

OKLAHOMA VETERAN NEWSMAGAZINE

Serving Active Duty Military, Veterans and Their Families

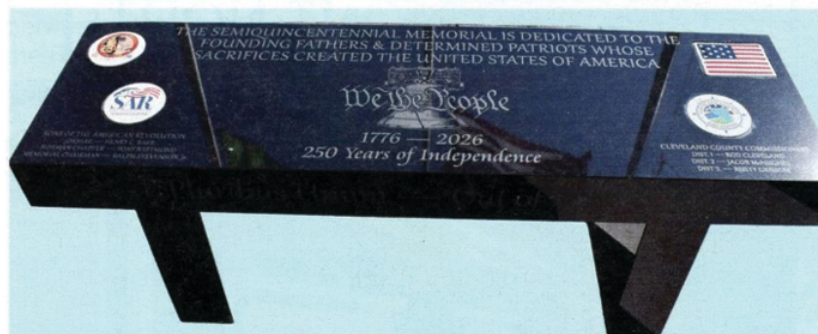
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JULY 2026

Oklahoma Celebrates America's 250 Years of Declaration of Independence Stories From Around The State

Stories by Lt. Col. Richard Stephens, Jr., USAFR, Ret. website: Rich Travel Niche



Left: Norman's Sons of the American Revolution donated a bench for America's 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. It sits at the Cleveland County Courthouse.

Simple Bench Makes Big Statement

An engraved, black granite bench was dedicated at the Cleveland County Courthouse in Norman on April 18 - but not an ordinary sitting bench - this one had a purpose: celebrate the semiquincentennial anniversary of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 2026, and to thank America's founding fathers and determined patriots who sacrificed much from 1775-1783 to win the War of Independence. The bench was designed and completed by Ralph Stevenson, Jr., a member of the Norman Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR),

which donated it.

Members of Norman's SAR, including Stevenson, State Society SAR President, Henry Baer, and Norman Chapter President, Tony Eastmond, spoke on the significance of the Declaration of Independence at the bench's dedication.

Seventeen-year-old Natalie Boone eloquently explained each of our Constitutional Rights.

Stevenson said a bench was chosen over other possible items because, "it's more lasting..." and at 2,200 pounds, "it's not gonna blow away and it's permanent." Asked what he hoped future residents would think of when looking at the

bench, he replied, "I just hope it's a permanent memorial to our ancestors...that sacrificed so much to make the United States."

Randy Hooper, owner of the Hooper Printing Company who printed the program, attended. He is a descendant of William Hooper, a Congressman from North Carolina, who signed the Declaration of Independence.

About 60 people attended, including Norman's SAR, 45th Infantry Living Historians, Daughters of the American Revolution and American Legion Post 88.

Contributions for the bench came from 28 individuals and 11 companies or associations.