

Legacy Portraits—Final Five—Who Are They?

October, 2018

In historical terms, a legacy is something that is handed down from one period of time to another period of time. Often it means something handed down from an ancestor or predecessor (from simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legacy)
When considering the many noteworthy Smithvillians for this project, the community thought about the legacy of their lives and how their deeds continue to shape and inform what Smithville is all about today.

Suggestions came from “Images of America” by Carol Snyder and David Herrington, “Early History of Smithville” by Silky Rasgdale Crockett, and from people who took the survey or responded to Mayor Scott Saunders’ FB posts. A community-wide survey indicated that it would be helpful to provide names in different categories that are important to our community—namely: Veteran, Educator, Creative Community, and Citizen of the Year (“recognized” citizens). The “Community Leader” category is a “catch-all” for people who don’t particularly fit in any of the other categories.

Veteran:

- **Floyd “Skip” Hyson (1917-2017).** Flew for the air force during World War II, the Korean War, and Vietnam, and was promoted to lieutenant Colonel before retiring. Back home in Smithville, Skip was named Outstanding Citizen in 1983 for tireless work with Boy Scouts and other organizations and for donating, along with his wife, Lucille, their historic family home to the Smithville Heritage Society for use as a museum. (From Images of America: Smithville, by Carol Snyder and David Herrington photo p. 80) (From Scott’s FB Post -- Suzanne Hinnant: Skip Hyson Heritage museum) (also was a Citizen of the Year)



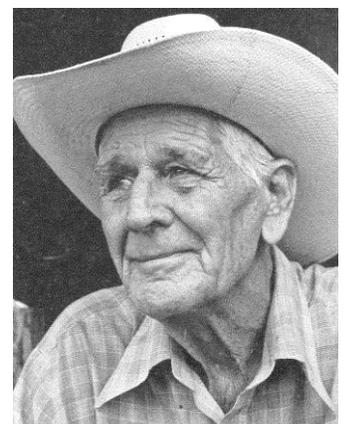
Educator:

- **Tommye Dell Culberson (1930-1997).** Tommye Dell (Henderson) Culberson was born in Smithville and attended Mary A. Brown Colored School prior to attending Prairie View AM, where she received her educational degree; she later returned there to complete her Master's degree in Education. She was a highly respected teacher in Math and PE at Mary A. Brown, and later at the integrated Smithville Jr High and High School. She often tutored promising students on her own time. She was a teacher for 31 years in Smithville ISD and served on numerous educational committees and committees for the city and school system improvement. She loved teaching and the community she affectionately called “The Ville”. She believed in the importance of education and being involved to make a difference. In 1957, she married her childhood sweetheart, Clarence “Kissie” Culberson. She served in her beloved church Mt. Pilgrim Baptist Church; the MLK Committee, organizing community walks and events; Mary A. Brown Reunion Committee, assisted Hope Float film crews; and Bastrop County Retired Teachers. She served her community faithfully until her death in February 1997.



Creative Community (musicians, artists, actors, writers, etc)

- **Joel A. “Old Joe” Cole (1902-1999).** Longtime Smithville cattleman, horse trader, rawhide furniture maker, historian, and writer of Western articles. Called “snuff dippin’, sotrytelling’, horse racin’, crap shootin’ Joe Cole.” He lived an independent life, but Joe never forgot his roots, and he surrounded himself with treasures from the



past so that important memories would not be lost. He knew where the bodies were buried (literally having documented many of the area's cemeteries), and knew many stories about the families in the area. He shared those memories in the stories he wrote for True West Magazine. He was a true Smithville character – his great, great grandfather came to the area in 1818 and settled in land that is now Fayette County. He lived in a log cabin that was built in 1840 in Blackjack Springs, which he moved to his place off Old Cistern Road during the 1950s, and for a while used it as a trading post for the antiques he collected over the years. (From Images of America: Smithville, by Carol Snyder and David Herrington photo p. 103 – and from old articles provided by David Herrington for this project).

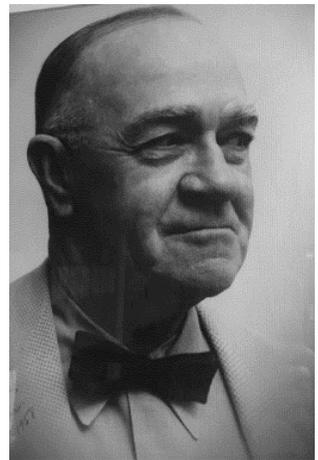
Chamber “Citizens of the Year” and other Recognized Citizens

- **Karen Bell (1954-2009).** Karen Bell was citizen of the year in 1984. She dedicated her life to serving the city and citizens of Smithville and was always to lend a helping hand to anyone in need. She was the Library Director of the Smithville Public Library from 1986 until her death in 2009, and president of the Smithville jamboree for decades. She has left a lasting legacy in this community.



Community Leaders:

- **Grover Shade (1891-1968).** Mayor of Smithville from the Depression through WWII and the Korean War (1938-1958). Grover S. Shade was born on Feb. 11, 1891 near Cistern, Texas. He was one of 7 children of Dan and Elizabeth Syler Shade. His family moved to Smithville in the late 1890s. He attended school in Cistern and Smithville. As a teenager he went to work in the train repair shops for the Katy Railroad. After he took a leave of absence to serve in the Army in WW1 he returned to his job with the railroad and continued there until the nationwide shopman's strike of 1922. He then worked as a welder on pipelines and later had Shade's Cafe on Main St. in Smithville. In 1932 he married Linnet Brown of Temple, Texas. He served on the Smithville Council in the mid-1930s and was elected Mayor in 1938. He continued as Mayor until 1958. During his tenure, the City built a sewage disposal plant in the early 1950s -- one of the first small towns to do this. In the 1940's he was instrumental in working to purchase an electric utility system from a private company so that Smithville could begin operating their own system.



The Artist: James Culleton

James Culleton graduated from Fine Arts at the University of Manitoba in 1998 and was hired as a designer by Palliser Furniture shortly after, assuming the role of Design Director. His furniture designs appear all over North America in stores such as JCPenney, Eq3, I/O Metro, Germaine Lariviere, Tanguay, Dufresne and the CDG Group. He has won awards from the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Quebec, EQ3's Generation Art from the Michaele Jean Foundation, and most recently he won a Pinnacle award from The American Society of Furniture Designers. (<http://jamesculleton.com/>)



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