

D. R. Miller: A Man Who Brought the Circus to Town



*By Juliana Nykolaiszyn and Tanya Finchum**

It was September 8, 1999, and D. R. Miller was not feeling well. He was showing signs of having a heart attack, yet the hospital released him. D. R. was not from around the area, no one knew him in McCook, Nebraska. In fact, “he was just the circus guy coming through town, so they sent him home and told him to come back at nine o’clock in the morning and they’d look at him.”¹ It was almost show time for Carson and Barnes Circus. On his way back to the fairgrounds, D. R. told his daughter, Barbara Miller Byrd, a story that she had never heard before. When he was just a little boy, around nine years old, his father and mother took him from Smith Center, Kansas, to McCook, Nebraska, to see a circus, his first circus. Back on the lot resting in his motor home, it was just about time for the band to strike up for the 4:30 p.m. show when D. R. passed away at the age of

eighty-three. Barbara recalls, "If I had never heard that story, I think I would've been completely devastated. There was something about that story that he had come full-circle from that little boy seeing his first circus to this famous circus owner seeing his last circus. It was a very moving experience for me and for my family."²

It should come as no surprise that D. R. Miller planned his funeral well in advance, complete with a shiny, candy apple red coffin. "You can get a lot of publicity out of this for the circus," he told his daughter.³ But the family knew he wanted the show to continue if he were to pass away during the season. After McCook, Carson and Barnes Circus was headed to Colorado. Barbara remembers:

The only people in the world besides the people here in Hugo that I know that own a funeral home happened to be in Denver, Colorado. . . . So they picked him up in McCook. We had a couple of moves in between, and we ended up in Littleton, Colorado, over the weekend. They had already gotten my father. We went down that morning before we left McCook, my husband and our two daughters, and we picked out a very plain, wooden casket for him to be transported in because we knew he had this shiny one back home. And they came and picked him up . . . and they prepared him for a funeral.⁴

Between shows in Littleton, Colorado, Carson and Barnes held a small funeral service under the big top. D. R.'s plain casket was placed in a wagon and pulled into the tent by a young male elephant. The casket rested upon elephant tubs, surrounded by flowers, with music coming through the sound system. Catholic nuns who often traveled with the show helped arrange the service and the family minister from Hugo, Oklahoma, flew out to Colorado to officiate. Friends and family also came into town for this intimate service held in between shows. This was just a small memorial service. D. R. had developed elaborate plans for a celebration in Hugo. So, he was transported to Denver and remained in cold storage until the circus returned to Oklahoma in November.⁵

In Hugo, momentum was taking shape as the season came to a close and D. R. could finally make the trek back to Oklahoma. Circuses in Hugo joined together to help facilitate the activities, which included a service at the fairgrounds under a big top and a procession to Showmen's Rest at Mount Olivet Cemetery complete with clowns, camels, horses, and elephants dressed in their best blankets. A circus band provided the music. Historic circus wagons from outside Oklahoma and local

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show vehicles traveled the route. Along the streets of Hugo, the public paid their respects. Barbara recalls, “As we went along the city streets, people held up signs thanking him for all the fun memories of the circus and the good times. It was quite moving.” D. R. Miller was finally “dun rovin’.”⁶

Obert and Jennie Miller lived in Smith Center, Kansas. They had two sons, Kelly born in 1913 and Dores in 1916. Obert’s father owned the hardware store in town, along with the opera house. At the opera house, traveling shows would come in and perform for the community. In later years, the opera house started showing silent movies, and when films had to be rereeled Obert and his father would perform a dog and pony show on stage, entertaining those in attendance.⁷

In the early days, Obert and his family would work for the occasional circus. They also started up a few ventures that were short lived, such as the Miller Society Circus in 1927.⁸ A turning point came in 1929 when Obert lost his wife Jennie, leaving him with two young sons to raise. According to Barbara, “It was basically the three of them after their mother died, and they would travel around and work for other circuses. My grandfather [Obert] was very tight-fisted with money. Everything they earned went back into the box to start their own circus. And, like I said, they started a couple and had a couple of failures.”⁹ By

*D. R. Miller’s casket on the way to Showmen’s Rest at Mount Olivet Cemetery, 1999
(Photograph by Charles Baggett).*



now, Does, or D. R. as he was most commonly known, had sawdust in his veins and was hooked on the circus.

