

# THE DRUMRIGHT MUSEUM GUSHER

March 4, 2024/ Vol 14

*SJA* PHOTOGRAPHY  
Photographer: Susan Matney, D.

## UPCOMING EVENTS IN THE OIL PATCH

*Blonde Ambition  
Estate Solutions*

**Estate Sales**

*Boomtown Theater*

**On Golden Pond**

## DOWN AT THE DEPOT

### Mama Says...

It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of a precious Drumright citizen, Elizabeth Joseph Naifeh. Her obituary is included in this issue of our newsletter, but I thought this might be the appropriate time to recognize the contributions of Syrian/Lebanese individuals to the community of Drumright over the years.

The Drumright oilfield was still in its infancy when peddlers came into this area traversing the fields selling goods to oilfield workers...food, clothing, and all manner of supplies. Then as the town of Drumright sprang up, merchants came and set up storefronts selling groceries, men's and

women's clothing and all manner of household goods needed by oilfield workers and their families. Here was an economic opportunity to start a business and by growing the business you could bring economic success to your family.

According to records, the first store established in Drumright by a Syrian/Lebanese businessman was the John Saffa dry goods store at Broadway and Ohio Streets in March of 1913. Then came the Massad Brothers dry goods store and in 1914, Henry Joseph established his Tiger Trading Store. As these stores started to prosper, other family members would come and join in the family business. Families



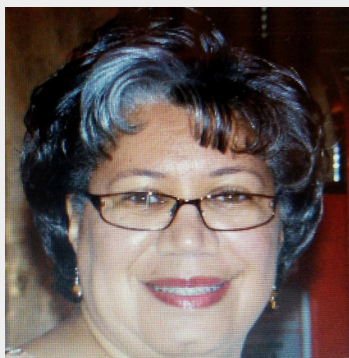
would live either behind their storefront or above their store.

As the years went by, these families assimilated into the community culture. They quickly learned the language and valued the education their children received in Drumright public schools. They supported civic organizations and attended local churches. Several of the family names you will recognize include Elias, Joseph, Salem, Massad, Saffa, Beshara, Naifeh, Shadid, Kraker, Saliba and DeBakey.

Down at the depot, we have old city directories and advertisements naming many of these families and their related businesses. Between 1912 and 1941, Syrian/Lebanese businesspersons in Drumright owned 23 grocery stores, 23 clothing and dry goods stores, 3 shoe repair stores, 2 confectionary/sweet shops, 2 eating establishments, a drug store, a bottling plant, and a variety of other small businesses. Their contributions to the city of Drumright are immeasurable.

Now, over one hundred years after these immigrants first arrived in our community, let us remember their contributions and celebrate their families and the lives they lived. Miss Elizabeth would want us to do just that "...Mama says!"

By: Patti Pouncil



Patti Pouncil



This photo was taken by local photographer, Ben Russell. This is Joseph Grocery and Meats of Drumright circa 1915. On the left is Chic Fogaley. Henry Joseph is in the center and Sabah Elias is on the right.

## **CIMARRON BAPTIST ASSOCIATION DISASTER RELIEF MINISTRY**

The Cimarron Baptist Association Disaster Relief Ministry has been assisting our local community as well as around the states since 2008. The ministry has been blessed with major equipment that is used specifically for disaster relief recovery. The ministry is located in Cushing in conjunction with the Cimarron Association.

The Drumright Museum Gusher has featured some of the ministry work locally in previous newsletters. This month the ministry is excited to announce it has acquired a brand new Bobcat Mini Track Loader. The benefit of this Mini Track is that it will go through a gate in a yard. Whereas the John Deere Skid Steer they have could not get into tight places. The Bobcat and John Deere are beneficial for removing heavy logs from trees that have been cut down or downed due to a storm.

By: Deborah Wilson

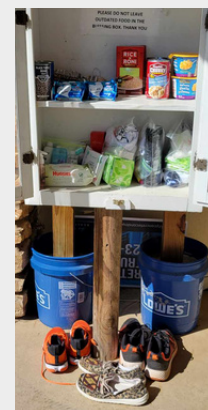
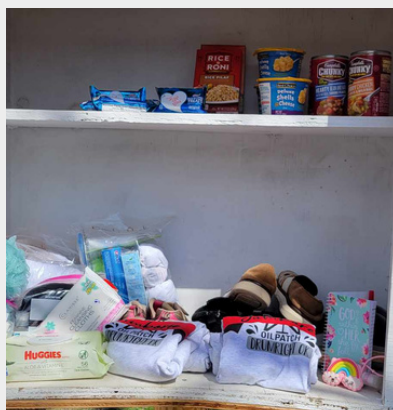


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## **LEAP OF KINDNESS DAY**

#LeapofKindness Deanna from The Keystone Gusher and Angela Titus went out and filled the blessing boxes with what was donated. Although the donations weren't what we expected it was still enough to fill the empty boxes. Thank you Deanna and Mandy Smith from Emerald Hospice for those donations. The Drumright Area Chamber of Commerce thanks you for helping our community! There is a little food, personal hygiene items, and a pair of shoes for man, woman and child at each box. With what's left Angela will fill the boxes next week too. Our blessing boxes are in need of food! Non-perishable and not expired.

