

# Depression-era prints on display at USD through Sept. 20

By Travis Gulbrandson

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On Wednesday, the John A. Day Gallery at the University of South Dakota became the temporary home to several dozen pieces from one of the most unique eras in American art.

"Dust, Metal and Stone: The Graphic Arts of the 1930s" features more than 60 original intaglio and lithographic prints created by Regionalist and Realist American artists during the 1930s.

Alison Erasmus, director of USD Art Galleries, said the show's title is a reference to the Graphic Arts Division of the Federal Arts Project (FAP), a division of the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

"That started in 1935, and a lot of the artists who are represented in 'Dust, Metal and Stone' worked for the FAP," Erasmus said. "It was mostly printmakers in the Graphic Arts Division.

"This was a really unique time in the nation's history, when the federal government funded creative work in a really novel way," she said. "They were doing it as a measure to relieve unemployment for artists, so that was a core purpose. There was just a lot of rich history with these prints, a lot of interesting names, a lot of famous names, a lot of the regionalists in the area."

The prints are "original" in that they were signed by their respective artists and taken from a limited edition of prints.

They were culled from USD's collection of approximately 300 that were made by the Associated American Artists Company, which sought to "democratize" fine art through the sale of affordable, original prints by American artists such as Grant Wood, Thomas Hart Benton and John Steuart Curry.

"A lot of these artists made prints, but they were also muralists, so they gained a certain amount of notoriety," Erasmus said. "The purpose of



"Dust, Metal and Stone: The Graphic Arts of the 1930s" will be on display in the John A. Day Gallery at the University of South Dakota through Sept. 20.

(Courtesy photo)

the Associated American Artists Company, which is where these prints came from, was to support well-known artists at that time, artists who had a name."

When the company started in 1934, the prints retailed for \$5 each, Erasmus said.

"Obviously, these are not prints that were funded by the federal government," she said. "Otherwise they would not belong to us. But they did initially come from the Associated Artists Company.

They had a very similar vision to the FAP in that they wanted to democratize art. They wanted art to be affordable. They wanted big names to catch people's attention, and they would think, 'Oh, wow, only \$5 for a Thomas

Hart Benton print.'"

The theory of "democratizing" art also opened up new avenues for women artists like Peggy Bacon and Marion Greenwood.

"They were hired by the FAP, as well," Erasmus said. "So, there was some leveling of the playing field in that sense."

The prints now on display in the Day Gallery have not been seen in "a couple of decades," the last time being a statewide tour, Erasmus said.

"They are quite a gem," she said. "They had been in older frames when (they) initially traveled around the state, so they all needed to be reframed, and they all needed to be organized."

That task fell to Jennifer Padgett, a graduate student studying printmaking who proposed taking an independent study in collections management and exhibit curating.

"It's kind of like a hands-on art history course, because she was actually working hands-on with these prints, analyzing them, trying to figure out what the processes were," Erasmus said. "We had some documentation, but really there's a lot of research that can be done when you are in direct contact with the objects, and so she had a full semester of researching the prints, learning more about the artists who made them, and also the printmaking techniques, and as a printmaker she was very qualified

for that. She was very good at adding to our collection information."

It would not have been possible to put all 300 prints on display in the gallery, so they were grouped together according to theme.

"We wanted to talk about the Dust Bowl, but also the agrarian theme," Erasmus said. "It really is pronounced. It probably is the bulk of the prints. We have few prints that depict subject matter of urban life. It's mostly the plight of the farmer."

Even so, some of the work could be considered propaganda, Erasmus said.

"This is government-funded artwork, and so it's really up to the viewer to decide if they want to buy that this is the true Americana," she said. "What I would argue is that there are certainly myths in this. There's the myth of the heroic laborer, there's the myth of agrarian paradise.

"Especially during the Dust Bowl, this was not really the case," she said. "There was a lot of unemployment, and we had stripped the earth's surface and created the Dust Bowl with our over-tilling."

Erasmus said the artists used their work to honor the American farmer, as well as to argue for a return to self-sufficiency, which they saw as viable through small-scale agriculture.

"I think there is a lot of idealism there that will speak to regional audiences," she said. "It's so pertinent to the history of South Dakota and the history of this region. . . ."

"This exhibition is really a part of our heritage," she said.

"Dust, Metal and Stone" will be on display through Sept. 20.