When he was younger, D. R. learned to be strong and stand up for himself. He often said, "When your name is Does, you have to defend your manhood quite often."¹⁰ To add to his unusual name, D. R. also was short in stature, but as time passed he established himself as a person who stood tall and cast a long shadow. In 1934 he married sixteen-year-old Isla Marie Beach, whom he had met at a barn dance in Smith Center, Kansas. Isla came from a family of farmers and had never been out of the county. Upon marriage, the duo joined the Fowler Brothers Circus in Indiana.¹¹ Looking back on her mother's experiences during those early years with D. R., Barbara explains:

The first night they stayed in like a pup tent, and they stayed on the edge of a game farm. And she heard these lions growling and trains going by, and she'd never experienced any of that. Also, she ended up with chicken pox on her wedding night. I'm sure it was a very frightening thing for a young girl to be in a pup tent, listening to lions, and having chicken pox. But they went on, and they worked for a circus. She learned to perform, and she loved it. When I came along, it was twelve years later, and like I said, I'm an only child. So they were married twelve years before I was born. She loved the circus as much as my dad did and really devoted her life to the circus. It was his passion, but it grew to be hers. She was a wonderful woman. She really was.¹²

Isla would endure challenging traveling and living conditions until the family settled in Oklahoma.

In 1937 the Miller family started a tiny, one-ring show named Miller Brothers Circus, touring primarily in the "high grass" area of Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska, and South Dakota.¹³ The show consisted of Obert, his two sons and their wives, a few donkeys, and ponies. In 1938 the family changed the name of the show and opened the season as the Al G. Kelly and Miller Brothers Circus.¹⁴ The show acquired the first of what would become many elephants in 1938.¹⁵ In 1941 the Millers relocated their circus operations from Kansas to Oklahoma after a prominent local businessman, Vernon Pratt, made an offer to attract the family to Hugo, located in the southeastern part of the state.¹⁶ In exchange for a free place to stay, electricity, and water, the Millers provided a public exhibition of their one-ring show every Sunday during the early years.¹⁷ It was the Pratt-Miller connection that would help establish Hugo, Oklahoma, as an attractive winter home for tent-

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Unknown circus parade, c. 1915 (17637, Oklahoma Historical Society Photograph Collection, OHS Research Division).

based shows. And many tent shows came or were developed in this small Oklahoma town through the years as Hugo has taken on the distinction of being known as Circus City USA or the Sarasota of the Southwest.¹⁸

Despite competition from other shows in town and the surrounding region, the Millers continued to make improvements to the Al G. Kelly and Miller Brothers Circus. By 1942 it had become a three-ring show. Despite the show's progress, it was not immune to events overseas. During World War II, brothers D. R. and Kelly left show business to serve in the military. While the Miller brothers were serving their country, their wives continued the show with the help of several women truck drivers.¹⁹ During the war years, the circus had to deal with sugar quotas and gasoline rationing, but they also experienced great success.²⁰ The postwar economy and D. R.'s return enabled the circus to become one of the largest on the road at that time. In 1945 the circus became a five-ring show and required sixty trucks to move it. In addition, it boasted twenty-one elephants.²¹ While Obert was not interested in making the show larger, it was D. R. who was the lead man in moving it in that direction.



Buffalo and unknown circus parade wagon, c. 1915 (17639, Oklahoma Historical Society Photograph Collection, OHS Research Division).

The Al G. Kelly and Miller Brothers Circus continued to see exponential growth and success on the road during the 1950s. It was also during this time when young Lucy Loyal would make her first trip to Hugo to meet legendary showman D. R. Miller. Miller hired her family, the Alfonso Loyal Repensky troupe, for their bareback riding act and skill in horse training. As a young girl, Lucy recalls:

The first time I ever met D. R. Miller. I'm going to say it had to have been in 1956. . . . It was all dirt road, all the way to winter quarters. I remember Mr. Miller coming up and then I remember him leaving. That was the first time I remember seeing him. It was him and his father, Obert. Then they left and I don't know how much longer—when you're a little girl, it seems like time is forever—here comes Kline, sitting on an elephant. . . . He's riding up on the elephant and got off, hooked that elephant, "Tina," made Tina turn around, hooked her up, climbed back up on her head. He pulled us from there all the way to winter quarters. It had snowed here and it was all mushy and nasty and you couldn't go down the road. You would get stuck. You'd go off the road. They

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Unknown circus wagon parade, c. 1915 (17638, Oklahoma Historical Society Photograph Collection, OHS Research Division).

pulled us, truck and trailer, or car and trailer, I should say, from there all the way to winter quarters, and then D. R. was there to park us, showed us, parked my mom and dad. That was the first time I'd ever seen Mr. Miller.²²

That season of working for D. R. not only altered her family's life, but Lucy's as well. In 1965 the Loyal family relocated to Hugo, Oklahoma, and Lucy would go on to maintain a lifelong friendship, as well as a career-long working relationship, with the Miller family.

