

Oak Cliff Society of Fine Arts to feature artists from Dallas' past

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The Oak Cliff Society of Fine Arts will honor a dozen prominent 1930s and 1940s Dallas artists tonight, featuring a special presentation on Florence McClung.

Tonight's Wine and Art benefits the 100-year-old Turner House, headquarters for the Oak Cliff Society of Fine Arts.

The organization's third annual Wine and Art event will raise money for the restoration of its headquarters, the Turner House. Mrs. McClung's 1946 work Dallas Skyline is a prominent piece of the society's collection.

Art gallery owner David Dike will speak at the pre-event presentation featuring works of Mrs. McClung, who died in 1992 at age 97.

"Some of these paintings haven't been seen since 1947 or 1948," her grandson Anthony McClung said. He and his brother, Bill McClung, will offer anecdotes giving insight into their grandmother's personality and the events of her life.

When Mrs. McClung was painting, it was difficult for women to succeed outside of homemaking duties. Mr. McClung tells of the backlash surrounding his grandmother's passion.

"She wasn't turning paintings out to make a living like others were doing at the time," Mr. McClung said. "A lot of the 'Dallas Nine,' which she was considered to be a part of, and other artists even, were jealous when her painting [Lancaster Valley] was purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York."

Oak Cliff Society of Fine Arts officials believe her devotion to local subject matter, her unique success and the rarity of her paintings' viewings necessitated a spotlight in this evening's program.

Other featured artists are Charles Bowling, Jerry Bywaters, Harry Carnohan, Reid Crowell, Jessie Davis, John Douglass, Otis Dozier, Alexander Hogue, William Lester, Everett Spruce and Olin Travis.

Sons of the society's founding member and longtime president, Mrs. E.P. Turner, donated her Marsalis Avenue home to the society in 1938. The group sold the home to the state and purchased the current home at 401 N. Rosemont Ave., with the proceeds in 1957, renaming the home the E.P. Turner Clubhouse.

The restoration of Turner House, estimated to cost around \$1.6 million, is slated for completion in 2012. A center of culture and society in its prime, with as many as 600 female members around 1933, the society opened its membership to men in 2000. There are currently about 100 members.

The Wine and Arts event features Texas wine courtesy of Times 10 Cellars, heavy hors d'oeuvres and a string quartet. Those who purchase tickets are considered associate members of the organization.

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