

# The Women of Oklahoma

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*A Poet Elite*

Dr. Jeanetta Calhoun Mish  
Oklahoma Poet Laureate

## Words from *WOO*

Welcome readers to **The Women of Oklahoma**, the e-newsletter that tells the stories of Oklahoma women who are and have made a difference in the state of Oklahoma, the Country or the World.

Produced monthly, **The Women of Oklahoma's (WOO)** primary purpose is to highlight entrepreneurs; recognize past and present leaders in their industry; cite controversial issues and challenges; sequentially cultivating an awareness of purposeful information.

Our first issue features Oklahoma Poet Laureate, **Dr. Jeanette Calhoun Mish**. Author of four books, *What I Learned at War*, *Oklahomeland*, *Work is Love Made Visible*, and *Tongue Tied Woman*, Dr. Mish is a Professor at Oklahoma City University, Director of Red Earth Creative Writing MFA and owner of the publishing company, Mongrel Empire Press.

Our entrepreneur pages features **Juanita John**, a designer from central Oklahoma whose Native Jewelry and accessories mark her as one of the most talented jewelry designers in the state and Amber Brown, a designer whose African Accessories are unique and designs of mystery.

On page 7, *WOO* remembers Seminole County Native, **Judge Juanita Kidd Stout**. Although she was raised in Wewoka, Oklahoma, Judge Stout was the first African American Judge in the state of Pennsylvania. She was also the first African-American Woman in the United States to serve on the Supreme Court of any state.

In *A WOO Word*, Senior Administrative Pastor of the Christ Restoration Tabernacle Church in Texas and Oklahoma Girl **DeAngela Boggas**, encourages insights in her article '*How to Develop a New Prayer Path.*'

In our first newsletter, *WOO* introduces you to some extraordinary Oklahoma women.

Enjoy getting to know them. We did. **The *WOO* Team**



Contributing photographer, **Gay Pasley** photographed Dr. Jeanette Mish in our featured article, *A Poet Elite*. Ms. Pasley is a professional nurse, an award-winning community leader and photographer whose artistry is featured in *Loud Zoo*, *Abstract Magazine/Maintenance 11 & 12: A Journal of Dada Writing and Art* and a regular contributor to *Art Mama Moves*. She is a recent graduate of the Oklahoma City Red-Earth MFA Program and has presented as lecturer for organizations such as the International Association of Forensic Nurses, Society for Photographic Education, the Ralph Ellison Foundation, the John Hope Franklin Center for Reconciliation, and the Scissortail Writing Festival. Gay has publications appearing or forthcoming in *Thread Literary Magazine*, *Elsewhere Magazine*, and *Transitions*.

Look for this Oklahoma woman to be featured in an up and coming issue of *WOO*. <https://inclusioninart.com/portfolio/gay-pasley/>

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*A Poet Elite*  
Dr. Jeanetta Calhoun Mish



*"I love reading most anything! But, at the top of the list would be poetry, essays, and popular history"*



Her name is now synonymous with the likes of Violet McDugal, Leslie McRill, Eddie Wilcoxon and Nathan Brown, and when I saw her on the Jeff Johnston Auditorium stage at Seminole State College, she brought back wonderful memories.

During the college's annual Howlers & Yawpers event, she recited one of her earliest poems from her poetry collections of her first book entitled, *What I Learned at the War*.

Her cowboy knee boots were the 'coolest' with her jeans and shirt to match. I was happy she was chosen as an Oklahoma Poet Laureate, and I was more thrilled because she was from my hometown.

Her stage presence demanded you to listen to her as she read her poem line by line and then she explained what she meant per line afterwards. The audience (*including some of her high school classmates!*) listened intently as she 'took them back' to a time most heart-felt for her.

With four published books, *What I Learned At the War*, *Oklahomeland*, *Work Is Love Made Visible*, (which won an Oklahoma Book Award, A Wrangler Award, and the WILLA Award from Women Writing the West) and *Tongue Tied Woman*, Dr. Mish was chosen as the twenty-first Oklahoma's Poet Laureate 2017 .

A most recent honor includes a Poets Laureate Fellowship from the Academy of American Poets in 2019.

Dr. Mish currently serves as Director of Red Earth Creative Writing MFA, faculty mentor in writing pedagogy, professional writing, and the craft of poetry at Oklahoma City University.

