

SEPTEMBER 2022

STANLY

the magazine



CUTTING EDGE

THROWING RANGE
UTILIZES TOMAHAWKS

MAKING AN IMPACT

Scott oversees public
housing

COMMUNITY FIXTURES

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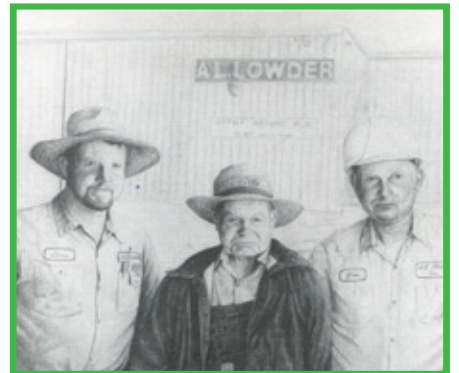
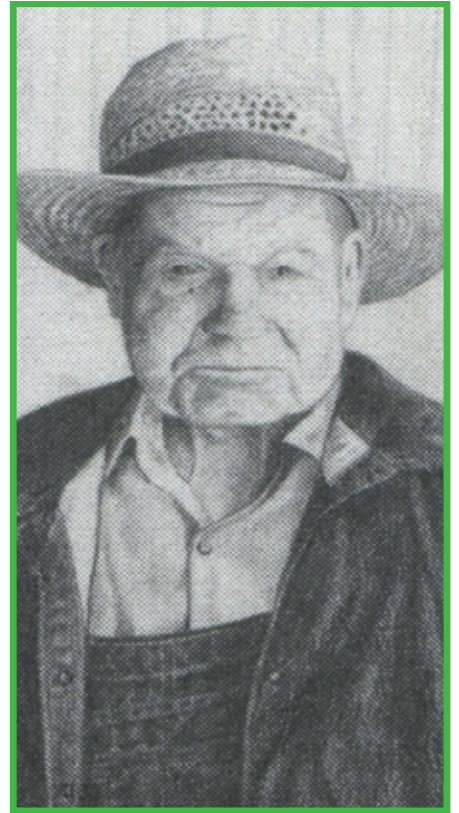
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George Wilson gets ready for a toss as Hailey Holbrooks looks on with anticipation at The Tomahawk Throwing Range and Blade Shop, located at 130 S. 2nd St. in Albemarle.

Tomahawk target

Albemarle throwing range hits the mark

STORY BY CHRIS MILLER | PHOTOGRAPHY BY SETH MABRY

Stanly native Michael Smith is an avid axe-thrower with about a decade of experience. He has thrown competitively all across the country, especially at venues utilizing tomahawks, his preferred weapon.

While axe-throwing has been a national trend over the years, the closest locations for people in Stanly

County had been in Charlotte. But that changed when Albemarle resident Garrett Starnes opened a location in downtown Albemarle in September 2021. And it wasn't just any range, it was one that exclusively utilizes tomahawks.

Smith, who now resides in China Grove, quickly fell in love with The Tomahawk Throwing Range & Blade



A tomahawk on a log rest.

Shop at 130 S. Second St., Albemarle. He tries to go every weekend and even won the first tournament the throwing range hosted.

"I love the environment," Smith said. "There's not a lot of places around here that offer tomahawks. Most of them are hatchet-throwing places."

Like Smith, Starnes also grew up with a love for "throwing sharp pointy objects" — everything from kitchen knives to saw blades to roofing hatchets. About nine years ago, he and his brother Mitchell discovered a new throwing tool: tomahawks.

"We just determined that that was the ultimate throwing weapon," said Starnes.

Over the years, Starnes introduced tomahawk throwing to several of his friends, who all enjoyed it. This got him thinking about the realistic possibility of translating his passion into an actual business.

Though nervous about introducing the area to such a niche sport, Starnes has

been blown away by the support he's received.

