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with Yours Truly

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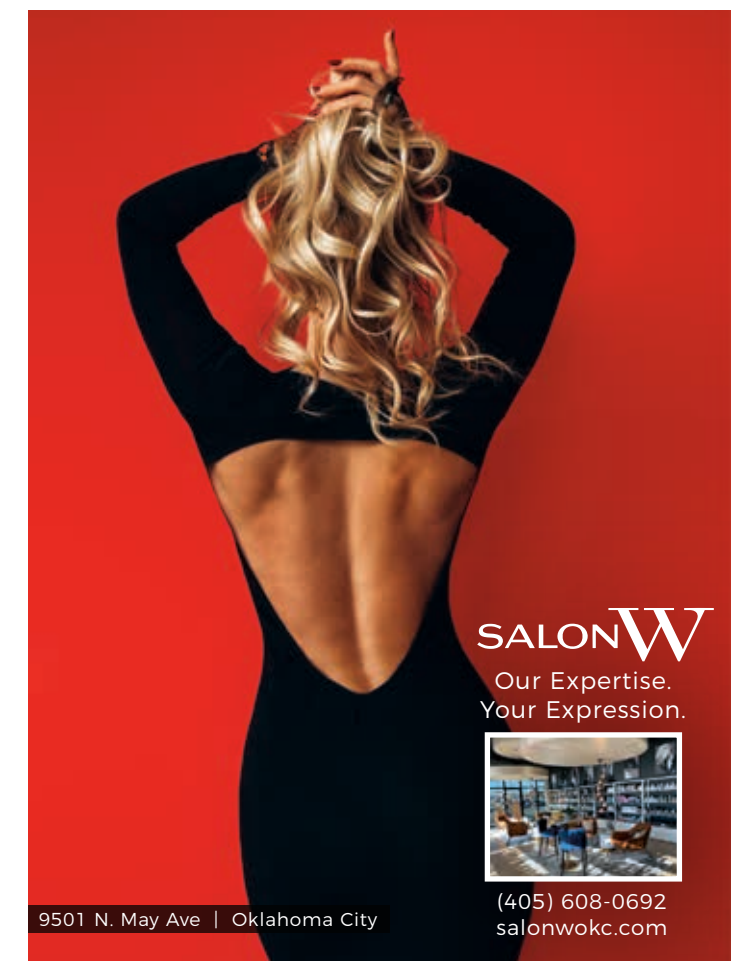
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La Brasa Group

Wow

with Yours Truly

WRITTEN BY KATHERINE H. FONDREN
PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY JAMES VU & LA BRASA GROUP

Inspired by the supper clubs found in LA, New York, and Vegas in the 1950s, Yours Truly is OKC's newest hotspot for dining, socializing, and live music. Located in the bustling heart of the Uptown 23rd District, Yours Truly is the latest creation of La Brasa Group and owner James Vu. It's decor and unique atmosphere are a testament to La Brasa Group's innovation, nostalgia, and effervescent spirit.

The tale of Yours Truly, an art deco restaurant and lounge adorned with an enigmatic Alice in Wonderland-themed hidden bar, begins against a backdrop of self-

discovery. James, a graduate from OU initially pursuing a pre-med major, found his calling charting a different course, ignited by an innate passion for hospitality that transcended traditional academics. "School wasn't really for me. I always couldn't focus," James candidly shares, reflecting on his earlier years. Ten years later, his path would eventually lead him to ventures like Kamps Deli within Kamps Market and La Brasa, where he honed his culinary finesse and discovered his penchant for crafting unique dining experiences.



However, it was the fusion of his love for nightlife ambiance and the conviviality of restaurants that sparked the inception of Yours Truly. James, drawing inspiration from his travels to Miami, New York City, and Vegas, envisioned a space that transcends the ordinary—a fusion of nostalgic charm and high-energy dining. "I felt like the last three or four years Oklahoma City has been missing something," he muses, his eyes alight with determination to fill that void. "As I got older, I realized for my friends and I, we enjoyed the energy of the nightclub but the setting of a restaurant."

What sets Yours Truly apart is its homage to the extravagant supper clubs of the 1950s, with a modern twist. James passionately describes it as "a wildly lavish and extravagant 21st-century American Japanese style," designed to tantalize every sense. "Every element in Yours Truly signals that guests have arrived in OKC," James elaborates. "Designed to see and be seen, everything becomes a spectacle, a moment, an orchestrated dance of space and depth, textures and context, lighting and sound." Inspired by the halcyon days of twentieth-century European supper clubs, Yours Truly is a destination where world class cuisine, art, fashion and nightlife entertainment converge for a truly elevated experience.