D. R. quickly developed a reputation as a smart and savvy businessman. But the circus industry still had an element of toughness to it, and D. R. was the epitome of tough. B. K. Silverlake has been involved with circuses and carnivals from the day she was born in 1946. Looking back on D. R.'s early years in the business, B. K. highlights:

Back when he was young, he was too tough. I mean, he was mean. He'd just as soon cold cock you and beat you half to death as to look at you. He had a good reputation for that. In the same time era, a lot of the guys did. And that's back when they would roll you

out, beat you half to death, roll you up in the sidewall, carry you to the next town, and then unroll you and make you go to work [but you had done something really bad to get that treatment]. That's true. But he mellowed. But he was tough. He was strict. He wanted things right. In his, really, heydays, that show was great. It walked, talked this country, buddy. Outdid them all, he pushed it.²³

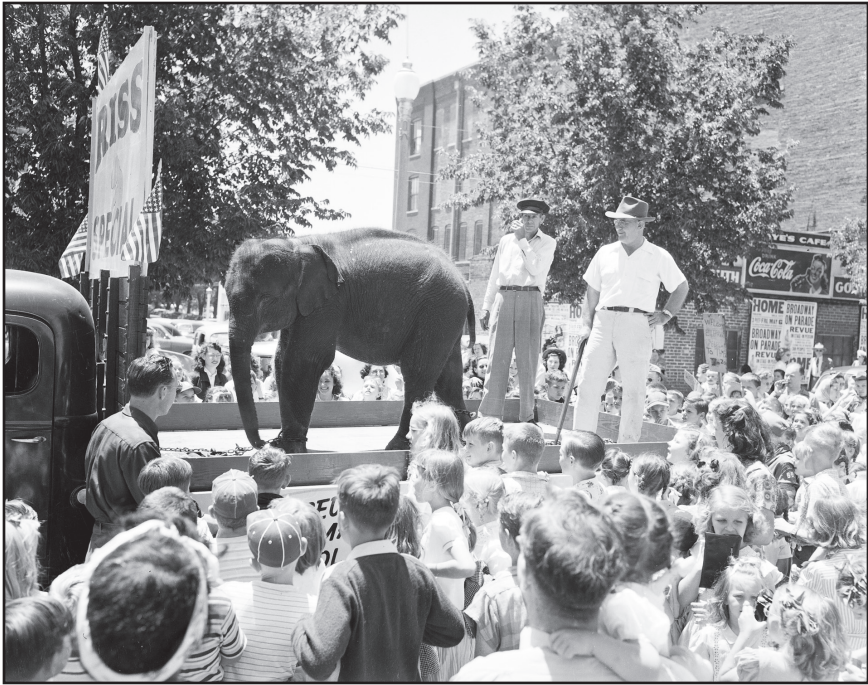
Flush with revenue and ambition, D. R. started to invest in various enterprises, including other circuses. In 1957 the Miller family had interest in five different tent circuses, and even had Hollywood connections.²⁴ Famed film director and producer Cecil B. DeMille borrowed Miller's herd of camels to make his movie *The Ten Commandments*. Twenty-one elephants from the Miller family were also used in a series of Tarzan movies.²⁵

In 1959 Al G. Kelly and Miller Brothers Circus hit the road with a new canvas, "a vast menagerie, the old style circus sideshow, and a full scale circus cookhouse complete with white jacketed waiters, griddles and steam tables."²⁶ For the season, the circus had been changed from a modern day to a traditional old time circus under a large canvas. The show included more imported acts from five foreign countries, had new seat wagons, and improved lighting.²⁷

