

Claremore Progress

Executive director hired for Claremore PAC

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When the much-anticipated Claremore Performing Arts Center opens next year, its executive director will have already been on the job several months.

Ruby Quinn was recently hired to head the PAC, a position she will officially begin in January. Quinn, who resides in Tulsa, said she is "thrilled" about starting her new job and what the PAC will mean for fine arts in the area.

"It's so exciting to see this amazing building," Quinn said. "It's a great addition to the community." Certified in theater education, Quinn knows the importance of a quality facility for students and teachers alike in order to promote excellence in the fine arts.

"I walked in and thought 'how would a teacher ever want to leave this place?'"

Quinn grew up in Tulsa and started her undergraduate career studying theater in Claremore at what was then Rogers State College.

"I'm amazed at the growth from the mid 80s," she said. "But Claremore still has a small-town feel."

Besides teaching, Quinn's impressive career spans acting, directing and playwriting.

She began teaching middle school theater in Texas while pursuing her master's in Fine Arts from Texas Tech University.

She then taught for three years at Eastern Oklahoma State College in Wilburton.

"There I was involved in building the theater program from the ground up," Quinn said. "I started with three students and there were 35 when I left."

During the summers she served as the Children's Theater Director for the Oklahoma Shakespearean Festival in Durant, and was Founding Director of the Festival's Teen Theatre.

Quinn says it's very rewarding to now have former students working professionally in the field.

But children's theater remains her favorite undertaking.

"It is dear to my heart," she said. "That's where you light the fire."

Indeed, it was as a child that Quinn had her first experience in the spotlight and fell in love with the stage while acting in community theater.

"The only thing that made sense to me was the arts," she said. "I found a place where I could excel."

But in those early years, things didn't always go well.

"I was a giraffe in a school play and forgot my line. It was sad!", she laughed. "I've done much better since then."

As she begins a new chapter in her career, Quinn says she is most looking forward to "getting to know the community of Claremore and what they want."

She will work closely with the arts teachers and programs already in place and will have an "open door for new ideas," she said.

"(The PAC) is a huge draw for Claremore for families who have children who are interested in the arts."

She also plans to resurrect the community theater.

Fine arts supporters will have a chance to meet Quinn and see up close the construction of the Claremore Performing Arts Center during a "Sneak Peek" Sunday.

The come and go event from 2-4 p.m. will include tours of the facility.

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