

# The Women of Oklahoma

The Newsletter for Every Oklahoma Woman

Winter 2020  
Volume 2, Issue 1



## LA Deer Apparel

From the Collection  
*Symmetry and Rhythm*  
Photography by  
Clinton Sinclair  
Model Hauli

## Oklahoma Business Entrepreneurs Reinventing

It is not surprisingly, the pandemic has caused havoc on Oklahoma businesses and with the predictions for winter and the flu season, it does not seem to be letting up. Our team spoke with three Oklahoma entrepreneurs having to reinvent the 'wheel' to keep doing what they love to do, during a treacherous time for our Nation and the world.



# LA Deer Apparel

## Fashion Designer, Leslie Deer

During the month of August, The Women of Oklahoma (WOO) had the opportunity to visit the Seminole Nation Museum in Wewoka. The exhibit, *Mvskoke Voices: Contemporary Native American Art* featured fashion designer, **Leslie Deer**. Originally from Holdenville, Ms. Deer's designs scream pride, history, cultural and style. WOO caught up with Ms. Deer earlier this summer to ask her about her clothing line, and how the pandemic has affected her business.

### **What was your biggest fear when you started your own line?**

*My biggest fear was not having many financial assets to be successful. My business is a bootstrap business. I was concerned that in the beginning I would not have enough capital to keep things flowing, but I have survived for four years so far, growing each year.*

### **What was the biggest rookie mistake you made at the beginning of your career?**

*I have to say that not saying "yes" to every opportunity that was presented to me was my biggest misstep. Today, I do try to say "yes" to almost all opportunities that come my way. Each experience is an opportunity to learn, grow, and create awareness for my brand and for myself.*

### **To what do you attribute your success?**

*I attribute my successes to my knowledge of where I come from and my desire to keep my Native culture current and alive for the next generation. As part of my Mvskoke Tribal community, I feel I have a duty to ensure that our Tribal designs survive for future generations to learn from, remember, absorb, and pass on. It's really bringing our ancestors with us wherever we are - in the present, and in the future. We hold space for them and bring them forward with us.*

### **Describe how the pandemic has affected your business?**

*The pandemic has slowed my business almost to a standstill. I primarily sell my limited-edition garments in person at Native American art markets and since all of these festivals have been cancelled there is not as much opportunity to get my artwork in front of customers. My clients appreciate the opportunity to view my pieces and more importantly, try on the garments. Experiencing the way a garment moves and the way it feels against the body is what determines whether a customer will want to make it their own. I am developing my website, but the inability for customers to interact with the garments is, without doubt, a big hindrance. I feel that this time has afforded all artists the opportunity to reflect, assess, and innovate.*

### **How do you want women to feel when wearing your designs?**

*People often comment on my artwork's quality and craftsmanship. Customers tell me my work is elegant, and I believe the classic silhouettes make the wearer feel confident and empowered. I put a lot of work and hours into each garment and each piece has a story. I make my garments from quality materials using high specification techniques and envision each garment being handed down from generation to generation. My hope is that people take away a sense of elegance, quality, and power when wearing my creations. <https://www.ladeerapparel.com/about>*

*"I attribute my successes to my knowledge of where I come from and my desire to keep my Native culture current and alive for the next generation." .....Leslie Deer*



From the Collection of  
**Voices of Ancestors**

Photography by  
Garett Fisbeck



***“Customers tell me my work is elegant, and I believe the classic silhouettes make the wearer feel confident and empowered.”  
.....Leslie Deer***

From the Collection of  
***Wind and Sun***  
Photography by  
Clinton Sinclair

***“I put a lot of  
work and hours  
into each garment  
and each piece  
has a story.”  
.....Leslie Deer***



From the Collection  
***Symmetry and Rhythm***  
Photography by  
Clinton Sinclair

# Breast Cancer Fact Sheet



**1 in 8 women** in the U.S. will be diagnosed with **breast cancer** in her lifetime.

## IN THE UNITED STATES

**Breast cancer is the most common** cancer among women in the U.S., accounting for 30 percent of newly diagnosed cancers.

**Every 2 minutes**, one case of breast cancer is diagnosed in the U.S.

**In 2020, more than 276,000 new cases** of invasive breast cancer are expected to be diagnosed in women and more than 2,600 cases in men in the U.S.

**In 2020, more than 42,000 women and men** in the U.S. are expected to die from breast cancer.

**Improvements in early detection and treatment led to a 40 percent** decline in breast cancer deaths in the U.S. between 1989-2017.

**In the U.S., breast cancer mortality** is about 40 percent higher in black women than in white women.

**In the U.S., it is estimated more than 154,000** women are living with metastatic breast cancer.

**There are more than 3.8 million** breast cancer survivors in the U.S.

## AROUND THE WORLD

**Breast cancer is the most common** cancer in women around the world, with an estimated more than **2 million new cases** recorded in 2018.

**Breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer death** in women around the world.

**Every 50 seconds**, somewhere in the world, someone dies from breast cancer. That's more than 1,700 women and men every day.

