Love & Legacy: Internationally Trained Doctor, Legendary Educator Chose to Make Impact Locally

Ruth Doby graduated from Howard University in 1928 with her bachelor’s degree in education. Roland Wiggins graduated with his first degree from Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia in 1925.

He would go on to earn a bachelor’s degree in chemistry and biological science, and his master’s in education before getting his medical degree, studying under the grandson of Louis Pasteur, the renowned French scientist. Wiggins was a Fulbright Scholar, a faculty member at the Paris School of Medicine, and he studied in Amsterdam and Paris, among other European cities.

An educated couple, Roland ran a prominent physicians practice from their home. Ruth spent a total of 49 years making an impact in local schools. She worked 30 years as a teacher for the Columbia school system before retiring.

Roland and Ruth first met in 1929, when they were both teaching at Douglass High School.

Ruth was an English instructor, and Roland taught physics, chemistry and French, while also coaching several sports. The two became friendly at school but would not marry for 22 years.

Ruth and Roland finally married in 1951, while Roland was studying and working abroad. He had been traveling around Europe for the summer and realized what he wanted most was to be experiencing all of these things with Ruth.

So, he sent for her, and soon after, they were married in Paris on September 21. They lived apart for three years when they were first married, while Roland finished up his medical studies.

There were not a lot of opportunities for Black physicians in the United States in the early 1950s, so Roland sought his training abroad.

--- Continued on page 4 ---
Chris Campbell, Executive Director

Thanks to the hard work of Nancy & Mike Russell, Larry Joe Pauley, Laurel & Howard Wilson, Liam Clarke and two volunteers, Ella and Ashlyn, from the Mizzou service fraternity, Alpha Phi Omega, much was accomplished in the basement storage of the Center in late January. This team cleaned and organized the space so when the I Do exhibit closes, the Model T Ford has a new place to park and be protected.

The long-planned and anxiously awaited exhibition Heroes Among Us is near completion. It should be ready to open to the public this month. The exhibit features brief histories of Boone County emergency response teams and those who served our country in the military.

Seven uniforms from our collection of military textiles are featured, as well as the county’s very first civil defense siren—a recent donation from the Boone County Joint Communications.

Toni Messina, communications and outreach supervisor for the Columbia Police Department, John Wilke of the Boone County Fire Protection District and BCHS members Laurel & Howard Wilson, Mike & Nancy Russell and Larry Joe Pauley all deserve thanks for helping this exhibit come to life.

Also new to the Walters East Gallery is a small exhibit titled On My Honor. The show briefly highlights the mentoring work and volunteerism of Boone Countians in four youth organizations: 4H, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Camp Fire USA. Sincere thanks goes to Laurel & Howard Wilson, Nancy Russell and Alice Havard for making this exhibit possible.

Our appreciation goes to board director, Jo Stealey, who is acting as the interim Montminy Gallery director, after Audrey Florey resigned due to family and work obligations. Erin Drake is our new assistant gallery director. She will be mounting and taking down future exhibits and assisting with the Montminy’s social media platforms.

Lory Pewitt Dobry, owner of Interior Design Associates is assisting us in finding vintage wallpaper to finish the necessary renovations to the Maplewood dining room. We hope to have the new wallpaper up before an April 1 opening for public tours.

Member and volunteer David Brown drastically improved the lighting in the vaults by replacing two 8-foot LED fixtures and installing four 8-foot LED light tubes. Thank you, David!

2022 CoMoGives Donors

Donors to the CoMoGives online fundraising campaign help ensure the History & Culture Center can continue serving this community in new, exciting ways from free family events to history exhibitions. You make it possible to preserve the triumphs, fears, successes and challenges Boone Countians have faced for generations, from settling in an unknown territory to the impact of modern technology. Thank you for your support of this mission.

Names appears as received from the CoMoGives site.
Richard Anderson
Marilyn & Paul Andre
Cheryl Andres
Jan & Wilson Beckett
Susan Burpo
Chris & Kellie Campbell
Rosemary Christensen
Jean Clarke
Cydney Coil
Carolyn Collings
Relevance
Michele Curry
Rachel Dicke
Kathryn Diges
James Eisenbeis
Jeanne Erickson
Becky Erickson
Marie Ewing
Dennis Fitzgerald
Susan Flader*
Barbara Fotsch
David & Diana Galat
Lawrence Ganong
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Patricia & Lynn Hostetler
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Richard Kaufmann
Elmo Klinginsmith
Robin & Alex LaBrurnerie
Robert McKinney
Virginia McMillan
David Mehr
Terry & Jack Meinzenbach
Karen Miller
Kay Murray
Terry Neason
Faye Nowell
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Charles & Garnet Payne
Garnet Payne
Monica Pitts
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Karen Touzeau
Bill Watkins
Elizabeth Watkins
Lisa Weil
Mary Westerfield
James Yonley
Peter Yronwode

*These donors went above and beyond by making a very generous “BCHS Advocate” contribution. Thank you!
BCHS Endowment Board Meets, Welcomes New Trustees

The Boone County Historical Society Endowment Trust Board met for the first time in 2023 on January 12. They received a presentation on the state of the markets from Commerce Trust. While 2022 was a tough year, our BCHS trust funds were better preserved than expected.

