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## Trail of Fame supporters to be honored at Friday reception

By Charlene Scott

*Dodge City Daily Globe*

The 14-inch bronze statue of Wyatt Earp his frock coat waving in the wind, one hand barely touching his pistol, his head cocked back over his shoulder looks "as if someone behind him just called his name."

That assessment comes from Carolyn Johnson, who, with her husband Jim, will join other Dodge City Trail of Fame Committee members to honor nearly 100 people who support the Trail of Fame at a reception Friday.

Many attendees at the reception from 4 to 6 p.m. in the Dodge City Depot lobby will get their first glimpse of one of the Wyatt Earp statues created by Oklahoma artist Mary Spurgeon to be sold to help finance the Trail of Fame.

"We also hope to have the Trail of Fame commemorative gun 'proof' (the first gun produced) at the reception for people to see," Jim said. "We will sell 100 of the small statues and 50 commemorative guns, with the purchase price being tax deductible to the full extent provided by law."

In addition to the statue, the trail will consist of 60 or more bronze medallions inlaid into downtown sidewalks commemorating famous Dodge Citians, both real and fictional. Engraved bricks also are being sold to help finance the project.

The Dodge City Trail of Fame, a historic walking trail, is being developed in downtown Dodge City as a major tourist attraction for the town.

An 8-foot rendition of the Wyatt Earp statue is also in the works, and Spurgeon will "throw the mud" (apply clay to the armature or skeleton of the statue) on Monday at her studio in Gate, Okla.

"We want to recognize all the people who have been kind enough to help us create the Trail of Fame," said Carolyn, an



*Charlene Scott/Daily Globe*

Many attendees at a Trail of Fame reception Friday at the Dodge City Depot will get their first glimpse of one of the Wyatt Earp statues created by Oklahoma artist Mary Spurgeon to be sold to help finance the Trail of Fame.

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archeologist also known throughout southwest Kansas as a jewelry designer.

"We have a list of supporters as long as your arm," she said. "They have given money and in-kind services to us, and we want to thank these people."

Two sites are under consideration for the eight-foot statue, which was commissioned for \$80,000, including foundry costs. One possibility is the corner of Wyatt Earp Boulevard and Third Avenue next to the Convention and Visitors Bureau, the other across from the depot at Central Avenue and Wyatt Earp Boulevard.

"We haven't decided for sure where the statue will be placed," said Jim, who has a special interest in Wyatt Earp, having portrayed the famed Dodge City Deputy Marshal and Ford County sheriff for a week at Harrod's Department Store in London 10 years ago.

"Placement of the statue has to be coordinated with the city," he said. "We still need funds to complete the statue, which will have a stone retaining wall around it, probably limestone."

The sculpture should be finished within a year. Several bronze statues of historical Dodge City figures eventually will be placed along the Trail of Fame.

"For now, we will have El Capitan (the bronze Longhorn Steer on Wyatt Earp Boulevard) and the eight-foot statue of Wyatt Earp, and that will be impressive," Carolyn said.

Also impressive is the commemorative gun, a recreated 1873 Peacemaker single action Army 45-Caliber pistol that will sell for the same price as the small Wyatt Earp statues: \$3,500.

"Only 50 of the guns are being produced by Investment Arms in Fort Collins, Colorado," Jim said. "The frame will be all gold, richly engraved as a Dodge City Trail of Fame and Wyatt Earp commemorative. There will be silver and gold inlays on the gun, and the grips will be of carved walnut."

The pistol's cylinder will be a deep blue, "eight-foot blue, they call it," Jim said. "The fluting and indentations will be brushed gold. Early lawmen's badges and scenes from Dodge City history will be engraved onto the gun."

The gun's display showcase will be a thing of beauty also, Jim promised.

"The case will be felt-lined and hand finished, with the Trail of Fame logo on the case and a certificate of authenticity inside, plus copies of some historical documents," he said. "Gun number five already is bought and paid for, and three other guns are spoken for."

"We will produce the guns as they are sold. We hope to advertise them in several magazines such as True West, American West and Cowboys and Indians. I hate to see the guns go out of Dodge City, but I know they will. We also will have a Web site where the statues, guns and sidewalk bricks can be purchased online using PayPal."

Also for sale to benefit the Trail of Fame are 24-inch bronze medallions, the first of which was dedicated to Dennis Weaver of TV's Gunsmoke series fame, who attended the induction ceremony in May. Each medallion will honor a Trail of Fame inductee.

Nine other medallions will be located with Weaver's along Front Street between the Visitor Information Center and the Santa Fe Depot. Additional medallions will be located in historic downtown areas.

"Bat Masterson's medallion will be placed on the sidewalk next to where his house used to be, which now is the parking lot of Bank of America," Jim said. "And we would like to induct actor Dennis Hopper, who was born and raised in Dodge City."

Twenty medallions are being created at the present time, and will sell for \$2,000 each. The medallions will depict lawmen, gunfighters, cattlemen, buffalo hunters, members of the military, women of the west and other early pioneers, as well as stage, screen, TV and local celebrities.

Also for sale will be more than 10,000 bricks that will be placed along the Trail, which eventually will expand north on Central, First and Second Avenues. People who purchase the bricks may have their own names or the names of a person they wish to memorialize engraved on the bricks.

"We are trying to get sponsorships for additional medallions," Carolyn said. "The Trail of Fame will be the kind of thing that keeps tourists in town at least one more night, which will be an economic improvement for all of Dodge City, not just downtown.

"The Trail of Fame is an important Dodge City project, and we think Dodge City residents will be proud of it."

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