**There are more than 6 million** breast cancer survivors around the world.



**Sandy Finestone, PsyD**  
*Scientific Advisory Board and  
AIS Steering Committee*

**Marian Johnson-Thompson, PhD**  
*Komen Scholar and  
AIS Steering Committee*



[komen.org](https://www.komen.org)

# *Bon Appétit!*

**Meet Business Owner and Caterer  
Executive Chef Taylor LaTouche**



**By  
WOO Contributing Writer,  
Cheval Parker**

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We have all heard at least one if not both of the following aphorisms, “You are what you eat” and “Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food.” Culturally, food is a constant that brings us all together. Eating is something we do many times throughout the day, but not everyone has the time to plan, prepare and cook meals from scratch. It is evident that those who are prepping and/or delivering prepared meals are devoted to serving their community during this global pandemic. **Executive Chef Taylor LaTouche**, the proprietor of Meal Prep Tulsa, demonstrates that devotion in her community as a frontline worker.

Chef Taylor’s passion for culinary art began as a young girl who comes from a Navy family. She shared with us that *‘the coastal influence of the U.S. combined with the Creole and American soul of my family began the exciting journey of my love for food.’*

In August 2008, she opened her first food concept, Hibiscus Caribbean Grill, on Brookside in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The restaurant received exemplary reviews: “3 Star Review” in 2008 Tulsa World, “35 Best Happy Hours” in 2010 Tulsa People Magazine, “3 Star Review” in 2010

Urban Tulsa Weekly and participated in A Taste of Tulsa “Benefiting Big Brothers Big Sisters” in 2014.

With a thirst for knowledge and refinement, Taylor attended Platt Culinary College in 2012. Her culinary, business and project management training allowed her to work in any professional kitchen around the world. She has been certified and licensed as a kitchen manager, food safety manager and a certified food handler. Training was a worthwhile investment that provided Chef Taylor adeptness and proficiency in group leadership, time management, communication and nutritional knowledge.

After a major health crisis, Chef Taylor focused her passion towards the need for fresh, healthy, and clean foods that nourish the body. She decided to close her restaurant in 2016 and opened a meal prep catering company in her home. This move set her on the path to establish Meal Prep Tulsa six months later. Now in business for three years, she is setting the stage for clean food and refined service in the catering sector. Meal Prep Tulsa accommodates most diet plans including vegan, vegetarian, Paleo, Mediterranean, Keto, and Pescatarian. Even preparing food for customers who have unique food allergies is a part of Chef Taylor’s repertoire.

Like a properly sharpened knife, effective communication is one of Chef Taylor’s essential tools in the kitchen and one she utilizes for meal prepping, planning events and preparing specific dietary needs for her clients. There are a lot of moving parts to make a kitchen operate smoothly, and everything starts at the top. From cleanliness, to customer service, to plate presentation, to having the ability to manage and lead, it all starts with the chef. A chef can set the standard, have everything in place, but she also needs a solid, dependable team rallying behind the vision every day. When the Brigade de Cuisine (kitchen hierarchy) structure functions properly, the chef will ensure a smooth cooking operation. It is a beautiful thing to watch all the moving parts come together.

A familiar aroma that appeals to our senses, a delectable taste or a carefully handcrafted dish has a way of bringing us all together.

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When the first wave of coronavirus prompted layoffs in March, a large population of furloughed workers lost their income and struggled to find new employment. Meal Prep Tulsa was on the frontline making sure that struggling families had meals. According to Feeding America, the largest charitable food assistance network, “Between March and June, roughly 4 in 10 people visiting food banks had not received food assistance before the pandemic.” During this time, Chef Taylor had an idea to donate 3,500 meals to those in need throughout her community. She provided an appetizing menu, consisting of mac and cheese, enchilada casserole, spaghetti, grilled chicken, soul green beans, garden salad, Swedish meatballs, garden rice, butter rolls and a brownie sundae. We asked what was the motivation behind the idea and she shares, *‘Being a Christian business woman, I strive to treat all people with love and to live by the second commandment found in Matthew: Love thy brother as thyself.’* Everyone has something to contribute and Chef Taylor reflects the light we wish to see throughout our communities, neighbors reaching out and lending a helping hand!

With the changing season, concerns of the flu and a possible second wave of COVID-19, we can make sure our immune systems are primed to take on these challenges by following a healthy diet. The old proverbial statement, “An apple a day keeps the doctor away,” may not keep you from visiting the doctor but following a healthy diet can increase longevity, boost the immune system, protect against disease, help with the management of illnesses and improve your overall quality of life. Chef Taylor emphasizes, *‘A healthy balanced diet is essential and those with special allergies or diet concerns can be accommodated through our meal plans.’* Whether you are concerned about heart health, diabetes, losing weight or just want to improve your family meal times with ease, Meal Prep Tulsa’s Executive Chef Taylor can help you make the best dietary meal choices for you and your family’s well-being.