Reflecting on his extensive 20-year tenure in the hospitality business, which includes La Brasa and the upcoming venture Tequila Chulos, James speaks fondly of his connection to the community. Living in Nichols Hills, he appreciates the centrality and the vibrant local businesses surrounding his neighborhood,



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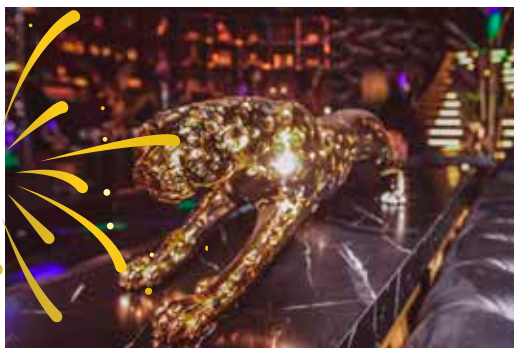


emphasizing the kindness of his neighbors. He is excited to be embarking on this latest venture with his brother, Nichols Hills resident John Vu, and Ravi Singh.

Beneath the surface of his success, however, lies a poignant reality. James shares the profound impact his mother has had on his journey. "I owe a lot of my success today to my mother. She's my rock, my inspiration, my role model," he confides. Her recent diagnosis of stage four liver cancer has reframed his perspective on life, infusing his ambitions with deeper meaning and purpose. This personal struggle has crystallized into a profound dedication—a promise to open an upscale Vietnamese restaurant from the 1940s, a tribute to his mother, celebrating their culture, traditions, and the flavors passed down through generations.

In the face of adversity, James Vu stands as an embodiment of resilience and determination. His story, a tapestry woven with entrepreneurial vision, cultural reverence, and unwavering familial love, paints a picture of a man who not only envisions culinary excellence but also seeks to honor his roots in the most heartfelt way possible.

Yours Truly, nestled at 313 NW. 23rd St., is poised to welcome guests into an immersive experience. It is not merely a restaurant but a symphony orchestrated by James Vu—a celebration of heritage and the art of storytelling through exquisite flavors and a unique ambiance. Please visit yourstrulyoke.com or reach out via email at yourstrulyloungeokc@gmail.com.



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CAPTURING MOMENTS:

The Remarkable Life of Bill Williams

WRITTEN BY KATHERINE H. FONDREN
PHOTOS BY BILL WILLIAMS

In Nichols Hills, where Bill Williams, the renowned photographer and artist, now resides, his legacy continues to shine through the lens of his camera and the strokes of his paintbrush. Married to his wife of 67 years, Juanita Williams, and blessed with two accomplished daughters, Tamey Fernandez and Tracy Parks, Bill's story is one of creativity, passion, and a lifetime dedicated to the arts.

Bill's journey in the world of visual arts began after graduating from Fairland High School in 1956. His artistic pursuits led him to NEO (Northeastern Oklahoma A&M, Jr. College), where he honed his skills before transferring to Tulsa University, earning a degree in art design. This educational foundation paved the way for a remarkable career that unfolded over the years.

After a stint with Sun Oil/DX in Tulsa, Bill's path took a turn in 1970 when he moved to Norman and assumed the role of art director at the University of Oklahoma. Serving in this capacity until his retirement in 1995, Bill's impact was not only felt in the academic realm but also within the larger community.

Post-retirement, Bill embarked on a global adventure, capturing the essence of landscapes and cultures through his lens. His talent caught the attention of the President of Mexico, leading to commissioned projects for several coffee table books focusing on the State of Chihuahua, Mexico. A

testament to his international recognition, one of Bill's photographs even found a place in the prestigious Louvre Museum in Paris, France.

Meanwhile, Juanita, Bill's wife, contributed her talents to the workforce, working for Pepsi Cola in Tulsa before relocating to Norman in 1970 upon her marriage to Bill. Joining Westinghouse, she dedicated her career to human resources until her retirement in 2000. In 2021, Juanita ventured into the world of entrepreneurship, launching a successful catering business and creating handcrafted accessories in a studio adjacent to Bill's.