"Everything has exceeded my expectations," he said, noting that each month seems to be better than the last.

Thinking he would take a loss during his first year of operation, so far the opposite has occurred. There's been enough interest with his business that he's been able to make a profit.

"I always believed, with the nature of what this is, that if I could get the word out, that people would enjoy it," Starnes said. "I always felt like Albemarle needed something for people to do, other than outdoor things."

On a busy Friday or Saturday night, he estimates as many as 100 people often make their way to his venue, which operates 10 single throwing lanes, divided by chain-link fencing for security. To entice

more people to show up during the weeknights, Starnes has designated Wednesday as Ladies Night, where they can throw for an hour at the half-hour rate and Thursdays are League nights, where people can come and prepare for upcoming tournaments.

Smith has particularly enjoyed seeing newcomers learn about the sport and toss their first tomahawks.

"It's nice to see people coming in for the first time and then getting addicted to it," he said.

Joy Almond, Main Street manager and director of the Albemarle Downtown Development Corporation, explored the range for the first time this spring, noting she was surprised by how much energy she used during her hour-long throwing session.

"It's a great space," she said. "Garrett is a very enthusiastic business owner and that's the kind of business owner that's



great to have in a downtown setting.

“The way everything came together to help bring his idea to fruition has just been very rewarding to see,” she added.

Due to the fact that people are throwing a dangerous weapon, safety is paramount. People have to fill out liability waivers and listen to a brief safety talk before being given one-on-one instructions regarding how to properly throw the tomahawks.

Many of the rules seem obvious — never walk in front of someone throwing, don’t try to catch a falling axe, always be aware of your surroundings — but when dealing with a situation where an accident could result in serious injury, “they need to be verbalized,” Starnes said.

Whenever customers hit the bullseye, which happens quite frequently, Starnes takes their picture and puts the photo on

Garrett Starnes, left, owner of The Tomahawk Throwing Range and Blade Shop, helps Jamerit Sturdivant, of Albemarle, learn the proper form and safety to throwing the tomahawk.

the wall for all to see. Several hundred people, including Smith, have already achieved the milestone.

“That keeps people going. People love that,” Starnes said. “You can miss for the whole hour and get that one Hail Mary and you’re good to go, you’re on the Wall of Fame.”

The success of the throwing range has attracted people from beyond just Stanley County. Customers have come from across the region, including Salisbury, Concord and Mint Hill.

“People come from a long way around to come here,” he said.

Tomahawk is one of several new businesses catering to a younger clientele and injecting lifeblood into what was once thought of as a sleepy downtown. As of this writing, another axe-throwing venue was planning to open in downtown.

“Until Tomahawk opened, I hadn’t been in that area for some time, probably two or three years,” Smith said. “But I was blown away by how many more businesses are moving in and how much it’s grown.”

Anyone 12 and up is allowed to throw, but all children under the age of 18 must be accompanied and monitored by an adult. One-hour sessions cost \$25.

The business is open 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, 4 p.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Saturday. Walk-ins are accepted, but reservations are preferred. **[S]**

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Kim Scott is busy at work in his office.

‘Dedicated to service’

Scott oversees Albemarle’s public housing

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS MILLER

Whenever there’s a problem within the City of Albemarle’s public housing community, whether it is overgrown vegetation along the sides of buildings, fences that need to be repaired or a chronic sewage problem impacting families, Dr. Kim Scott wants to know about it so he can go about trying to fix it.

As the so-called mayor of Albemarle’s public housing community, or a “city within a city,” as he calls it, Scott, who’s been the city’s public housing director since January, is not

one to sit idly by when there are problems to be tackled.

“I want it fixed because if it represents a safety and a health issue, I cannot sit at my desk and ignore it,” he said. “That’s just not who I am.”

As someone who has always been naturally inquisitive, Scott, 56, said he always wants to figure out how “the machine works.”

“I want to know every aspect of the machine, he said, “from the oil to the gas to the pistons — everything.”

