel Music"

by Beth Chapman

**M**ultiple Grammy and Dove award-winning artist, and renowned member of the Gospel Music Hall of Fame, Vestal Goodman is a legend in the field of gospel music.

Internationally known as "The Queen of Gospel Music," and one of the founding members of the Happy Goodman Family, along with her husband Howard and brothers-in-law Rusty and Sam, Vestal helped pioneer gospel music as we know and love it today.

Born the daughter of Gordie and Mae Freeman, Vestal grew up in Alabama high atop Sand Mountain. She lived and worked on the family farm with her four sisters: Jonnie, Mildred Mary, Faye and Bobbie. She had one brother, Claris "Cat" Freeman, a renowned tenor in the field of gospel music.

Like many great singers, Vestal Goodman began her musical career in the church—the Highway Church of God in rural, tiny Fyffe, Alabama. It was there that she sang her first solo at age three, and the rest is history.

As a young girl, Vestal aspired to sing at the Metropolitan Opera, but it became apparent early on that she was "called" and destined to sing Gospel



*Vestal and Howard Goodman and the Happy Goodman Family entertained audiences for decades.*

Music. Vestal put her heart and soul into her music. She had the innate ability to paint a picture with the lyrics of a song like only a handful of recording artists can. She truly felt what she sang, and it was obvious.

"God Walks the Dark Hills," "What a Lovely Name," and "This is What Heaven Means to Me," are a few of her trademark songs.

Vestal and The Happy Goodmans recorded their first album with WORD

Records in the sixties and they quickly became the flagship artist of that prestigious recording company.

Memories of waking up on Sunday mornings to the popular television show *Gospel Jubilee* and The Happy Goodmans singing; "I Wouldn't Take Nothin' for My Journey Now," are still fresh in the minds of many Alabamians today. The music of Vestal and the Happy Goodmans was as much a part of life back then as were

Photo: Courtesy of the Goodman family.

all day singings, dinner on the ground and ice cream socials. It was a southern tradition and The Happy Goodmans, especially Vestal, would become a southern legend.

Vestal recorded her first solo album on WORD Records in 1975 and to date millions of records including 15 number one hits have echoed throughout thousands of concert halls, churches and homes across the globe.

During her five decade career, Vestal recorded songs with leading musical artists such as Vince Gill, Dolly Parton, George Jones, Wynona Judd, Lee Greenwood and Sandi Patty. In addition, she sang with virtually every gospel music recording artist ever to perform.

Over a decade ago renowned Christian song writers and recording artists, Bill and Gloria Gaither gave

birth to a series of television and video specials entitled the *Gaither Homecoming Series*. Vestal and Howard Goodman were a major part of the revival of gospel music that occurred via the series. The series topped the charts of the worldwide music industry. At one point, *Billboard Magazine* ranked them number one in all genres of music. Thanks to the contributions and popularity of gospel music artists such as Vestal



*Vestal Goodman and Dolly Parton sharing a moment of laughter and fun.*

Photo: Courtesy of the Goodman family.

Goodman, each video project achieved gold and platinum sales status.

Bill Gaither referred to Vestal as a “national treasure” and said when you heard Vestal you were hearing “the most dynamic and greatest voice that has ever been heard in Gospel Music!”

After five decades of concerts, television appearances, and speaking engagements around the world (including a diverse range of performances ranging from the *Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts* to the *Grand Ole Opry* and everything in between), Vestal gained unequaled national recognition. With all of her accolades, fame and fortune, she was always proud to call Alabama her home, though many in other states she once lived tried to claim her for their own.

While Vestal Goodman is one of Alabama’s most award-winning daughters, she never reached the level of prominence or recognition that many of Alabama’s successful sons and daughters have, simply due to her chosen career path. But if years of dedicated service and devotion to God have anything to do with success, she could



*George Jones and Vestal Goodman performing together.*

Photo: Courtesy of the Goodman family.



*Little Jimmy Dickens and Vestal Goodman backstage at the Grand Ole Opry.*

greatest honors to put Sand Mountain and Fyffe, Alabama on the map.

Vestal Goodman died and went “home” to be with the Lord on December 27, 2004, leaving behind wonderful memories and a phenomenal musical career that started on a rural farm in Alabama seventy-four years ago and continues to touch thousands of lives around the world today. Vestal Goodman will not only be remembered by the nation as “The Queen of Gospel Music,” but by Alabama as one of our most accomplished natives and greatest contributions to the world.

easily be the most accomplished Alabama native in history.

While there are many accomplished and famous athletes, artists, actors, writers and musicians who have hailed from this great state, very few, if any, have had such an obvious and profound impact of the salvation and spiritual well being of so many people. Vestal Goodman and her family were never about winning hundreds of awards or selling millions of records, though they did both. She and her family were about winning hearts and souls for God, and millions of those they won as well.

Vestal Goodman was a Godly, multi-talented, successful woman who considered it among her



*Vestal Goodman and Brad Paisley performing together.*



Mrs. Goodman is survived by her and Howard's daughter, Vickie Meadows and their son, Rick, who continues Goodman ministries—the legacy his parents started more than fifty years ago.

