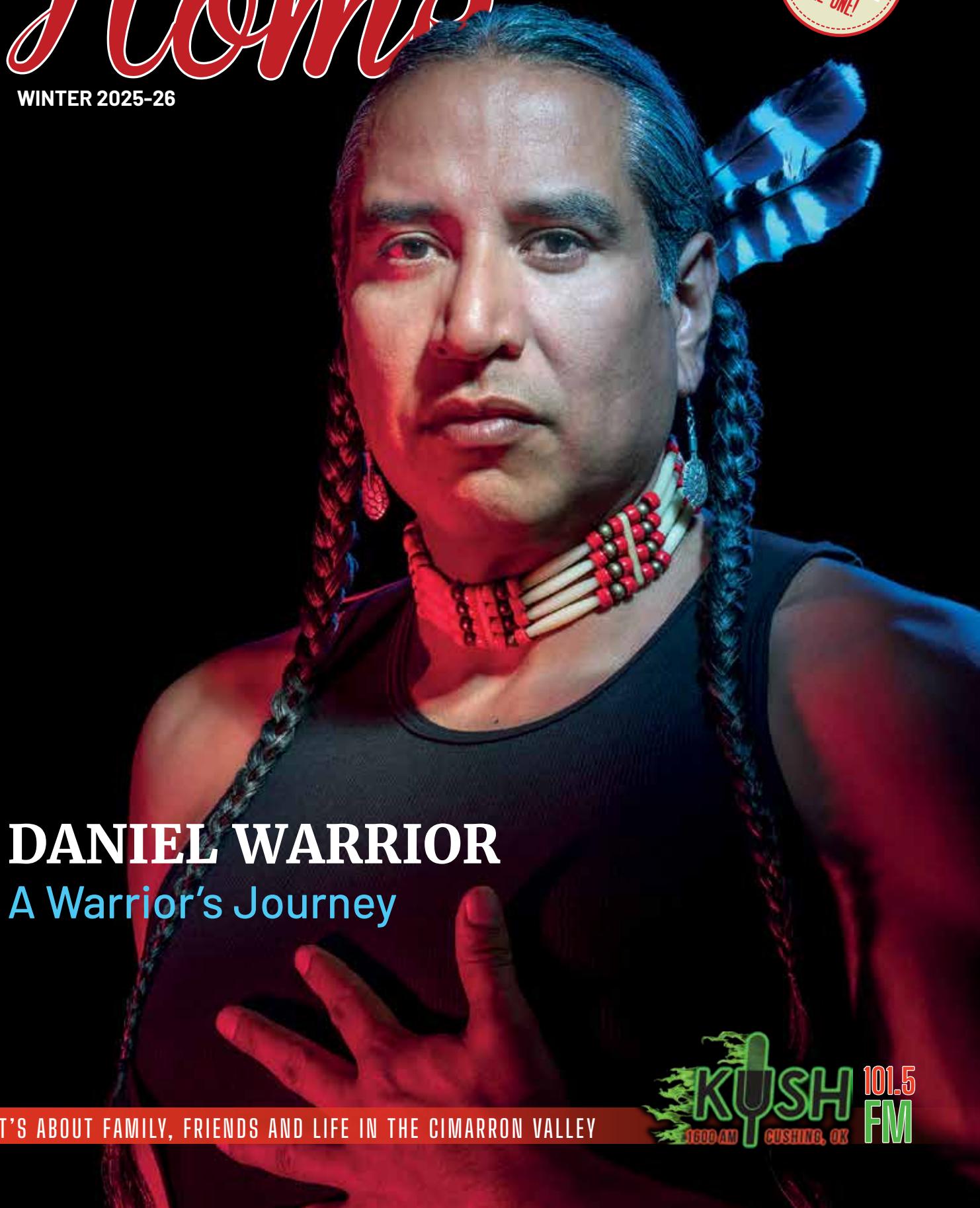


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DANIEL WARRIOR

A Warrior's Journey

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PUBLISHER / Oil Patch Radio Corp

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ADVERTISING / Jim Cox

COVER PHOTO / Ken Pivak Photography

GRAPHIC DESIGN AND LAYOUT / Cheryl Payne

PRINTER / Cable Printing, Lindsay, OK

Oil Patch Radio Corp
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WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR...

Happy New Year!
From our *Home*™ to yours!

Welcome back HOME!

"Home is where love resides, memories are created, friends always belong, and laughter never ends." - Unknown

Is it just me or did 2025 really fly by that fast?

It's been a longer than usual time between issues of our HOME magazine, but I think you will find this one worth the wait! From its beautiful cover featuring Daniel Warrior, to stories about people we know and the insightful ponderings of myself and Sara, this HOME magazine has been a labor of love. Much like birthing a baby, the process can be painful and anxiety-filled as well as hopeful and joyous. But once it can be held in our hands and shared with others - it's all worth it!

My heartfelt thanks goes to all of you who've been a part of this venture - I truly couldn't do it without you.

