

The Women of Oklahoma

The Newsletter for Every Oklahoma Woman

Fall 2020
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The Art of Nursing

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Shannon Evans-Roberts, RN

The Women of Oklahoma continues its featured stories of extraordinary Oklahoma women on the frontlines.

Our Fall Issue highlights Registered ICU Nurse, **Shannon Evans-Roberts**. Read her heartfelt story of perseverance, while volunteering in a New Jersey Hospital during COVID-19.

The Art of Nursing

by Cheval Parker

They say that when everyone else runs away from danger, heroes run toward it. That's true for police, firefighters and our most recently celebrated national heroes: frontline healthcare workers. This is certainly true of one particular Woman of Oklahoma: **Shannon Evans-Roberts**.

Shannon was raised in the cities of Wewoka and Holdenville, Oklahoma. She is a wife and mother, teacher, artist and Registered ICU nurse. Her professional journey is an interesting one. She initially attended college in San Diego majoring in Fine Arts while she enrolled in Biology courses with the goal of becoming an Art Therapist. She had intended to complete a certified medical assistant program; however, God had other plans.

After graduating with her Associate's Degree with honors, she was accepted into a Certified Medical Assistant program in San Diego and then decided to move back home to be closer to family in 1998. In Oklahoma, she worked for two years as a Medical Assistant and received a Bachelor's Degree in Liberal Studies from OU in 2001. After watching her children take required art classes, Shannon was inspired to return to college to pursue her Oklahoma teaching license, and follow her first passion, Art. Subsequently, she taught Art History and Studio Art at her children's school for ten years, while she continued to work as a medical assistant during the summers.

Budget cuts in Oklahoma's educational system caused Shannon to contemplate returning to college once again. This time, she allowed herself to be like a blank canvas as she paused and prayed for direction whether to pursue Art Therapy or Nursing. It turned out that Art Therapy was no longer offered at OU, giving her a definitive sign that she should pursue nursing. She applied and was accepted in 2012.

After graduation, Shannon began working at the University of Oklahoma and Mercy Hospital emergency departments. After working for several years as a staff Registered Nurse, she discovered her area of interest when she started working as a traveling nurse: critical care nursing.

At the beginning of 2020, with the coronavirus pandemic in full swing, Shannon was working at OK Comanche County Memorial Hospital. Two of her colleagues called and informed her that they were working on the Frontlines of COVID-19 crisis in Hackensack, New Jersey. At that moment, she knew that she needed to be there as well and by the end of the week, Shannon was on a flight to serve back east.



Shannon shared that as she boarded the flight, it was an emotional rollercoaster ride. *"As I was getting ready to board my plane to NJ, I broke down in tears. It hit me, I may not come back home. If I get sick, I will not have anyone. I [thought] of all our patients and their families, that this must be how they feel."*

Shannon's first day of work at Hackensack Meridian's ICU was chaotic because everything about this COVID-19 epidemic was, and continues to be, unknown.

"There weren't enough nurses to take care of all the patients. At times, we would have anywhere from two to five patients per nurse. Not all of the nurses were ICU nurses. Some were pulled from med/surgical, ER, or, wherever an RN could be found. The ICU nurses had to help the non-ICU nurses with various types of care, and procedures. The hospital continued to take unprecedented steps to control the spread and mitigate the impact of the virus."



Nurses have always been on the frontlines of the medical industry, yet they are often overworked, underappreciated, understaffed, heartbroken, anxious and under moral distress, but they are always working courageously on the frontlines.

Shannon stated, *"The more I want to share, the more I remember what we, as nurses on the frontlines, have endured and are still enduring. I break down. Our anxiety levels are maxed out. I understand how soldiers must feel after being in battle and witnessing so much death."*

The first three to four weeks of working in Hackensack, NJ, she felt defeated. The entire staff was desperately trying everything to keep the patients alive. *"The deaths outnumbered the living. Not all of the physicians and residents were ICU physicians. Doctors were pulled from different areas just like the nurses. Being an ICU nurse and trying to explain to a resident or a doctor what's going on with your patient and them not being familiar with the symptoms, treatments or medications was very frustrating,"* she recalls.