There is no doubt we are living in unprecedented times, we are inundated with information regarding staying healthy and preventing the spread of this pandemic. COVID-19 has changed life as we know it, but one thing remains constant in the “new normal,” our human desire to eat. Food is one of our basic and most fundamental necessities. It is also one of life’s greatest pleasures, as it provides sustenance, energy, nutrients, fuel and helps the body function properly. “Let food be thy medicine...” is often attributed to Hippocrates, who is considered the father of Western medicine, but he did not see food and medicine as one; but considered nutrition one of the main tools that a doctor can use. Therefore, the type and quantity of food we consume play an essential role in improving and maintaining our health.

While it is unclear how long the virus will last, we all want to look good, feel good and enjoy a long life while maintaining a healthy body and mind. We must continue to educate ourselves concerning healthy food, modify our eating behaviors and remember that our food choices matter. Let food bring you nourishment, arm yourself everyday with fresh, clean and healthy foods so that you give your immune system the best protection. Meal Prep Tulsa can provide some of those healthy meals for you, your family and community, one meal at a time!



*Chef Taylor’s services are available for meal prep, catering and private chef services. Meal Prep Tulsa can be reached and followed at <http://www.mealpreptulsa.com> and <https://www.facebook.com/SpiceeGurl>*



## Yá'át'ééh, Shiéi, Amber DuBoise-Shepherd, yinishyé

*(Hello my name is Amber DuBoise-Shepherd)*

Her heritage is from the Navajo, Sac & Fox, and Prairie Band Potawatomi. Her Navajo clans are Red House & Near Water People Clan, and her Sac & Fox Clan is Wolf.

Artist, **Amber L. DuBoise-Shepherd** depicts contemporary Native American narratives based on her family's heritage and her artwork has been shown all over the state. The Women of Oklahoma was excited to meet and feature a story on another *Rising WOO* in the world of art!

Amber received an Associates of Art from Seminole State College in Seminole, Oklahoma and completed her Bachelors of Fine Arts in spring 2016 from Oklahoma State University. Accepted into the Oklahoma Visual Arts Coalition's *Momentum* in 2017, 2019 and 2020, Amber's mixed media pieces and oil paintings reference an illustrative quality.

Currently a Manager of Education at a museum in Oklahoma, Amber has won *Best of Show in 2016*, *First Place in 2017*, Judges Choice Award in 2018, and Best of Show in 2019 in her categories in the *Native American Heritage Festival Juried Art Show in Cushing, Oklahoma*.

She was also one of two selected for the first ever *Red Earth's Emerging Artist Award* in 2018 by the Red Earth board for her body of work.

Her exhibition, *Tradition Through Modern Eyes 2018* was featured at the Southern Plains Indian Museum in Anadarko, and additional solo exhibitions include the Jacobson Native Art Center from April 2019 through May 2019, the TAC Gallery 2020 in Tulsa, for her exhibition *Living on the Native Oklahoma Reservation*, the Ahha Gallery in Tulsa featured the exhibitions *Concept/Survey and Re/Convening*, and the *Azhwakwa: Contemporary Anishinaabe Art* exhibition at the Jacobson Native Art Center in Norman.

Her most recent exhibition *Speak: Speak While You Can* was showcased at Living Arts in Tulsa, OK. Amber's work was also viewed at the Artesian Native Art Market in Sulphur and The Cherokee Art Market in Catoosa.

In August of 2018 and 2019, Amber was accepted in the *Santa Fe Indian Market*. Located in Santa Fe, New Mexico, the market is the biggest Native American arts market in the world! Amber is the Manager of Education and Outreach at the Mabee-Gerrer Museum of Art in Shawnee, Oklahoma. The Women of Oklahoma caught up with Amber early this fall to ask her how the pandemic has affected her business.

*'Navigating the current art exhibitions and markets is tough right now. Artists are sensitive to changes and have a strong emotional association with what is going on around them; I feel for my fellow Native and non-Native artists.'*



*'Art is healing, it will take time for all of us to heal from this year.'*

**Amber Duboise-Shepherd**

*'With COVID-19 many people are impacted by sickness or been hit financially. Artists are no exception, and with the cancellation of art markets, it is tough to provide a steady flow of income for my business.*

*When it comes to my art making I am very vigilant about staying active in the studio. This year I focused on art exhibitions and promoted my name and art through those venues.*

*My bread and butter for income, though, are through art markets where I can interact directly with buyers and talk about my art in an intimate space. I still crave that connection with others through art, and COVID-19 has made that difficult; but I work hard to connect over social media with other people.*

*We will see what the future holds, and I will continue to be creative each day to combat the negative pressures of what is going on around me. Art is healing, it will take time for all of us to heal from this year.'*

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**What were you doing when  
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated?**

The day was Thursday, April 4, 1968 and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was fatally shot while standing on a balcony.

**The Women of Oklahoma** sought out eight Oklahoma women who were much aware of their activities that unforgettable day!

Join us on our Facebook page everyday starting Sunday, January 10, 2021 through Sunday, January 17, 2021 to hear an incredible story from a remarkable woman!

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