

MUSEUM **BILLBOARD**

Celebrating American Roadside Advertising

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CHARCOAL OVEN SIGNAGE GETS SAFE HAVEN!



Photos by Kathy Anderson



The first sign lasted just 2 years and was replaced by the Chef in 1960.

Image courtesy of Charcoal Oven archives



The Chef sign started life with a star on the top!

Image courtesy of Charcoal Oven archives



G&S Sign Services begins the removal process. The sign was separated into 3 pieces and it took 2 days to completely remove it and all other signage from the property.

Photo by Kathy Anderson

Charcoal Oven Signage Stored at the Billboard Museum Warehouse!

It was a sad day for Charcoal Oven customers when the 58-year old iconic hamburger drive-in closed on September 11, 2016. The Facebook page for the restaurant was filled with mourning fans' memories and photos of first dates and family outings. Opened in 1958, the drive-in quickly became part of mid-20th century car culture and a favorite hang-out for families and teens. For weeks before the closing, traffic was backed up in the restaurant's driveway and down the Northwest Expressway with folks craving one last Theta Burger and Suzy-Q fries.

Since 1960, the 22-foot tall red, black, and white sign with its signature chef was an Oklahoma City Northwest Expressway icon. The restaurant's owner, 84-year old David Wilson, has run Charcoal Oven from day one and decided to retire, selling the property. The drive-in will be replaced by a useful but less romantic tire store.

Signs like these become part of the landscape of collective memory and aren't missed until they are gone. Part of the Billboard Museum Association's mission is to rescue, preserve, restore, and safeguard endangered local historic signs. The goal is to publicly display them for all to continue enjoying rather than see them disappear into a private collection, hauled out of state, or worse, not cared for, then discarded.

The Wilson family retains ownership of the sign, menu boards, and other signage as well as the kitchen equipment while the Billboard Museum is providing indoor storage for everything, waiving any rental fees.

Anne Wilson, David's daughter said, "We wanted the sign safely in storage so we could take all the time we needed to decide what the best and highest purpose is for the sign."

Until that time, their property will remain in storage at the Association's warehouse.

Easy Does It!

Jim Gleason, owner of G&S Sign Services and Vice-President of the Billboard Museum Association, oversaw dismantling of the sign on Monday, September 12. The crew worked for two days, performing a careful inspection, doing a practice lift, and installing supports for removal. Gleason said the biggest challenge for the crew was not breaking the porcelain sign. It can never be placed on its side or it will shatter under its own weight. Keeping it upright while dismantling, loading and moving was a delicate operation.

The double pipe supports, or a pipe within a pipe that held up the sign, were a surprise to the sign crew. "It was hard to cut and make it stay upright." However, Gleason concluded by saying that the sign was in extremely good condition. "The upkeep on it was amazing. He (David Wilson) took really good care of it."

G&S Sign Services also removed the menu boards and additional signage on the property.

Talk about riding into the sunset. See G&S Sign Services' Facebook page and scroll down for one last wistful view of the top piece of the sign leaving the property on a G&S truck. The video was shot by Anne Wilson and the caption that accompanies it says, "This will put a lump in your throat." The post has received 157,000 views. It's a testament to the fondness people have for the historic business and its sign, and confirmation that signs are important to a community's identity.



Photos by Kathy Anderson



Billboard Museum Association, Inc. Now Listed with GiveSmartOKC!

The Billboard Museum Association, Inc. is pleased to announce that our non-profit organization is now listed on GiveSmartOKC: www.givesmartokc.org. On the homepage, click on the link "Find," type in the name Billboard Museum and then "View Details." In order to be included, an organization must be in existence three years, be registered as a 501(3)c with the IRS and submit detailed financial and management information.

GiveSmartOKC is a website of comprehensive information about charitable organizations in eight counties in central Oklahoma. The Oklahoma City Community Foundation administers GiveSmartOKC. At a later date, the Museum will also be profiled on GuideStar (www.guidestar.org), a national database of 501(3)c non-profits in the United States.

Looking for ideas about where to volunteer your time or make a donation? Both databases provide vital background information about governance, management and financials so you can make smart decisions about sharing your precious time and resources.

Found at Auction— Sign Painter's Portfolio!

Justin and Shannon Booher are donating to the Billboard Museum Association an antique scrapbook/portfolio that belonged to W.F. Meyer, a designer of storefront signs. Dates inside this portfolio stretch from 1911 to 1949. There are 58 original letters--most of which are letters of recommendation by banks, acknowledging previous work Meyer had done for them. Many are based in Oklahoma.

There are also around 50 or so pictures of the work he did, plus 19 drawings. This portfolio depicts the amazing array of skills sign painters had back in the day.



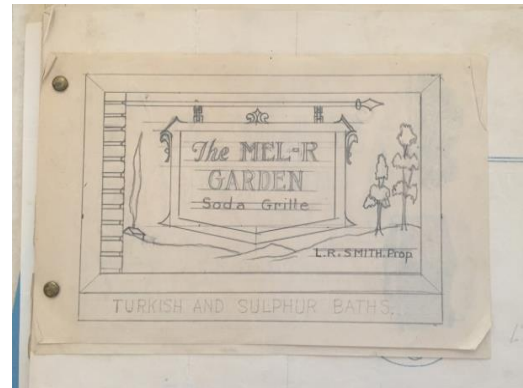
*All photos courtesy of
Justin & Shannon Booher*

Any Surface Fair Game...

Meyer moved to Santa Cruz, CA, in 1923 and died there in 1956. Before moving to Santa Cruz he was foreman of a General Outdoor Advertising plant at Rochester, NY. He was born in Wheeling, WV but was employed in many of the larger cities and towns in the United States, and spent some time in Oklahoma. In the late 1930s he once related that while driving through the town of Erick in western Oklahoma, he saw gold signs painted by him on the First National Bank windows twenty years earlier.

His obituary notes, "A sign painter and artist, Meyer was widely known for his excellent scale models of buildings. Among the edifices he built models of were the Independence Hall in Philadelphia, the Wrigley building and The Sentinel-News building in Santa Cruz. Among his paintings was one of the Last Supper which he gave to the First Congregational church some years ago."

Justin Booher is on the Board of the Billboard Museum Association and serves as volunteer coordinator. Special thanks to you and Shannon for finding and donating this fascinating glimpse into the life of a sign painter!



Soda Grille with Turkish and Sulphur Baths? What a place!





In early 2017, we hope to recreate this awesome 1940s billboard!
Image courtesy of OAAA Archives, Duke University

Become a member and help the Museum become a reality!
 Your contributions enable this currently all-volunteer organization to grow. Donations of any amount are also accepted to help restore the signs that have been acquired as well as further the mission of the Association. Thank you!

Board of Directors:

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Junior Poster (Student/Retiree)	\$25.00
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Streamline (Family)	\$100.00
Lizzie (Sustaining)	\$500.00
Spectaculars (Corporate)	\$1000.00



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Billboard Museum Association, Inc., PO Box 446, Bethany, OK 73008