She also owns and writes for her own publishing company, Mongrel Empire Press.

*WOO* caught up with Dr. Mish last month and was able to ask her some questions regarding her busy career and up and coming projects. **The *WOO* Team**

*Dr. Mish at her high school Alma Mater Wewoka, Oklahoma*



**What writers did you enjoy reading as a child and young adult?**

When I was a kid, I read everything Mrs. Carolina suggested and the many books my mother gave me. My favorite Mrs. Carolina suggestion was *Harriet the Spy*. My mother gave me one book for each birthday, and one of my favorites was *The Selected Poems of Robert Frost*.

**How did you get started as a poet?**

I wrote my first poem in second grade in Wewoka. My dog died, and I wrote a poem about that. I never stopped writing poetry from that moment on.

**What do most well-written poems have in common?**

Excellent imagery and luscious language.

**How much research do you do?**

Some of my poems are researched, and almost all of the essays I've written are researched. I enjoy doing research so much that, sometimes, I have to make myself stop researching and start writing!

**What type of writers does Mongrel Empire Press publish?**

Mostly Oklahoma and regional writers in poetry, literary fiction, and creative nonfiction.

**What advice would you give would-be writers wanting to get their works published?**

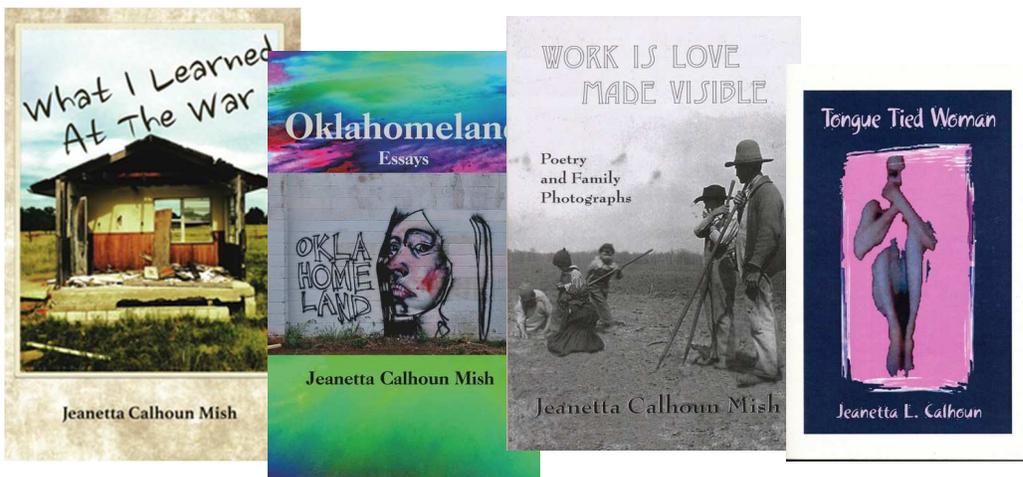
First, be sure you're reading contemporary writing in your genre so you know what kind of work is being published today. Second, start by submitting to literary magazines and journals—most book publishers won't consider a book manuscript if the writer has never been published. Third, make sure you follow all the guidelines for submission and submit a perfect manuscript—no typos, correct formatting, your best writing.

**What books are you reading now?**

Joy Harjo's newest collection of poetry, *An American Sunrise*; Kat Meads' most recent poetry chapbook, *Watering*; and several books of environmental essays.

**Can you share your current projects?**

I am still Oklahoma Poet Laureate and will continue visiting Oklahoma public schools in April 2020. My school visits are being funded by a Poets Laureate Fellowship from The Academy of American Poets. I'm working on a new book of poetry centered on environmental poems and I'm trying to complete another book of personal essays. <http://jeanettacalhounmish.com/>



## Juanita John: *A Designer Keeping Traditions*

With an emerging controversy of cultural appropriation, Native American clothing represents their culture, heritage, traditions, and customs. In our first issue, WOO reached out to interview Native American and beadwork designer, Juanita John.

Juanita John is a full-blooded Native American who is part Choctaw and Shoshone-Bannock. She is an enrolled member of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes from the Fort Hall Indian Reservation in Idaho. Her early childhood years were spent on the Fort Hall Indian Reservation, in which, she learned Native American customs and rituals.