One of the most difficult challenges that she encountered while working on the frontlines of this pandemic was that at times she felt like they could not keep up with the virus. *"Every time we think we are making progress with a treatment with one patient, it fails on another patient. We were so busy trying to keep up with the IV meds, IV pumps, and doctors' orders, that we didn't have time to get to know our patients. It has been hard because you don't have time to form a personal connection with your patient and in times that we have formed a bond, they pass. As nurses, we take the losses personally."*

Ultimately, nurses are life-savers. They have the most interaction with their patients. They assist patients through the complex medical system, help them make informed decisions concerning their health, advocate for them and coordinate the care for all aspects of their overall health to ensure that they are on their way to recovery.

Everyone has encountered a nurse at some point in life. At birth, routine check-ups, the occasional emergencies. Sometimes, we as a society do not recognize the importance of a frontline worker until a crisis arise. Shannon notes, *"COVID ICU patients are some of the sickest, if not the most sick patients a nurse will ever care for. I know this, there is no comparison between COVID-19 and the flu. None. COVID-19 will infect anyone; any age, race, religion, gender, and nationality. I'm still learning what can be done. I hope when I go back home, I can share things we did that worked and what needs to be improved."*

We all need hope during this difficult time. Shannon is clear about what brings her hope, *"Having faith in God is my hope. Knowing that we, the human race are resilient. I have seen so much strength in doctors, nurses, staff, patients and families that seemed to have lost hope. They have remained resilient, no matter the obstacle, no one gives up, and we are not about to let this beat us."*

We all became family during this time at Hackensack University Medical Center, we continued to support each other as a whole and we are all in it together. When we lean on each other, there will always be hope. I remain hopeful when people are wearing mask in public, demonstrating social distancing, and doing whatever they can to keep others safe, themselves safe, and their loved ones safe. Those people give me hope."

After spending 52 days, and 1,400 miles away from home, Shannon was looking forward to several things upon returning home to Oklahoma. *"I look forward to seeing my family, sleeping next to my husband, and hugging my entire family. My art studio is finished, and I left before I was able to use my studio. I have so many experiences and memories from all of this. I have a place to paint now. I'd like to paint them."*

As Shannon arrived home on May 31st, 2020, she wanted to express her gratitude and appreciation, *"By the grace of God, we survived COVID, the worst of the worse, we tested negative the week before we left. We made it safely on our drive from the east coast. We survived the riots and looting in Nashville and had great BBQ in Memphis."*

Shannon recounted an incident on her journey back home. *"The hatchback of the car didn't close, when we thought it did, and two of our bags fell out on the off ramp to the interstate in Ft. Smith, Arkansas. The extremely, wonderful trooper that helped us thought we were pretty awesome. Not sure if it was the black undies that fell out of the bag or just our great personalities."*

"He stepped out of the car, looked down and started laughing (I was already running toward them). We explained the situation and he said, "You two survived that and lost your undies on the highway." He was laughing pretty hard and I'm pretty sure it was because we were both running toward them yelling, 'Oh my God!' Trying to reach them before he did."

When she arrived home to Guthrie, OK, Shannon shares her homecoming, *"I made it home to balloons placed down the road to my house, balloons left on my mailbox from my neighbor, a clean house, two Peony plants, a new art studio, an amazing HOME COOKED MEAL made by my amazing husband, a shower and my own bed."*

Shannon, the artist and the nurse, paints a beautiful picture of what it looks like to be a servant. The journey is not always straight and neat just as some brushstrokes on canvas can appear sharp or misplaced. But when you step back and look, there is a masterpiece.

Shannon's experiences and memories from being on the frontline in N.J. now allows her to express herself in a new way. She plans to continue to stand, serve and continue to save lives through the "Art of Nursing."



WOO Contributing Writer, Cheval Parker

Cheval Parker is the owner of C. Marie Creative Styles and Cheval Parker Realtors. She serves in such diverse roles as buying/selling agent for international clientele, construction project manager, event coordinator, relationship conference speaker, creator of home décor and most recently, a contributing writer.

She graduated from Seminole State College and has furthered her education at the University of Oklahoma and the University of Michigan.

Cheval counts her greatest accomplishments as that of being a devoted wife of 31 years and raising her two children, one a Lawyer, the other a Doctor.

Cheval's personal mandate is to continue making a positive impact, and to leave an indelible mark on those around her by walking out her calling in life as a disciple of Christ.

Her personal mantras are: "Preparation is Key" and "Start strong, Finish Strong."

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)

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A WOO in Another State: ***Karen Wallace-Brown*** by Kay Wallace



With the plight of the ongoing tumultuous trials of the pandemic, I find it somewhat relaxing to continue writing about women who make a difference in our state. Yet, this particular section of our newsletter focuses on Oklahoma Women making a difference somewhere else in the U.S.