Bill's list of accolades includes his promotion at Sunray DX, where he rose from a graphic designer to art director, and at the University of Oklahoma, where he served as president for two years of the Art Directors Association (UCDA). These achievements highlight Bill's commitment to his craft and his influential role in the artistic community.

Beyond the professional sphere, Bill was not just a photographer; he was a juggler, too, showcasing his skills at the annual Medieval Fair in Norman. His love for juggling was instilled by his grandfather, DP Adams, a significant influence in Bill's life.

Today, Bill resides at Iris Senior Living in Nichols Hills, where the walls echo with the stories of a life well-lived. Bill's daughters, Tamey and Tracy, continue the family legacy, each pursuing their unique paths. Tamey and her husband, Paul Fernandez, are enjoying retirement in Norman, while Tracy resides in Tulsa with her husband, Jeff Parks, and works for OU Tulsa in admissions and recruitment.

As readers delve into the fascinating narrative of Bill Williams, they are sure to be inspired by the dedication to art, family, and a life rich with experiences. In this corner of the world, the retired Art Director of the University of Oklahoma leaves behind a legacy of creativity, adventure, and a passion for capturing the beauty that surrounds us all.



Bill with his wife, Juanita



Canyon de Chelly in September



Red River Sunset
2006 Oil on canvas



Show Money
Oil on canvas



Gray Mare with Stable Mates
2009 Oil on canvas



The Westwall
The Holy Land
1999 Watercolor



Carpenter's Son
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Fishing Boats on the Sea of Galilee
1999 Oil on linen



Chihuahua Cathedral
2004 Watercolor

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SUBMITTED BY LEIGH HEFNER BENTLEY



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School: Casady School
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Position: Cheerleader
How long have you participated in cheer: 2 years
What is your favorite teacher/mentor's name? Ashley Davis, Casady Cheer Coach
Who do you idolize in this sport/activity? Claire Samara, Casady Junior, Varsity Cheer
Where do you normally practice? At school
Are you on a team? Varsity Cheer Squad - Casady
Have you met anyone famous in this sport/activity? Quinn Davis; Cheerleader at Arizona State University, and Kendall Schmidt, Cheerleader at the University of Oklahoma
Have you traveled anywhere related to this sport/activity? Away games for school

What events have you participated in? Games and Homecoming Activities/Pep Rally, coaching cheer summer camp for Lower Division's Casady Cyclone Future Cheerleaders
What awards or honors have you won? Award of Excellence at cheer camp this summer, and making the Varsity Cheer Squad as a freshman.
What have you learned from participating in this sport/activity? I've learned how important it is to be part of a team, and to get along and bond with girls that are my age and older.
What do you like the most about the sport/activity? My favorite part about cheer is supporting the school, Casady athletes, and cheering on my friends and classmates.

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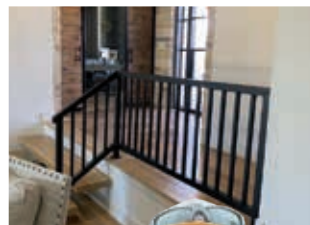
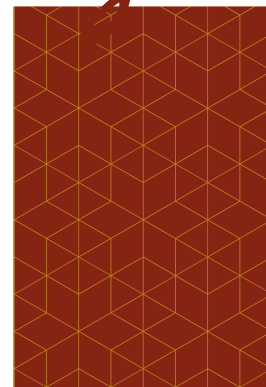
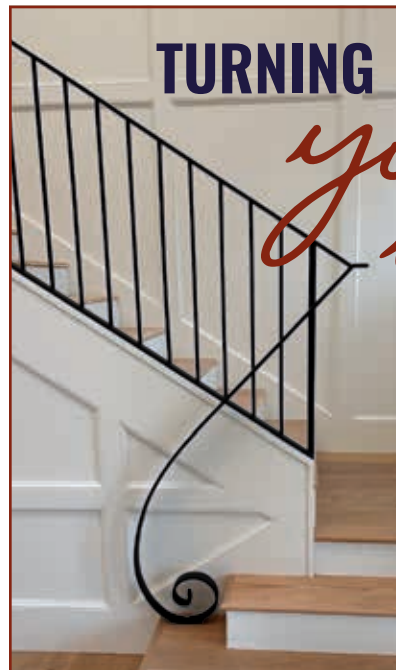
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SUBMITTED BY REESE FAHLER, JUNIOR RESIDENT WRITER

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What is your breed? I am a Siberian cat.

