

The Butler eBanner

Newsletter of the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies

Spring 2019

Art Exhibitions

May 10–August 24

**Galleries at Library Square,
Concordia Hall Gallery**

Patrick McFarlin—*Fifty Years of
McFarlin Oil: Paintings and Sculpture
by an Arkansas Traveler*

McFarlin has been making art under the moniker McFarlin Oil for more than fifty years. This exhibition of paintings and sculptures follows McFarlin from his time creating works of sculpture during the Bay Area funk movement back to his home state of Arkansas as he works through the eighties and beyond, painting his varieties of Ships of Fools as well as large so-called Manic-Expressive narrative paintings.

June 1–August 31

**Hillary Rodham Clinton Children's
Library & Learning Center**

Arkansas Arts Educators: *Statewide
Student Art Exhibition*—artwork from
K-12 student artists selected from
regional competitions around the
state.

June 14–September 28

**Galleries at Library Square,
Loft Gallery**

Melissa Cowper-Smith: *Natural
Treatment, 2018–2019*—a series of
pigment prints on handmade paper
offering a visual chronicle of Cowper-
Smith's interviews with herbalists
in the Ozark and Central River
Valley regions of Arkansas and their
complex relationships with healing,
illness, and belief.

July 12–October 26

**Galleries at Library Square,
West Gallery**

Arkansas Society of Printmakers: *Big
Impression Prints*—an exhibition
featuring prints by members of the
Arkansas Society of Printmakers
(ASP). This show celebrates the
impact large-scale imagery has upon
the viewer—making a big impression.
As part of Second Friday Art Night
(2FAN) on September 13, 5:00–8:00
p.m., ASP members will hold a live
printing event where attendees
can watch art being created. Wood
blocks of 24" x 36" or larger will
be inked and printed using an
industrial steamroller to create "big
impressions."

*The Galleries at Library Square
exhibitions open during each
month's Second Friday Art Night
(2FAN), 5–8 p.m. in the CALS
Roberts Library.*

More events on page 8

History Takes Flight with Picard Collection

Those watching C-130s circle over the Little Rock area on training flights from the Little Rock Air Force Base (LRAFB) at Jacksonville may wonder about these bulky aircraft, unaware of the important role they have played in both war and peace. For retired U.S. Air Force major Richard L. (Dick) Picard, now a Little Rock resident, sightings of the planes surely bring back sharp memories of his service as a C-130 navigator—and especially of years spent in Southeast Asia supporting U.S. troops in Vietnam.

Picard shared some of those memories in an oral history interview as part of the Butler Center's Vietnam War Project. He spoke of the pride he and his fellow airmen felt in providing critical support to the troops on the ground. Their missions, which they referred to as "trash hauling," took them in large circles throughout the region picking up and delivering supplies, ammunition, and often people. These circles included Taiwan, the Philippines, Okinawa, and Thailand, as well as several bases in Vietnam.

Dick Picard was born in South Carolina



Dick Picard standing by pallets of ammunition ready to load onto a C-130 bound for Vietnam.

on December 12, 1939, to George and Evelyn Picard. He graduated from high school in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and attended Northrop Institute of Technology in Inglewood, California. After graduation in 1962, with a degree in aircraft maintenance engineering, Picard was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force.

Picard served for approximately two and a half years between 1967 and 1970 as a navigator on C-130 Hercules aircraft flying support missions to many locations in Vietnam. His first assignment was with the 50th Tacti-

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Volunteers Educating Students, Teachers, and the Community

Since becoming acquainted with the Butler Center two years ago, Kwami Abdul-Bey and Clarice Abdul-Bey have been exceptional volunteer partners. The Abdul-Beyes are founders and co-directors of the nonprofit the Washitaw Foothills Youth Media Arts and Literacy Collective (find more information [here](#)). Notwithstanding their quiet demeanors, the couple's work with students and teachers in the Butler Center's education outreach activities has been heard far and wide, literally.