In our featured section, *A WOO in Another State*, The Women of Oklahoma introduces you to my sister, Karen Wallace--Brown; ***An Oklahoma Woman doing it BIG in Texas.***

My sister and I talk just about every other night. Our discussions tend to focus around encouraging Bible scriptures, family updates, world news, hair, fashion, politics and music.

When I approached her about highlighting her in this article, she said, "ok." After three weeks, three days and five hours of reminding her to send me her info, I *finally* received a resume, a brief bio, newspaper articles and photos by email.

I am always excited about writing about people and reading their life stories. I was once told by a writer, '*Kay, everyone has a story to tell*', and as a writer, I like to tell their beginnings, their accomplishments and their goals yet to come.

I have always said I continuously read and write about amazing women daily, but I truly missed the fact that I talk to one every other night!

Karen graduated from Wewoka High School in 1980 and received her Bachelor's Degree in Music Education in 1986 from Lincoln University, in Jefferson City Missouri. She has been teaching elementary students in the Texas school district for 19 years and like our Mother, the world of music plays a big part of her life. As I think back, in the beginning of her career, she would have discussions with our Mother on the phone. I now hear the love of teaching music in her voice during our conversations when she describes to me her current lesson plans for her students.

Karen: "Sis, first, from a slide projected from the board, students used boomwhackers to analyze and play the standard blues progression (C7, C7, C7, C7, F7, F7, C7, C7, G7, F7, C7, G7) also known as the 12 Bar Blues. Then students were divided into three separate groups, each group representing a different chord. Group 1 represented the C7 chord, Group 2 represented the F7 chord, and Group 3 represented the G7 chord and played the 'turnaround'. Does that make sense, Sis?"

Me: Yeah. Sure it does. (LOL)

Karen: "Students then learned about chord structure, dominant seventh chords, and that measures are the same as bars. We would only need three chords to play this standard progression. A 12 Bar Blues backing track in the key of C was then added to accompany my students. After everyone learned the 12 Bar Blues progression using boomwhackers, I then modeled on the piano how to improvise using the C Blues Scale. Do you understand, Sis?"

Me: Yeah. Sure I do (LOL)

Although, it is customary to brag on one's family member, I am proud of the fact my sister is one of millions who opens the world to the minds of students and does an extraordinary job doing it. Now, I don't want you to take my word for it. Her accolades speak for themselves.

Just to name a few of her career highlights; *In 2011, she acquired 3 computers from a local business for the Book Adventure Reading Program. She was named J. A. Hargrave Teacher of the Year 2013; in 2014, the city newspaper featured her in a article entitled, "Music; Brown's Recipe for Success"; her choir, at the time, David L. Walker Intermediate Warrior Choir placed 1st at the Sandy Lake Funfest Competition in 2016 and her student ensemble received a 1st place trophy for playing recorder. She served as a "Cooperating Teacher" Texas Woman's University Teacher Mentoring Program and this past October, she organized professional musicians to visit her school. Her second and third graders danced to live folk music with renowned artists, Joey McKenzie and others that included Ridge Roberts, Elyza Whaley, and Beth Cheatham!*

But, if you asked her what she thought might be the highlight of her career, she might say her continuous efforts to acquire instruments, books, and the latest music technology resources through her Donor's Choose Page <https://www.donorschoose.org/classroom/2142277>.

She has accumulated over \$18,152.00 in musical instruments, and books for her school district! All this and she still manages being a wife and mother. Her husband, Sam is a retired Pastor and Soil Scientist. Her son and daughter, are both graduates of Baylor University; one a software engineer and one a writer (*a writer, I wonder were she inherited that?*).

Once a First Lady of a Church, my sister has certifications in the following: All Level Music (PK-12); Secondary Music (6-12); Generalist (EC-4); English Language Arts and Reading (4-8); Gifted and Talented Supplemental (EC-12); English as a Second Language Supplemental (EC-12); and Missouri Certifications in Instrumental Music – Lifetime (K-12).

"As a music teacher, my objective is to use every strategy at my fingertips and every resource available that could assist me in helping provide my students with the best music education possible."

..Karen Brown

Coming from a family where both parents were educators, we know the first hand struggles our educational system face and continues to face: spending their own money to buy classroom supplies, students asking questions while teachers are probably thinking, *will I get in trouble if I answer the question or should I let their parents answer this question?*; continually trying to keep their certifications up-to-date; and now COVID-19.