How old are you? I am 10 months old.

What is your birthday? Feb 9, 2023

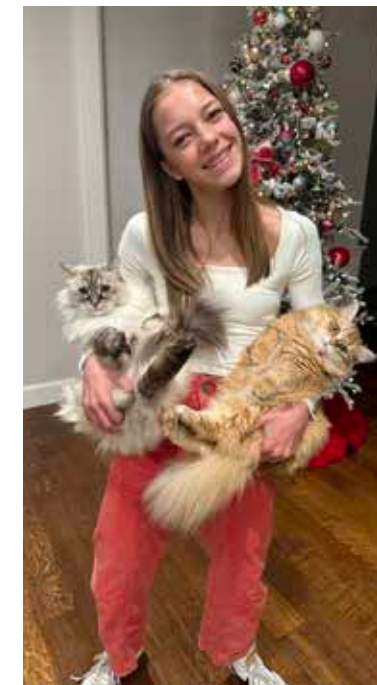
Do you have Siblings? I have one older sister named Elsa. She is a Siberian cat just like me! She is 5 years old and my owners got her a while ago so she was the queen of the house till I showed up. She acts like she does not like me, but I know she loves it when I jump on top of her and try to tackle her.

What is your Favorite toy? I love it when my owner, Reese, throws her scrunchy. Whenever she throws the scrunchy I will pick it up with my mouth and bring it back just like fetch. I also like to chew on anything I can find such as plastic, LED lights, and my owner's food.

What do you do at night? Whenever my owners are sleeping I like to crawl on top of them and lick their noses.

Do you like snuggling? I might lay at your feet, but I don't like being held and will try to squirm out of your arms the second you try to hold me.

What is your least favorite thing to do? I hate it when my owner tries to give me medication. She has to sit on top of me because I will try to get away.



Is there anyone you have met that you don't like? No! I like everyone I meet and like to stand right under their feet so when they trip over me, they will remember how much I like them!



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BISON CONCRETE, LLC

Where Quality Meets Commitment

WRITTEN BY KATHERINE FONDREN
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY ALFREDO LOPEZ, BISON CONCRETE, LLC



In the OKC area, Bison Concrete, LLC stands as a testament to craftsmanship and dedication. Alfredo Lopez, the driving force behind this local business, tells the story of the solid foundations they lay in our community.

Alfredo's roots run deep in the city he calls home. "I grew up in Oklahoma City. We have lived here for 30 years. I have a wife and two daughters, one is two years old, and the other is one month old," he shares with a warmth that reflects not just familial ties but a genuine connection to the community.

FROM SCHOOL DAYS TO CONCRETE WAYS

A graduate of Putnam City High School, Alfredo's journey into the world of concrete was shaped by his father's landscaping company. "My dad had a landscaping company and taught me many things growing up. One of those was concrete work, and I loved it," he reminisces. Despite briefly exploring electrical work in his twenties, the draw of the concrete business proved irresistible. "I tried many things out before I went back to concrete work. I wanted to make sure it was what I wanted to do," he admits, revealing a thoughtful approach to his career path.

BISON CONCRETE, LLC: SOLIDIFYING DREAMS IN CONCRETE

Today, Alfredo is the proud owner of Bison Concrete, LLC, a concrete contracting business born out of a desire to make a difference. "I've always enjoyed working in the concrete industry, but what pushed me was hearing how much trouble people were having trying to get the contractors to show up," he reveals. It's this commitment to reliability that sets Bison Concrete apart in a competitive industry.

Beyond the project itself, what makes Bison Concrete unique is their unwavering focus on customer satisfaction. "Happy employees make the project run easier. When a

customer hires us, they are almost always impressed with the crew they love working with them and can't believe how good they are at what they do," Alfredo notes. It's not just about the finished project; it's about the experience—the journey shared with a team passionate about their craft.

GUIDING NEIGHBORS THROUGH CONCRETE VENTURES

For those contemplating a concrete project in their homes, Alfredo offers practical advice: "Always hire someone who cares about being on time, has good communication skills, and has recommendations." It's a trifecta of principles, a compass for homeowners navigating the sometimes tricky terrain of construction projects. "Homeowners always get trapped with bad contractors, and most of the time, the bad contractor can't do those three," he warns.

