

# ICONIC

# BRONZE



Mustangs at Southern Methodist University  
by Miley Frost

Besides neon lights, the Texas Rangers and world-class restaurants, the Dallas-Fort Worth area may be best known for its bigger-than-life, bronze outdoor sculptures that celebrate the area's cowboy heritage.

While some have criticized the sculptures as a bit clichéd for a city that seems to have outgrown its western roots, others argued that the bronzes – particularly because of the quality of the artistry – have helped define Dallas, Fort Worth and smaller cities like Irving and Frisco. Visitors come by the droves to be photographed with cows being herded to market, galloping mustangs and cowboys working the range.

“When you go to Paris or Florence, you expect to see great masterpieces from those cities’ past. People come here to see art that reflects the flavor of our society and history, of the Wild West,” said western art expert David Dike. The artists range from celebrated homegrown sculptors to artists imported from as far away as the African bush.

One of the best known of the giant bronze sculptures is at Pioneer Plaza adjacent to the Dallas Convention Center

where three cowboys on horseback drive bronze longhorns across a stream. The sculptures may be the largest of their type in the world. Sculpted by renowned Texas artist Robert Summers of Glen Rose, the cattle drive ranks second only to Dealey Plaza for the number of visitors each year. The reason, Dike believes, is that Summers captured exactly the muscular action of the animals and cowboys. “He did an amazing job,” Dike said. Summers, who was chosen as the official artist of both the Bicentennial and Sesquicentennial celebrations, may be the closest thing Texas has to an official state artist. John Crawford, president of Downtown Dallas, said the trail drive “still plays a major role, making downtown more fun and vibrant.”

Across town at SMU, where mustangs are revered, there is a bronze statue of three running mustangs, sculpted by artist Miley Frost and paid for by real estate developer John W. Carpenter III as a 25th wedding anniversary present to his wife. Frost, formerly a resident of Dallas before moving to Washington, D.C., designed the three 11-foot bronze statues of wild horses that stand in front of Moody Coliseum. The mustangs are considered among her best work, which includes pieces that were in The White House Oval Office when Ronald Reagan was President.

Heading west, one of the largest equestrian sculptures in the world has made Williams Square, otherwise much like any other office building plaza, into a world-class tourist destination. The bronze sculptures in the Las Colinas Urban Center, created by African wildlife artist Robert Glen, feature nine wild mustangs splashing across a stream. It took Glen, who from his Kenyan home has created sculptures for Queen Elizabeth, eight years to create the Mustangs. The Mustangs have grown into such an icon that there is a museum to them at the Las Colinas Urban Center.

The trail drives were so colorful and critical to the youthful Texas economy that they are celebrated in bronze throughout the area. In Frisco, the longest continuous-themed bronze sculpture collection in the country meanders through The Centre at Preston Ridge. The longhorns, cowboys and a chuck wagon bring the Shawnee Trail, now Preston Road, to life.

The latest addition to the region's bronze collection stands in front of the Winthrop Rockefeller Building on the TCU campus in

Fort Worth. A 6.5 foot bronze of a ranch hand clad in a duster, called “Range Duty,” was created by New Mexico artist Star Liana York, who said she was inspired in creating the sculpture by her own father's work on the American frontier.

TCU Trustee J. Luther King, Jr., could have been talking about all the bronzes in the area when he said that the cowboy in “Range Duty” epitomizes the values of the West – “rugged determination, a belief in the power of the individual and an incredible can-do spirit.”

“Range Duty” by Star Liana York



“Pioneer Plaza” by Robert Summers