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# Ten People We Watched in 2017



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GTR Newspapers annually highlights individuals predicted to be newsmakers. Here, we review the "10 People We Watched in 2017."

### G.T. Bynum

Tulsa Mayor G.T. Bynum has spent his first year in office working toward his campaign promise to re-establish Tulsa on the global stage.

In September, Bynum announced that he would make a bid to lure Amazon to Tulsa as the location of Amazon's second corporate headquarters.

In order to impact Tulsa's rising violent crime numbers, 90 police officers were hired this year, with 90 more officers to be hired in 2018. The city also received a grant to hire 60 firefighters this year.

In Bynum's first month as mayor, he convened the Tulsa Commission on Community Policing in an effort to begin implementation of one of the most comprehensive community policing initiatives in the nation.

In order to improve city beautification efforts, medians and rights-of-way are now being mowed at a higher frequency. Also, additional street maintenance workers and traffic signal repair crews have been hired.

Other areas of Bynum's focus include addressing racial disparity and citywide education needs and utilizing data to improve city government.

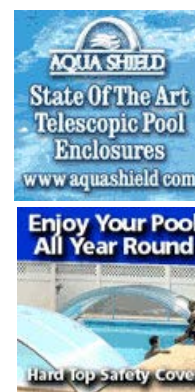
### Laura Chalus

Upon entering her role as executive director of the Tulsa Garden Center in August 2016, Laura Chalus had a number of high-priority items to address, with one of the most pressing issues being the improvement of its rose garden, which had lost about half of its rose bushes due to Rose Rosette Disease.

The five-tiered rose garden now includes a research garden and pollinator and other non-rose plants.

The research element of the garden came about through a partnership with Oklahoma State University and the American Rose Society. The research garden allows rose experts from across the country to study Rose Rosette Disease and search for solutions in fighting the disease.

In line with the rose garden's new look, the organization's annual fundraiser, An



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Evening of Wine & Roses, was rebranded as The Tasting at Woodward Park after the event took a one-year hiatus in 2016.

When the fundraiser took place in November, it featured high-end restaurants and wineries and allowed access to the Linnaeus Teaching Garden and Woodward Park.

### **Tony Moore**

Tony Moore began his role as park director for A Gathering Place for Tulsa in August 2016. In his role, Moore is responsible for full operational and programmatic oversight of the Gathering Place and for downtown Tulsa's Guthrie Green.

Moore, a native of Jamaica, brings more than 30 years experience in the entertainment park industry. He began with his first job as a part-time operations employee at Sea World and went on to work in various roles, including marketing, environmental, health and safety, and culinary operations, at a number of Orlando-area entertainment parks. Most recently, Moore served as chief operating officer at Lowry Park Zoo in Tampa, Florida.

The first phase of the Gathering Place, along Riverside Drive, is planned to open by spring/summer 2018.

In order to provide a sneak peek, Tulsa-area elementary students will be invited to visit the five-acre Adventure Playground, which will be completed by January.

The \$350-million park will include natural trails, a large green space, recreational water activities and educational programming.

### **Daniel Sperle**

Tulsa native Daniel Sperle took the role of executive director of Tulsa Bike Share in August 2016.

Tulsa Bike Share was started by INCOG (Indian Nations Council of Governments) in 2014. It is part of the GO Plan and will receive a portion of funds from Vision Tulsa.

Sperle earned his bachelor's degree in visual communications from the University of Oklahoma in 2013 and his master's in architectural urban studies from OU-Tulsa.

Sperle's hope is to create a bike share program that will be "at the forefront of where bike share is going," he says.

In line with that goal, Sperle and program stakeholders have been very deliberate in their formation of the program.

Phase I of the program was last expected to launch in spring of this year. However, because the equipment selected for the program is still in development, the launch date needed to be rescheduled, says Sperle.

Currently, the launch is planned for May 2018 with details regarding the equipment, bicycle station locations and branding soon to come, he continues.

### **Ken Chapman**

The Salvation Army Tulsa Area Commander and Captain Ken Chapman, a Georgia native, came to Tulsa with his wife in June 2016.

Part of Chapman's focus in Tulsa has revolved around finding ways to increase the budget for the area command.

The Tulsa command serves 109,000 children per year, in part through its six area Boys and Girls Clubs, Chapman notes. It also serves 357,000 meals per year at its downtown shelter, located at 102 N. Denver Ave.

The Salvation Army also offers financial assistance to people in need, help during natural disasters, and emotional and spiritual aid.

Earlier this year, the Tulsa command launched the Power of Twelve, a fundraising campaign originated by Chapman. The goal of the campaign is to encourage 12,000 individuals to pledge to donate \$12 per month for 12 months, which would raise, in total, over \$1.7 million for the Tulsa Area Command, he says.

