History major, dedicated father and UCO's assistant vice president of Facilities are all titles that fit Mark Rodolf. More recently, he has added one more — museum hero.

“...you do not have enough pen and paper to write down how we feel about Mark Rodolf,” Jenna Mottola said before even asked a question. She’s the former executive director of the Edmond Historical Society Museum, which opened its doors to the public in 1983. Mottola had the idea to make the museum more hands-on and kid-friendly, and Rodolf became the guy who built her dream.

Because of his background in history and architecture, UCO leadership selected Rodolf in 2008 to serve on the museum’s board as part of the university’s initiative to reach out to the community. Mottola, who had become executive director in January 2008, began voicing her plan for a hands-on concept. The first step, she thought, was to create an interactive replica of early-day Edmond, a museum area for children.

Money was the first obstacle Mottola encountered, due to the fact that the museum is a private, nonprofit organization. After many fundraising efforts, the museum still lacked some of the financial support it needed, including a large amount for labor. Rodolf quickly asked, “Why don’t you let me build it?”

He started in May 2008. Five months and 400 volunteer hours later, he finished the new, interactive children’s center that Mottola envisioned. The learning-play area includes a general store with an actual rough cedar roof, a train station with a smaller-scaled train inside, and a sheriff’s office with a jail cell made up of rubbery bars for kids to slip in and out. The exhibit also includes a Citizens Bank of Edmond with laminated money, a prairie house with dress-up clothes and an activity area with blocks, books and art supplies. The museum also added small displays to the walls that include educational facts about the structures and Edmond history.

“I’ve remodeled all of my life, worked in the trades through college, but this project was by far the most I’ve ever done,” Rodolf said. He built the exhibit as if a real house, with extra-reinforced wood corners because he knew it would take a beating. After six years, the only thing museum volunteers have needed to do is apply a little touch-up paint.

The exhibit also includes detailed murals of town life, painted by UCO art professor Bob Palmer, Ed.D., and his students. (continued on page 22)
Did You Know?

- The city of Edmond started as a coal and watering stop on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Line. On March 28, 1887, the stop was finally given the name Edmond, named for Santa Fe freight agent Edmond Burdick.
- The first year settlers arrived in the area was called “The Year of the Turnips” because the land had not been cleared or plowed, so most settlers planted and ate turnips.
- Homemade dolls were sometimes stuffed with hair that was brushed from girls with long tresses.
- The first telephone system in Edmond began in 1902.
- The Edmond Fire Department was all or partly volunteers until 1971.
- In 1920, a phone call to Oklahoma City cost 13 cents.
- In 1925, a dozen lemons cost 22 cents.

Following are some random facts found on the walls of the Edmond Museum’s children’s area.

Derek Brown (continued from page 13)

the annual springtime event.

“At the beginning, we did a lot of outreach to get the word out about the school and students and all that we could offer the community,” Derek said. “But, once people began to see the level of talent and education the school cultivates, word got out and it just grew from there.”

Now, five years later, ACM@UCO is a music industry cornerstone in the region.

Last year, ACM@UCO was involved heavily in “Rock For Oklahoma,” a benefit concert in July for victims of the May 2013 tornadoes; the Gentlemen of the Road Stopover Tour, featuring Mumford and Sons, in Guthrie; and the music entertainment component of the Oklahoma State Fair, just to name a few larger events where students performed.

The academy's current and former students, faculty and staff book, perform, produce and manage shows throughout the area on a weekly basis, including fundraisers, local events and sporting attractions such as the Oklahoma City Thunder and Barons games.

Every Wednesday, the metro area’s latest issue of the Oklahoma Gazette is splashed with information about upcoming concerts and shows that connect in some way to the ACM@UCO.

“Derek has more experience in this industry than anyone I’ve ever met at his age,” Booker said. “Derek also has the rare perspective to look at both sides of an event — as a promoter as well as a performer who has played to hundreds of thousands of people, if not millions. He can take all of those experiences and apply them to the needs of our students and our program.”

Brown shrugs off the compliments.

“My goal here is to continue to grow the relationships between the music industry and our students, to help them achieve their goals, get them going on their careers in music,” he said.

“I want people in the music industry to believe in our students just as much as we do. By connecting them with opportunities to showcase their abilities, we’re generating that belief, and it’s paying off.”

Sister Rosemary (continued from page 11)

Sewing for Hope


Since 2006, Joseph Kony and his Lord's Resistance Army no longer terrorize northern Uganda, where they are accused of kidnapping more than 20,000 children. Kony is a fugitive in hiding, on the world’s “Top Ten Most Wanted” list, indicted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Sister Rosemary, who has been nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize, now works to restore Uganda. She has opened a school similar to St. Monica’s in Ariak, Uganda, about 55 miles north of Gulu, with hopes to open more schools in Uganda and southern Sudan. She works to make her schools and her students self-sustaining. Students sew uniforms for local schools and cater area events to help support the schools and themselves, all the while learning skills that will help them establish their own businesses and become independent. They also create purses from pop tabs and yarn. These purses are sold internationally, with the help of the organization Sisters United, that Rachelle Whitten helped establish.

“The world can change if we only do small things with commitment and love,” Sister Rosemary said. “I have my children repeat with me: I can change the world.”

For more on Sister Rosemary and her work, visit SewingforHope.com, ProsforAfrica.com and SistersUnited.com.

Her book, Sewing for Hope, is available from Amazon and Barnes & Noble.