By: Angela Titus



## UPCOMING EVENTS IN THE OIL PATCH



Estate Sales

March 14-16  
Tulsa, OK

March 20-23  
Drumright, OK

April 18-20  
Broken Arrow, OK

For more information follow **Blonde Ambition Estate Solutions** on Facebook  
<https://www.facebook.com/blondeambitionestate/>

## SAVE THE DATE

BOOMTOWN THEATER PRESENTS



FRIDAY, APRIL 19  
SATURDAY, APRIL 20  
SUNDAY, APRIL 21

20

FRIDAY, APRIL 26  
SATURDAY, APRIL 27  
SUNDAY, APRIL 28

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# Obituaries

## **James Isaac Arnold**

A memorial service for Oilton resident, James Arnold, was held on Friday, February 23rd, 2024 in the Gazebo at Highland Cemetery at Oilton, Oklahoma. Rev. Mike Brannon of the Drumright First United Methodist Church officiated. Cremation and funeral arrangements were entrusted to the care of Michael's Funeral Home of Drumright.

James was born in Seminole, Oklahoma on June 4, 1938 to the late Clyde Otto Arnold & Dorethy Faye (Randin) Arnold. He passed from this life at his residence on February 18, 2024 at the age of 85 years, 8 months, & 14 days. James was raised & educated in Seminole. After high school, he enrolled at Oklahoma State University, graduating in 1961 with a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering. In 1961 he started his career with the Boeing Company in Wichita, Kansas. He married Judy L. Pruner on March 2, 1963 and they made their home in Wichita. He continued his electrical engineering studies at Wichita State University and graduated with a masters degree in 1967. Throughout his engineering career, he worked on numerous different projects from development of flight controls for the United States Air Force, AIAA, & NASA, to directional drilling with AMOCO Oil in Tulsa. Several of his technical engineering papers on control configured vehicles & active controls have been published. After 22+ years with Boeing, he retired in 1983 and moved to Oilton where he became an independent oil & gas producer and co-owner of Petroleum Exploration Production, Inc. He also owned and operated the local VHS video rental store for several years. He was very active in the Oilton community and coached Little League Baseball; was a former School Board Member and was on the Board of Directors of the local bank. He also enjoyed farming, fishing, hunting, and spending time outdoors with his family and friends. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a Brother: Tim Arnold.

His remaining family includes his Wife: Judy Arnold of the home; Children: Steve Arnold & wife Kim of Oilton - Dana McBrayer of Edmond; Grandchildren: Chris & Carson; Cousins: Tori Hunter & Brad Hunter, both of Missouri; plus several other relatives and friends.



# Obituaries

## **Jeffrey Shawn Collier**

Graveside funeral rites for Drumright resident, Shawn Collier, were held Monday, February 26th in Euchee Valley Memorial Park near Cushing, Oklahoma. Funeral arrangements were entrusted to the care of Michael's Funeral Home of Drumright.

Shawn was born in Monahans, Texas on June 7, 1958 to Albert Lee Roy Collier & Mable Lee (Parrot) Collier. He passed from this life suddenly at his residence on February 14, 2024 at the age of 65 years, 8 months, & 7 days. Shawn was raised & educated in Covington, Oklahoma & was a graduate of Covington High School. He married Patricia Ann Mullins on October 30, 1982 & they raised a family of 6 children. Shawn had lived the majority of his adult life in the Drumright & Cushing area. He was a "Jack of all trades" and worked many different jobs in his lifetime. He enjoyed reading & tooling leather. He was a talented musician and an avid gun collector. He was preceded in death by his father & his wife in 2011.