The trustees then elected officers for 2023. They elected Susan Hart as chair, Gwen Struchtemeyer as vice chair and Marie Nau Hunter as secretary. This was the first meeting for two new trustees, Patsy Ponder Dalton and Hunter. The pair officially joined the Endowment Trust Board on January 1, and both will serve a five-year term. We are excited to add their expertise to the group, which is tasked with overseeing the management of the Society’s investment funds and planning the Boone County Hall of Fame Gala each year.

Patsy Ponder Dalton, a former Boone County Commissioner and long-time Boone County resident, has a deep respect for our county’s history. She hosted the “Missouri Business Account” show on KOMU and featured businesses in Mid-Missouri. In addition to many years as a Columbia Chamber of Commerce activist, she is also an Athena Award winner.

For the past 17 years Patsy and her husband, David, who died last year with Parkinson’s, have led both the Columbia and Lake of the Ozarks Parkinson’s Support Groups with a total of 350 members. Beyond her own local impact and deep connection, Dalton’s father-in-law, Warren Dalton, was also a Hall of Fame enshrinee.

Patsy’s professional career was spent as the head of healthcare marketing at Boone Hospital and later MU Heath Care.

Marie Nau Hunter was on staff with the city of Columbia Office of Cultural Affairs (OCA) for 13 years. During her tenure, Columbia was named the state’s first ever “Creative Community” by the Missouri Arts Council (MAC) and the Missouri Department of Economic Development.

In 2010, Hunter was the state’s recipient of the “Leadership in the Arts Award” given by the MAC. In 2015, she was named Stephens College’s “Woman of Courage,” and in 2021 she was recognized by the Missouri Alliance for Arts Education for her work statewide supporting arts education programming.

Hunter has served on numerous panels for the Missouri Arts Council, has chaired the Missouri Alliance for Arts Education’s Advisory Council, was a member of Americans for the Arts Public Art Network and served on the alumni board of MU’s College of Arts and Science. Before working for the city, Hunter was on staff at the Museum of Art and Archaeology.

In 2014, Gov. Jay Nixon appointed Hunter to a three-year term on the Missouri Arts Council where she served on its Executive Council and chaired the Arts Awards. Hunter has served on the board of Missouri Citizens for the Arts for more than 20 years and just completed nine years on the Community Foundation of Central Missouri’s board, chairing their granting committee. At present, Hunter coordinates public art for MU. A native of southwest Missouri, Hunter has called Columbia home since arriving for college. She holds a bachelor’s and master’s, both in art history and archaeology, from MU.

Call for Nominations: 2023 Hall of Fame Enshrinees

Mary Ellen Lohmann, Director, Administration & Communications

We need your help to make sure three outstanding enshrinees are added to the Boone County Hall of Fame in 2023, and the deadline of February 24 is approaching fast.

Help us recognize remarkable individuals and organizations that have left a legacy, both in the place we call home and beyond.

Each year one living recipient, one posthumous honoree and one business or organization are selected for the Boone County Hall of Fame.

Our esteemed enshrinees have demonstrated professional or philanthropic excellence, creativity or initiative that created a lasting and positive impact, locally and nationally.

Members are also selected because they provided valuable service to improve the quality of life for others in their community, either through their work, personal sacrifice, teaching or building.

Lastly, Hall of Fame members are selected because they have brought positive distinction upon themselves and our community through extraordinary achievements, which drew statewide or national recognition.

Please let us know who should be added by completing the form that was mailed to you in January, or download one at BooneHistory.org/Hall-Of-Fame-2023.

Thank you for helping us recognize remarkable individuals and organizations that have left a legacy, both in the place we call home and beyond.
Digital Collections Cross New Milestone

More than 20,000 photos and historic records are now available online! This new milestone in the BCHS Digital Collections is possible thanks to our team of dedicated volunteers and Brian Flanagan, coordinator of the Henry “Hank” J. Waters III Digital Imaging Lab.

The Digital Collections, which are free to use and key word searchable now feature images from the 1880s to the 1960s as well as Boone County Court records from the year of our founding, 1820, through 1913. The data accompanying each image comes directly from the photographer’s journals and record books. Names and dates have been cross-referenced when possible to ensure accuracy.

Browse what is available at BooneHistory.org/Digital-Collections, or help the online offerings grow faster as a lab volunteer! Training is provided. To get started, visit BooneHistory.org/Volunteer.