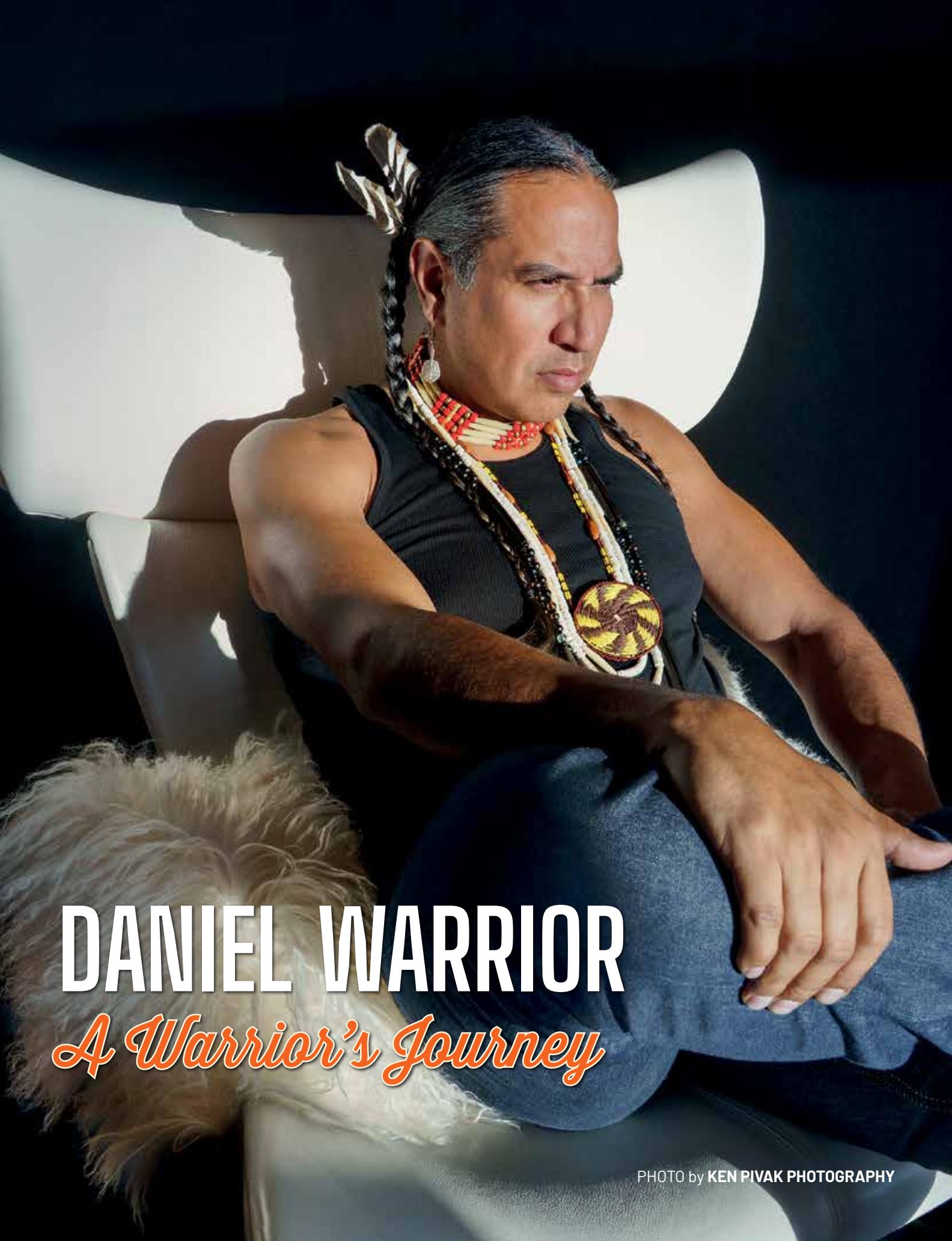
2025 marked 10 years since the birth of our HOME magazine. In February, KUSH Radio will turn 73. At a time where terrestrial radio and print are considered "dying breeds" - your support through advertising, sponsorships and as listeners/readers is needed more than ever.

If you enjoy the uniqueness of what we do here at KUSH, please let us know. We'd love to hear from you!

Let's all work together to make 2026 a great year!

Enjoy!

-Molly



DANIEL WARRIOR

A Warrior's Journey

PHOTO by **KEN PIVAK PHOTOGRAPHY**

“It’s funny how we are placed into this immaculate and beautiful predicament called, ‘Life’. We are born as a budding seed without directions or a blueprint for a finished product, but yearning for knowledge and given a plethora of gifts and talents to use for the Creator.” –Daniel Warrior

by **MOLLY PAYNE**

Some people spend their life searching for a happy ending; Daniel Warrior however, has learned to find happiness in the journey.

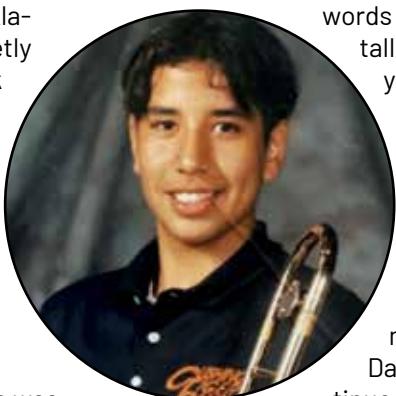
Daniel, the youngest of four sons, began his journey living in Indian Housing in Cushing, Oklahoma. He was the quietly intense boy in the back of the classroom, using a rudimentary set of crayons to create his latest artistic masterpiece. He was the shy, curious kid throwing newspapers all across town, wondering what was beyond its borders. He was the “band nerd” – tapping on his girlfriend’s window to say goodnight on his way home from practice.

“Yea, I was a big nerd,” Daniel said with a self-deprecating laugh.

But Daniel was also a dreamer... and a perfectionist. Whatever he dreamed up to focus on, he would figure out how to do it the best way possible – and do it.

“I would work for hours making circles over and over until I could draw one perfectly,” he said, giving an example. Even today, Daniel will practice something time and time again until he’s satisfied with the results.

Between 8th and 9th grade Daniel’s life changed. He GREW – literally. “I went to a Science and Math camp at OSU for three months and came home a foot taller,” Daniel recalled with a laugh. “I just wanted to be as tall



as the refrigerator, but when I came home I could put my elbow on it!”

Daniel’s physical change from a 5’6” chubby kid to a lean 6’6” young man garnered the attention of his peers, as well as adults. “Popular kids started talking to me, girls started talking to me,” Daniel said. “I was ‘forced’ to become an extrovert.”

It also changed his own perspective. “It’s like changing your camera angle,” Daniel said insightfully. “You see things differently.” He gathered his mother’s words of admonishment and took them to heart, “You’re going to be a tall guy. You’re going to need to take care of everyone smaller than you.”

As one might imagine, Daniel’s growth spurt also caught the eye of coaches; so as he moved into high school, basketball became a main focus. Having learned and competed against his older brothers who were superb basketball players, Daniel worked diligently to hone his basketball skills. He believed if he worked hard enough, basketball could be the vehicle to take him beyond the limits of his hometown. With the help of mentors such as Coach Tanner and his own drive to be the best, Daniel became a basketball “star” and earned a scholarship to continue his education. And although his basketball career at the college was cut short due to its closing, the seeds of a valuable lesson had been planted in Daniel: perseverance, hard work and belief in the value of the uniqueness of one’s self can open the door to unlimited possibilities. It is a lesson of hope and fulfillment Daniel continues to embrace and share with others.