TRANSPARENCY, GROWTH, AND THE BISON LEGACY

As with any journey, Bison Concrete, LLC has had its share of challenges. "I have made many mistakes, just like any other business owner, and we have always gone back to make things right. Learning from every mistake has definitely made us better," Alfredo reflects, embodying a spirit of transparency and a commitment to continuous improvement.

In speaking with Alfredo, it is evident that Bison Concrete, LLC isn't just a local business; it's a community asset, contributing to the aesthetic and structural beauty of the homes of Nichols Hills. With a reliable crew, a commitment to quality, and a guiding philosophy rooted in customer satisfaction, Alfredo Lopez and Bison Concrete, LLC are making waves, one concrete project at a time.

To discuss your next project, you can reach Bison Concrete, LLC at 405-881-8384, or visit their website at bisonconcreteok.com. You can also find a gallery of his projects on their Instagram page: [@bisonconcreteok](https://www.instagram.com/bisonconcreteok)

Cultivating Self-Care:

Lauree Dash Shares Mindful Self-Compassion through Restore Behavioral Health

WRITTEN BY KATHERINE H. FONDREN
PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY LAUREE DASH

“A moment of self-compassion can change your entire day. A string of such moments can change the course of your life.” Christopher K. Germer, PhD.

A year ago, we spoke with Nichols Hills resident Lauree Dash, a certified meditation and mindfulness teacher, and learned about her path of finding inner peace and wisdom through mindfulness and meditation. After completing her mindfulness training in a two-year certification course with Master teachers Jack Kornfield and Tara Brach, Lauree felt called to study and teach Mindful Self Compassion [MSC], the work of Kristin Neff, PhD. and Christopher K. Germer, PhD. She is currently the only trained teacher in Oklahoma for this powerful, resilience-building work and is now offering it through Restore Behavioral Health right here in Oklahoma City, Norman and Edmond. With Mindful Self-Compassion, Lauree has found a way to help herself and others navigate the inevitable suffering of life.

From Soul Yoga to the Wellness Center at INTEGRIS Cancer Institute, Lauree has been on a mission to help people cultivate practices that nourish and support their well-being. Her newest course, “Mindful Self-Compassion”, is an 8-week adventure she’s excited to share with the patients of Restore Behavioral Health and our Oklahoma community as well.

Lauree’s holistic approach isn’t just about meditation; it’s about developing resources to better care for ourselves. “We all have fierce inner critics,” she notes, emphasizing there is a need to break free from destructive self-judgments and learn to be kinder to ourselves. In her course, a simple yet profound exercise called “How to Treat a Friend” challenges participants to reflect on how they treat themselves compared to how they would treat a friend facing the same difficulties.

Kelly Lashar, LPC and Operations Manager/Co-founder at Restore Behavioral Health, sees Lauree’s class as a perfect fit for their holistic approach to mental health. “We want to offer a service that includes mindfulness, meditation, and yoga,” says Kelly, who, along with her business partner Gina Dixon, founded Restore



Lauree Dash and Kelly Lashar

seven years ago. They’ve grown from a team of two to a staff of 60 counselors, serving nearly 1000 clients each week.

Lauree’s journey to Restore was facilitated by Molly Ross Fuhrman, a colleague from her work at Integris and counselor at Restore. Having taken Lauree’s Mindful Self-Compassion course, Molly recognized its potential and believed it fit seamlessly with Restore’s vision. “We want the public to get to know Lauree and the peace and calm that she emanates,” Kelly expresses, highlighting the transformative impact they hope Lauree’s class will have on their community.

As winter descends and the days grow shorter, mental health concerns can take center stage. Lauree’s class can help clients with the “winter blues”, mental exhaustion that stems from the stress of the season and the hectic lifestyle it brings. “Mindfulness is learning how to be with uncomfortable or difficult thoughts and feelings. It’s about being intentional; and Mindful Self-Compassion is about recognizing those moments when we are suffering, knowing we are not alone and learning to give ourselves kindness,” Lauree explains. She says, “This illuminates the three core components of mindful self-compassion identified by Dr. Neff: mindfulness, common humanity, and self-directed kindness.

“We receive so many messages on so many screens constantly. We are overstimulated,” Lauree observes, pointing out how our bodies absorb stress, pushing us into a perpetual fight, flight or freeze state. This stress can lead to health issues as well as negative effects on our relationships and ourselves. Mindfulness, meditation, and therapy become the tools to hit the reset button. “You can be a changing force when you walk into a room. You can change



the energy in that room,” she adds, emphasizing the transformative power of intentional presence.

