

CPA's Rock Stock Climbs

While others patiently wait for their investments to grow, one member continues contributing to an investment that pays personal dividends more than financial dividends.

By Amy L. Welch, APR, OSCPA Director of Communications

In the late 1960s and into the early 1970s, Mike Crawford, the lead guitarist for a rock band called Revelation, found himself motivated by the poeticism — and the fun — of playing and listening to music. He eventually changed courses and became a CPA, but rock-and-roll fever continues to run through his veins.

The results of his obsession can be viewed by clients, friends and family in a rock music memorabilia collection that boasts thousands of pieces and autographed items that could capture the attention of any music lover, including hundreds of small devotions to Crawford's initial inspiration, the Beatles.

"From the first time I saw the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan show in 1963, I wanted to be a guitar player for a rock and roll group and be like Paul McCartney," Crawford said. "So the Beatles hold a special place in my heart."

The Henryetta, Okla., native went to East Central University in Ada, Okla., planning to become an attorney. However, while playing varsity tennis, the then-assistant coach, who was also an accounting instructor, encouraged Crawford to think about

taking accounting. The coach was Dr. Pat Dorr, CPA, the Haskell Cudd Professor of Accounting at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Okla., and the OSCPA's 1997 Outstanding Accounting Educator.

"Pat asked me to consider accounting," Crawford said. "I took some accounting courses, did well, liked it and never looked back. Becoming a CPA allowed me to exercise my creative juices in developing new systems, approaches and guidance for clients and other accountants, and ultimately led to my current role as an author."

Crawford is currently retired from active CPA practice and works as a writer for technical publications for CCH, an arrangement he says suits him.

"I enjoy the freedom of retirement from active practice and not having to deal directly with the day-to-day issues of managing a growing CPA firm," Crawford explained. "As an author, I have the freedom to travel and work when it is convenient for me, as long as I meet my deadlines."

Crawford said a typical day involves responding to e-mails and calls for technical assistance for about four or five hours a day, except when book deadlines loom. The rest of the time, he said, is his personal time. However, he added, his challenges still include balancing

... rock-and-roll fever continues to run through his veins.

A framed original ticket from Woodstock is part of Mike Crawford's extensive rock and roll collection.



professional responsibilities as an author and a mentor to staff members at his former firm with personal responsibilities to family, friends and community.

One way he shows dedication to his profession is by regularly donating pieces to the Educational Foundation to raise money for accounting scholarships and by donating door prizes for the women's financial conference, Do It Herself: A Journey to Financial Freedom.

"I get the most fun by seeing others enjoy the nostalgia associated with the classic rock items in my collection or a specific item," Crawford explained. "I donate pieces when the opportunity arises for three reasons. First, I enjoy giving; second, it makes a unique gift; and third, I won't be taking them with me when I pass on."

Crawford said his unique skill set as a CPA has helped him a great deal in his role as a collector.

"There are so many fake pieces out there, you have to be careful and exercise due diligence in acquiring pieces," he said. "That's where my audit training comes in handy — because I have been trained to be professionally skeptical, I generally try and acquire autographed pieces from reputable auction houses or galleries and less from over Internet sites such as eBay."

An auction he recently participated in raised money for charity and featured items from Dick Clark and American Bandstand. Crawford said he obtained dozens of items, including a Prince and the Revolution Purple Rain poster, tour jacket and tour badge; Diana Ross' movie script and costume design book for "Mahogany," (which is actually spelled "MAHOGONY" on the book), with Ross' autograph and personal notes; and

An auction he recently participated in ... featured items from Dick Clark and American Bandstand.

an American Bandstand letter jacket signed by Patti LaBelle and Jon Bon Jovi.

The piece he feels luckiest to have is a set of ZZ Top nesting dolls from Russia.

"I'm lucky I found them on the Internet," Crawford said, "and even luckier to meet ZZ Top backstage and get them to autograph the dolls!"

Crawford said the hardest piece to get was one he assembled himself over a few years, which includes a set of 22 Beatles hit single picture disks. Crawford said he had to locate each disk individually and wait until he had the entire set before he could take it in for framing.

Although his own collection tops his list of places to see rock memorabilia, Crawford said he enjoys visiting Hard Rock hotels and cafes. However, he said that his next visit will be to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio.

For those who can't make the trip, Crawford invites members to see the next best thing.

"Our office is open any time to visitors who just want to come by and see the collection," Crawford said. "If you are ever in south Oklahoma City with some extra time, come on in and browse." €

Editor's Note: Photos of Crawford's collection can also be found online at http://www.crawfordcpas.com/html/unique_office_decor.html.

Crawford's favorite piece is his framed Beatles picture disk collection, which took years to complete.



The rock and roll collection has more than 1,000 albums, organized alphabetically with tabs that show the artist's or group's name.

Crawford's guitar collection includes this one, signed by Jimmy Page, Eric Clapton, Keith Richards and Pete Townsend.



His luckiest piece is a set of nesting dolls, later autographed by the band ZZ Top.