She was inspired at a young age by her mother, Gladys Tone John, and other relatives who created a variety of beaded items such as belt buckles, beaded belts, wallets, coin purses, hair ties, as well as, fully-beaded Native American Regalia and attire.

Juanita uses a variety of beadwork techniques in her artwork, including: loom work, 2-ply method, peyote stitch, lazy stitch, and single stitch. She is currently learning quill work. Her mother also taught her how to process the brain-tanned deer hides used in her work which is becoming a lost art. She incorporates the Shoshone-style beadwork in her artwork, which is primarily the geometrical and floral designs that are symbolic of all four Shoshone Nations.

Her character is evident throughout her work, which incorporates both traditional as well as modern design elements. Ms. John states, *“Throughout history, a Native American woman was able to express herself through her sewing and beadwork. I try to express myself and my experience as a twenty-first century Native American artist through my work.”*

Ms. John received her Bachelors of Arts Degree in Services for the Deaf in 1986 and completed her Masters of Science Degree in Counseling in 1994. She believes that she has been successful in accomplishing this both through her artwork and her vocation.

To purchase one of Ms. John’s original designs, please contact her by email: [shobannativegal@yahoo.com](mailto:shobannativegal@yahoo.com).

She also takes special orders to meet customers’ needs. Her store *Sho-Ban Native Designs* can be located on [Etsy.com](https://www.etsy.com).



*“My mission is to give back to the Native American community and to inspire young children to further their education and reach for their goals, while maintaining their native identity and preserving their heritage for generations to come.”*

.....Juanita John

## WOO Remembers: Judge Juanita Kidd Stout



Judge Juanita Kidd Stout  
Image from Google

Oklahoma has always produced and continues to produce powerful and famous women. I am fortunate and honored to have met one of those women: **Judge Juanita Kidd Stout**.

I was in my teens when I first met her and was unaware of the impact she made in the courtroom as well as to African-American history.

She grew up in Wewoka, Oklahoma, a town located in Seminole County. At 16, she graduated from segregated Douglass High School.

My mother and Judge Stout were great friends. She was one of my mother's mentors.

One year (*in the 1980's*), during the annual Douglass High School Reunion Festivities, she visited our home and spent time with my mother, reminiscing about the 'good old days' and updating each other about their current lives.

I remember her vividly. Her suit looked like she just stepped out of Chanel Paris 31 Cambon; her hair was immaculate; and her professional mannerism would make Emily Post want to co-author a book with her.

Judge Stout received her Bachelor 's Degree in Music from Iowa State University and received two law degrees from Indiana University. Although she was from Oklahoma, she was a judge in Pennsylvania.

Famous for being the first African-American Woman in the United States to serve on the Supreme Court of any state and the first African-American woman in the state of Pennsylvania to serve as a judge, some of her accolades include eleven Doctorate degrees, Outstanding Woman Lawyer of the Year in 1965, Inducted into the Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame in 1983, and Justice of the Year 1988.

Wikipedia cites her specialty in homicide cases that she was "*renowned for a record of successful prosecutions and her meticulous preparation.*"

She married Charles Otis Stout in 1942, and they had no children.

She was a pioneer in her field, opening doors not only for women of color but for all women who now sit behind the bench with the gavel in their hands. She died in 1998. WOO proudly remembers **Judge Juanita Kidd Stout**.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juanita\\_Kidd\\_Stout](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juanita_Kidd_Stout)

<https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=ST062>

## How to Develop a New Prayer Path

A new year brings a new and exciting blank canvas allowing us to begin to rewrite or write our own story. Prayer being one of those areas that can begin the new year burning bright but over the course of time – we find it is the first casualty during the heat of the battle. Over the course of the year – our diligence in prayer should be stretched and directed to a place in prayer that many of us have not been before – at least that should be the goal. There will be challenges and obstacles to give up and revert to the old way of thinking and familiar methods to solving problems or obtaining peace. There is a path to ascension in prayer. Our prayer life must be sharp, maintained, and desired to create a matured balance.

### DEVELOPMENT 1: KEEP YOUR SWORD SHARP

#### Maintaining your bible study time.

The key to maintaining your bible study time is organization and preparation. Once you have made the decision to be dedicated to maintaining your prayer life – you must incorporate dedicated time for bible study time. This time should be just as important as taking a shower every day – you must commit to it or your spirit will become ‘stinky’. A health study time allows the believer to develop an intimate relationship with your bible. It is essential that you have a bible that is structured for your faith level. There are multiple bible types with various versions, you must find a bible that is best for you. Take a trip to the Christian store and explore what will work.