The decade of the 1960s proved challenging for D. R. and his Al G. Kelly and Miller Brothers Circus. In 1960 D. R. lost his brother Kelly. The show decreased from five rings to three in 1962, and for the first time there was no grift or after show.²⁸ Attendance was troublesome on the road, and to make up for some of his financial shortcomings D. R. took a segment of the show to Kingston, Jamaica, in December 1962. The trip initially was cancelled due to the Cuban Missile Crisis and President Kennedy's Cuban blockade. This show was the first North American circus to appear in the West Indies and the government assured them it would be safe. In addition to performers, D. R. took three elephants, nine lions, two kangaroos, an emu, puma, leopard, llama, tiger, snakes, and Miss Oklahoma, a 3,800 pound hippopotamus.²⁹

D. R. was always thinking about what to do next, and in the 1960s that meant purchasing an old freighter, the SS *Fleurus*, with the goal of having a seagoing circus showboat, perhaps the first and last of its kind.³⁰ The ship was converted to house the show, both animals and performers, and was scheduled to travel up the East Coast in 1963 while other segments of the show were doing ground-based tours.³¹ Splitting up the show was also new in 1963, and D. R. would use an airplane to travel between the shows.³² Though a boy at the time, Mike

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Judy the elephant, May 1949 (21412.M42.32, Barney Hillerman Collection, OHS Research Division).

Fulton remembers the boat show well. Fulton's family worked for the Millers, and for a brief period traveled on the SS *Fleurus*. Fulton recalls:

One day somebody locked the engine room, and there was only one way to get in and that was to just knock the door down or slide through a small porthole. So they stuck me through the porthole, and I opened the door to the engine room so they didn't have to knock the door down. They had to get in there fast. It wasn't like they could wait until the next day, so I got in there. I can remember the engines running. It was real loud in there. I was kind of scared, but it was just like right around the corner. It wasn't real bad, but I did that. And I remember walking down the deck plank to the land. I could see fishing lines going down off the side of the boat. People were fishing off the boat. It was real rusty looking, I think. That's what I remember. It was kind of a rust bucket, but it was our ship, I guess.³³

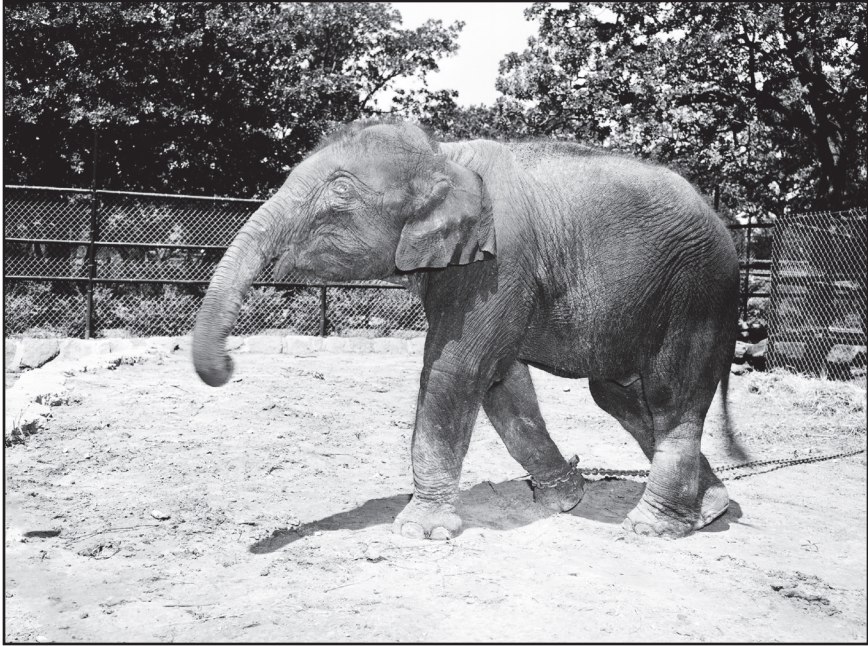


Judy the elephant, May 1949 (21412.M42.22, Barney Hillerman Collection, OHS Research Division).