It is in her loving memory and well deserved honor that the Alabama Senate and Governor Bob Riley at the request of State Auditor Beth Chapman and with the sponsorship of Senator Lowell Barron dedicated a portion of Highway 75 between Fyffe and Geraldine, Alabama as The Vestal Goodman Highway. ■

*Beth Chapman was elected State Auditor for Alabama in 2002 and is a published author of two books, one about Mrs. Goodman.*



Photo: Courtesy of the Goodman family.

*Howard and Vestal Goodman of The Happy Goodman Family visiting with former Alabama Governor, George Wallace.*



## AWARDS PERFORMERS

### THE ALABAMA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA QUARTET

#### CONCERTMASTER

DANIEL SZASZ

Violin

Violinist and Alabama Symphony Orchestra Concertmaster Daniel Szasz was born in Romania, in the Transylvanian city of Sibiu. He began playing the violin at age six under the supervision of his father, a former principal trumpet player with the Sibiu State Philharmonic Orchestra. At the age of eight he played his first solo recital, and at thirteen he performed his first concerto with a professional orchestra.

In 1982, Mr. Szasz moved to the city of Cluj to study violin with Mihai Wunderlich at the Cluj Music School and Music High School and later with Andras Agoston and Victoria Nicolae at the Gheorghe Dima Music Academy. At age nineteen, while still a student at the Music Academy, he landed a position with one of the top orchestras in Romania, the Cluj State Philharmonic Orchestra, with which he toured Europe extensively, recorded, and performed as a soloist on many occasions.

After graduating from the Gheorghe Dima Music Academy and following studies with Alberto Lysy at the International Menuhin Music Academy in Gstaad, Switzerland, Mr. Szasz moved to the U.S. and continued his violin studies with Vasile Beluska, Yair Kless, Gerald Jarvis,

and Patrick Rafferty. He also studied chamber music with members of the Franz Schubert Quartet, Audubon Quartet, Emerson Quartet, and Fine Arts Quartet. He attended Bowling Green State University in Ohio and The University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa.



Mr. Szasz has received numerous awards in national competitions in Romania as well as international competitions which took place in Italy and the United States,

including the "Public Prize" at the prestigious Vittorio Gui International Chamber Music Competition in Florence, Italy, playing with his wife, pianist Alina Voicu. Over the years, Mr. Szasz participated in several music festivals, including the Graz Music Festival in Graz, Austria; the Sopron Music Festival in Sopron, Hungary; the Blossom Music Festival in Ohio; the Chautauqua Music Festival, New York; and the New Hampshire Music Festival.

Mr. Szasz continues to perform regularly in chamber music concerts and as a soloist with orchestras in the U.S. and Europe. He and Alina live in Birmingham and are the proud parents of Alex and Angela.

## **MUSICIANS**

### **OLGA SHPITKO**

#### **Violin**

Olga Shpitko, Assistant Concertmaster, was born in L'viv, Ukraine, and received her Bachelor of Music, Master of Music and local Ph.D. degrees from the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory. While studying in Moscow, Ms. Shpitko toured many European countries with the Symphony Orchestra of the Moscow Conservatory, she was Assistant Concertmaster of the "Young Russian" State Symphony Orchestra and performed as a soloist with the L'viv Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Shpitko attended many festivals and played numerous concerts as a member of the contemporary music ensemble "New Music Studio".

In 1995 Ms. Shpitko moved to Paris, France to continue her professional studies, where she won First Prize at the "Concours Musical Regional d'Ile de France" and Second Prize at the UNESCO 8th International Competition "Flame".

In 1997 she received the Lindred Scott Bendann Endowed Scholarship in Violin and the Heifetz Fund for Talented Young Musicians Award and came to study at the Peabody Conservatory of Music at Johns Hopkins University.

Olga Shpitko became a member of the Alabama Symphony Orchestra in 1999 and in 2001 won the position of Assistant Concertmaster.

### **RENE REDER**

#### **Viola**

Violist Rene Reder joined the Alabama Symphony Orchestra in 2004. She was born and raised in Tacoma, Washington, where she attended the University of Puget Sound, earning her Bachelor's Degree in music. She then

studied at Temple University in Philadelphia, receiving her Master of Music Degree and Performance Diploma.

Music has taken her to a handful of beautiful and interesting places including Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Puerto Rico, Europe, Israel and Argentina. In 2001, after three years in the New World Symphony, Rene won a position with the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra, which unfortunately folded two years later. In June of 2004, she completed a one year position with the Virginia Symphony in Norfolk, Va. She makes her home in Birmingham with her two cats, Pete and Repete.

### **JUN HOU**

#### **Cello**

Born in XinJiang, China, Jun Hou entered the Beijing Central Conservatory (Middle School) at age fourteen. In 1987, he went on tour with the China Youth Symphony Orchestra to the USSR, Germany and Poland. In 1988, Jun Hou won a prize at the Beijing National Competition.