“Because of our choices as a human race we have limited the greatness and vastness of God-given beautiful diversity. Our differences are a wonderful array of priceless oil paints brought together to complete a masterpiece that surpasses all earthly understanding of beauty. Until we learn this and until the right brushes and technique are utilized – we can, without a doubt, expect less than greatness in this gift of existence.” – Daniel Warrior



Once Daniel realized boundaries were self-imposed and life's possibilities were endless, he decided to reach for the stars. Daniel decided to add "Actor" to his blossoming resume.

HOLLYWOOD OR BUST

Daniel's first trip to Hollywood didn't pan out like he'd thought it would. He arrived there to do a play, thinking accommodations were part of the deal. Instead he found himself with no place to stay, no food and no money to provide either of those things. He made do as he could - taking shelter amongst the homeless community and sustenance through discarded restaurant scraps. He found solace and sleep in bottles of shared booze. Ultimately, Daniel ended up in the emergency room - weak, malnourished and confused. Learning of her son's predicament, his mother provided Daniel a plane ticket to her home and a place to heal. Realizing he needed help to rise from finding his "rock bottom" - Daniel checked himself into rehab.

← →

"As we soon find out, fate, experience, obstacles, and sheer chance determine our ever-growing structure and character. In our floor plan, walls will fall and rooms will change size and shape, but we are never limited by the edge of the paper." -Daniel Warrior

← →

He continued to work on himself - reshaping his mind and body, preparing for opportunities he believed would come his way. He found love and became a father.

Daniel also continued to dream of Hollywood.

"They're gonna put me in the movies...they're gonna make a big star out of me...and all I gotta do is act naturally..." -Act Naturally by Buck Owens

A couple of years ago, word spread about an upcoming movie that would not only be filmed in Oklahoma, but would have numerous opportunities for Native American actors and "extras." Learning that Pawhuska, OK would be the center of the activities in the filming of Killers of the Flower Moon, Daniel set his mind to be as near to the set as he could - Every. Single. Day. For three weeks he stood by the side of the road, taking note of the name badges of the crew passing by, shaking their hands and talking to them whenever he could. His 6'8" frame and striking countenance were enough to draw attention. But when Martin Scorsese rounded the corner and stopped to look up at Daniel and say, "You're magnificent!" Daniel knew he'd been noticed.



Tattoo by Daniel



Painting by Daniel representing him and his son



Daniel at Hollywood Walk of Fame in LA with his name superimposed on star.

"Words are so powerful!" Daniel said, emotionally. "No one had ever said that to me before. And for Martin Scorsese to say it...that meant a lot."

Daniel's persistence paid off - he was cast in the opening scene of Killers of the Flower Moon. "I even got to cry [in the scene]," Daniel said, grinning.

The experience was life changing. To date, Daniel's acting credits include Killers of the Flower Moon, Yellowstone, Tulsa King 2, Lawmen: Bass Reeves, and Seven Cemeteries.

As much as Daniel enjoys acting, it's not the desire for fame and fortune that drives him. It's for his children and his children's children. The legacy Daniel will leave behind comes at a price. But it's the currency of love that is dictating the amount spent.

Actor, graphic artist, painter, tattoo artist, drummer, speaker, voice over talent, singer, basketball player are all titles Daniel wears. But "Dad" is the one he loves most. "I love my kids. I'm doing all of this for them," Daniel said. "I want them to look back and see me in a film or television show and say, 'that's my dad...that's my grand-dad...if he can do that, I can, too!'" Just

as Native actors/mentors before him, Daniel wants to instill the belief system to seek higher things rather than the goal of fame or fortune.

Daniel is a big proponent of the adage - "You've got to believe it to achieve it." He uses visualization as a way to instill courage and confidence sometimes needed to face the challenges of following one's dreams. For example, Daniel has a red carpet in his home...it leads to his drums he plays most days. Practicing "walking the red carpet" not only puts an action to his dream, but it allows him to visualize what it would be like to walk the red carpet at a movie premier. "I took a picture of a star on Hollywood Boulevard and inserted my name into it," Daniel admitted. Some may view such actions as a form of arrogance, but for Daniel visualization is a tool to achieve the right mind set during the pursuit.

← →

"We have embedded passions and goals and the ones that choose to pursue those passions become the leaders of our people and give us hope. Leading by example somehow lifts our spirits and sets the benchmark for greatness and achievement." -Daniel Warrior

← →

At 44, Daniel is still dreaming. He dreams of being a superhero for his Native people – for all people. "I want to make a difference without being labeled different," Daniel said. "We're all water in different water bottles."

Daniel is still learning...whether it's a line in a movie or knowing when to "let go and let God." He's seen what's at the bottom and is continually striving to reach the top. But in the meantime, Daniel Warrior is staying in the river as much as he can as he continues on his journey.

← →

"Stay in the river...it knows where it's going" -Daniel Warrior

← →

Daniel Warrior is a Native American actor and visual artist known for his commanding 6'8" presence (6'10" with his cowboy boots) and his commitment to authentic Indigenous storytelling. Of Mvskoke, Absentee Shawnee, and Rosebud Sioux descent, Warrior has appeared in major productions such as *Killers of the Flower Moon*, *Tulsa King*, *Yellowstone*, and *Seven Cemeteries*. He is also available for public speaking and appearances. You can follow the journey of Daniel Warrior on Facebook @Daniel Adam Warrior and Instagram @mr danwarrior 



Daniel gets a high five from one of his young fans in Edmond, OK.



PHOTO by KEN PIVAK PHOTOGRAPHY



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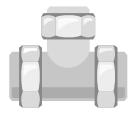
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A NOTABLE COUPLE:

Rachel and Griffin

by MOLLY PAYNE

I first met Rachel Lynch in 2018 when she came on the morning show to share her music. She and another musical friend, Mackenzie Fox, were headed on a tour and they'd heard of The KUSH from another friend. "I think it was Jake Flint who connected us," Rachel said. (Oh yes...Jake was always helping promote fellow singer/songwriters, as well as KUSH radio. Sure miss that guy.)

