

## Two new Murals (and maybe more to come?)

(As published in The Oak Ridger's Historically Speaking column the week of July 5, 2021)

My good friend Jim Dodson is well known for his interest in art. He teaches it, does it himself, and promotes art in many ways in our city, Knoxville, and the state level as well. I was fortunate to work with him to engage Ed Westcott, famous Manhattan Project Photographer, when he used Ed's photographs to encourage his art class to draw images based on them. It was a delight to see Ed interact with those students. I miss Ed!

Jim has also arranged for several outdoor art exhibits in our city. I recently asked him to share his thoughts on the most recent examples, the mural at Melton Lake Park and the latest mural on Broadway Avenue. Here are his thoughts:

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Oak Ridge, a city conceived in science and built to help win the war, is also a vibrant arts community. We have several performing arts organizations ranging from our Historic Playhouse to the Oak Ridge symphony, Community band, OR Civic Ballet, and others.

More recently, we have been placing more and more outdoor art around our community such as large sculptures and monumental murals in public places. Two of the newest murals were sponsored by Explore Oak Ridge and ORNLFCU respectively and created by local Oak Ridge resident Megan Lingerfelt. Many know Megan for the outdoor murals she has created in downtown Knoxville, most notably the restoration of the Dolly Parton mural in Strong Alley near Market Square in Knoxville.

The first mural that Megan was commissioned to create is in Melton Lake Park and painted on the side of the Oak Ridge Rowing Association boat house which faces Melton Lake Drive and greets residents and guest to our waterfront where we host rowers from around the country. The mural was made possible by a grant to Explore Oak Ridge to help stimulate tourism.

Katy Watt, President of the organization wrote the grant and coordinated with me for help finding a talented artist and approving the most appropriate artwork that would represent our amazing parks and recreational offerings through iconic imagery. The mural at the waterfront is titled "Sunlight on Melton Lake" and depicts the sunrise and sunset on either end of the words "OAK RIDGE".

The second mural created by the same artist is located on Broadway Avenue facing West Tennessee Avenue and is painted on the side of one of ORNLFCU properties. This mural commissioned by ORNLFCU and created by Megan Lingerfelt depicts the past, present, and future of our Oak Ridge Community through both iconic images taken by Ed Westcott and interpreted in a compilation by Megan.

The official dedication of this beautiful mural took place at the mural's location on June 15 at 10am.

Both Explore Oak Ridge and ORNLFCU are to be commended for their vision to bring more art in public places to our town. We are so fortunate to have so many talented individuals who have contributed to the fabric of Oak Ridge that moving forward I would like to recognize these local leaders as other towns have to not only pay tribute to their work but to educate visitors to Oak Ridge as to the vibrant and dynamic history of the place, we all call home.

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Thanks Jim, you are to be commended for your continuing efforts to bring art to our city.

I wish other firms would pattern after ORNL Federal Credit Union and consider sponsoring other murals that featured our famous people. Really good portraits of Ed Westcott, Alvin Weinberg, General Groves, General Nichols, John Googin, Jack Case, Clark Center, Clifford Schull, Ernest Wollen, Eugene Wigner and others could be included in murals!

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Other cities have done this with success. The murals are actual tourist attractions for them. We could do the same!



Jim Dodson and Megan Lingerfelt pose in front of the most recent mural on the ORNL Federal Credit Union building on Broadway Avenue



The mural in Melton Lake Park

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The mural on the ORNL Federal Credit Union building on Broadway Avenue