FROM A CAREER IN EDUCATION TO PUBLIC HOUSING

Originally from Albemarle, Scott grew up about four blocks from Amhurst Gardens and vividly remembers playing with friends who lived within the public housing community.

“This was like home to me because I had relatives here, I had friends here, so anytime it was time to play, this is where I came to play,” he said.

After college, where Scott majored in elementary education, he came back to Albemarle and spent about four years working in public housing as the resident coordinator.

Wanting to experience what public housing was like on a much larger scale, Scott moved to Charlotte, where he served as HOPE VI resident services coordinator. He was responsible for developing family self-sufficiency programs and facilities management in the First Ward, Dalton Village and Fair View Homes housing communities.

“My plan was to eventually always come back home, but I wanted to get that experience,” he said.

Scott then changed careers and for much of the next two decades spent time as a teacher and school administrator. He spent about 10 years at an elementary school in Scotland County, where he worked with low-income Lumbee Indian students, before coming back home, where he served as principal at both Albemarle Middle



Kim Scott, who has been Albemarle's director of public housing since January, chats with Carol Cole.

School and Albemarle High School. He later served in other roles at charter and for-profit schools.

As an educator, he regularly worked with at-risk children, many of whom lived in public housing, which gave him a unique perspective that helped inform how he views his current role.

“You have those social ills that come along with poverty and students being behind academically, so even as a teacher, I felt it was important to get agencies involved in the school, even in my classroom, to come meet the needs of the

students as well as their parents,” he said.

Some of the most searing memories as an educator occurred during his time in Scotland County, one of the poorer parts of the state, when he said parents eagerly invited him to their house — just to show him they had running water.

“I’m standing there thinking: I’m accustomed to seeing faucets and spigots and they would literally come into the kitchen and turn the water on like, ‘Look,’ ” he recalled. “It was that poor and I couldn’t believe it. I was shocked at the time because I’m thinking this is America.”

His teaching experience, especially his time in Scotland County, helped instill in him that even within the same community, people often operate on totally different levels.

“It humbles me to understand that you can’t look at people and expect everyone to be the on the same level,” he said, noting there are so many “nuances” that can cause people to struggle.

It also taught him that he has to meet people at the point of their needs and help empower them to want to create a better life for themselves.

Scott moved back to Albemarle from Florida at the end of 2021 to be closer to his six siblings. He planned to continue his career in education but as luck would have it, he received a call from Garry Lewis, Albemarle’s interim director of public housing, asking him to consider applying for the full-time position. He was appointed the



Kim Scott catches up with 10-year-old Samaad Young Beck, who has family that lives in Amhurst Gardens.



new housing director and assumed his role in mid-January.

“As fate would have it, I believe I was assigned at this point in my life to be here,” he said.

TACKLING THE SEWAGE PROBLEM

As the so-called mayor of his new community — which consists of 200 apartment units, including multi-family sites at Amhurst Gardens, along South Bell Avenue near N.C. Highway 24-27 Bypass, and one-bedroom units for elderly and disabled individuals at Elizabeth Heights, near downtown — Scott quickly went about touring the facilities and meeting with the many residents.

He discovered several familiar faces dating back to his time as a child including John and JoAnne Branch, who have been Amhurst Gardens residents since public housing first began in the early 1970s. Scott was best friends with their son, Elbert, who was a former police officer with the city.

“They’ve been here and when I returned here, I knew exactly where they lived and I went to see them first,” he said.

John Branch, 77, is optimistic Scott will make a lasting impact in the community.

“It’s great to see him come back because he will make a difference in here,” Branch said, noting he’s already seen several improvements.

In his short time with the city, Scott, who regularly meets with residents, has worked to alleviate some of the long-standing issues. Wanting to reduce cars speeding along South Bell Avenue, Scott has developed connections with Police Chief Jason Bollhorst and the Albemarle Police Department as well as officials from the Sheriff’s Office, who come through the community a few times a week.