I found Rachel engaging, talented and a bit quirky. I'd never had a guest with a signature "snort" when laughing or someone who could "burp the alphabet" – but nonetheless I found Rachel to be very endearing. Not only is she not ashamed to admit her humanness, but she embraces it in a refreshing way. Rachel is Rachel. And I love her for that. Plus she has a great voice and a flair for capturing glimpses of real life in her song lyrics.

Rachel continued to hone her craft and soon formed her own band, Rachel Lynch & The Daydrinkers. She and her band were met with enthusiasm and in 2020 they released a self-titled album. Rachel's passion for music and entertaining continued to grow.

And then...fate stepped in one day in 2022 when Rachel met a bluegrass banjo player, Griffin Wade. While visiting after attending one of his shows, he and Rachel felt a connection right away. "It wasn't 'love at first sight,'" Griffin admits, but it was definitely "something." Griffin lived in Texas at the time so aside from an occasional in person visit, much of their correspondence was over the phone. It was during one of their late night calls Rachel realized she had fallen in love with Griffin. Knowing the feeling was reciprocated, it wasn't long before he made the decision to move to Oklahoma to be close to Rachel. They discovered their unique spirits were the perfect blend, musically and in life. Within a year of meeting, the couple were married.

Since then Rachel and Griffin have worked diligently to create the life they'd both dreamed of - using their artistic talents to entertain while building a sense of community based in love and inclusivity.

December 13, 2025, the couple saw another of their dreams fulfilled with the release of their first album - Rachel & Griffin: Live! At the Blue Door.

I was given a "sneak preview" of the album and I loved



Rachel, Griffin and me, Molly, in the studio.

not only the songs, but the energy felt because it was recorded live at the iconic listening room, The Blue Door. I found it to be as charming and funny as the duo - while giving a glimpse of what it's like to experience a Rachel and Griffin show.

Rachel and Griffin and their music embrace the acceptance of others as well as themselves, and inspire others to do the same.

Like many albums, it's hard to choose a favorite song. Whether it's Griffin's "Bluegrass Budget", expressing money woes or their love song "Make Me Melt" (aka "Ode to Butter") - each tells its unique story and together they compile a view of life through the special lenses of a couple of young, love-filled and hard-working musicians. Rachel and Griffin and their music embrace the acceptance of others as well as themselves, and inspire others to do the same.

"For the most part it's up to us, to choose who we become... don't let the traits of those who raised you keep you from YOU." - Traits, by Rachel Lynch

"Rachel & Griffin: Live! At the Blue Door" is available at rachealandgriffin.com or on all the streaming platforms. You can also follow Rachel and Griffin on social media. 



"Rachel & Griffin: Live! At the Blue Door" album

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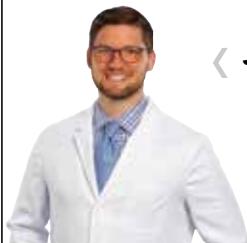
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CHANGING the ALGORITHM



by MOLLY PAYNE

Up until recent years I had never thought about algorithms. In fact, even when I first started becoming familiar with the word, I really had no idea what it meant. So I looked it up.

Algorithm: "a data-tracking system in which an individual's internet search history and browsing habits are used to present them with similar or related material on social media or other platforms." – Oxford dictionary

Well. That explains a lot of what comes up on my screen!

Recently I found myself in a funk, immobilized by events, responsibilities, relationships, etc...in other words, LIFE. I'd grown weary of reading/seeing all the negative and often divisive information on my social media feed. People saying mean things to and about each other...things one might never say to someone they have a relationship with, let alone to someone they don't even know. And yet there it was, every single day,

something new and uglier.

I decided to try to test the algorithm by clicking on one of the reels I usually let pass in lieu of something more salacious.

Here's some of what I saw.

I saw smiles spread across the faces of seniors and veterans as a man in the United Kingdom stopped people on the street to tell them they were beautiful and appreciated while presenting them with bouquets of colourful flowers.

I saw giving and gratitude as I watched Damon Darling spread his wealth unexpectedly by buying a small child a gaming machine, purchasing others groceries and handing out money to strangers to use in whatever way they desired.

I saw joyfulness in the faces of people watching or joining in as young men randomly started dancing to energetic tunes.

I saw art as I watched Trent, a young autistic man, tap into his special gift and draw incredible pictures at the request of his followers.

And guess what? I started feeling better – about myself and others. The world didn't seem quite as dark. I felt a need to shift some of those "habits" I'd found myself acquiring. But how?

On a recent First Indian Baptist Church broadcast I was listening to on KUSH, Brother Jr. Pratt shared a story about a "real Scrooge" he'd met years

I was reminded of an old Cherokee parable about an inner battle between two wolves – one representing negative traits (anger, greed, fear) and the other positive ones (joy, peace, love). The question posed is “which wolf do you feed?”

ago while working at a fast food restaurant. He and the woman sometimes shared the break room. Jr. would talk to her about things in his life while giving her the opportunity to talk about hers. The more he listened, the more she would open up. By getting to know her, he started seeing her in a different light. He learned she wasn't really a "Scrooge" as her reputation indicated. She was a fellow human who'd become distrustful and "hard" because of the things that had happened to her. Had he not taken the time to get to know her, he would have continued assuming she was a "bad" person, instead of discovering she was a person who'd had a lot of bad experiences. Brother Pratt concluded his story by admonishing listeners to overcome the "bad" by spreading "good."

Brother Pratt's suggestion resonated as an even better way to change the algorithm – through personal interaction, by spreading seeds of kindness and listening to and "seeing" others. And although I try to do these things on a daily basis, I know there's always room for improvement. I found myself reflecting on my own "algorithms." It's not just what we're "putting out" but what we're "taking in" that makes a difference in our mindset and our views of the people and world around us.

I was reminded of an old Cherokee parable about an inner battle between two wolves – one representing negative traits (anger, greed, fear) and the other positive ones (joy, peace, love). The question posed is "which wolf do you feed?" The answer and the core message is that the wolf you feed is the one

that wins – whichever one you devote your attention to, through your thoughts and actions, becomes stronger and dominates your life.

"Which wolf are you feeding?" the Universe whispered.