Wiggins Lasting Legacy—continued from page 1

Roland found great success and recognition in Europe, studying at the Paris School of Medicine, where he would go on to become a professor.

After their marriage, Ruth would join him on her breaks from school and together they traveled the world. They visited North Africa, Yugoslavia, Austria, and Scandinavia, among other countries. Upon his return to the states, Roland opened a medical practice in their home.

Roland and Ruth had opportunities to work overseas or even elsewhere in the states; but both were determined to work on race relations in Missouri, so they decided to stay. Ruth taught in the Columbia school system for 30 years, teaching first in all Black schools, then in integrated schools, where she was some children’s first Black teacher.

Roland worked in many community roles while living in Columbia. He was the membership chairman of the NAACP, Columbia chapter, and the Chairman of the City Business Relocation Committee. Roland was also a member of the Boone County Medical Society, the Missouri State Medical Association, the American Medical Association and the World Medical Association.

Reportedly, Roland looked often at these words, which Beardsley Ruml penned for an article in The Crisis. It “crystallizes so well what Wiggins was working for” throughout his esteemed life.

“We are defending a way of life, not as it is, but as it may become. Many aspects of our way of life as it is today most of us would neither defend nor preserve. These unworthy features rest on ignorance, indifference, prejudice and social habits. What we will defend, however, are the beliefs that will progressively weaken the forces of ignorance, indifference, prejudice and habit, and in doing so will promote a better and happier way of life.”

Ruth and Roland finally married in 1951, while Roland was studying and working abroad. He had been traveling around Europe for the summer and realized what he wanted most was to be experiencing all of these things with Ruth. So, he sent for her, and soon after, they were married in Paris.

Top Ruth and Roland Wiggins smile at each other on their wedding day, September 21, 1951. Above The Wiggins’ original certificate of marriage is part of the fantastic collection of their personal papers donated to BCHS by Jennie Johnson.

News & Notes
Volunteer Spotlight: Carole Riesenberg

The work of the Boone County History & Culture Center simply would not be possible without incredible volunteers. This special section highlights an individual who goes above and beyond to serve our community and help ensure the future of this organization.

How long have you been volunteering?

My volunteer position began in February 2022. I am a front desk volunteer, which involves a variety of tasks from unlocking the door and turning on gallery lights in the mornings to locking up in the evenings. The most important thing that we do at the front desk is to help people feel comfortable and welcome as they join us, especially for the first time.

Why is history and culture important to you?

History and culture are important to me because both provide learning experiences and add to the richness of our present moments.

Why do you choose to help preserve and share Boone County’s history and culture?

It is interesting for me as a non-Boone County native to meet and learn from those for whom Boone County has always been home. History comes alive when we hear the stories of others and Boone County is more interesting to me as a result of my work at the Center. The experience enriches my sense of place as a member of the community.

Why should someone support BCHS?

We have lost so much of our identity, cultural knowledge, and manners in this so-called information age. The richness of history and culture deserves preservation and celebration. Anything that we can do to support the past as a means of enriching the present, we should do!

Has anything about volunteering surprised you?

I had no idea how many interesting, active, warm, and gracious volunteers I would meet.

Why would you tell someone else to volunteer at the History & Culture Center?

This is a most pleasant place to spend time. I have met really dedicated volunteers and staff during my time as a volunteer and am enriched by meeting many of the Center’s guests who walk through the door. Sometimes I am entertained by events and people. A good example is the day that the Model T was brought through the front door of the Center for placement in the “I Do” exhibit. I was in awe as I watched that exhibit take shape with much labor and care.

Anything else you’d like to share?

I have had lots of fun while volunteering at the front desk and volunteering occasionally for additional jobs. One of my most happy memories is working at the root beer stand during the 2022 Heritage Festival with my daughter, Kathryn. We had such a good time and it felt so good to make a small contribution to this huge undertaking by the History & Culture Center.

Join Carole! There is currently a great need for volunteers to serve the History & Culture Center at the front desk and in the Waters Digital Imaging Lab. All training is provided. To get started, fill out the form online at BooneHistory.org/Volunteer or contact the Center at 573-443-8936 or Info@BooneHistory.org.

Stitched Together Family Event on March 11

We started off our family events for 2023 in February with “Love Letters.” Be sure to join us from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. on March 11 to learn about quilts in “Stitched Together”. Everything from flour sacks to precious leftover fabric has been pieced into quilts over the generations. These practical tools for warmth traveled west with settlers and helped many families survive the Great Depression. Yet, they brought together more than just fabric. Drop by for this come and go event, designed for all ages, and learn how quilts helped build communities.

Make a paper quilt block on March 11.
Your donation unlocks the power of stories. It allows us to open the doors and share stories that will impact future generations. You make it possible for a young mother to tell her children a story she hadn’t thought of for decades.