The public housing department’s work over the last several months to improve the community seems to have made a notable impact, according to a recent federal HUD inspection, undertaken over the course of three days in mid-June. The department received a score of 75 out of 100, “the highest it’s been in 10 years,” Scott said.

“Dr. Scott is someone who is truly dedicated to service,” said City Manager Michael Ferris. “That dedication stood out during his work with the Department of Public Housing when I first met him nearly 30 years ago. Dr. Scott genuinely cares about improving the lives of the people that the

Department of Public Housing serves.”

The biggest obstacle in front of Scott seems to be tackling the ongoing sewage problems caused by several collapsed pipes underneath many of the units — an issue that has persisted for many years. Scott first learned about it in mid-January.

Scott and his staff are working with Stogner Architecture in Rockingham to determine the severity of the problem and hire contractors to renovate the properties. Albemarle City Council approved a two-year contract with Stogner at its July 11 meeting. Since 1991, Stogner has worked on 18 public housing projects within the city, according to its website.

At least 22 units on South Bell Avenue along with Inger and Grigg streets were identified as having plumbing problems. The total represents approximately 25 to 30 families, or about 15 percent of the 150 units in Amhurst Gardens, Scott said.

“It was just disturbing to me that this was something that had lasted for several years and no one had addressed it,” he said.

The families living in the impacted properties will be temporarily relocated to vacant units on Inger Street. While things can change, depending on the severity of existing problems or additional damage discovered, Scott said he hopes to have the units fully renovated in three to six months.

EMPOWERING RESIDENTS

During his tenure, Scott has been working to help provide the wrap-around services for many families, including healthcare, mental health services, youth development, childcare and literacy programs.



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He encourages residents that just because they live in public housing, that does not mean they cannot be successful and can't work towards finding a stable job or purchasing their own home. Despite the obstacles they've encountered or might still be dealing with, Scott wants to instill in them that they too can have "a piece of the American Dream."

Part of his advocacy role he likens to that of a cheerleader working to inspire the home crowd.


"It's just like going to a football game and the team that you love is losing," he said. "But there's always the wonderful cheerleaders on the sideline that will help you remember you are really here because you love this team."

"As the mayor of this city," he said, extending the metaphor, "it is my job to celebrate the residents, to provide them with these agencies in our county that can help them get on their feet and to change their minds, about whatever trauma has happened to them or whatever their perception is of the world outside of Amhurst."

Carole Cole, 63, who has lived in Amhurst Gardens since the 1990s, appreciates Scott's dedication to his residents, noting that during his first six months on the job, she gives him an A+.

"Since he has been here with us in the Amhurst area, there has not been a day that I called him that I could not reach him," she said. "If there was something I needed done in the house, he would make sure it was done."

As someone who knew Scott when he was growing up, she is proud of the man he's become — and that he is working to help people like herself.

"I don't know what a male angel is called, but he is an authentic angel," Cole said. 



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Rusco Fixtures president Jeff Russell talks with vice president Barry Slater.

Coming together

Business has been a fixture in community

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS MILLER

For many decades, Stanly Fixtures and Rusco Fixtures Company, located only a few miles from each other in Aquadale and Oakboro, were friendly competitors, trying to gain an upper hand in the competitive market of retail fixture manufacturing while also helping out whenever possible.

“We bid against each other, we worked against each other, but at the end of the day, if they needed something and I had it I would give it to them and they had something I needed they would give it to me,” said Barry Slater, long-time Rusco

employee.

Both fixture installers have worked for big-name clothing flagships over the years, including Macy’s, Belk, Lord & Taylor and Neiman Marcus, designing and assembling the interior of each space with cabinets, jewelry cases and other types of furniture.

Unlike other fixture businesses which might focus on mass producing the same types of products, such as specific cabinets or doors, Rusco tailors its work to what the companies are requesting.