Their volunteer efforts with students in the Central High Memory Project Team, a project

sponsored by the Butler Center, have generated a program on National Public Radio, a real-time historical reenactment via Twitter-feed, a dozen student-led civil rights oral history interviews, and a soon-to-launch student-produced podcast series that will be an ongoing part of the Elizabeth Eckford Commemorative Bench Project in connection with the Central High National Historic Site.

The Abdul-Beyes are professional audio engineers, broadcast radio programmers, and audio podcast producers—with versatile and eclectic backgrounds and skills in documentary pho-

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cal Airlift Squadron based at Ching Chuan Kang Air Base in Taiwan. He was later assigned to the 21st Tactical Airlift Squadron, which flew out of Naha Air Base, Okinawa. Picard's family was able to join him at Okinawa.

In addition to the oral history interview, Picard donated a number of documents and more than 300 photographs depicting his time in Southeast Asia. This includes photographs from the family's time in

Okinawa, as well as dramatic scenes from locations in Vietnam and Thailand.

Picard remained in the air force, serving the last seven years of his career in Arkansas at LRAFB as a C-130 instructor navigator and standardization/evaluation navigator in the training squadron. He retired in 1984 with the rank of major.

After retirement, Picard pursued a teaching certificate in physics at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, and in 1986 began teaching physics at Parkview

High School. He is now retired and lives in Little Rock.

Picard's interview and a selection of photographs are available on the [Vietnam War Project](#) website. The finding aid for the collection is online [here](#). The full collection, including the photographs and supporting documents, is available as the Richard L. (Dick) Picard Vietnam War Collection in the Research Room of the CALS Bobby L. Roberts Library of Arkansas History & Art. ■

Cont. from Education, p. 1

tography, visual art, spoken-word poetry, solutions-based journalism, youth media arts programs, and community organizing. The husband-and-wife team combines this professional expertise with a keen interest in Arkansas's social justice history and a focus on training and mentoring young people to become a vocal part of their community.

The couple was introduced to the Butler Center in the spring of 2017 by Sarah Stricklin, then youth programmer and media specialist at the CALS Hillary Rodham Clinton Children's Library & Learning Center. The Abdul-Beys suggested that students in the Memory Project team combine efforts with summer high school interns in the youth radio journalism internship they were directing at the City of Little Rock's new low-power FM community radio station, KWCP LPFM 98.9. Kwami had designed and installed KWCP's record-

ing studio and transmitting station, and Clarice was training the student interns to deepen their on-air personalities with solutions-based journalism approaches to their background research and live interviews on community topics.

Under their tutelage, the KWCP interns and Memory Project students recorded programs to be used with the approaching "Central High at 60" events, including two interviews with white classmates of the Little Rock Nine in the 1957–58 school year. One was with Robin Woods Loucks, who shared algebra class with Terrence Roberts. A second was with Penny Fox, who shared biology class and lab with Gloria Ray Karlmark. (Listen to interviews by scrolling down to "Oral History" [here](#).) The KWCP interns also interviewed the Memory Project students about their newly produced audio walking tour relating the events of the failed first day attempt by the Nine to enter Central.

In another volunteer effort, the Abdul-Beys served as a liaison between the Butler Center and NPR's Youth Radio to produce a special student commentary for NPR's observance of the 60th anniversary of the Central High Crisis. To create the piece, Kwami recorded Memory Project junior Zia Tollette reflecting on her oral history interview with civil rights activist Phyllis Brown, who is the sister of Nine member Minnijean Brown Trickey. Clarice provided the photograph package of Zia and the Memory Project team for the web upload of the radio story. The resulting piece aired nationally on NPR's [Here and Now](#) afternoon program on September 25, 2017.

It was the second national media posting that day. At 6 a.m., Youth Radio had launched its [Twitter feed](#) reenactment using eyewitness accounts the Memory



Kwami Abdul-Bey (in blue shirt) with Robin Woods Loucks and Caleb Calmes at KWCP.



Clarice Abdul-Bey (left) coaches her student interns from KWCP radio as they prepare to interview Memory Project students who researched, scripted, and narrated the audio walking tour Words That Matter: Voices of Civil Rights, the 1st Day at Central High. The interview was recorded in the sound studio at the CALS Hillary Rodham Clinton Children's Library and Learning Center.

