

Doreen Ravenscroft, Spotlighted By Influential Women, Expands Access To The Arts Across Central Texas

WACO, TX, UNITED STATES, October 21, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Founder and Director of the Waco Cultural Arts Fest, She Has Spent More Than Two Decades Building Free, Inclusive Arts Programming for Her Community

Waco, Texas — Doreen Ravenscroft is the founder and director of the Waco Cultural Arts Fest (dba Cultural Arts of Waco), which she established in 2004 to celebrate, promote, and expand access to the arts throughout Central Texas. From the start, her vision was to make the arts accessible to everyone, regardless of background or ability. For more than two decades—serving as President from 2004 through 2025—she has led the organization in offering free, inclusive programming for artists,



educators, and community members. Under her direction, the festival grew into a year-round organization focused on arts education, cultural diversity, and public engagement, attracting thousands of attendees each year from Waco and the surrounding region.

Early Career and Artistic Roots in England

Originally from near Chester, England, Doreen studied Chemistry and was employed by Unilever before devoting her full energy to community service and creative design. In the 1960s and 1970s, she served as founding Chairman of the Twyford & Ruscombe Floral Design Club, earning honors at the Royal Chelsea Flower Show in 1968 and winning numerous floral design awards across southern England between 1966 and 1976. During this time, she produced Floral Design Festivals to raise funds for local historic churches, designed for Malmesbury Abbey and Woburn Abbey festivals, served on horticultural and civic boards in Twyford and Princes Risborough, and founded Flowers by Arrangement, a small floral design business.

Relocation to the United States and Civic Leadership in Waco

In 1976, Doreen moved to the United States with her husband, William (Bill) Ravenscroft, when he took an international transfer to join M&M Mars in Hackettstown, New Jersey. In 1978, the family relocated to Waco, Texas, where Bill served as R&D Director for M&M Mars.

Upon moving to Waco, Doreen quickly immersed herself in the local arts scene. She joined the board of Art Center Waco, eventually serving as Chairman of the Board, and actively contributed to the Waco Women's Symphony Guild and the Historic Waco Foundation (serving on the Fort House Board). She helped organize major civic fundraisers, including the Symphony Horse Show and Christmas on the Brazos. In 1982, she established Flowers by Design, an event design company in Waco, followed in 1990 by a commercial faux finishing business with commissions in Dallas and Central Texas. She frequently donated her faux painting skills to raise funds for Art Center Waco and the Cattle Baron's Ball Cancer Fund.

Major Public Art and Community Initiatives

Doreen's impact on Waco's visual landscape spans four decades of monumental public art projects and collaborative festivals:

Open Door Arts Fest & Wacows (1997–2003): Co-chaired the Open Door Arts Fest with Luanne Klaras and co-chaired Wacows (2000), a public art exhibition of life-sized artist-painted cows and steers that raised over \$600,000 for Art Center Waco.

Community & Educational Collaborations (2001): Served on the 4th on the Brazos committee to launch Box City, an architectural educational project for urban environment awareness, and contributed to Genesis, a Baylor University symposium honoring Paul and Kitty Baker that featured her work for the Jearnine Georgette Wagner Research Library.

Waco National Outdoor Sculpture Competition & Exhibition (Est. 2005): Launched as Chair to bring dynamic public art to downtown Waco, creating lasting cultural landmarks across the city. **Branding the Brazos:** Coordinated the \$1.9 million monumental sculpture project depicting the history of the Chisholm Trail along the Brazos River.

Stickworks "River Vessels": Secured a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Artistic Excellence grant to bring internationally renowned sculptor Patrick Dougherty to Waco, uniting 450 volunteers and drawing 275,000 visitors over an 18-month exhibition.

Doris Miller Memorial (2009–2018): Spearheaded the \$2.8 million fundraising and management effort for the monument honoring African American WWII hero and Pearl Harbor Navy Cross recipient Doris Miller.

Commitment to Accessibility and Education

Doreen has long championed creative opportunities for individuals with disabilities:

Art at the Arc (Est. 2006): In partnership with The Arc of McLennan County, she founded a summer art camp for students with Autism, Down Syndrome, and Cerebral Palsy—a program she organized for more than 20 years.

Community Learning Kitchen: She is currently developing a community-based learning kitchen

designed to teach baking and life skills while creating employment opportunities for young adults with disabilities.

In 2016, she established the Ravenscroft Foundation to support permanent facilities for the Waco Cultural Arts Fest.

A Philosophy of Resilience and Perseverance

Doreen attributes her success to perseverance and an unyielding commitment to follow through on her word. “We have to Carry On”—always my mantra when we hit an obstacle; there is usually a way to reach a goal if we are more flexible in our thinking.

Whether facing tight logistics or complex fundraising goals, she approaches every project with collaboration and resilience, bringing artists, educators, and civic leaders together around a shared vision.

Honors and Recognition

Her contributions to civic life and the arts have been recognized through numerous prestigious awards:

Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP): Volunteer Award of the Year (2001) and Lifetime Achievement Award (2025) for her work with Cultural Arts of Waco.

IFEA/Zambelli Fireworks Internationale: Volunteer of the Year Award (2006).

Waco Tribune-Herald: Make a Difference Award for the Arts in Waco (2006).

Ruth and Lawrence McMillan Award: Recognizing visual public art (2011).

Creative Waco: Established the Ravenscroft Award in 2024 to honor individuals demonstrating outstanding service to arts and culture.

Learn More about Doreen Ravenscroft:

Through her Influential Women profile: <https://influentialwomen.com/connect/doreen-ravenscroft>

Influential Women

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