#### Restructuring your day.

In order to maintain your sword, you must – if you haven’t already – restructure your day so that you are including this time as part of your normal routine. Maintaining your sword means that you must take care and handle your sword – or your prayer and study time. This means that you are seeking a deeper communion. You are oiling your sword with the continual presence of God; you are keeping the sword free from carnal mindedness so that your edge is sharp. Because iron sharpens iron, surround yourself with those that are going in the same direction – seeking the same deeper communion.

#### How do I restructure my family and job to coincide with my prayer time?

Even when there does not seem like opportunity to move your ‘to-do’ list around and your day appears to be completely full with children “things” and work “things”; we must remember, it is the will of God that you give him your time. Prioritize your day to include God. Unfortunately, small children don’t understand that mom and/or dad need God time, so you will have to be creative in scheduling your time to continue your communion with God.

#### The Power of Faith Confessions.

Faith Confessions are designed to improve your vocabulary of the word of God and to remind your spirit of the word. Faith confessions are also designed to support the prayer direction so that you stay in constant communion with God. You can write a faith confession, gather one from an additional resource or listen to one from another source. Just be cautious that the resources that you listen to are not idle or confessing or opposite of your beliefs.

#### The Power of Fellowship

Enjoy the fellowship of other believers; seek out a prayer or a fellowship group that will encourage you to maintain the fellowship with God; remember it’s not always a church building – small home groups are effective intimate groups can also support your growth.

Other resources are also available for you to maintain your study time with God. Visit your local Christian store or seek out additional resources to select materials on meditation and worship.

## DEVELOPMENT 2: DESIRE THE DESTINATION OF PRAYER

To desire the destination of prayer is defined as your appetite for the presence of God. Has your prayer increased and it has become a priority to you? To desire means to crave – to want ([www.dictionary.com/desire](http://www.dictionary.com/desire)). In the same manner that we desire or crave food, we must desire to be in the presence of God. Often the excitement, familiarity and chaos of the cares of life can drown out the craving and we attempt to replace or fulfill that craving with other habits that can cause us to begin yet again. The encouragement of a believer is to desire the path of prayer to ensure that the overwhelming cares of life don't stray you away from prayer.

## DEVELOPMENT 3: KEEP THE PATH CLEAR

Keeping our path clear is our responsibility. It is our job to 'janitor' our destination to prayer as it can become littered with pride, anger, forgiveness, and unhealthy relationships. Just as a janitor would maintain a cart with tools to clean specific areas, we too must carry specific tools to ensure that our path is clear of litter.

Our cart must have a broom (discipline)

Discipline is an assigned set of rules that govern the order of the path. Our discipline must not become a dread or unpleasant, as it will be difficult to maintain. However, we must work with our discipline until it becomes a delight. No one wants to be disciplined, but the result of disobedience is far greater.

Our cart must have a dustpan (discernment)

To discern is the ability to differentiate. On our path, there will be lots of opportunities for clutter so the use of the broom and dustpan are essential.

Finally, we must recognize what is in and out of our landscape.

Recognize when you have slipped off the path to prayer and drifted away from the assigned purpose and plan for your life. Learn to recognize when you have become disconnected from the source of your purpose and when your power bank is low.

There is a method to maintaining your new prayer life. Each day will bring new challenges, obstacles and distractions – the maturity is how to handle them. Each day is a learning of how to hold a spear and pray at the same time. The goal is to be ambidextrous – the ability to watch and pray simultaneously.



***Pastor De'Angela "Dee" Boggas is the youngest of nine siblings and the daughter of Pauline and Earnest Davis of Wewoka, Oklahoma. She graduated from New Lima High School and Seminole State College.***

*After Jr. College, she moved to Prairie View, Texas, to attend Prairie View A&M University as a business major. In 1993 she met the love of her life, Jeffrey Boggas. They married in July of 1995 and have three beautiful children. In 2010, De'Angela Boggas was called and ordained to the Office of Pastor and is currently serving as Senior Administrative Pastor at Christ Restoration Tabernacle in Texas.*

Connect with Dee at [www.christrestorationtabernacle.com](http://www.christrestorationtabernacle.com) or at [dboggas@yahoo.com](mailto:dboggas@yahoo.com).