Project students had compiled—and sent with Kwami's technical savvy in large file transfers—from oral histories and memoirs from September 25, 1957. The feed ranked in the top 5 for interaction that day.

The Abdul-Beys have continued their volunteer efforts, helping more groups of students record and use oral history interviews in a new podcast series that will be part of the Elizabeth Eckford Commemorative Bench Project. Earlier this month, Clarice organized an interview at the Little Rock School District Superintendent's office between Eckford and the student and adult volunteers who researched, designed, and built the historical replica of the city bus bench where she sought refuge across the street from the school over six decades ago.

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A Word from the Center

David Stricklin, Director of the Butler Center

The signs are up. The re-dedication has happened. It's really, really official. We are in the Bobby L. Roberts Library of Arkansas History & Art in Library Square, what we used to call the Main Library Campus of the Central Arkansas Library System (CALS). You can see here a painting by Little Rock artist John Kushmaul, showing the northwest corner of the Roberts Library and the new sign showing the new name of the building at our main entrance at 401 President Clinton Avenue. John is widely known as a gifted interpreter of the Little Rock streetscape, and we were pleased he agreed to do two new paintings of the building, one for the CALS permanent art collection and one as a gift for Bobby.



ice storms and such. It was great to have the president for the occasion, and great to have the remarkable organizational work of Sheila Bronfman, who did a million things to pull the event together. Sheila is especially famous for organizing the intrepid groups of Clinton political campaigners known as the Arkansas Travelers. I often think that if she had been around in 1943 and '44, Dwight Eisenhower would have outsourced the organization of D-Day to Sheila. It would have come in several days earlier, probably sometime in May, and probably under budget. And the weather would have been nicer. A lot of other people helped with our event, including especially CALS's Cathy Sanders, Rosslyn Elliott, Madelyn Ganos, Glenn Whaley, Joey Cole, Grayson Martin, and Mary Osteen. Thanks, everyone.

Thanks also to the many people who gave money on the occasion. You can see their names on page 9 of this *eBanner*, and you can join the growing ranks

of CALS supporters and pick out a great CALS thing to support by going to <https://cals.org/> and clicking on Donate. As you can see on page 4, CALS gets funding from property taxes. The Library part of the millage paid by the average property owner is pretty small, and we do a lot to multiply the benefits of that funding for the people in our service area in Pulaski and Perry counties. It's a great investment in the future strength and vitality of Central Arkansas, and we hope people who are able will help us stay strong and vital by giving a little extra. Use that link above and help CALS do great things!

And come see us in the Bobby L. Roberts Library of Arkansas History & Art in Library Square! ■

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The podcasts will be featured on the [Arkansas History Hub](#) website for teachers, which is maintained by Butler Center staff.

In recent months, the couple has been lending its expertise to the Butler Center's 2019 summer seminar for Arkansas teachers: "Tools for Teaching and Learning Difficult History: Racial Violence in Arkansas, the 1919 Elaine Massacre and a Century of Lynching, 1836–1936." Click [here](#) for more information. The Abdul-Beys are helping students and teachers from two different schools plan, con-

duct, and record personal interviews with families who faced lynching and other acts of racial terror. The couple will join the students and teachers to present their work in a special session at the summer seminar, along with providing copies of the interviews and guidelines others can follow to do similar projects in the coming year.

Inspired during a family trip to the newly opened National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Alabama, last fall, the Abdul-Beys began working with a number of historians, educators, clergy, elected representatives,

and community organizations (including Guy Lancaster, editor of the Encyclopedia of Arkansas, and George West, Butler Center education outreach coordinator) to form the Arkansas Peace and Justice Memorial Movement. The group has met with the Governor Asa Hutchinson and his staff and with current state legislators to seek support for a statewide effort to encourage citizen groups around Arkansas to help document and acknowledge the difficult history of racial violence.

For more information on these and other education projects, contact [George West](#) or info@FYMAorg. ■

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