

'None of us will ever be the same.'
-- Hart attorney Garvin Isaacs



DEFENSE ATTORNEY GARVIN ISAACS ADDRESSES THE MEDIA MOMENTS AFTER GENE LEROY HART WAS ACQUITTED OF MURDER -- PHOTO BY MICHAEL WHEAT

Where are they now?

Hart defense attorney 'knows the truth'

So-called 'disputatious defender of accused murderers' speaks out

Garvin Isaacs was only 33 years old when he was hired to defend Gene Leroy Hart.

"But I had lots of miles on me for a 33-year-old," quipped the veteran trial lawyer in a recent interview with *The Paper*. "A lot of miles, indeed."

Isaacs, now approaching 60, speaks with a heavy southern drawl and is still as outspoken as he was when he represented Hart.

"I really liked Mayes County," said Isaacs from a Wyoming lodge where he was assisting famed trial lawyer Gerry Spence with a conference for young attorneys. "There were a bunch of people from Mayes County I didn't care for, but

the country was real nice."

To this day, Isaacs still won't reveal who hired him to defend Hart, but maintains it was family members who introduced the pair.

"Gene could have had any lawyer in the country," said Isaacs. "It was a high profile case and there were any number of high profile lawyers who would have jumped all over it. Gene made the final decision."

Assisted by attorney Gary Pitchlynn, Isaacs spent 359 days working on the case -- nearly non-stop.

"None of us will ever be the same," he said. "We just try to learn from our mistakes and go on down the road."

Isaacs said he became friends with Hart from spending so much time with him during the trial and visited him often in prison -- until his unexpected death in June 1979.

"I'll never forget the kindness his family showed me at Gene's funeral," said Isaacs. "They're the most genuine people I've ever met."

Since Hart's trial and subsequent acquittal, Isaacs has continued to try criminal cases -- mainly what he calls "little guy" cases.

"That's when somebody with power or money is picking on a little guy," he said.

"Right now, I'm representing 21 Lawtins-urea farmers in a lawsuit against the Wells Fargo Insurance

Company which has refused to pay these folks on crop losses."

With a tendency to represent accused killers, *The Daily Oklahoman* has called him "the disputatious defender of accused murderers," a moniker Isaacs doesn't mind.

"Call me whatever you want," he said. "I will always speak out and exercise my first amendment rights to speak up for the little guy. Every man deserves to have his day in court. When I'm dead and buried, they better drive a stake through my heart because I'm not going to quit. I won't ever give up representing the just cause."

"That's the reason Isaacs said he accepted the Hart case to begin

with.

"I know the truth. He was an innocent man," he said. "A jury of his peers acquitted him. DNA evidence has shown on more than one occasion that he's innocent. What more do you want?"

Isaacs said pending DNA tests would mean nothing to him if they come back implicating Hart.

"Who are you going to believe?" he asked. "The OSHI and Buddy Falls (district attorney who prosecuted Hart)? Trial showed that evidence had been tampered with. What's to stop them from doing it again?"

"Gene was innocent, end of story."

-- David Gustafson

Truth is, we can't handle the truth

There's that great scene in the film, "A Few Good Men," when Tom Cruise is grilling Jack Nicholson on the witness stand and Uncle Jack slams his grubby fist on the wood stand and screams, "You can't handle the truth!"



By David Gustafson

That's how I feel about our ongoing investigation into the 1977 Girl Scout murders.

About 40 miles southwest of here, there are three families in Tulsa who

would love to have some sense of closure in the deaths of their daughters.

Like many of us, they'd like to see someone punished for the crime.

They'd like to close that chapter of their lives.

They'd like to know the truth. But can they -- can we, the people of Mayes County -- handle the truth?

What if we found out Gene Hart did do it? With all the allegations of misconduct and evidence tampering at OSBI headquarters, could we believe it even if it was said?

What if the allegations of "tunnel vision" by local law enforcement officers turns out to be true?

What would happen if there was someone out there who claimed to have first-hand knowledge of what really happened that night in Tent 38 of the Kiowa Unit.

Could we handle knowing the truth if it was something other than what we've always been led to believe?

For some of us, not knowing is simpler.

It's safer. In Thursday's issue of The Paper, you'll read an incredible story that will leave you speechless. Speechless and breathless. Don't miss it.

NOTE: Two weeks ago in this column, I mentioned a man in Tulsa, a deputy court clerk who has access to me copy information from court case archives.

I found out later that Title 20, Section 106.4 of the Oklahoma state statutes specifically prohibits anyone -- including reporters -- from making copies of court transcripts. Come to find out, they're the eyes looking out of the court reporter who has them and copies aren't allowed without their permission.

The women in the court reporter office were only doing their job and apologize for inferring others.

