

Local writers pen book on Gallup's notable denizens

Written by By Babette Herrmann Sun Editor
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Gallup *Independent* Elizabeth Hardin-Burrola didn't set out to write the book, "Legendary Locals of Gallup."

Instead, it came about like one of those things that fall into place and blossom given the right opportunity – by happenstance, one could say.

Hardin-Burrola was approached by Arcadia Publishing, based out of Charleston, South Carolina, about three years ago, give or take, to pen a book highlighting the people that make Gallup special. It's part of Arcadia's "legendary locals" series of books.

"This is series specific to small, regional histories," she said.

No doubt decorated Korean War hero, Medal of Honor recipient Hiroshi "Hershey" Miyamura made the cut. So did the late Gallup *Independent* publisher John Zollinger and his beloved widow Martha Zollinger. Even balloonist, Chamber of Commerce executive and County Commissioner Bill Lee is featured.

Oodles of prominent folks made the cut, more than 140 in all.

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The 128-page book features a paragraph – or three – on each person or group, divided into four chapters: History Makers, Traders and Native Culture, Community Builders, and Creative Voices.

Hardin-Burrola struggled on whether she should take on the challenge due to an already hectic schedule. So, she sought the help of two other history-loving buffs – retired librarian and writer Carol Sarath and local attorney and former Gallup mayor Bob Rosebrough.

“I really didn’t want to do it by myself,” she said, adding that her partners were at the ready to help her tell the stories of the numerous beloved locals that fill the book’s pages.

Sarath used her librarian prowess to dig into the past; Hardin-Burrola had access to old newspaper clippings and photos; and Rosebrough’s writing skills and analytical attorney mind made for an exceptionally balanced and powerful writing trio.

Rosebrough deemed the collaboration as “beneficial,” saying each writer brought something special to the mix.

“I think the book is broad and diverse,” Rosebrough said. “There were many people interviewed that I didn’t know about.”

Full of colorful characters, when asked what particular individual stood out to each writer, it took a moment for the trio being interviewed together to come up with one person in specific.

But they did, well, sort of.

Hardin-Burrola was captivated by Jesus Arviso’s biography. As a young Mexican boy, he was enslaved by the Apaches, then traded to a Navajo man in exchange for a horse. He served as a Spanish and Navajo language translator, and made the historical and tragic long walk to Fort Sumner alongside the Navajos. He rose to prominence when he served as an interpreter during

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the high stakes Treaty of 1868.

"Who would have ever thought that he would end up being a part of Navajo history?" she said.

Sarath felt an immediate connection to the biography of Kenji Kawano, a Japanese-American photographer who hitched a ride with Navajo Code Talker Carl Gorman in 1975. The rest is history, and what has emerged following that chance meeting were the creation of artistic photographs of Navajo landscapes and people.

"He's someone people don't hear about," she said. "He's an amazing person."

Rosebrough had a tougher time, saying "there's a lot of favorites."

"The collection of people of Gallup speaks to the richness of our community," he added.

He mentioned the late Native activist Larry Casuse, and former Gallup mayor Emmett Garcia. Casuse and an accomplice kidnapped then-mayor Garcia by gunpoint. Casuse reportedly wasn't pleased with Garcia's appointment to the UNM Board of Regents because of his partial ownership of a bar. Shots were fired, and Casuse died.

"I feel of a great deal of empathy toward those two profiles," Rosebrough said.

None of the authors plan on getting rich from any royalties paid out on the book.

Instead, they decided to donate proceeds to their favorite charity.

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The authors will be selling and signing copies of the book during Saturday's ArtsCrawl. They will be at ART123, located at 123 W. Coal Ave., from 7 to 9 pm. Author proceeds from the book, which sells for \$21.99, are being donated to: Adventure Gallup, Big Brothers Big Sisters Mountain Region and GallupARTS.

Information: Elizabeth Hardin-Burrola at (505) 870-0745.

By Babette Herrmann

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