Gandhi is attributed with saying, "Be the change you wish to see in the world." If I want to see a change in my algorithm, whether it's on my social media page or the way I view life, the choice is mine. It's ours. And the only time we're guaranteed is... now.

"How lovely to think that no one need wait a moment. We can start now, start slowly, changing the world. How lovely that everyone, great and small, can make a contribution toward introducing justice straightforward. And you can always, always give something, even if it is only kindness!" – Anne Frank 



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Connections

by MOLLY PAYNE

Serendipity: “A sign of something bigger: a moment where the universe seems to bring two people together for a positive and life-changing outcome.”

I've had an abundance of serendipitous moments in my life - many have come because of my position at The KUSH. I feel fortunate to have been given the opportunity to form bonds with a wide array of people by listening and sharing their stories. Sometimes the connections are relatively brief, but many times the people who've walked through the station doors have become more than friendly acquaintances.

A few months ago, I received a phone call from a fella asking about having a song he'd written played on KUSH. While it wasn't an unusual request, the story behind the call was.

As many may know, Sean Kelly was the owner of the station when I came to work at KUSH in 2008. Back then, Sean was pretty much a “one man show” - taking care of the day-to-day programming, broadcasting the newscasts and Cushing Tiger football games. Just prior to my arrival on the scene, Sean and his son Aaron established a website for the station to post obituaries and an occasional news

story. Sean would search for local news to write about, but sometimes people would stop by or call to give him information about something of local interest. Jerry Deer was one of those people.

Back in the mid 2000s Jerry managed several MMA fighters who were from the area. After a competition in Louisiana, Jerry stopped by the radio station to see if Sean would be interested in doing a brief story about the fighters. During their conversation, they started talking about music and songwriting, a subject they discovered they had in common. When Sean learned Jerry had done some songwriting himself, he asked if he had anything recorded that might be deemed “radio worthy.” Jerry said he had some songs, but none that were finished enough for radio. Before the two men said goodbye, Sean told Jerry that if he ever had a song to play on KUSH, to be sure to let him know. Jerry thanked him for the offer, tucked away the information and went on down the road.

I've been trying to pay more attention to the weight my words may carry. Probably important since I spend a great portion of my time talking! But I'm also more aware of the words of others.

That was in 2007.

Fast forward to 2025...

A few months ago Jerry received a surprise birthday gift from his son, Tigran. It was a finished version of Jerry's song, "Keys in the Door" – a song he'd written nearly 20 years before.

Excited and pleased, Jerry called the station, hoping to talk to Sean about his song. Instead, I answered. Jerry had lived various lives, in various places since his last conversation with Sean and had only recently moved back to the Cushing area. He was sorry to hear Sean had died, but was pleased to learn I had a morning show where he could come and talk about his song and have it played on the air. He sent me the song and we scheduled a time for him to come on the show.

I fell in love with "Keys in the Door," the story behind it and its beautifully haunting melody and lyrics. I have also become good friends with its writer. Even more importantly, lives have been touched because of Jerry's song. I don't believe any of these things would have happened if it weren't for that fateful conversation in 2007.

"Words are seeds that do more than blow around. They land in our hearts and not the ground." –Unknown

I doubt Sean had any inkling that his words would one day lead to a new friendship between strangers - especially nearly 20 years in the future. But they did.

To me, not only is this a story about a significant connection, it's a reminder of just how powerful words can be. How we may never know how or when - the things we say and do may impact someone's life. In this case it has had a positive impact, but unfortunately that's not always the case.

"Be careful what you plant and careful what you say. You might have to eat what you planted one day." --Unknown

I've been trying to pay more attention to the weight my words may carry. Probably important since I spend a great portion of my time talking! But I'm also more aware of the words of others. It's disheartening to hear or read hateful things being said or done. But it's so encouraging to hear stories of kindness and love. It's up to each of us to choose...whether it's our actions or words, or the things we pour into our minds and souls. Because you never know whose life may be changed by a seemingly simple word or action.

I've also been trying to pay more attention to life's synchronicities. Maybe it's my age. Maybe it's a need for the



PHOTO by **MOLLY PAYNE**

Jerry checking out the wall of albums at KUSH.

world to make sense. Whatever the reason, I find it thrilling when the "stars align" and connections are made.

As we close out 2025 and move into the next year, I'm looking forward to making new connections and growing and rekindling some old ones. I will also continue to be mindful of my own words and actions. How about you?

"We cannot live only for ourselves. A thousand fibers connect us with our fellow men; and among those fibers, as sympathetic threads, our actions run as causes, and they come back to us as effects." –Herman Melville

**Editor's note: "Keys in the Door" by Jerry D Deer is available on YouTube and can be heard Sunday mornings on The KUSH. *



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LIVE MUSIC...

...AND OTHER FUN EVENTS IN OUR AREA

JANUARY

- Jan 9** - Tim Grimm w/Sergio Webb, The Blue Door, OKC, 8 pm
- Jan 10** - Miss Brown to You, UCO Jazz Lab, Edmond, 8 pm
- Jan 10** - Beau Jennings and Cheyenne - I Am Alive 20th Anniversary Performance, The Blue Door, OKC, 8 pm
- Jan 11** - Round Barn Rendezvous, Noon - 4 pm, Arcadia Round Barn, Arcadia
- Jan 16** - Red NOT Chili Peppers - A Tribute to Red Hot Chili Peppers, Cain's Ballroom, Tulsa, 8 pm
- Jan 17** - Chuck Dunlap, Cimarron Breeze Concert, Old Church, Perkins, 7 pm
- Jan 22** - Eric Hagen - Make Country Music Sad Again Tour, The Blue Door, OKC, 8 pm
- Jan 23** - Stoney LaRue, Cain's Ballroom, Tulsa, 8:15 pm
- Jan 23** - Seth Lee Jones, The Steepwater Band, Greg Koch, Dustin & Jesse's Higher Education, Tulsa VFW
- Jan 23** - Hannah Juanita & The Hardliners, Mercury Lounge, Tulsa, Doors 7 pm, Show 8 pm
- Jan 24** - Hortonfest, Cain's Ballroom, Tulsa, 6:15 pm
- Jan 24** - The Filthy Heathens, Mercury Lounge, Tulsa, Doors 7 pm, Show 8 pm
- Jan 25** - Elm Tree Concerts, 1 - 3 pm, Arcadia Round Barn, Arcadia
- Jan 30** - Randall King, Tumbleweed, Stillwater, Doors 8 pm, Show 9:30 pm
- Jan 31** - Insider: A Tribute to Tom Petty, Diamond Ballroom, OKC, 8 pm
- Jan 31** - Square Dancing Tribute, 2 - 4 pm, Arcadia Round Barn, Arcadia