“We’re definitely more custom work and that’s the niche that we look for,” Slater said.

After years of competition, the two were placed in the same orbit in 2019 when Don Russell, owner of Rusco, which opened in 1976, purchased Stanly Fixtures, though each business continued operating independently. It wasn’t until last November that the decision was made to merge both companies under the name Rusco Fixtures. Slater is one of the vice presidents of the company.

“During the middle of COVID, there wasn’t enough business for both places,” said Stephen Russell, Rusco vice president and Don’s brother, regarding the decision to combine forces. The original Rusco employees from Oakboro moved to the 125,000-square-foot manufacturing plant in Aquadale, located along N.C. Highway 138 next to the elementary school.

Much like the sprawling facility (which has an active spring on site and about a century ago was the home of a movie theater), the company itself has a dynamic and interesting backstory.

“There’s a lot of layers, I can tell you that,” Slater said.

A FAMILY BUSINESS TO ITS CORE

When asked what has been the best part about working at Rusco, Stephen Russell quickly answered with a one-word reply: “Family.” His family has been a key thread connecting both fixture companies over the decades.

It began with Ben, Russell’s father, who began his career in the fixture industry at Young Manufacturing Company in Norwood in the early 1950s. He left to start his own business, Russell Fixture Company in Locust, in the early 1960s. That venture lasted about three years before it closed; Russell then began work at Stanly Fixtures, which opened in 1959. His sons Roddy, Don and Stephen also spent time at the manufacturing plant.

“I started here, sweeping floors in 1964,” Stephen Russell said.

Don’s son Jeff remembers playing around the facility on Saturdays.

“I ran around in the dark out there,” he said.

The Russell family stayed at the Aquadale facility from 1964 until 1976. It was at that point that Ben, along with his three sons, opened Rus-



David Rodriguez, who works in plastic lamination, has been with Rusco Fixtures for 22 years.



Danny Hatley, who was at Rusco in Oakboro, said he’s enjoyed being able to work with better machines since he’s been at the Aquadale site.

co Fixture Company in Oakboro.

During his tenure with Rusco, Jeff worked in almost every state this side of the Rocky Mountains. One of his most memorable experiences was spending a summer in New York City as a teenager. Stationed across the river in New Jersey, he and his team traveled each morning into the city through the Holland Tunnel, where they worked to install American Express offices in both World Trade Center towers.

Stephen recalls telling Jeff upon leaving Stanly Fixtures for the new venture in Oakboro that “I’ll never be back.”

That was the plan, even after Don purchased Stanly Fixtures in 2019. But the pandemic and Don’s death last April changed the plans for both companies’ futures.

“We all had our jobs and knew what to do, but Don ran the company,” Slater said. “Don did everything.”

While Stephen and Jeff, who is now president of the company, are still going strong, they don't have to look too far whenever they decide to retire and step down. Stephen's son Seth is a fourth generation Rusco employee and Jeff's son Mitchell is a fifth generation employee.

Even when the companies merged, there was no territorial turf war that emerged, according to interviews with several employees.

David Hargett, who has spent 11 years working at the Aquadale facility, most of which was part of Stanly Fixtures, said the merger with Rusco, including getting to know his new co-workers, has been "pretty smooth." He's one of three full-time builders, the other two came from Rusco. "There's not been a lot of change on my part."

There have been several advantages for Rusco employees in their move to the Aquadale facility.

"There's more machines and a whole lot better equipment," said Danny Hatley, another of



Long-time Stanly Fixture builder David Hargett said the merge with Rusco has gone pretty easy.

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THE END OF AN ERA

While the two companies in their heyday combined to have more than 200 employees, Rusco Fixtures now has around 50 workers, most of whom are involved with the construction and installation of the various materials (doors, cabinets, cases, lights) that get assembled at the plant.