Only a few performances were completed before the boat caught fire and sank off the coast of Nova Scotia.³⁴ While only one animal perished, the incident was responsible for several municipalities across Canada passing legislation to make it illegal to transport animals in such a manner.³⁵

Declining business in the early 1960s, charges of tax evasion, and a very poor season in 1965 left the Al G. Kelly and Miller Brothers Circus in further financial difficulty. Just before the 1966 season, D. R. signed a lease/purchase agreement with Joe McMahon, who showed interest in purchasing Al G. Kelly and Miller Brothers Circus.³⁶ Losing his brother, the sinking of the SS *Fleurus*, and an eventual tax evasion indictment most likely played into D. R.'s decision to enter into the lease/purchase deal. Al G. Kelly and Miller Brothers was dramatically reduced, and D. R. stayed on with the show and ran the concession department to make sure lease payments were made. D. R. did this for the 1967 season and part of the 1968 season.

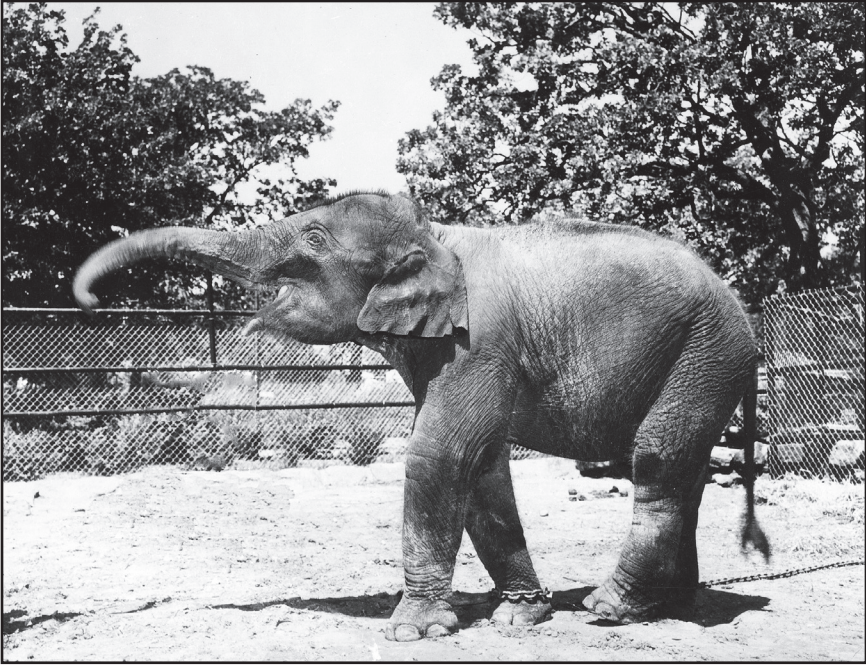
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Judy the elephant at Lincoln Park in Oklahoma City, May 1949 (21412.M42.37, Barney Hillerman Collection, OHS Research Division).

In another development, halfway through the 1968 season Jack Moore, the owner of Carson and Barnes Circus (another Hugo-based show), became ill and D. R. stepped in to manage its circus operations. McMahon eventually fell behind on the Al G. Kelly and Miller Brothers Circus lease payments, and the agreement was ended.³⁷ The Al G. Kelly and Miller Brothers Circus ended the season early and returned to Hugo in fall 1968.³⁸ The Millers made the decision to close Al G. Kelly and Miller Brothers indefinitely and D. R. turned his attention to operating Carson and Barnes Circus.³⁹ D. R. would not escape the 1960s without more bad news, though. He lost his father, Obert, in 1969.⁴⁰ The decade ended as it had begun, with the loss of yet another beloved family member.

Carson and Barnes Circus did not start with D. R. Miller, but with Jack Moore. After returning from military service in the 1940s, Jack began a tent picture show with a circuit in east Texas and west Louisiana. He, along with a partner, started acquiring animals and named their show Jack and Kelley's Bear Track Shows. Eventually, they started deemphasizing the movies and emphasizing country-



Judy the elephant (21412.M1285.96, Barney Hillerman Collection, OHS Research Division).

western and animal acts that they contracted out of the Louisiana Hay Ride, a Shreveport, Louisiana, based company that started back in the late 1940s to broadcast various musical artists, such as Johnny Cash. They soon changed the name of the show to Tex Carson's Jamboree and Wild Animal Show, dropped movies, and mainly showed in Texas and Louisiana. The Moore family, along with their show, relocated to Hugo, Oklahoma, in 1952.⁴¹