His remaining family includes his Children: Trenda Cates of Drumright - Caleb Ray Collier of Texas - Danielle Collier of Seminole - Levi Collier & wife Robin of Owasso - Robert Collier & wife Amanda of Georgia - Timothy Collier of Drumright; Grandchildren: Shaun & Avonlea - Dylan & Brianna - Keenan - Zhy'ere - Keegan - Cole - Ivan - Clarice - Brylee - Jeffrey - & Emma; Great Grandchildren: Henry - Lila - & 1 on the way, Millie; his Mother: Mable Collier of Drumright; Brothers: Randy Collier & wife Linda of Shamrock - Gene Collier & wife Susan of Drumright - Shane Collier & wife Randi of Drumright; Sister: Elaine Kinnin & Husband Lewis of Drumright; plus numerous Nieces - Nephews - Cousins - other relatives & friends.



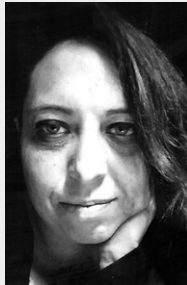
# Obituaries

## **Toni Beth McDowell**

Graveside funeral rites for Stillwater resident, Toni McDowell were held on Wednesday, January 14th in the Stroud City Cemetery at Stroud, Oklahoma. Her brother, Rev. Tyler McDowell of the First Baptist Church at Blair, Oklahoma officiated. Funeral arrangements were entrusted to the care of Michael's Funeral Home of Drumright.

Toni was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma on July 1, 1978 to Rev. Jess Willard McDowell & Rajena Lee (Harrison) McDowell. She passed from this life suddenly in Altus, Oklahoma on February 10, 2024 at the age of 45 years, 7 months, & 9 days. Toni was raised & educated in Milfay, Oklahoma & was a 1996 graduate of Depew High School. She furthered her studies at Oklahoma Baptist University and graduated in 2004 with a bachelor's degree in fine arts. Her passion was live theater & she pursued a career in stage managing. Before her health declined, she had worked for numerous theater companies throughout the United States. She was preceded in death by her father in 2016.

Those left behind to mourn her passing include her Mother: Rajena McDowell of Blair, OK; Bother: Tyler McDowell & wife Crystal of Blair; Sisters Beccy Peck & Husband Allen of Colgate – Jeanie Daniels & husband Robby of Kemp, OK; Nieces & Nephews: Joe Allen – Candace – Jake – Kanin – Sadie - & Cooper; Aunts & Uncles: Sammie & Stan Bond of Louisiana – Eulala Pegram of Colorado – Richard & Anna Harrison of Latta; plus several other relatives & friends.



## **Elizabeth (Joseph) Naifeh**

Elizabeth Joseph Naifeh, a beacon of warmth and strength, left us on February 12, 2024, at the age of 98 years, 5 months, and 30 days. Born in Drumright, OK, on August 13, 1925, to Henry Joseph and Nora (Dumit) Joseph, Elizabeth's life was a testament to love, resilience, and faith.

Elizabeth grew up in Drumright, OK, and tragically lost both of her parents by age 12, causing her to have to grow up fast. She started working to help provide for her family, all while remaining in school. She graduated from Drumright High School in 1943. After graduating, she accepted a job at Tidewater Oil Company. She later met the love of her life, Glen T. Naifeh, and they were married on June 25, 1950. Together, they settled in Tulsa, OK, and over the years, they welcomed six children into their lives: Bill Naifeh (Helen), Tricia Naifeh Parker (Jack), Kaye Naifeh-Lakey (Ron), Joe Naifeh (Kathy), Glenda Naifeh Brown, and Thomas Glen Naifeh.

Her heart was always with her family. She found her greatest joy in being a mother, immersing herself in her children's lives through school, scouts, and sports. Her home was a hub of love and activity, with her role as a homeroom mother bringing her particular joy.

Glen died suddenly in 1963, when Elizabeth was pregnant with their youngest, Tommy. Amidst this profound loss, Elizabeth's resilience was steadfast. Only 20 years later, she would also lose her son, Tommy. Her strength in continuing to nurture her family was a source of inspiration for all who knew her. Some might wonder how she persevered after the loss of her parents, her husband, and her youngest child, but those who knew her already know—it was her faith in God that kept her going.

# Obituaries

Elizabeth's Catholic faith was the cornerstone of her life, an unwavering force that guided her in every aspect. Her deep devotion to her Catholic faith was beautifully reflected in her weekly mass and adoration attendance, as well as praying the Rosary, practices she embraced with heartfelt reverence and unwavering dedication. She had an active role in the St. Mary's Altar Society, where her dedication and service were not just acts of faith but expressions of her deep love for her community. Elizabeth's house was a home for many, especially the priests who she took under her wing, treating them as her own sons. Her generosity of spirit and unwavering faith earned her the affectionate nickname "Saint Elizabeth" among those who knew her. This deep spiritual connection was a source of strength and inspiration, not only to Elizabeth herself but to everyone whose lives she touched. Her legacy is not just one of familial love and community service, but also of profound faith and spiritual devotion, traits that will continue to guide and inspire long after her passing.

