

GO! talent

The Bulletin and Scalehouse, a collaborative for the arts, have joined together to raise donations to help Central Oregon's creative artists — musicians, visual artists, performers and creative workers — by offering grants and a platform to bring attention to local amazing talent. This is a crowdfunding effort with a first-round fundraising goal of \$40,000. To make a tax-deductible donation or apply for a grant, go to bendbulletin.com/talent

Muralist honors art instructors

BY DAVID JASPER • The Bulletin

Bend artist Douglas Robertson was happy to be out last week doing what he does: painting a mural in his trademark stencil style, this one a tribute to seven Bend-La Pine Schools art instructors, enhancing the entire north-facing wall of Deschutes Brewery's Bend Public House on Bond Street.



Prior, it was “just a blank wall,” he said. “And it’s been a blank wall for over 30 years.”

The founder of the High Desert Mural Festival and this week’s featured Central Oregon Creative Artists Relief Effort (CO CAREs) grant recipient, Robertson specializes in using blank walls as a canvas.

You may have seen some of his other murals around Bend, adorning such places as the south wall of Substance cannabis dispensary’s south location and Cascade Heating’s west-facing wall at First Street and Olney Avenue.

In typical years, he’ll work on stencils and do other prep work during the winter months, painting commissioned murals May through about October.

As we all learned the hard way, 2020 was hardly a typical year.

Robertson was able to keep busy early in the COVID-19 pandemic with a mural commissioned by Brooks Resources, planned in 2019, with painting of the mural begun in June 2020. However, after it was complete, the mural momentum halted abruptly.

“Everything just stopped,” he said. “All potential commissions stopped. Grants — they froze a lot of grant processes. Everybody just went into lock down, and I wasn’t in the category of artist that collectors jump on. ... There were a lot of artists that had really successful years because they did tons of commissions — that wasn’t me.”

With no work on the horizon for 2021, Robertson met with local art teachers and eventually approached Deschutes Brewery about a mural celebrating educators — “something positive to focus on as we hopefully come out of COVID,” he said. “All my labor I did and everything I did around it is volunteer. And then, it’s privately funded, and Deschutes is hosting it — which is fantastic. The fact that Deschutes wanted to do this is huge.”

Working his way along the wall from left to right, Robertson began the mural with his portrait of Marcy Marne, retired from a 31-year career at schools including Marshall High School and High Desert Middle School. She was on hand last week while Robertson worked on the mural.

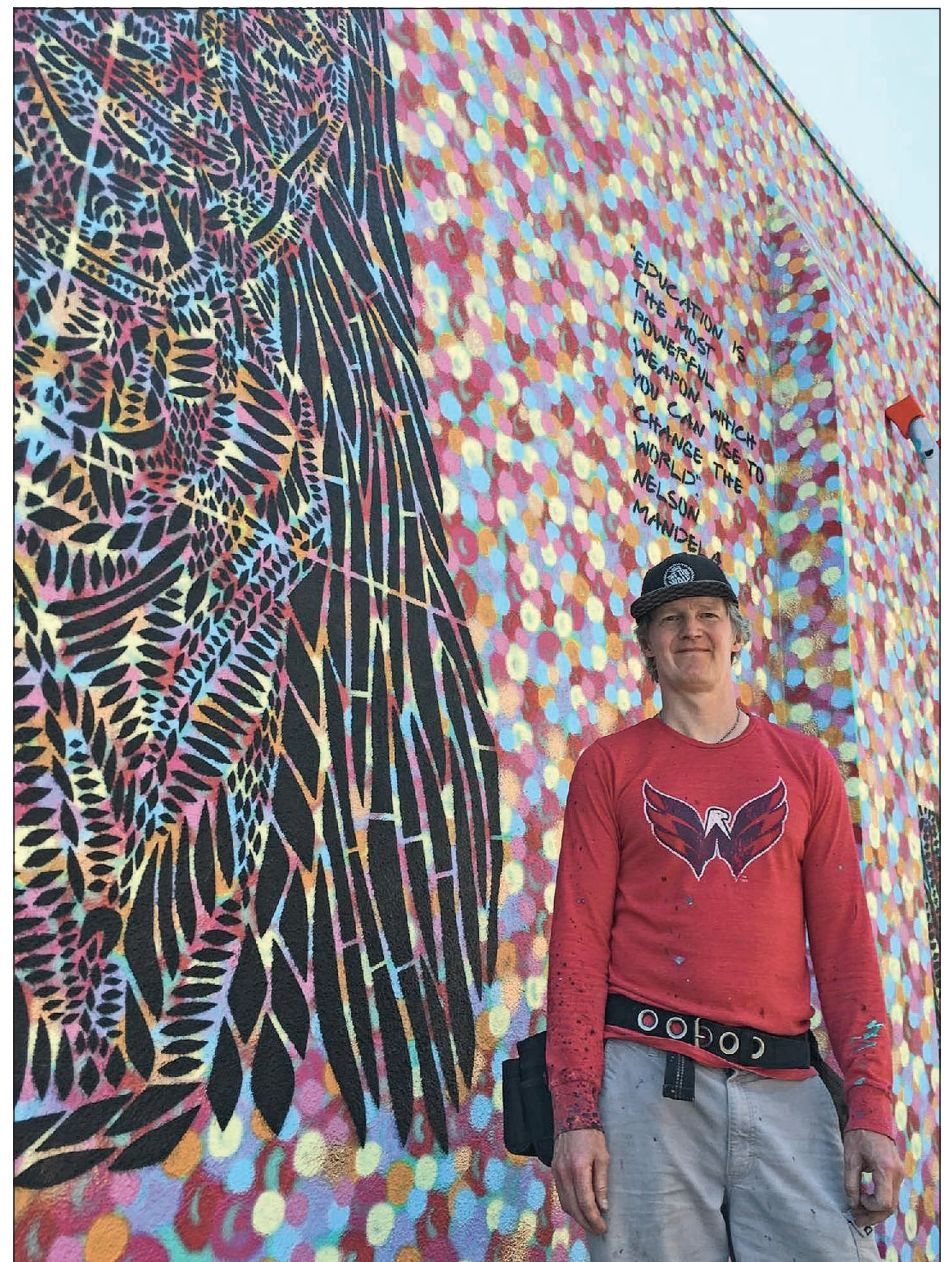
Each portrait is accompanied by a quote. Marne’s comes from Nelson Mandela, and reads: “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

“He had sent me the mock-up two weeks ago,” Marne said. “I wrote him back and said, ‘Thank you for making me look beautiful. ... I love this.’”

Last week, standing beneath his portrait of her, Marne told Robertson, “I’m so glad you’re doing this. It’s so sweet.”

“You know, my art teachers were a big deal to me,” he replied. “Plus, we needed something positive.”

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David Jasper/The Bulletin

Douglas Robertson stands outside of Deschutes Brewery last week, where he was at work on his latest mural, an ode to arts educators.