The John A. Day Gallery is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Weekend visits may be arranged only by special appointment.

For more information, call University Art Galleries at 677-3177.

## OBITUARIES

### Darcie Beene

Darcie "Babygirl" Beene, age 22, of Meckling, died Saturday, July 27, 2013, at her home in Meckling.

A memorial service will be 10:30 a.m. on Friday, Aug. 2, 2013, at the Wintz & Ray Funeral Home in Yankton, with Reverend Dani Jo Ninke officiating. A gathering of friends and family was from 5 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, August 1, 2013, at the Wintz & Ray Funeral Home in Yankton.

Honorary pallbearers are Darcie's nephews, Marshall Mockler and Landon Lundgren.

Darcie "Babygirl" Beene was born Dec. 25, 1990, in Russellville, AR, to Danny and Kim (Wescott) Beene. Her family moved to Vermillion, and Darcie graduated from Vermillion High School in 2009. After high school, she became Certified Nurses Aid and began working at Sanford Care Center in Vermillion. She later moved to Sioux Falls, where she worked at the Good Samaritan Center until moving back to Vermillion in 2013, where she worked for Morris Inc.

Darcie loved riding four-wheelers whenever she could, attending stock car races and tractor pulls, taking care of her car, shopping and being outdoors. She especially loved spending time with her nephews and her dog BOSS. Everyone knew Darcie as "Babygirl", a nickname her father gave her as a child. She truly was her father's Babygirl and she will be greatly missed by everyone.

Survivors include her father, Danny Beene of Sioux Falls; mother, Kim Beene of Vermillion; two sisters, Marissa (Ross) Mockler of Burbank, and Danielle Beene of Vermillion; two nephews, Marshall and Landon; uncle, Greg (Nanci) Wescott of Harrisburg; two cousins, Bailee and A.J.; and her constant companion, BOSS.



Beene

She was preceded in death by her grandparents, John and Judy Wescott.

To post an online sympathy message, please visit [wintzrayfuneralhome.com](http://wintzrayfuneralhome.com).

### Laura Berg

Laura Sullivan Berg, 53, died Sunday, July 28, 2013, at the Avera Heart Hospital. A funeral service was at 11 a.m. Wednesday, July 31, 2013, at Saint Mary's Catholic Church in Rock Valley, IA, with Father Doug Klein celebrating. Burial followed the luncheon at Saint Mary's Catholic Cemetery in Alford. Visitation with family present was from 6 to 8 p.m. with a prayer service at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 30, 2013, at Porter Funeral Home, Rock Valley, IA. Online condolences may be left for the family at [www.porterfuneralhomes.com](http://www.porterfuneralhomes.com).

Laura was born May 28, 1960, at LeMars, IA, daughter of Robert and Phyllis (Frembgen) Sullivan. Laura grew up near Alford and graduated West Lyon High School and obtained a Bachelors Degree in Psychology at Metro State University. She married Darman Berg in 1979 at Alford. Laura lived at Crystal, MN and had worked at Honeywell and later as a medical secretary at Courage Center at Golden Valley, MN. Laura was a long time member of the VFW auxiliary. She enjoyed many things including flea markets, cooking, drawing and painting, gardening, seeing the sights, giving of her time in volunteering, listening to Sarah sing, and time with her dog Penny.

Surviving family include her parents, Bob and Phyllis of Alford, IA; daughters, Jamie and fiancé Shane Foster of Champlin, MN, and Sarah and special friend David Vosika of Plymouth, MN; brothers, Tom (Kimberly) Sullivan of Sioux Falls, James (Ann) Sullivan of White Bear Lake, MN; and sister, Susan (David) Berg of Vermillion.

Laura was preceded in death by a brother, John Sullivan.

### Marcella Oden

Marcella (Mars) Lovre Oden passed away peacefully on Friday, July 5, 2013, in Peoria, AZ, at the age of 90.

Mars was born on Nov. 18, 1922, in Sacred Heart, MN, to Marcus and Clara Dosseth. After graduating from high school in Sacred Heart, Mars earned her degree in elementary education from Augustana College in Sioux Falls. Mars took a teaching position in Toronto, SD, where she met Vernon Lovre. Mars and Vern were married in Sacred Heart on March 17, 1946. Together, they had three children, JoAnn, Mark and John.

The family settled in Brookings until the sudden death of Vernon in July 1963. Four years after Vern's passing Mars married widower Robert Oden and the family moved to Vermillion.

