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Narrative Description of Activities of a Museum

Overview

The Willard Stone Museum, Inc. is an incorporated organization that was founded on April 2, 2019, by immediate members of the Willard Stone family, along with like-minded supporters and friends.

The group is structured as described in the attached "Certificate of Incorporation of Willard Stone Museum, Inc." This group is governed by the adopted bylaws described in "Bylaws of Willard Stone Museum, Inc."

The goal of this organization is to preserve the art of Willard Stone and to provide a proper home for the display of the Willard Stone art collection. All present activities are pursuant to that goal. While the organization has existed but a short while, there have been regular monthly meetings conducted in a manner complying with IRS regulations on non-profit organizations.

Past

This organization is only recently formed and has no past to describe. To understand the history and events leading to the forming of the organization, a review of Willard Stone's life is here presented for educational purposes and enjoyment of the general public.

STONE, WILLARD (1916–1985).

A sculptor, Willard Stone, of one-quarter Cherokee ancestry, was born on February 29, 1916, at Oktaha, near Muskogee, Oklahoma, and educated in Oktaha public schools. He later credited his career as an artist to the influence of Oklahoma historian Grant Foreman, who saw Stone's early

efforts exhibited at state fairs in Muskogee and Okmulgee and encouraged him to enroll in art classes at Bacone College. There he subsequently studied under Acee Blue Eagle and Woodrow Crumbo. Stone attended Bacone College from 1936 to 1939. After leaving school, he married and supported himself at various jobs. From 1948 to 1951 he worked for Thomas Gilcrease, Tulsa oilman and art collector, for whom he produced a unique series of wood sculptures. Stone later worked in Tulsa as an ornamental pattern maker for Ernest Wieman Iron Works and as a die finisher for Douglas Aircraft Company. He eventually established a permanent studio near Locust Grove and after 1961 devoted himself entirely to art.

Exhibiting regionally and nationally, Stone gained wide recognition for his stylized human and animal figures created from a variety of locally obtainable woods and occasionally cast in ceramic or bronze. He produced commissioned pieces for the National Hall of Fame for Famous American Indians at Anadarko in 1964, the Oklahoma Historical Society in 1965, and the National Cowboy Hall of Fame and Western Heritage Center in Oklahoma City in 1966. In 1969 his illustrations appeared in *Cherokee Spirit Tales* by Jack Gregory and Rennard Strickland, published by the Indian Heritage Association. That year, Stone received the Outstanding Indian Award from the Council of American Indians in Tulsa.

Willard Stone was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame in 1970. Bacone College awarded him an honorary degree in 1972. Oklahoma Christian College in Oklahoma City designated him a Distinguished American Citizen in 1974 and awarded him an honorary doctor of humanities degree in 1976. Meanwhile, between 1969 and 1980 he received a total of ten awards in juried competitions at the Five Civilized Tribes Museum in Muskogee, including that of Master Artist in 1973. He died on March 5, 1985 and was buried in the family cemetery at his home near Locust Grove.

Stone's work is preserved in public and private collections throughout the United States and abroad. Several pieces in the Gilcrease collection are unusual in relating to the birth of the atomic age. They are among the few of his works based on a contemporary theme. Important collections of Stone's work also are found at the Willard Stone Museum in Locust Grove, the Five Civilized Tribes Museum, the Cherokee National Museum near Tahlequah, and the U.S. Department of the Interior and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

Present

Currently all planning and activities are primarily related fund gathering, the first step in our immediate goal of procuring a home for the collection. We have conducted, and are planning the following:

1. Participation in events that are related to the arts and crafts that Willard Stone practiced in his lifetime. A recent event was the Eastern Oklahoma Woodcarver's Association annual show on June 21-22, 2019. The Willard Stone Museum, Inc. organization manned a booth displaying works of Willard Stone. Sales of merchandise was also conducted.
2. Building a website. This website will seek to provide knowledge and history of the works of Willard Stone and similar artists and activities. Requests for donations, upcoming event announcements, and merchandise sales are planned for this site.

3. Pursuing relationships with a broad spectrum of entities or individuals in person to seek their sharing of the mission of the Willard Stone Museum, Inc.
4. Seeking grant application potential and possibilities.
5. Exploring the prospects of conducting banquets, auctions and other fundraising events.

Once the funds have been procured and the site purchased, work will commence to make the site a suitable home for the collection. An historic site in the town of Locust Grove, where Willard raised his family and is his final resting place, is the choice of the organization to house the museum. The structure will need modifications requisite with the code and ordinance requirements. There will also be design requirements to meet the aesthetic and practical environment for a museum setting. These activities will become an increasing part of the organization's overall activity once funding is met.

When the structure is operational, we hope to provide a unique experience for art admirers to enjoy. Information will be gleaned from our website and Facebook page to advise the prospective visitor of our location, operating hours and current displays and programs. Upon visiting the museum, the people will be able to enjoy the art displays of not only Willard Stone, but also the pieces of guest artists. Members of his family will be available to provide first hand history of the many of the works and of Willard Stone the man. We hope the experience will recruit new supporters of our plans for the future of The Willard Stone Museum, Inc.

At this point, we hope to support this day to day experience through donations and our fundraising efforts. However, we realize that operational costs of the museum may require charging an entry fee to cover this expense.

Future

When the immediate goals have been met and the museum is operational, the corporation's true work will begin. We will continue fundraising efforts, seeking to achieve a budget level that will support the gifts of scholarships for deserving art students. The museum will host guest artist and youth art shows. We plan on being very active in the town of Locust Grove and support the communities' celebrations and events. We will continue to increase the collection of Willard Stone artwork, and hopefully have the means to provide grants for selected art projects.