When the Moores arrived in Hugo, Jack struck up a friendship with D. R. Miller and they formed a partnership. D. R. Miller would eventually lease Mabel the elephant, along with some equipment and canvas, to Moore. With the addition of Mabel in 1953, Moore changed the name of his show to Tex Carson's Circus. In 1958 it would undergo a final name change. Thus, Carson and Barnes Circus was born.⁴² Jack's son Mike Moore recalls, "I'm not sure why or where the name came from, although Barnes is an old, old circus name, and so maybe he was trying to play off of that. And Carson and Barnes sounded better than Tex Carson for some reason. So that's how it came to be called Carson and Barnes."⁴³

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Carson and Barnes Circus started as a family affair. Jack's wife Angela worked in business operations. Their four kids, Wanda, Mike, Martha, and Madelyn, also played an important role in the show's operation. Mike remembers, "We did whatever Daddy told us to do, and that was quite a bit. We quickly learned, unlike the other people on the show who could leave whenever they wanted to, we couldn't leave. So we sometimes had to do some things we didn't like, but we did them and probably overall, it was good for us."⁴⁴

Carson and Barnes saw success on the road and grew under Jack Moore's management. But in 1969, at the age of fifty, Jack passed away from lung cancer, leaving behind his wife Angela, their children, and the show.⁴⁵ By this time D. R. Miller was helping Angela with circus operations and she sold her half of the show to him a few years later. Mike looks back on the relationship between his father and D. R. Miller:

All of these years, up until that point in time, Dory was essentially a silent partner. He and Dad would work together each winter in putting together the show for the following year, but he was not an active manager of Carson and Barnes. He was managing their family show, [Al G.] Kelly Miller. So Mother sold her half of the show to Dory in '70 or '71, and basically retired from the road.⁴⁶

With Carson and Barnes, D. R. found himself back in business full time.

Since 1972 the Miller family has been sole owner and operator of the Carson and Barnes Circus. D. R.'s dream of having the biggest circus under the big top continued. For a number of years, Carson and Barnes boasted five rings and was known at one point as being the largest tent show in the world.⁴⁷ At the time of D. R.'s death in 1999, it was the only five-ring tent circus in North America and carried more than eighteen elephants on tour each year.⁴⁸ A few years after his death, his daughter Barbara reduced the show to three rings and later, one ring. While the economy is largely to blame for having to downsize, Barbara is proud that her father's dream is still alive. Looking back on the Miller family circus legacy, she said, "He would just be so proud that we're forging on, that no matter what it takes, we're going to keep this operation going. And if it has to be one ring, has to be thirty or forty performers, has to be three or five elephants instead of [thirty], that's okay because it's still continuing the tradition, keeping the circus going."⁴⁹

While Al G. Kelly and Miller Brothers Circus was sidelined in 1968, it came back to life in 1984 under the shortened name Kelly Miller.⁵⁰ Former D. R. Miller employee David Rawls had worked for circuses his

entire life. Born into a generational circus family and known for being a hard worker, David formed a partnership with D. R., among others, and managed the show on the road. Looking back on his friendship with D. R., David explains:

My relationship with D. R. Miller was extraordinary. We had an understanding of each other. We were different kinds of people, but we had the love for this industry and the job that we did. I admired the man, and he gave me the opportunity that I probably wouldn't have gotten from anyone else. He knew people, he could read people. He was a great innovator. He was uneducated, but he was a very wise man and very sharp and very, very integral to our industry over the years. He owned more elephants than anyone else, had a huge show, very successful, was welcomed anywhere. I never heard the man knock anyone. He just didn't knock other people. He had people he liked and people he didn't like, but he didn't talk about them. He wasn't one of those kinds of guys that said, "Oh, I don't like that so and so." It just wasn't in him.⁵¹

For twenty years, Rawls had much success on the road with Kelly Miller. In 2006 he sold the show to John Ringling North II, and Kelly Miller continues to base its headquarters in Hugo, Oklahoma.⁵²

Tough and smart, D. R. Miller is remembered by many not only in Hugo, Oklahoma, but around the circus world. Kelly Miller Circus winter quarters superintendent Dudley Hamilton recalls, "That's one thing about that old man that always impresses me is you meet showmen on other shows and at some time or another, they've all worked for D. R. Miller."⁵³ It is challenging to list his accomplishments and amazing feats. D. R. Miller is what legends truly are. His impact on the circus industry is undeniable, from technological innovations to his love for elephants.