FEBRUARY

- Feb 5** - Vincent Mason, Cain's Ballroom, Tulsa, 7:30 pm
- Feb 8** - Round Barn Rendezvous, noon - 4 pm, Arcadia Round Barn, Arcadia
- Feb 12** - Greg Volker & The River, The Blue Door, OKC, 8 pm
- Feb 13** - King Cabbage Brass Band, Cain's Ballroom, Tulsa, 7:30 pm
- Feb 14** - Mandy Patinkin, McKnight Center for the Performing Arts, Stillwater, 7:30 pm
- Feb 14** - Ordinary Elephant, The Blue Door, OKC, 8 pm
- Feb 17** - Trevor Wallace, Cain's Ballroom, Tulsa, 7 pm
- Feb 22** - Elm Tree Concerts, 1 - 3 pm, Arcadia Round Barn, Arcadia
- Feb 25** - Dropkick Murphy's, Cain's Ballroom Tulsa, 7 pm
- Feb 27** - The Great Divide, Cain's Ballroom, Tulsa, 8 pm
- Feb 27** - The Cherokee Maidens w/Sycamore Swing, Cimarron Breeze Concert, potluck 6 pm, show at 7 pm, the Old Church, Perkins

MARCH

- Mar 1** - Cory Branan, 8 pm, The Blue Door, OKC
- Mar 7** - Bob Wills' Texas Playboys, 7 pm, Cain's Ballroom, Tulsa
- Mar 8** - Bob Wills' Texas Playboys, 5 pm, Cain's Ballroom, Tulsa
- Mar 8** - Round Barn Rendezvous, noon - 4 pm, Arcadia Round Barn, Arcadia
- Mar 13** - 49 Winchester, 8 pm, Cain's Ballroom, Tulsa
- Mar 15** - Badflower, 7 pm, Cain's Ballroom, Tulsa
- Mar 19** - Houndmouth, 7:30 pm, Cain's Ballroom, Tulsa
- Mar 20** - Blackberry Smoke, 6:30 pm, Cain's Ballroom, Tulsa
- Mar 21** - Band of Heathens, 7 pm, Cain's Ballroom, Tulsa
- Mar 24** - St. Paul and The Broken Bones & Tyler Ballgame, 7:30 pm, Cain's Ballroom, Tulsa
- Mar 26** - Nate Smith-Country, 7:30 pm, Cain's Ballroom, Tulsa
- Mar 29** - Elm Tree Concerts, 1 - 3 pm, Arcadia Round Barn, Arcadia

MISCELLANEOUS MUSIC/OPEN MICS

- Bad Brad's Bar-B-Q** - Songwriter Circle w/Dylan Moss & Guests, Thursdays, 6:30 - 9 pm
- The Horseshoe Bar, Yukon**, Open Mic, Sundays, 6 - 9 pm
(sign-ups start at 5:30 pm)
- Mother Road Market**, Tulsa, Open Mic, Tuesdays, 6 - 8 pm
- J9 Tavern, Guthrie**, Open Mic, Mondays, 9 pm - midnight
- Elks Lodge 1118, Sapulpa**, Live Music Friday w/Andrew & Friends, 7 - 10 pm
- Uncle Bentley's Pub, Tulsa**, Open Mic, Thursdays, 7 - 11 pm
- Sunday Song Swap, The Hunt Club, Tulsa**, Sundays, 5 pm
- Comedy Open Mic, The Hunt Club, Tulsa**, Wednesdays, 8 pm
- First Friday Karaoke, Tidewater Winery, Drumright**,
First Friday of each month, 7 - 11 pm
- Karaoke Night, The Great White Buffalo Tavern, Stillwater**, Fridays 9 pm

MISCELLANEOUS LOCAL EVENTS

- 3rd Sunday of each month** - Stillwater Sketchers, on-site sketching of downtown Stillwater, Modella Art Gallery, Stillwater, 2 - 4:30 pm No previous art experience needed. Bring supplies and a "powerful bit of open energy."

- Jan 24** - Adult Prom Night, Tidewater Winery, Drumright, 8 pm
- Feb 7** - Annual Father/Daughter Dance, hosted by Cushing Tigers Soccer, 5:30 - 7:30 pm, Cushing High School Fieldhouse Lobby

Becoming Ms. Sara

by SARA PAYNE KEYES

“Y ou are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars, you have a right to be here, and whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.” - Max Ehrmann - The Desiderata

What a year 2025 has been! The first half of the year seemed to fly by with all sorts of fast moving parts and then this last half is a whole other animal! It feels like one of those years where I have had multiple lives within the four seasons.

In the first half of 2025 my household went through significant changes. By Spring, $\frac{3}{4}$ of my kids were now adults. I am a parent of

In the summer, my twin daughters left for college and my son and his love moved to Arkansas. Our home went from the hustle and bustle of 7 people, to 3. All in a matter of weeks...I was not ready for the quiet.



Ms. Sara at the little green table - Photo by Molly Payne

multiple adults.

It's really weird y'all.

In the summer, my twin daughters left for college and my son and his love moved to Arkansas. Our home went from the hustle and bustle of 7 people, to 3. All in a matter of weeks.

I was not ready for the quiet. I was used to managing a large household and just wasn't quite sure where I was going to put all that extra energy.

So I had been real busy contemplating what my probable nervous breakdown/identity crisis was going to look like.

When I wasn't doing that, or drowning myself in nostalgia, I let myself be curious as to what my next step could be. I figured I could stay home, be at my family's beck and call, and work on more of my whimsical gnome-like tendencies. Maybe I would write more, or paint...Maybe clean out those closets and garages.

I was open to ideas. Pondering.

My youngest child, still at home, is 14 and was not necessarily looking forward to having my undivided attention. "Maybe you could get more kids?" she helpfully suggested.