One of the most indispensable workers has been Joe Furr, 82, who forged a strong relationship with the Russell family over his many decades of service. Having worked at the original Rusco facility in Oakboro and the new iteration in Aquadale for close to 45 years, there's not much involving the company that Furr does not know about.

"He's known me since I was knee-high," said Jeff Russell.

Soft-spoken and a man of few words, Furr is the type of employee who loves his work but seeks to avoid any type of attention being placed upon him.

"I just like the company," he said, noting he's built all kinds of furniture during his tenure. "They've been good to me."

Even though Furr, who retired July 1, will miss coming to the facility each day and interacting with his peers, he said it's time to walk away.

"Joe by far is our best builder," Slater said. "The experience and knowledge that he has in his head when he retires, he takes all that with him."

Having known him for many decades, dating back to their time in Oakboro, Stephen said Furr is just like family.

"I'm gonna miss him, he's been with me for so many years."

Should Furr reconsider his retirement plans, Slater said, the company has an "open door policy" and that he can always return.

"He's always welcome to come back and work wherever he wants to work, whenever he wants to work." **S**

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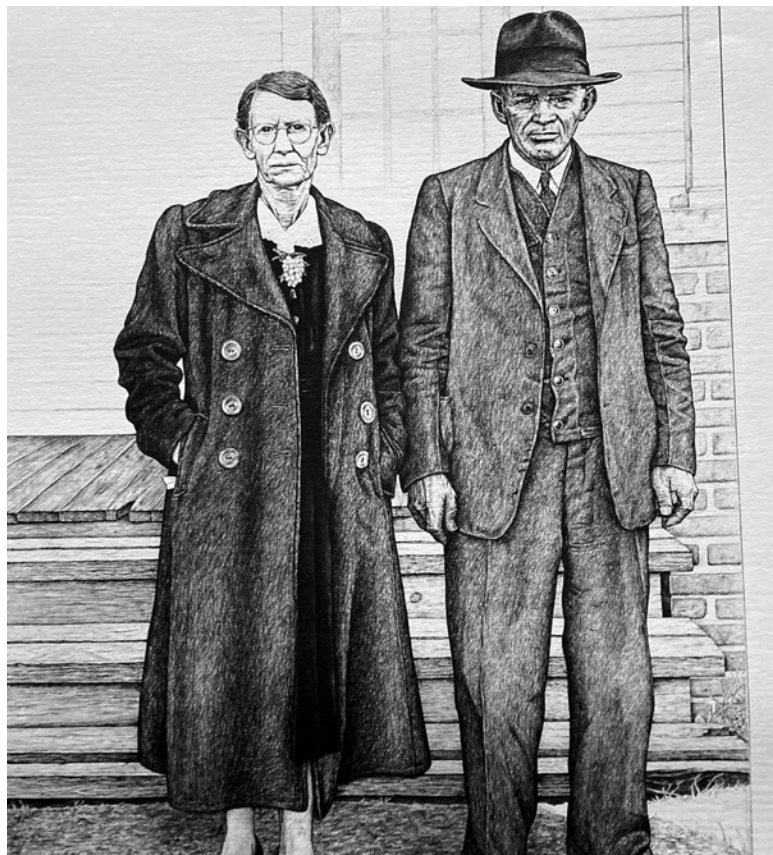
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Left: Talmadge and Ruth Moose. **Right:** One of Talmadge's large award-winning pencil portraits of his grandparents, named "Eight Apiece."

Ruth and Talmadge

A love story of two creators

STORY BY JO GREY | SUBMITTED PHOTOS

They met at a picnic in 1952. He had graduated from Albemarle High School the previous year.

She still had four years to go. He waited for her.

Talmadge and Ruth Moose were born and raised in Stanly County. She grew up in west Albemarle, the oldest child of Ardie and Vera Morris. He was the son of Cecil and Flora Moose and lived south of town toward Norwood where his uncles owned dairy farms — Mooseville, he called it.