Being ahead in the circus business oftentimes meant designing new equipment to meet a demand or need. For example, when a hippopotamus was added to the show, a way to transport it and a tank of water was needed. The Millers teamed up with Wayne Sanguin, a machine shop owner in Hugo, in the 1940s and helped design it.⁵⁴ The partners designed most of the motorized equipment, including the canvas spool wagons, used to transport the large and cumbersome tents, and giraffe trucks. The first canvas spool wagon was designed by Kelly Miller and Sanguin, and was built by Sanguin. It was patented and was used by many canvas tent circuses.⁵⁵ The Millers and Sanguin also teamed up to design and build a portable drop-side grandstand

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D. R. & Isla Miller's headstone in Showmen's Rest at the Mount Olivet Cemetery, Hugo, Oklahoma (photograph courtesy of the authors).

mounted on a semi-trailer.⁵⁶ This eliminated the need for workmen to set up and take down chairs or bleachers at each stop.

Miller also had a passion for elephants. He purchased his first elephant in the late 1930s and elephants quickly became a staple on his shows and in his life. D. R. also imported one of the last large lots of baby elephants into the United States in the 1970s, just before regulations were tightened. In 1993 D. R. founded the Endangered Ark Foundation with the aim to preserve the Asian elephant.⁵⁷ He started a breeding program that has seen success. The compound, located in Hugo, sits directly across from the Miller family home. Through the years D. R.'s elephants have been leased to circuses, zoos, and movie production companies and in every sense have earned their keep, as well as put a little income into D. R.'s pocket. As part of his estate, he established a trust for the care of his elephants.⁵⁸ At the time of his death in 1999, he owned thirty-six elephants, believed to be the largest herd of privately owned elephants in the world.⁵⁹ He had owned as many as fifty-seven during his lifetime.

Throughout his life, D. R. owned several circuses and surpassed John Ringling Sr. for longest running owner of a circus. He owned and operated his own show longer than any other circus proprietor

in history.⁶⁰ He ran the show and watched every minute of the action under the big top. He took care of his employees, celebrated all holidays with this staff, and remembered most birthdays. D. R. was also known to keep older employees on the payroll because of their loyalty, even when they were no longer able to work.⁶¹ He thoroughly enjoyed setting up the tent even into his later years. There was something about seeing townspeople interested in watching the tent go up that brought joy to D. R. He opted for "high grass" circuits of open fields and vacant lots to entertain small towns. He once said, "Show business is like fighting a war. It's a battle every day. You have to win the battle or you're out of business."⁶² D. R. dreamed big and achieved big. Mike Fulton explains:

He inspired a lot of people, but you can't even imagine how many people. Millions—I want to say billions of times—billions of times he's put a smile on a child's face because that was his, what he did when he saw his first circus. He could say, "Hey, I could do this!" He enjoyed it a lot. He's quite a guy. We hated to see him go.⁶³

D.R. Miller is buried in Showmen's Rest at Mount Olivet Cemetery in Hugo. He helped establish Showmen's Rest in the 1960s. It serves as the final resting place for showmen and women from not only Oklahoma but also all parts of the country. D. R. knew it would be his final resting place, too, as he planned his grand funeral celebration. What started in McCook, Nebraska, as his first experience at a circus, ended in McCook, Nebraska. His life had come full circle.

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Endnotes

*Dr. Tanya Finchum and Juliana Nykolaiszyn are librarians with Oklahoma State University's Oklahoma Oral History Research Program.

¹ Barbara Miller Byrd, interview by Juliana Nykolaiszyn and Tanya Finchum, November 19, 2011, 18, for the "Big Top" Show Goes On, Oklahoma Oral History Research Program, Oklahoma State University, funded by the American Folklife Center/Library of Congress.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., 19.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., 20.

⁷ Ibid., 5.

⁸ Cherie Valentine, "The End of an Era," *Back Yard* 4, no. 75 (1999): 1, 4, 6.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ D. Nevil, "Obituary: D. R. Miller," *Independent* (London, UK), November 15, 1999.

¹¹ Valentine, "The End of an Era," 4.

¹² Byrd interview, 6.

¹³ Donald R. Carson, "High Grass and Miller Magic, the Hugo, Oklahoma Circus Story," *Bandwagon* 13, no. 1 (1969): 22-34

¹⁴ Trey Keys, "The Big Top," *Kiamichi Journal: A Voice in the Wilderness* 5, no. 10 (February 1998): 1-13.