Lauree Dash extends an invitation to cultivate self-care. For more information on “Mindful Self-Compassion” or other mindfulness practices offered online, visit restore-bh.com/mindful. To discover other ways to work with Lauree, visit her website, meditationrebound.com.

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BACHELORS CLUB OF OKLAHOMA CITY

Presents Debutantes for 77th Annual Christmas Ball

BY ERIN FITZGERALD

Twenty women made their debut at the 77th annual Bachelors Club Christmas Ball on Thursday, Dec. 22, 2023, at the Oklahoma City Golf and Country Club. Each debutante was escorted by a member of the Bachelors Club of Oklahoma City.

After the debs were presented, guests danced to the music of Souled Out, and the evening concluded with a late breakfast.

Pivot, a Turning Point for Youth, was the recipient of the charitable proceeds of this year's ball, a local nonprofit designated by Club President Eddie Cook. Pivot works with young people who are lacking stability in their lives and offers programs that meet housing and basic needs, education and job assistance, mentoring and life skills development, prevention and intervention services, and therapeutic care.

"I chose Pivot because they're dedicated to providing a safe environment and compassionate support for young people in need, ensuring they have the care and resources to build brighter futures," Cook said.

According to tradition, Bachelors Club members – "escorts" – invite the women to be debutantes on Thanksgiving Day (Nov. 23). They present each debutante



Escort Henry Jackson with Debutante Julianne Bentley and her mother, Jennifer Bentley



Debutante Isabella Hampton Pardo with her parents, Diana and Gabriel Pardo



Taylor Dillard, Presley Roselius and her mother, Terri Ogle



Debutante Madge Lister with her parents, Jenner and Darren Lister



David and Jennifer Oliver with their daughter, Emma Wood, and her fiancé, Winston Scambler



Debutantes Hannah Lee, Kate Russell, and Cate Carter



Autumn Abernathy and Karen Wright

personally with an invitation and a rose and toast them with a glass of champagne. This year, in honor of a new jam-making program at Pivot, each debutante also received a jar of Pivot Preserves.

The Bachelors Club of Oklahoma City has raised more than \$1,050,000 for local charities through its Annual Christmas Ball. Last year, the ball raised \$35,000 for Fields and Futures.

The Bachelors Club of Oklahoma City was founded in 1938 by a group of young men who wished to promote the social and philanthropic undertakings as well as leadership in the Oklahoma City area. The debutante presentation began in 1945 as a way to raise funds for various Oklahoma City charities. It has been held annually, except in 2020 due to the pandemic.

This year's 20 debutantes to be presented are Rachel Constance Abbott, Alison Marie Anderson, Julianne Elizabeth Bentley, Catherine Anne Carter, Victoria Jane Cohn, Lily-Kate Duit, Hadley Scheyer Ferguson, Jillian Brooke Hibbard, Gabriella Naji Karam, Hannah Sydney Lee, Madelyn Grace Lister, Sophia Elizabeth Mathis, Peyton Claire McCuan, Jane Anne

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Let's Connect!

Nelson, Isabela Hampton Pardo, Elliott Frei Reiger, Presley Ann Roselius, Caroline Marie Roten, Aubrey Elizabeth Ruffin and Katherine Jane Russell.

Escorting the debutantes are President James Edward Brooks Cook II, Luke David Chansolme, Carter Steven Cole, Owen Carter Crofts, Brody John Gibbs, Gabriel William Grim, Rhodes Byron Haggard, James Henry Robert Jackson, Theodore Nathan Jacobsen, Parker Scott Kays,

Jacob Robert Margo, Luke William Mashburn, Grant Harrison McLain, William Craig McMurphy, Charles Durden Medley, Blake Oakley Miller, Cooper Monahan Moody, David Blake Oliver, Oliver Cromwell Rogers Pointer, Caden Edward Reynolds, Brennan Charles Wade, Pearce Garnett Wade and Adam Patrick Wheeler.



Linda Carpenter and Frank Olney



Chip Carter and Father Rick Stansberry



Escort Grant McLain with his father, Scott McLain, and Jeb Cook



Steven Bentley, Julianne Bentley and Parker Bentley

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