

Sports author holds book signing

Written by Gallupsun Staff

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Sports: a subject no longer left by the wayside on Route 66

Staff Reports

One of the main roads that runs through Gallup has been highlighted in books, songs, movies, TV shows, and every other form of entertainment: Route 66. This road, spanning 2,400 miles, eight states, and three time zones, is a symbol of the country and its culture.

But while most attention has been given to historic buildings, landmarks, and towns along Route 66, one person felt there was a crucial aspect of American culture that has been left by the side of the road: sports.

That person is Ron Clements, a Wisconsin native who has written a new book that aims to give attention to this neglected part of the history of America's highway in, "A Sport Fan's Guide to Route 66."

Clements and his wife began a tour to launch the guide in August, stopping at 15 towns along Route 66. On Sept. 18 they made their way to Sammy C's Rock N' Sports Pub & Grille. He spoke with the *Sun* about the experience.

"The book signing went great," Clements said. "We had a good turnout and Sammy [Chioda] was such a wonderful and hospitable host. Sammy C's is an amazing place."

COMING BACK

A return was in the cards since Clements last visited Gallup. He came alone the first time.

"I had been talking about it ever since my 2019 visit and my wife was wondering if it would live up to the hype, because she didn't go with me," Clements said. "She was in awe of the place on Saturday, so it did indeed live up to the hype."

Clements said he had anticipated the trip to Gallup for weeks, and in addition to the welcoming atmosphere at the book signing, he was surprised by the other doses of culture he discovered.

“What I didn’t realize back then is how many murals downtown Gallup has,” Clements said. “After the book signing ended, my wife and I walked around Gallup and took several photos of the murals. Then we saw a movie at the El Morro Theatre. We spent a week in Gallup and thoroughly enjoyed it.”

THE STATE’S IDENTITY

The book’s website highlights rodeo as the biggest deal in sports across New Mexico, but soccer and basketball are not far behind. Clements emphasized the popularity of basketball in the state, which also houses one of college basketball’s most iconic venues, The Pit in Albuquerque, where the New Mexico Lobos play.

“I think we all know that basketball is everything in Gallup,” Clements said. “After speaking with both Sammy C and Jessica Dooley at Gallup High School in 2019, that was very clear. Having dynastic programs like Gallup has is rather impressive.”

Clements said another unique aspect of the regions surrounding Gallup that caught his attention were the landscapes, which captivated him and his wife.

“Driving into and then away from Gallup, we were amazed by the region’s natural beauty,” he said.

Since 2018, Clements and his wife have traveled the country in an RV “in search of new adventures.” He said they stayed at USA RV Park, 2925 W. Hwy. 66, and as of Sept. 21, copies of “A Sports Fan’s Guide to Route 66” was available for sale at the park’s gift shop.

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For more information on Ron Clements, his book, and more updates on his journeys across the country, visit <https://sportsguide-rte66.scenicsidetrips.com/>.