Her love extended to her 10 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren, to whom she was known as Sitty. They created endless memories during their special summer weeks together. Each grandchild cherished their time with her, filled with laughter and undivided attention, and Elizabeth lit up every time they came to visit, especially in her final months.

Elizabeth was a pillar in her community, and she dedicated countless hours volunteering with the Drumright Hospital Auxiliary, Drumright Human Needs Council, and St. Mary's Altar Society as treasurer. She also served as a poll worker during many elections—ensuring that every voter had an opportunity to cast their ballot. Even after retiring, she continued to be a familiar, friendly face at her son Joe's restaurant and later at his deli. She loved handing out bubble gum at the register and would always sneak Andes mints to her grandkids. She continued working with her son into her early 90s. Each week, patrons would come by the deli to see what "Momma says..."

Elizabeth's Lebanese heritage was a proud part of her identity. She embraced her culture, sharing it with her family and community, enriching their lives with her heritage and traditions and food! She was a master at rolling stuffed grape leaves and cabbage rolls, and her perfect kibbeh, laban, Easter cakes, and "Sitty cookies" will be missed. After making just about anything, she loved telling everyone, "Oh, this isn't a good batch!" with a twinkle in her eye, knowing she never cooked a bad dish in her life. Elizabeth loved cooking and baking and especially loved making cakes. She never missed the chance to make Billy his special German chocolate birthday cake, or a coconut-covered Baptism/First Communion/Confirmation cross cake, and her granddaughters were always thrilled to see how she would decorate their angel food Barbie birthday cakes.

Elizabeth made countless friends over the years. Among her favorite memories were her trips across the world from Portugal to Rome to Alaska with her dear friend Bea Harris. She also loved playing penny slot machines (somehow always winning), cheering on OU and OSU football and basketball teams, taking her chances at lottery scratchers, and visiting the beauty shop every week. Elizabeth enjoyed talking on the phone with friends and family, and always looked forward to visiting with her longtime friend Nancy Kelley. For over 50 years, Elizabeth lived just minutes from her older sister, Adele Salem. Their bond of sisterhood was deep, and they were truly best friends. One of the running jokes between them was that whoever died with the most kitchen gadgets wins. The judges have declared a tie.

As Elizabeth's health started to decline, her daughter Kaye spent many hours caring for her needs and driving her to appointments. The family extends heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated caregivers who supported Elizabeth in her final years and months: Becky Thompson, Emmie Mapemba, Liz Dorsey, Misty Walls, and the team at Traditions Hospice. Their kindness and care made a significant difference and will always be remembered.



# Obituaries

Preceded in death by her husband Glen, son Tommy, sons-in-law Ron Lakey and Jack Parker, and grandson Austin Parker, as well as all of her siblings and in-laws, Elizabeth leaves behind a legacy of love, resilience, and faith. We will remember her for her unwavering spirit, her heart full of love, and her hands always ready to comfort and create. Elizabeth Joseph Naifeh's life was a beautiful tapestry of devotion and joy, and her memory will forever be cherished.

Elizabeth's funeral mass was celebrated at the same church where she was baptized, married, grieved her own losses, and celebrated her children's unions: St. Mary's Catholic Church in Drumright, Oklahoma. The Rosary service was held on Friday, February 23. The funeral mass was at on Saturday, February 24, with interment to follow at Rose Hill Cemetery in Tulsa, OK.

In lieu of flowers, those wishing to honor Elizabeth's memory are encouraged to make donations to St. Mary's Altar Society at P.O. Box 828, Cushing, OK 74023, the Fred Joseph Memorial Christmas Dinner c/o Drumright Community Fund at P.O. Box 790, Cushing, OK 74023, or to a hospice care of their choice, in recognition of the compassionate care she valued.

Funeral services were entrusted to the care of Michael's Funeral Home of Drumright, Oklahoma.



# Obituaries

## **Marjorie Ellen (Titus) Peden**

Memorial services for Drumright resident, Marjorie Peden, were held Saturday, January 17th at the Drumright

First United Methodist Church with Rev. Mike Brannon officiating. Cremation & services were entrusted to the care of Michael's Funeral Home of Drumright. In lieu of flowers, the family has requested memorials be made to the Drumright First United Methodist Church Building Fund.