Hmm... more kids. Well I am 45 and perimenopausal so there's

Whoa! How did this happen?! I was just watering flowers! Now I am a preschool teacher?! I am becoming Ms. Sara - again!

that little tidbit. But historically I have found a lot of joy in working with tiny people. I have taken care of kids most of my life.

I received my Early Child Development Certification when my twin girls were toddlers. I enjoyed learning about how our brains function and form when they are new.

My certificate came in the mail the week after the daycare I had worked at had closed. I was sad about that. But I had my own youngins to raise so I concentrated on that a whole bunch. I took on a lot of various caregiving & odd jobs here and there, but didn't work full time outside the home.

But now my oldest three are all trying to be adults and stuff.

Leaving me in the dust.

Not to be dramatic about it or anything,

So I was watering flowers one day...

An earth angel I happen to know, asks me to water her flowers every now and then. I am always delighted to do it. I love visiting with her flowers. Her gardens are beautiful and artfully done.

A few days after our visit, she sent me an inquiring text. She asked if I knew anyone who might be interested in being a preschool teacher.

Wait-a-minute...

This felt like one of those moments. The stars aligning. A mystical synchronicity!

I love that stuff.

I quickly replied that I was interested.

The more information I got about the job, the more interested I became. Yes! I feel like this is my next thing!

I accepted the position.

Whoa! How did this happen?! I was just watering flowers! Now I am a preschool teacher?! I am becoming Ms. Sara - again!

When I walked into the classroom for the first time, I saw a familiar round green table. The EXACT table my twin baby girls learned, played and ate around when they were toddlers. I remembered when it was bought from the daycare all those years ago. There it was!

It felt like coming home.

Talk about synchronicity! I believe in those unseen connections. What if I hadn't been watering those flowers on that particular day? I may have missed that opportunity completely.

Now I get to spend my days being Ms. Sara and hanging out with 2 to 4 year olds. They do all the best things in life. Play outside, read books, eat snacks, take naps, they know how to live! I am learning so much from this new generation of people, and from the seasoned teachers I am lucky enough to work with.

In this new cycle of returning to my roots, while traveling a new and different path, I am looking forward to seeing what blooms in 2026. And you can bet I will be keeping an eye out for more mystical synchronicities. 

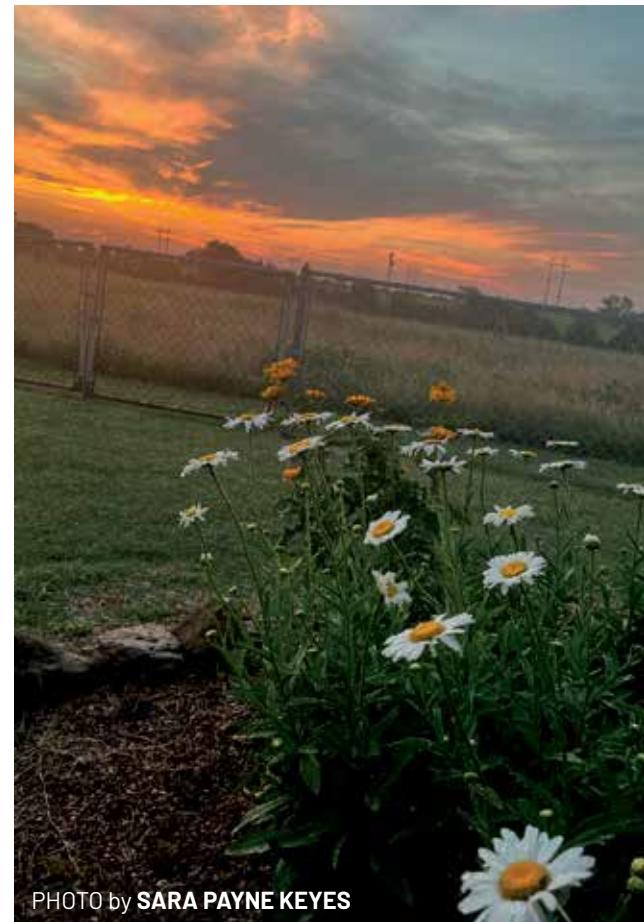


PHOTO by SARA PAYNE KEYES

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We had a great 2025! We hope you will join us in 2026!

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WEEKDAY SCHEDULE...Monday - Friday

7:00am

Start your morning with the **ENERGY and FARM REPORTS**, **NATIVE NEWS** and a blend of music to get you going!

8:00-10:00am

HOME IN THE MORNING with MOLLY PAYNE Tune in Monday thru Friday to hear about things happening in the Cimarron Valley - straight from the locals themselves - as well as interviews with music artists from near and far.

9:00am THURSDAYS

***THINKIN' ABOUT IT THURSDAY W/MOLLY PAYNE & JIM COX** - Molly and Jim talk about topics you might be thinkin' about, too!

10:00am - NOON

KUSHBRAND MUSIC

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KUSHbrand MUSIC throughout the rest of the day and night!

KUSH plays the latest Americana, Classic and Texas Country, Red Dirt and Oklahoma artists all day long and sometimes gets "down and funky" with its eclectic blend in the overnight hours.

WEEKEND SCHEDULE...Saturday

Midnight - 10:00am

Start your weekend with **KUSHbrand MUSIC** and special programming!

10:00 - 11:00am

NATIVE AIR W/DR. HUGH FOLEY, featuring Native American music, announcements powwows and news of interest to the Native community

11:00 - 11:15am

WORDS OF INSPIRATION from First Indian Baptist Church

11:15 - ??

SATURDAY MUSIC MEETING W/HUGH FOLEY - Join Hugh when he comes into the studio to check out the latest music coming into The KUSH!

FOLLOWED BY MORE KUSHbrandMUSIC

KUSH hand picks all of the music on The KUSH. From Americana (a contemporary genre blending American roots traditions such as folk, country, bluegrass and blues) to Red Dirt and Oklahoma artists, it's a great way to discover your new favorite song/artist!

WEEKEND SCHEDULE...Sunday

7:00 - 8:00am

INTO THE BLUE - Hosted by award-winning broadcaster Terry Herd, Into the Blue is the longest-running syndicated bluegrass program ever!