Ruth says her mother took her to Montaldo's in Charlotte to buy her wedding dress — a \$25 bargain rack steal. She and Talmadge were mar-

ried at Second Street Presbyterian Church in 1956 after she graduated from AHS.

"Talmadge had more ambition than anyone I knew," said Ruth. "He was the first in his family to go to college. Pharmacy school at UNC-Chapel Hill was the plan." Instead, a last-minute change of heart — more like an admission of his heart's true desire — drew him to Richmond Professional Institute at the College of William and Mary where he earned a bachelor's degree in fine arts.

Even if fine arts jobs after college proved elusive, Talmadge gained practical experience working in commercial art as a technical illustrator and an art director and spent his evenings

and weekends doing freelance design work.

The couple lived for a while in Winston-Salem, then Charlotte, then by 1972 they were back home in Stanly County building a home on Stony Mountain designed by Talmadge.

Stanly Technical Institute (now Stanly Community College) hired him to develop and teach the first commercial art courses there. He told one interviewer some of his students had never seen an original painting so his teaching plan was to "throw in fine art on the side because art is art is art. A student must learn painting before he can learn commercial design."

Ruth says it only took one art book in the Stanly County Library to feed a boyhood ap-

petite for the visual arts. Her husband's first art hero was Norman Rockwell, the 20th century American painter and illustrator known for his "Saturday Evening Post" cover designs.

Talmadge also developed a fascination with the work of Andrew Wyeth whose favorite subjects were the land and the people around him.

Though Talmadge worked in acrylics, oil, and watercolor, Ruth says his favorite medium was carbon pencil. With Eckerd's No. 2 pencils he made meticulous pencil strokes, capturing, as he said, "the universal in the particular. Each subject relates to some part of my life, but by the same token it will relate to some part of each viewer's life. There's a Stanly County in everyone's past."

One of Talmadge's large award-winning pencil portraits first appeared as part of a 1970s exhibition at Atlanta's High Museum of Art. The details of coat buttons, worn spots and wrinkled faces are plainer than the photographs he often worked from. It was a portrait of his grandparents, named "Eight Apiece" and dubbed "Southern Gothic" by an Atlanta



Talmadge paints in his studio.

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art critic who compared it to Grant Wood's famous "American Gothic" painting. The portrait has recently been on display as part of the Talmadge Moose Art Exhibit at the Stanly Community College Library (Sept. 19-Oct. 3, 2022).

If Talmadge's college studies and dreams seemed like "air castles" to his parents, Ruth's high school courses kept her grounded.

At Albemarle High School she was placed in the vocational track that entailed classes until noon then a short walk to City Hall where she worked five afternoons a week and half a day on Saturday.

Diversified Education students were not expected to go on to college, but after marrying, she earned a bachelor's in English and creative writing from Pfeiffer College (now Pfeiffer University), then in 1989 a Master of Library Science from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Ruth values the skills she gained through the Diversified Education program.

"Shorthand teaches you to listen," she says, and her typing know-how served her well for 12 years as she carted her Smith-Corona typewriter all over the Carolinas one week each month teaching poetry and creative writing in schools at all grade levels. She says she eventually wore it out typing three columns a week for the Charlotte News.

Years ago in Charlotte, Ruth began writing stories in short bits of time in between tending two young sons, serving as "office help" for Talmadge, attending PTA events and taking writing classes. She turned listening into a writer's tool by making use of everyday conversational tidbits for her short stories and poetry. She found story ideas in newspaper fillers, headlines and the classifieds, and collected character names from obituaries.

Ruth also met other writers through the Charlotte Writers Club, like Dannye Romine Powell before she became a Charlotte Observer feature writer. And before Ruth's short stories found their way into glossy magazines. The women gathered in Dannye's kitchen to share their works in progress and to learn to see their own words through someone else's eyes.

