



## Original Capitol City Kicks Off Centennial Year For Central Oklahoma

by Darl DeVault

**G**uthrie, Oklahoma's original capitol city, hosts the first Centennial events in central Oklahoma November 18, 2006, with a full day of mostly free activities celebrating Oklahoma's first 100 years, organizers said.

Guthrie's Oklahoma Centennial Kick-off Day's first offering for visitors is a book signing by children's author, Molly Levite Griffis at 9 a.m. in the Guthrie Library. Her Oklahoma Centennial book, *Paradise on the Prairie* is about children sent into the American West on orphan trains for adoption in the late 1800s.

Guthrie was the Oklahoma Territory capitol shortly after the 1889 Land Run. It was the capitol again from statehood in 1907 until moved to Oklahoma City in 1910. Oklahoma City's growth as a railroad hub had far exceeded Guthrie's population.

George Watts, Lt Col, USAF (ret), leads the city's Centennial committee. When the importance of being the state capitol moved south to Oklahoma City Guthrie residents preserved their heritage, Watts said. Guthrie's downtown architecture reflects turn of the century styles. The historic buildings are intact. Many building owners joined a preservation movement to restore building facades to their original glory.

"We are proud that Guthrie was designated one of the Dozen Distinctive Destinations by The National Trust for Historic Preservation last year," Watts said. In 1999, Guthrie was named a National Historic Landmark. It is the largest contiguous historic district in America. The historic downtown and surrounding areas feature 2,169 buildings on 1,400 acres and 400 city blocks.

The Centennial celebration continues at 10 a.m., with entertainment in and near downtown Guthrie that lasts until the start of the parade an hour later. World renowned fiddle player Byron Berline and his Byron Berline Band will play in front of the Guthrie Post Office. The Cottonwood Cloggers will perform at the Oklahoma Territorial Museum. Guthrie's Fogarty Elementary School Centennial Honor Choir performs on the steps of the Guthrie Junior High on Oklahoma Ave. The Guthrie Gunfighters will re-enact a typical gunfight at the corner of Harrison and 2nd Streets.

American Indian tribal flags and representatives will be featured in the parade and days events. The significant American Indian presence in the parade will commemorate their importance to Oklahoma's history. With the theme of "Honoring the Past... Looking to the Future," the American Indian participation will include many Oklahoma tribes, and children offering their musical vision for the next 100 years.

That theme of the importance of the contributions of Oklahoma's American Indians extends later in the day to a special event at the Oklahoma Sports Museum at 2 p.m. Plaques of Oklahoma athletes enshrined in the American Indian Athletic Hall of Fame in Lawrence, Kan., will be unveiled.

The Great Period Parade at 11 a.m. recognizes Oklahoma's 1907 Statehood, as participants stress period themes and appear in that era's dress. The parade will feature period Model "A" autos, horse organizations' riders, and horse drawn carriages. The Langston University Marching Band and high school bands from Guthrie, Crescent, Perkins, Cashion, and Mulhall-Orlando will perform.

The new historic statehood exhibits are on display all day in the Oklahoma Territorial Museum at 406 E. Oklahoma Ave.

At 2 p.m., the Oklahoma Sports Museum (OSM) at 315 W. Oklahoma Ave. will host an Oklahoma Athletic Heritage Reception where a special painting will be unveiled. Selected Oklahoma athletes' images are depicted on this Oklahoma Centennial Sports Montage, a 24 by 30 inch acrylic painting by Norman artist Tom Gentis.



The 11 a.m. parade will feature early statehood period automobiles such as these.



**Tom Gentis will unveil his Oklahoma Centennial Montage painting at the Oklahoma Sports Museum at 2 p.m.**

Gentis cooperated with the Oklahoma Centennial Commission to create this painting showcasing prominent Oklahoma athletes of the past 100 years. The painting is intended to be a timeless image of those who have contributed most to Oklahoma's rich athletic heritage.

Gentis specializes in professional and amateur sport illustrations from his studio in Norman. Selected as the official artist for the OSM, Gentis' award-winning art is exhibited in sports venues, galleries and

private collections around the country. Gentis' large-scale portraits have been presented to every Warren Spahn Award winner since the OSM began presenting the award in 1999.

This montage is the latest in a series Gentis has done to celebrate Oklahoma's sports figures. He recently painted sports figures depicted on the newest large addition to the museum, the Oklahoma Centennial 1907-2007 Athletic Heritage Timeline Project. This timeline depicts Oklahoma sports figures from each decade of the last 100 years, such as Mickey Mantle and Steve Owens.

The day of celebration concludes at 7 p.m. Saturday when Guthrie native and internationally acclaimed mezzo-soprano Gloria Parker sings at the Guthrie Scottish Rite Masonic Temple Auditorium. The auditorium at 900 E. Oklahoma Ave. is famous for its excellent acoustics.

The John Vance Auto Group presents Parker's "Music of the Heartland, a Singer Returns to Her Roots." Parker attended Guthrie High School. She also attended Oklahoma City University, and is a member of the Oklahoma City Performing Arts Hall of Fame. Parker has performed with the New York City Opera, the London Philharmonic, and at many operatic and symphonic venues around the world.

Piano virtuoso David Wilkinson will accompany the singer in her treatment of classical and American music. Wilkinson is a lecturer at the USC Thornton School of Music and internationally famous for his work with several opera stars. He has recently played recitals at Carnegie Hall, the Whitehouse and the Kennedy Center.

A post-concert reception within the Scottish Rite Temple allows guests to meet Parker and Wilkinson.



**Looking east down Oklahoma Ave. in historic downtown Guthrie.**

Food and beverages will be served. Attendees must be 21. For concert and reception tickets call Box Talent at (405) 360-2263 or access [www.outstandingtickets.com](http://www.outstandingtickets.com).

A multimillion-dollar Classical Revival building, the Temple sits on the 10.6 acres originally platted as the Capitol Park. It incorporates the old Legislative Hall, which housed the State legislature before the capitol was moved. Said to be the largest structure used for Masonic purpose the 400,000 square foot building contains 13 artistic rooms, 200 stained-glass windows and a world-class auditorium.



**The Oklahoma Territorial Museum features new statehood exhibits.**