With her unbelievable faith in God, I am happy my sister continues to teach. I am glad she chose a profession that I think only God hand selects those to do. I am happy she teaches all genres of music. From the sounds of Blues to the sounds of classical music, my sister continues to allow her students the opportunity to see what inner musical talent lies beneath, their tiny little hands or their underdeveloped voices.

So, even though, I am not musically inclined and most of the time I do not understand the music verbiage, I continue to listen to my sister when she explains her new class project or new class instrument. If she is happy, I am happy, if she loves it, I love it. And when she excitedly says things like,

Karen: *Sis, I wanted every student to experience success, so, on all nine piano keyboards, I placed blue stickers on the keys that outlined the C Blues Scale (C, Eb, F, Gb, G, Bb, C). If each student played only the 'blue notes,' they would experience a successful solo. Sis, do you get it?*

Me: *(I will continue to say), Yeah Sis, I get it! (LOL)*

Teachers, Librarians and Counselors are eligible to sign up for an account.

<http://share.donorschoose.org/m3sDw>

My Second Closet *Vintage*

Website coming soon!

The Boots
\$25.00



My Second Closet

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Wewoka, Oklahoma 74884

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Website coming soon!

The Jacket

\$125.00



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The Designer Jeans

\$7.00



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Website coming soon!

The Fall Outfit

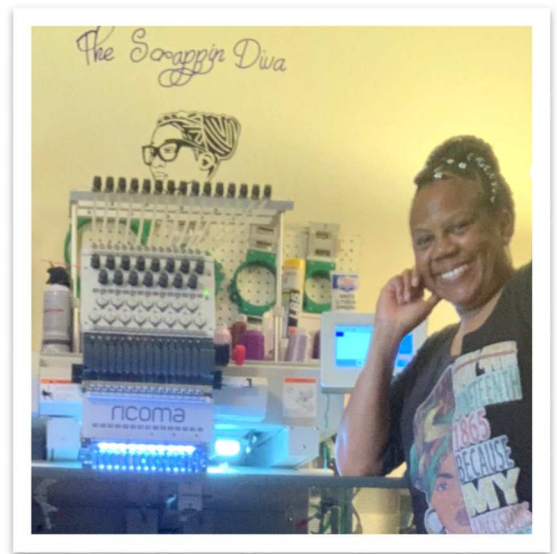


A WOO Entrepreneur: **Felisa Montee** aka **The Scrappin Diva**

The Women of Oklahoma jumps at the chance to introduce its readers to some of the hottest small businesses in the state! And did we find one! **The Scrappin Diva.**

The Scrappin Diva has been in business for twelve years and creates and designs based on what their clients want.

The Women of Oklahoma caught up with owner and operator, **Felisa Montee** to tell us the company's story.



Tell us a little about yourself and your background. *I am a mother of three, a wife of 15 years, and a Nana of 7 living grand kids and 1 in Heaven. I am a house wife, and I run my own crafty business, "The Scrappin Diva." The Scrappin Diva has been around for about 12 years.*

I started out with my business as a hobby, so making money was never my goal. I do personalized items and ready to make orders. I am pretty much open to what a client will ask for when they send me a picture of the item. I can let them know quickly if it is something I can or will do.

How did you get started?

Looking back when I was young, my mother was a seamstress, and I picked up that bug—or should I say, I wanted to be a seamstress. I am still in the learning stage of sewing. When my oldest grandson was born, I wanted to reserve the memories of him. So, I started with scrapbooking and making cards. Right now I am a crafter of many hobbies.

How long have you been sewing?

I started sewing right after high school but gave it up real quick. I just recently started sewing again with the masks. My son blessed me with an industrial machine that I have fallen in love with. I have learned to make hair turbans and my next thing will be clothing.

Where do you find your inspiration?

My inspiration comes from YouTube, Facebook and my crafty friends. I try not to jump on every band wagon but if I like the new craft coming out, I will try it and say yes or no for me. My crafty girlfriends are my biggest inspiration right now. If I am having a dry or hard time completing a task, my girlfriends will get online and help me right at that moment.

What is your least favorite part about being a designer?

My least part is when a customer has no idea what they want and expect me to come up with something when I have no idea about them.

What is your favorite part about being a designer?

The freedom to let my creativity go where it wants to go.

A WOO Entrepreneur Felisa Montee aka

The Scrappin Diva

<http://felisa21.blogspot.com/>

<https://www.paypal.me/TheScrappinDivaOK>



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Nov 4.



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