¹⁵ Valentine, "The End of an Era."

¹⁶ Ibid., 1; Byrd interview, 6.

¹⁷ Keys, "The Big Top," 3.

¹⁸ Keys, "The Big Top," 2; Gladys Brewer, "Hugo's Circus Opens Season in Home Town," *Daily Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City, OK), April, 28, 1946.

¹⁹ Valentine, "The End of an Era."

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Luciana "Lucy" Loyal and Zefta "Dolly" Pirtle, interview by Juliana Nykolaiszyn and Tanya Finchum, June 30, 2011, 44.

²³ B. K. Silverlake, interview by Juliana Nykolaiszyn and Tanya Finchum, July 1, 2011, and January 18, 2012, 68.

²⁴ Valentine, "The End of an Era."

²⁵ Bill Burchardt, "Circus Isn't Dead—Hugo Proves It," *Daily Oklahoman*, March 24, 1957, 139.

²⁶ "The Circus of the Year," *Bandwagon* 4, no. 1 (1960): 2.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Leland L. Antes Jr., "Al G. Kelly and Miller Bros. Circus," *Bandwagon* 6, no. 6 (1962): 15, 17. Grift and after shows were additional revenue sources for circuses. Grifters operated side shows that often included gambling or crooked games, such as the shell game and three-card monte. After shows were held immediately following the circus and, for an extra fee, those attending the circus could stay for additional entertainment.

²⁹ "Hugo Circus Expects Big Welcome in West Indies," *Daily Oklahoman*, December 14, 1962, 39.

³⁰ "Ship Sinks, Sooner Circus Off Safely," *Daily Oklahoman*, June 27, 1963, 1, 2, 17.

³¹ "Hugo Show Boards Ship: Circus Going to Far North," *Daily Oklahoman*, May 26, 1963, 123.

³² "Ship Sinks," 1, 2, 17.

³³ Mike Fulton, interview by Juliana Nykolaiszyn and Tanya Finchum, August 12, 2011, 8.

- ³⁴ “Ship Sinks,” 1, 2, 17.
- ³⁵ The Elephant Sanctuary in Tennessee, “Shirley—A Place in History,” accessed April 3, 2013, www.elephants.com/shirley/shirleyHistory.php.
- ³⁶ Keys, “The Big Top,” 7.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 7, 9.
- ³⁸ Carson, “High Grass and Miller Magic.”
- ³⁹ Keys, “The Big Top.”
- ⁴⁰ “Hugo Circus Founder Dies,” *Daily Oklahoman*, October 31, 1969, 59.
- ⁴¹ Mike Moore and Martha Moore, interview by Juliana Nykolaiszyn and Tanya Finchum, October 8, 2011, 5-6.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, 7.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁷ “Hugo Circus Founder Dies,” 59.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁹ Byrd interview, 13.
- ⁵⁰ “Hugo Circus Founder Dies,” 12.
- ⁵¹ David Rawls, interview by Tanya Finchum and Juliana Nykolaiszyn, June 15, 2011, 38.
- ⁵² “Kelly Miller Circus: America’s One Ring Wonder,” accessed April 4, 2013, <http://bestcircus.com/about-us/>.
- ⁵³ Dudley Hamilton, interview by Juliana Nykolaiszyn and Tanya Finchum, June 30, 2011, 22.
- ⁵⁴ “Hugo Machinist Completes Hippo Transport,” *Daily Oklahoman*, June 29, 1948, 49.
- ⁵⁵ “Hugo Circus Founder Dies,” 12.
- ⁵⁶ Carson, “High Grass and Miller Magic.”
- ⁵⁷ “Saving the Elephants,” accessed April 4, 2013, <http://www.carsonbarnescircus.com/savingelephants/>.
- ⁵⁸ Byrd interview, 16.
- ⁵⁹ Dave Seldon, “Circus Owner’s Herd of Trunks Follows Faithfully to America’s Big Tops,” *Daily Oklahoman*, March 14, 1983, 5.
- ⁶⁰ Bob Ritz and P. Casey Morgan, “Last of the Big Tops,” *Oklahoma Today* 35, no. 6, 30.
- ⁶¹ Ed Kelley, “More Elephants Circus Man’s BIG Dream,” *Daily Oklahoman*, March 30, 1980, 2.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, 1.
- ⁶³ Fulton interview, 32.