After receiving his Bachelor of Music degree at Beijing Central Conservatory, Mr. Jun Hou won a full scholarship at the Peabody Conservatory of Music at Johns Hopkins University. While studying in Baltimore, he won second prize at the Mary Graham Lasley Competition and gave numerous solo and chamber music concerts in Washington, D.C. and Baltimore. He also attended many music festivals, including the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival in Germany, the National Orchestra Institute, and the Blue Hill Chamber Music Festival.

Jun Hou joined the Alabama Symphony Orchestra in 1998. In 2000, he won a substitute musician audition at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and since then has been performing every summer in Ravinia with the CSO.



# 2005 *Celebration of the Arts*

## AWARDS PERFORMERS

### THE GARY WALDREP BAND



The Gary Waldrep Band, from the community of Kilpatrick, near Boaz, in northeastern Alabama, is among the finest old-time/bluegrass bands in the southeastern United States.

The band performs with a traditional sound spiced with original songs and old standards, making them a favorite with acoustic music lovers across the country.

#### GARY WALDREP

Gary plays the banjo, fiddle, and sings lead and tenor for the group. Raised on the musical traditions of Sand Mountain, including Sacred Harp singing, old-time clawhammer banjo, fiddling and close harmony singing, Waldrep previously performed with the Warrior River Boys, Wendy Bagwell and the Sunlighters, and the Sand Mountain Boys, before creating his own band in 1998.

Gary's musical success is measured in many accomplishments. In 1990, Gary was nominated for a Grammy award for his recording of "Vintage Bluegrass" on Old Homestead

Records. Gary is an exceptionally good crowd pleaser with his old time clawhammer style of banjo picking. For this talent, he was named "The Old Time Player of the Year" for two consecutive years. This honor was awarded in Nashville, TN by the Society for the Preservation of Bluegrass Music in America. He is a Master Artist in the Alabama State Council on the Arts' Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program.

#### DONNA TOWNSEL

The Gary Waldrep Band is proud to welcome this very talented lady to the group. Not only is the bass player, she is Gary's aunt. She provides the rock-solid bass timing needed, as well as sings. She enjoys traveling and meeting people.

#### BILL EVERETT

Although Bill can play all the instruments in the band; you'll see him on stage doing some great mandolin work. You will find Bill singing some fine lead, as well as tenor and baritone harmony vocals that blend great with the group. Bill comes from Dallas, Georgia.

#### MARK SQUIRES

Mark is a fiddle player from Fayetteville, GA. Mark started fiddling at the age of 7 and he grew up playing classical, popular, gospel, country and bluegrass music. In the early 80's he played with groups in the Carolinas. Mark moved to Nashville in 1986 and played with Bill Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys, The Bonnie Nelson Band, and Hubert Davis and the Season Travelers.



# 2005 Celebration Arts EXHIBITION

The Alabama State Council on the Arts is proud to showcase the work of Alabama artists in its Montgomery gallery in the RSA Tower.

## Expressions of Place: Three Alabama Artists

May 4 – June 27, 2005

### ANNIE KAMMERER BUTRUS

Annie Kammerer Butrus, Birmingham, holds a Master of Fine Arts in Painting from the University of Notre Dame and received a 2004 Individual Artist Fellowship in Visual Arts from the Alabama State Council on the Arts. She said, “My paintings are meditations on changes in the contemporary Alabama landscape. My interest ... not being from Alabama—is to capture the experience and point-of-view of the farmer by documenting their landscape and the encroaching development before their way of life, method of farming and habitation of the land disappears entirely.” Her works on this theme have included *Fallen Fruit* and installations at Space One Eleven for “BAMA,” *Shadow: Seasons and Weather: Seasons*.

### JERRY SIEGEL

Jerry Siegel, of Selma and Atlanta, holds a degree from the Art Institute of Atlanta and has worked as an advertising and corporate photographer for the last 18 years. On exhibit are photographs from his series *Black Belt Color*. He said, “Sometimes you don’t realize what you have until

it’s gone. Growing up in a small town and then moving to the city, I never really understood just how connected I was to Selma and the South as a whole. But with the passing of time and my parents, I’ve begun to realize how much my hometown and its surroundings have shaped who I am. These images are but a small part of a continuing study, a journey to my beginnings.”

### SAMANTHA RINEHART TAYLOR

Samantha Rinehart Taylor, Marion, is an MFA candidate, the University of Alabama, May 2005 and is an Adjunct Professor of Art History at Judson College. She has worked with the Auburn University Rural Studio Program, completing a mural for *The Music Man Project* in Greensboro. Her works are about her home, the Black Belt of Alabama. She has harvested kudzu and uses its staining properties as a major element in her work, tying material and concept. She said, “Through this close communion with place, the touching and gathering of the kudzu plant, I am connected to the actuality of the land... It is my dream to share the lyrical, subtle and feeble beauty of the Black Belt with a broad spectrum of viewers.”

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**Alabama State Council on the Arts**  
**2005 Celebration of the Arts Awards**

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