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# Designs of Mystery



BET's *Rip the Runway* inspired us to take notice of Black designers. From clothing and costumes to accessories and jewelry, Black Designers have always been in the design game.

Need we forget Elizabeth Hobbs Keckley, personal seamstress and dressmaker to First Lady Mary Lincoln; Ann Lowe, designer of First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy's wedding gown; 1970's Jewelry designer icon, Art Smith; and Zelda Wynn Valdes who designed the original iconic Playboy Bunny suit (just to name a few).

My research for this article took me on a journey where I found innumerable and phenomenal talented designers in all facets of the business (past and present). Women's ready-to-wear designer, Tracey Reese; fashion nomad, Patrick Robinson; leather good designer twins, Dexter and Byron Pert; jewelry designers, Billie Hilliard, Vauje, Melanie McPherson and Areeayl Goodwin; fashion

British designers Carly Cushnie and Martine Rose; b.Michael of b.Michael America, Stephen Burrows and the legendary Oswald Boateng.

I could go on and on but as I sit and think how proud I am of the representation in the industry, nationally and internationally; my curiosity got the best of me and I had to ask the question; *Are there any current Oklahoma Black Designers that also represents in this pool of fashion and jewelry couture?*

Recently, I read a quote by an unknown author, *'be fearless in the pursuit of what sets your soul on fire.'* This describes Amber Brown, owner of Mystery Maracuja. Her story is a story of ambition and drive, and although her business is young, her intricate detail in jewelry and accessory designs exemplifies something of an advanced nature. Her story in her words.



*“Creativity has always been a part of my life. From sketch sessions at home with my siblings to trips to the art galleries of Oklahoma City, I’ve always gravitated toward artistic experiences. As a child I sketched and painted super heroes and fashionable ladies. Later, I entered the craft world through crochet and picked up (and put down) different craft techniques along the way. During this time, my father introduced me to Adobe Photoshop and I began learning how to create artwork on computers. Before I left Del City High School, I was deciding between applying to art school or pursuing science in college. Practicality won, and I choose the science degree and kept crafting as a hobby.*

*In 2005, I met a girl wearing a necklace that looked like a bunch of grapes. After that, I sought out someone to teach me how to make jewelry. An eccentric bead shop owner in Houston taught me how to make earrings and I was hooked. By 2007, I opened an online shop on Etsy called Amber Dawn Accessories to finance my love for beads. “Bead all you can and sell the rest,” is what we say. During this time, I became an avid fan of Project Runway. I could not get enough of the magical moments of turning fabric into wonderful creations, so I bought a sewing machine. I tried sewing in my high school home economics class, but the defeat of a sad looking quilt turned me all the way off. I was so inspired by the show that I was willing to try again. Then my long-time friend, the super craft diva, master of all crafts invited me to the Houston International Quilt Show, where I fell in love with the textiles of Africa.*

*Fast forward to 2012, after many projects, classes, and experience and I went into business with a new name: Mystery Maracuja. A mystery is something that is difficult or impossible to understand or explain. People often describe me as mysterious. It is just my personality. Maracuja is the Portuguese and German word for the fruit of the Passion flower, commonly called Passion Fruit. I first heard this word when I visited my family in Germany, and I just love the way it sounds. Under this name I create custom gifts and digital artwork.*

*Since my creativity flows out into different mediums, I selected a name that allowed some flexibility. I’ve tried to incorporate my equally talented sisters: Athena designed the logo; Antoinette offers constructive criticism; and Antigone is my go to model. Although all of my sisters and my cousin Courtney have generously contributed pictures to my website and social media. Since we began Mystery Maracuja, I’ve done craft shows, conferences, charity events, fashion shows, taught lessons, and had a spot in a boutique!*

*It brings me joy to now be able to combine my sewing, embroidery, and jewelry making skills into cherished keepsakes bestowed with love. Currently, I’m continuing to channel my inspiration from color, art, nature, and music into learning new techniques and making new items. Ultimately, I simply enjoy the act of creating and the gratification of the finished creation. So I continue to create!*

Website: <http://www.mysterymaracuja.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/mysterymaracuja>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/mysterymaracuja/>



A *WOO* Event



# The Beauty & Health Expo 2021

Sponsorship  
Details Coming Soon

Picture from the website of  
<https://pixabay.com/>

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