Mars was a homemaker and took great pride in caring for her family and creating a lovely home. Mars was also known to have a flare for hosting and entertaining family and friends, especially during the holiday season. Mars was active in PEO, League of Women Voters and the Lutheran Church. She enjoyed golfing in the summer and playing bridge in the winter.

In 1989 Bob and Mars moved to Phoenix to enjoy the warm weather, golfing, reading and relaxation. Mars also enjoyed singing in the choir at their church, American Lutheran in Sun City, AZ.

Mars is survived by her husband, Robert of Peoria, AZ; three children, JoAnn



Oden

(Fred) Winkler of St. Augustine, FL, Mark (Janet) Lovre of Sioux Falls, and John Lovre of Brookings; step-children Jane (Walt) Stull of Minneapolis, MN, Rob (Theresa) Oden of Hanover, CT; step-daughter-in-law Carolyn Oden of Seattle, WA; two sisters Joan (Rod) Skalbeck of Sacred Heart, MN and Corrine Kirkhart of Wichita, KS; 10 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren (who affectionately referred to her as "Nana") and numerous nieces and nephews.

Mars was preceded in death by her parents; husband (Vern); brother (Steve); brother-in-law (Winston); and step-son (Paul).

A memorial of remembrance will be held on Aug. 17, 2013, at 11 a.m. at the First Lutheran Church in Brookings. Memorials may be made in Mars's name to the First Lutheran Church in Brookings. For obituary and online registry please visit [www.menkefuneralhome.com](http://www.menkefuneralhome.com).

### Robert Livingston

Randy Richard Livingston, 56, of Council Bluffs, IA, passed away on July 27, 2013, at the Douglas County Health Center in Omaha, NE, with family by his side after a courageous battle with FTD/ALS.

A visitation was held from 5 to 7 p.m., with a rosary and scriptural service at 7 p.m., on Thursday, Aug. 1, 2013, at St. Agnes Catholic Church of Vermillion.



Livingston

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A funeral mass will be held at 10 a.m. on Friday, Aug. 2, 2013, at St. Agnes with Fr. John Fischer officiating.

Burial will take place at Calvary Cemetery in Vermillion, immediately following the mass. Military Honors will be provided by V.F.W. Post 3061 and American Legion Post 0001.

Randy was born on June 15, 1957, in Wichita, KS, to Robert and Bobbie (Barb) Livingston. Randy graduated from Elk Point High School in 1975. On Dec. 3, 1976, he married his high school sweetheart, Susanna (Susie Beach) Livingston. Through this union brought two beautiful daughters. Randy served in the U.S. Air Force from 1975-1979 and received a double major in psychology and business from UNO and Bellevue University. He worked as a civil service supervisor for the federal government for 34 years at Offutt Air Force Base. On Nov. 25, 2002, he received the 2002 President's Quality Award from President Bush for reconstructing a plan for manpower to save 58 percent in costs annually in Washington DC.

Randy coached many kids for many years in tee-ball, coach pitch and fast pitch softball. His coaching skills led to his daughter being inducted into the Iowa Hall of Fame for

pitching. He enjoyed helping children reach their highest potential and chasing their dreams. He enjoyed working out at the Offutt SAC Fieldhouse, spending time with his family and took great interest in aviation and space programs. Randy was very patriotic and loved his country.

Randy is survived by his wife, Susie Livingston of Council Bluffs, IA; his daughters, Heidi (Grant) Watts of Council Bluffs, IA, and Jamie (Jay) Dilts of Council Bluffs, IA; his grandsons, Max Watts, and Keaton Dilts of Council Bluffs, IA; his mother, Bobbie (Barb) Livingston of Elk Point; his brothers, Joe Livingston of Fort Worth, TX, Kerry (Marilyn) Livingston of Colorado Springs, CO, and David Livingston of Stepcove, WA; his sister, Lisa Wixon of Centerville; as well as many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his father, Robert Livingston; and his faithful dog, Chauncy, who will be laid to rest with him.

In lieu of flowers, memorials are suggested to the Douglas County Health Center in Omaha, NE, or the FTD and ALS foundations.

Services have been entrusted to Kober Funeral Home of Vermillion.

Condolences may be posted online at [www.koberfuneralhome.com](http://www.koberfuneralhome.com).

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