"When we built our Uwharrie home, we included side-by-side studios on the lower level of the house with equal square footage and floor-to-ceiling windows looking out on the woods and a small creek," said Ruth. "When we worked, we mostly left each other alone. Our one rule was we couldn't comment on the other's work in progress."

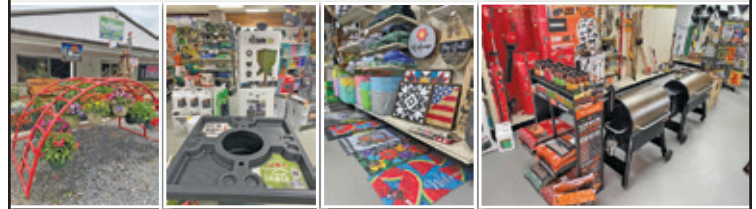
But they did work together on behalf of the arts in Stanly County through the Stanly County Arts Council. They served as co-chairs of the Artist Writer's Dialogue.

Talmadge gave art showings in the Stanly County Public Library, at Pfeiffer and Stanly Community College. Ruth conducted poetry workshops in six elementary schools, formed writer's groups and book clubs. She served as editor of the Uwharrie Review for several years. She undertook the collection of writings on poverty by N.C. authors which were published in a small book called "I Have Walked." Talmadge provided the



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Ruth's poems were published in various literary reviews and her stories in magazines, such as *Good Housekeeping*, *Redbook*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *The State* (now *Our State*), and *Atlantic Monthly*. Her short fiction pieces were mostly about southern women, and full of realism and something one book critic called "Southern dailiness...loveliness and dignity amidst the meaner details of life."

By 1987 Ruth was working as the reference librarian at Pfeiffer while driving to Greensboro on Monday evenings for her master's studies at UNCG. She also taught a children's literature class and worked one morning a week on her first novel.

In 1988 Ruth and Talmadge made a pilgrimage to England as part of a writer's fellowship grant from the N.C. Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts. They visited Charles Dickens' house, the homes of Beatrix Potter, John Keats and Jane Austen's House Museum.

"When the docent turned aside, I put my



"Clay Banks," by Talmadge Moose

hand on Jane Austen's desk," said Ruth.

Ruth's tenure at Pfeiffer lasted until 1996 when her work caught the attention of the

Creative Writing Department at UNC-Chapel Hill. They were looking for a writer of short fiction — Ruth's first love and a natural fit. She

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also taught children's literature classes and various workshops during her 15 years on the faculty.

She says she still gets wedding invitations from former students, and loves hearing from them.

"One former student has had a Netflix series made from two of her novels started in my class," said Ruth.

Bridget Huckabee is a writing friend who's known Ruth for many years and has high praise for her ability to critique without being critical.

"She's a natural teacher, an excellent listener and gives generous help with all aspects of writing. She was the leader of our writer's group, though she won't admit it. We fell apart when she moved to Chapel Hill."

Talmadge and Ruth were married 47 years and spent seven years together in Pittsboro before he died in 2003. They raised their sons, Lyle and Barry, and shared a passion for books, art, learning and making a difference. They earned awards too numerous to list and produced a significant body of work to share.

Ruth grieved deeply, but she worked through her grief by doing what comes naturally.

She wrote.

And wrote.

"I was in a writer's workshop in Raleigh and had to come up with something," she said.

She pulled the short stories together around a theme, and with the help

of her editor at St. Andrews University Press, another book rolled off the press.

"The Goings on at Glen Arbor Acres" was released in May 2022.

Two years ago, Ruth donated 996 of Talmadge's art books to North Carolina art institutions and moved back to Albemarle to be near her sons and their wives, her four grandchildren and one great-grandson. Lyle and Barry Moose both graduated from AHS, attended Pfeiffer University like their mother, and have made Stanly County home. The family treasures Talmadge's paintings and drawings, and they recall his words, "There's beauty in red clay banks and the people who live among them." **S**



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