Beautiful moments like those happen because we’ve preserved a little piece of everyday life from the early 1900s. A single book that provided a tangible way for her to revisit the past. You make that possible. Every dollar truly makes a difference. It starts with that young mother. It grows with her children and the generation after. Thank you for helping make that possible with your continued support during the 2022 holiday season.

Donors: November 29, 2022—January 26, 2023
There’s still time to join them!
James & Sally Allen
Anonymous Donor*
Scott & Fran Atkins
Breck & Monica Barton
Lynnanne Baumgardner*
Wilson & Jan Beckett*
Shirley Bedsworth*
Lynn Behns & Janice Wenger
Priscilla Bevins & Bob Bartlett
William & Antoinette Carson
Andrew Clarke
Ann Cleek
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Patsy Dalton*
Deborah Daniels
Shirley Fay Delbert
Terry Douglass
Carolyn Doyle
Mary Kaye Doyle
Patti Doyle
Marilee “Cricket” Dunn
Carol Ellebracht
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Ted & Catherine Pettit
Vicki Russell
Joe & Connie Rutherford
Marvin & Kathleen Sapp
Nancy & Tom Schultz
Harry Sulzberger*
Gladys Swan
John & Elaine Thompson
*These donors went above and beyond by making a very generous “BCHS Advocate” contribution. Thank you!
Volunteers Needed

You can help extend the History & Culture Center’s mission! There is a great need for volunteers to serve in a variety of roles, many provide the opportunity to learn new skills and meet new people. All training will be provided.

**Digital Imaging:** Spend your time digitizing photographs and historical records or helping research information to make the artifact searchable online. No experience is necessary, and there are multiple shifts available each week.

**Front Desk:** These volunteers are the face of the Center! You will greet visitors, assist in store sales and staff the front desk. There are numerous opportunities to help.

**Tour Guide** If you like sharing stories, this is the perfect position for you. In this role, you will learn about our historic structures and share what interests you with visitors. There is no exact script to memorize, and fact sheets are provided. We have started an exciting agreement with Columbia Public Schools, so we anticipate groups almost all year round.

**Family Events:** The free family programs are growing and could use extra volunteers. In this role you might welcome families at the door, help with a simple activity or play a pioneer games. Events occur mostly on the second Saturday of each month.

Your time and talents will be much appreciated, and you will be a part of helping your History & Culture Center better serve the community. To learn more contact Madeline Bloss at MadelineBloss@BooneHistory.org.

Show Your Love for Local History

Each dollar donated goes directly to our mission, which is why your generous donations are so important to continuing our day-to-day work preserving Boone County’s vibrant history and exploring it through exhibitions and free family programs.

Unfortunately, our CoMo Gives campaign came in below our expectations. Our 2022 CoMo Gives donations totaled $8,975, even though the goal was $12,000. So, we are asking for you to show your love of Boone County’s history and culture this February and help us make up for this shortfall.

Donate in honor of your sweetheart. We’ll send them a letter to ensure they know about your loving tribute. Simultaneously, you will help local students learning about Westward Expansion get their lessons not only from books but also from tracing trade routes on historic maps and feeling furs like those that the trappers caught. Help provide for the care and preservation of our wide-ranging collections and thought-provoking history exhibitions.

Donations may be made online at BooneHistory.org/Donate-Now. Checks may be sent to 3801 Ponderosa Street, Columbia, MO 65201. If you are making a gift in honor of someone, please be sure to include their name and an address where we can notify them of your wonderful tribute. Thank you in advance for showing how much you love this fascinating place—Boone County.
Beauty & Chaos Explored in Regional Expressionism

Regional Expressionism, on display now through March 11, features the work of two artists from the St. Louis area, Stefanie Kirkland and Brian Kirchoff. Despite their different artistic approaches, each reflects on the idea of memory and the transience of city life.

“This body of work, ‘City in Memory,’ are collages that echo the beat and chaotic pulse of the city,” Kirkland said. “They are repetitive, dense, black and white imagery that create space and memory. They are optimistic and personal. They are designed with a rhythm and cadence. The line drawings of structures that sit in the cityscapes are self-portraits. They are symbols of my current identity reflecting in a memory. They are often incomplete thoughts, vulnerable and imperfect.”

“Beauty and chaos co-exist in nature, man’s world and in my paintings,” Kirchoff said. “Applying and working paint with brayers gives unpredictable results, enhancing personal discovery, which I build upon as new direction and inspiration occur with each addition of acrylics.”

Top Chaos and Flow, left, and Making a Point are works in acrylic by Brian Kirchoff. “The world is an inspiration if we just take the time to see it as it really is,” he said.
Left Midtown Harvest by Stefanie Kirkland combines acrylic paint, mixed papers and wood. Kirkland’s art incorporates aspects from multiple mediums, focusing on enhancing the subject matter through mixed media techniques.