Marjorie was born in Dover, Oklahoma on October 26, 1925 to the late Charles Lee Titus & Margaret May (Albright) Titus. She passed from this life in Drumright on February 9, 2024 at the age of 98 years, 3 months, & 14 days. Marjorie moved with her family to Drumright when she was 3 years old. During her youth she became active in the Drumright Methodist Church and began teaching children's Sunday School at 16 years of age. She became a telephone operator in the Drumright office after she graduated high school in 1943. On Easter Sunday, March 28, 1948 she married the love of her life, Robert Wesley Peden, in the Drumright Methodist Church & they started their married life in Cushing, Oklahoma. They remained together 3 months short of 70 years at the time of Robert's death in 2017. In 1963 they moved to the Will Rogers Boy Scout Reservation near Cleveland, Oklahoma and remained there for 29 years until Robert's retirement. Marjorie worked many unpaid hours on the reservation and became totally dedicated to scouting. As a result, she was awarded the coveted Silver Beaver award. After retirement, they returned to her family's homestead in Drumright where they remained the rest of their lives. They were very active in the Drumright Methodist Church and for 16 years delivered Meals On Wheels for the Drumright Senior Citizens Center. Marjorie loved working in her yard and especially with her flowers. She was always quick to offer them to anyone who showed interest. She was also known for her delicious chocolate cake and her never empty cookie jar and several other tasty delights. In addition to her parents & husband, she was preceded in death by a granddaughter; & 2 sisters: Naomi McHenry & Esther Titus.

She is survived by a Son: Rob Peden & wife Becky; Daughter: Sue Miller; 1 Grandchild; 5 Great Grandchildren; plus several Nieces, Nephews, Cousins, other relatives & friends.



# Obituaries

## Paul Wayne Rusco

Funeral services for Drumright resident, Paul Rusco, were held on Tuesday, January 13th at the Olive First Baptist Church with Rev. George "Marty" Brock, III officiating. Interment followed in the Shamrock Cemetery at Shamrock, Oklahoma. Funeral arrangements were entrusted to the care of Michael's Funeral Home of Drumright.

Paul Wayne Rusco, beloved husband, father, and friend, passed from this life peacefully surrounded by family, on February 8, 2024 at the age of 73 years, 10 months, & 26 days. He was born on March 13, 1950 in Oilton, Oklahoma to Nelson & Alberta (Schonfield) Rusco. He attended grade school at Buckeye & went on to graduate from Olive High School in 1968. In 1969 he married Lanie Campbell & from this union two daughters were born: Lori & Melody. In 1975 he met Brenda Creekmore Randall & to this union, he gained three more children: Jimmy Randall, Jr., Lori Randall, & Lynda Randall. In his younger days, Paul enjoyed going to rodeos and riding his motorcycle. He had several other hobbies throughout his lifetime & was an avid collector of small lawn tractors and hot-wheels. He enjoyed leather working and loved grilling ribs, brisket, and bologna. Paul was a third generation water well driller in Creek County and the surrounding areas. In 1991 he became a tank insulator welder for Yale Steel Fabrication which allowed him and Brenda to travel. When that window closed, he came back to his childhood love of drilling water wells and joined up with his brother, David. Later in life, Paul enjoyed fishing, camping, and more traveling, and spending time with his family and friends. Brenda loved dragging him

down old Route 66, making several stops along the way. But don't kid yourself, he really did love to travel. They were fortunate to go on a few cruises and the highlight for Paul was trying the many different foods. But what he enjoyed most was the ice cream station. Being a man of few words, a perfect day for him would be sitting under a tree, whittling on a walking cane; his dog in his lap, and a Diet Pepsi in his hand.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a Daughter: Lori Colwell; Son: Jimmy Randall, Jr.; Granddaughter: Brayden Loy; Great Grandchild: Raeleigh Ritter; Son-in-Law: Harold "Skip" Brown; 2 Brothers: James & Billy Rusco; 3 Sisters: Juanita Reed - Virginia "Jackie" Rusco - & Jenci Felix.

Those left behind to mourn his passing include his Wife: Brenda of the home; Children: Melody Rusco and spouse Ray Davalos of Owasso - Lori Loy & husband David of Jenks - Lyndall Hall & spouse Todd of Drumright; Grandchildren: Zachary - Ella & Payton - Joshua - Steven & Larrah - Dylan & Alexis - Mandi & Larry - Misty - Alexandra & Colleen - Hailey & Jarvis - Jamie & Jimmy - Jessica & Benny - Jimmy & Shelby - Brittany & Zach - Layla - & Colton; 3 Brothers: Harry Rusco & wife Beverly - David Rusco & wife Carolyn - & Harvey Rusco, all of Silver City; a Sister-In-Law: Evelyn Rusco of Oilton; plus Numerous Nieces, Nephews, Cousins, other relatives & friends.



*in  
loving  
memory*

Newsletter Designed By Carson Creative