With the holiday season, the organization is also currently in the midst of its



annual Red Kettle Campaign.

### **Stephanie Cameron**

As 2017 chair of Tulsa's Young Professionals, Stephanie Cameron's and the organization's 2017 accomplishments include TYPros' Day at the Capitol, 2017 Street Cred event that highlighted the role of highway infrastructure and urban development, its Boomtown Awards and other initiatives that strengthened the core mission of TYPros, Cameron notes.

This year's Street Cred event, called "Bridging the Brady," was held in June in the Tulsa Arts District (formerly the Brady Arts District) and focused on how cities address highway infrastructure when it becomes a physical barrier. A local example of this is how Interstate 244 cuts through the northern end of the Brady Arts District, hindering its connection to the Brady Heights neighborhood and north Tulsa, she notes.

Although the district is already well developed, TYPros chose the area for the event largely due to its proximity to north Tulsa.

"Having a connection to north Tulsa is a critical component for community dialogue."

Cameron is state director of OK2Grow and Dream It Do It Oklahoma and recently became community relations administrator for AAON, Inc.

### **Dr. Gerard Clancy**

Dr. Gerard Clancy became president of the University of Tulsa in January.

During his inaugural year, the school has dealt with a number of challenges, including the loss of certification status for its teacher preparation program, on-campus rape allegations and the recent death of President Emeritus Steadman Upham.

Regarding the university's loss of teacher preparation certification, Clancy says that TU is working to both regain the certification and provide a solution for affected students.

The university recently launched new education programs and policies to impact on-campus student safety, and a five-year strategic plan was recently unveiled.

The strategic plan's objectives include promoting an inclusive, diverse and safe campus; new scholarship opportunities; expansion of programs focused on emerging interest in innovation and social justice; and strengthening TU's role as an economic engine for the region.

Areas of focus include data analytics, health sciences, neuroscience, entrepreneurship and creating start-ups, cybersecurity for the U.S. military and the business sectors, coding, and programs to recruit veterans.

### **Kimberly Johnson**

Kimberly Johnson, who has worked for the Tulsa City-County Library for nearly 20 years, was named the organization's CEO in January.

Johnson is a New York native who earned her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Tulsa and her Master of Library and Information Science from the University of Oklahoma.

She began as the coordinator of the African-American Resource Center at Rudisill Regional Library. From there, she held various positions, including library manager, regional director and chief operating officer.

Since Johnson took over as CEO in January, she has made it a goal to visit each library location within the library system, which she has done two times over, she says.

Also, in the past six months, library staff has hosted library systems from Frisco, Texas, and Washington, D.C.

"Our library system is something that our customers can be proud of," she says. "We are a model system for the country because of our offerings."

During summer 2017, the library saw 52,000 participants in its summer reading program.

"We are creating a more literate community," she says.

### **Phil Albert**

Phil B. Albert, president of Pelco Structural, LLC, located in Claremore, served as the 2017 Tulsa Regional Chamber board chairman.

This was the first time in the history of the chamber that the board chair's business resides in a regional partner community outside of Tulsa.

Albert credits the chamber's annual OneVoice Agenda as the catalyst in establishing the chamber as Northeast Oklahoma's regional leader.

Recently, the chamber created its OneVoice 2018 Regional Legislative Agenda with its regional objectives including creating an educated and healthy workforce, mental health and criminal justice reform, funding OCAST (Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology), modernizing the state's alcohol laws, and municipal funding diversification.

Each year, to create its OneVoice Agenda, the chamber forms task forces of leaders in business and the community to determine the leading regional issues and concerns for the coming year.

"It's a deliberate and well-vetted process," Albert says. "I think (the effort put into this process) is the reason that when we visit cities to discuss our OneVoice objectives, people listen."

**Scott Stulen**

Scott Stulen officially became director of Philbrook Museum of Art in August 2016, succeeding Rand Suffolk.

Since coming to Philbrook, Stulen has led the charge to further engage the community.

To increase educational partnerships, the Philbrook team provided area teachers with museum memberships and changed its hours in order to offer more weekday visitation opportunities for school teachers and their students.

Philbrook is using its 8,000-square-foot vegetable garden to provide food for its restaurant, La Villa, to donate produce to local nonprofits, and to create additional learning opportunities. The garden is also home to beehives and a dome that serves as an outdoor classroom.

In September, the museum began offering extended hours on Friday evenings in order to incorporate new programs, such as films on the lawn, discussions and adult versions of the museum's second Saturday offerings.

Coming to the Philbrook grounds in spring 2018 is a stained-glass log cabin—a long-time dream project of Stulen's. The cabin will be available for various community uses, including events and classes. Musicians even want to record in it, he says.

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