8:00 - 9:15am

INSPIRATIONAL AND GOSPEL MUSIC - a mix of new songs meant to inspire as well as some of your classic favorites

9:15

***JESUS UNIVERSITY** - Learn about the Scriptures w/ David Smith

9:30am - NOON

MORE INSPIRATIONAL AND GOSPEL MUSIC

4:00 - 5:00pm

BLUES DELUXE - Where radio rocks the blues! America's longest-running syndicated blues radio show.

5:00 - 6:00pm

***HOMEGROWN MUSIC HOUR** - an hour chock full of music by local and Oklahoma singer/songwriters you may even know personally!

6:00pm thru the night

KUSHbrandMUSIC

***NEW LOCALLY PRODUCED PROGRAMS**

I'd Like You to Meet - JIM COX

by MOLLY PAYNE

Some people may know him as the "guy in the park" while others may know him as the singer/songwriter at Fulkerson Jam. KUSH listeners/viewers may recognize him as my counterpart on Think About it Thursday. And in the near future, book readers may know him as an author. While all of those things are true, I'd like to introduce you to the Jim Cox I know.

I met Jim several months ago after he called inquiring about working for the station. He was new in town and was pleased to learn Cushing had a radio station and felt it might be a good fit for him. He had a musical/entertainment background, had co-hosted a podcast and owned a small business to boot! As much as the station could stand to have a full-time staff of more than one, the only thing I could offer him was the opportunity to sell advertising for The KUSH. Although it wasn't the job Jim was looking for, he agreed to a meeting.

As I watched him approach the door, my first thought was, "he looks like a 'KUSH' guy - if that's even a thing," I chuckled to myself. He was wearing a Hawaiian-style shirt, had shoulder-length hair and beard, and a pleasant countenance. I soon learned I wasn't too far off the mark in my thinking when he told me he had spent most of his life in Southern California. I shared information about the radio station and he told me about his niche business and a little about his music background and the podcast he'd had with his friend. He told me he'd landed in Cushing because of the "luck of the draw" after putting 3 towns in the hat and pulling out Cushing. He also acknowledged the value of an independent radio station having seen the effect after one of his hometown stations had shut down. I liked what I'd learned about Jim, so we agreed to a second meeting to delve more into the advertising aspects of the station.

The next time Jim walked through the door, I was in a full-blown "tizzy." There was a glitch in our automation system and my stress level was at 11 out of 10. Seeing my distress, he immediately asked how he might help. Trusting his understanding of technology, I relinquished the phone conversations that were ensuing with Hugh, the engineer and the IT guy. With their guidance, Jim was able to resolve the issue and I was relieved and grateful for his willingness and ability to stay calm in the midst of my chaos. While I still didn't know a whole lot about him, what I had learned was that Jim is compassionate, helpful and kind.

Since then we've had numerous visits, including each Thursday morning when we're "thinkin' about" stuff. Here's some of what I've learned.

Jim spent most of his life in California. His dad was in the ministry, mostly serving as an interim pastor to whatever church that needed him. His mom was a kindergarten teacher, with a



passion for helping children. Jim has an older brother and a younger sister, making him the "typical" middle child; except I don't find anything "typical" about Jim.

Jim is a deep thinker. Unlike a lot of us, he's found the strength to look at himself in a proverbial mirror. A lot of the reason he's found that strength is due to the challenges he's faced - starting in his pre-teens.

At 10, Jim began to show signs of something happening in his body that he couldn't control. He called it "the shakes." Initially, he was nonchalant about it, until one night his mother noticed and whispered to his dad, "Something's wrong with Jimmy." Alarmed by his body movements, they immediately rushed him to the hospital. Perplexed, the doctor told his parents they would do whatever they could to keep him alive. After exhaustive testing, Jim was diagnosed with the neurological disorder, Sydenham Chorea.

The combination of the words of his mother and those of the doctor led Jim's young mind to believe he was "broken" and would die soon - a thought that continued to plague him throughout his early adulthood. He was afraid to let anyone see his shakes, not

As he got older he was able to enjoy sports such as baseball, skateboarding and snowboarding. In middle school he caught the performance bug, participating in theater, stage acting and music.



only because of the shock and despair he'd witnessed in the reactions of his parents and doctors, but because he didn't want to be pitied. Thankfully the shakes didn't come that frequently, but when they did, he would hide so no one would see "something was wrong" with Jimmy.

As he got older he was able to enjoy sports such as baseball, skateboarding and snowboarding. In middle school he caught the performance bug, participating in theater, stage acting and music. "Jimmy" started finding his voice. While working at a skate shop, he became friends with a guy who shared his love of music and they formed their own band - "Dreyfus." Later, Jim went on to tour with a party band, "Do It Live", before settling into doing his own writing for a Hip Hop label. He was having fun, living like he was invincible because he still believed his life would be short.

There was a shift after Jim turned 20....the shakes went from infrequent to sometimes lasting for days at a time. Between shaking half the time and the long-term effects of the pharmaceuticals he'd been prescribed to help abate the shaking, Jim started slipping into depression and identifying as a victim. The details of what Jim went through are not mine to tell, but more of that story is in his upcoming book, "Something's Wrong with Jimmy."

However, what I do know that came out of this rocky

time in Jim's life, is that he started realizing he had a choice. He could either "be" the shakes by constantly identifying with them or he could look deeper and find who he is. Jim chose the latter.

He's the first to admit it wasn't easy - for that matter it still isn't. But he's found a peace in acceptance - not by others, but in whatever might be "shaking" up his life. I find that both admirable and inspiring.

Jim is currently putting the finishing touches on his book with a tentative release date in early 2026. The process of writing it has played an integral role in Jim's discovery of purpose and self and he's hopeful it will help others with theirs.

So who is the Jim I know? He is insightful and kind. He's a listener and peacemaker. He's a wordsmith - on paper, in conversation and in song. Jim is also my friend and I'm grateful fate led him to Cushing.

"The real man smiles in trouble, gathers strength from distress, and grows brave by reflection." —Thomas Paine 



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11 - 11:20 am **Words of Inspiration** from First
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11:20 am - ?? **"Music Meeting"** w/ Hugh Foley featuring
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