Remembering Michele

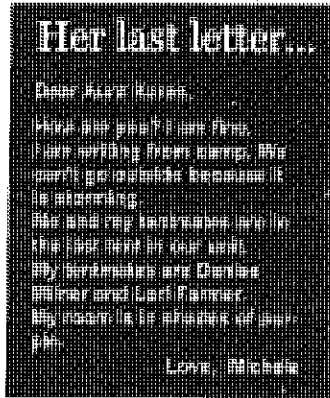
Active Girl Scout had been to camp the year before

Michele Heather Guse had attended Camp Scott the year before and was looking forward to spending a week in the wilderness with her fellow Girl Scouts.

"She was very excited and she came downstairs and she sat on my lap and told me that she was going to miss me," remembered her mother, GeorgeAnn Guse of Broken Arrow. "But she wanted to make sure that I was going to take care of her plants. African violets were her specialty and she wanted to make sure I was going to water them and take care of them."

An active and athletic young girl, Michele's father, Richard, said he felt like his daughter knew she wasn't coming home from camp that summer.

"It was like a premonition," he said. "She hugged us goodbye. It was like she was say-



ing goodbye and that she was never going to see us again."

A former member of the Oklahoma Crime Victims Compensation Board, Michele's father was an organizer of a local chapter of Compassionate Friends, a support group for parents who have lost children.

The Guses chose not to participate in a 1984 suit against the Girl Scout council, but were very outspoken against the council in a television documentary produced by former OSBI agent Mike Wilkerson.

"They never told me she had been killed," said Guse. "Just that she had died, that there had been an accident. I learned exactly how she died by turning on the television."

Michele's death came one day before their wedding anniversary -- an occasion they don't celebrate still today.



Hart: guilty or not?

Did Hart fit pattern of 'child killer'?

Psychogoist: Killer suffered from 'inferiority complex'

When Dr. Robert Phillips was asked to address the Oklahoma News Executive annual meeting in July, 1977, his keynote address was about the biggest news story to hit Oklahoma since Will Rogers tragic death in an airplane crash.

Dr. Phillips, a clinical psychologist who at the time had treated criminals and the criminally insane for more than 25 years, used his opportunity to paint a grim psychological profile of the man who killed eight-year-old Lori Farmer, nine-year-old Michele Guse and

10-year-old Denise Milner while attending Girl Scout camp south of Locust Grove.

"While not legally crazy, he survives on such a savage, animal level it would be impossible to change him," said Dr. Phillips. "He calculated and planned his deed in a cold-blooded manner and took the tools he needed to do the terrible deed, then escaped."

Dr. Phillips said it was unlikely that the man who killed the girls had intended on killing all three, but in the process of committing the crime, passion took over and the "beast" emerged.



HART MUGSHOT FROM 1966

"After one kill, he returned to the tent for another and another. He could not leave the bodies alone," said Dr. Phillips. "He was caught up in his deed. He lost all control. In a demonic way, he carried the girls outside and continued to violate them. At that second, he was completely mad -- a monster -- an animal."

And like an animal who scratches the ground trying to cover his tracks, Dr. Phillips said the crime scene proved the killer tried to cover what he had done.

"A man with complete disorder in his life was trying to create order

by putting the girls back in their sleeping bags and attempting to wipe up the blood."

Dr. Phillips said whatever committed the crimes did so because he hated happiness, innocence, and decency and the best way to degrade those things was by violating the young girls.

"Something happened during this man's life to make him feel extremely inferior and to build up a passionate hatred in him. He hates being alive and in killing, he is taking revenge on a world he believes has mistreated him."

Thousands attended Camp Scott before...

At the height of its popularity, Camp Scott was the summer home to thousands of girls from northeast Oklahoma who trocked in its wilderness, learning about arts and crafts, and the Girl Scout way of life.

Until it's closing in June, 1977, more than 12,000 girls attended camp there.

Located two miles south of the junction of Highways 33 and 82 in Locust Grove, the camp was begun in June 1928 when H.J. "Scotty" and Florence Scott of Tulsa donated 24 acres of wooded land on Little Spring Creek to the Tulsa-based Magic Empire Council of the Girl Scouts of America.

Soon after, the Tulsa Civitan Club underwrote the construction of the Great Hall, and money to build several small cottages was donated by civic clubs throughout Oklahoma.

Using primarily money raised through sales of their popular Girl Scout cookies, scout officials bought subsequent 20, 50, and 170 acre tracts -- bringing the total acreage to more than 400.

Area landowners who sold property to the scouts included the Cavalier family, Joe Big Feather, Lizzie Bluebird and Redbird Levy, Ward Goddard, and Wildcat Williams.

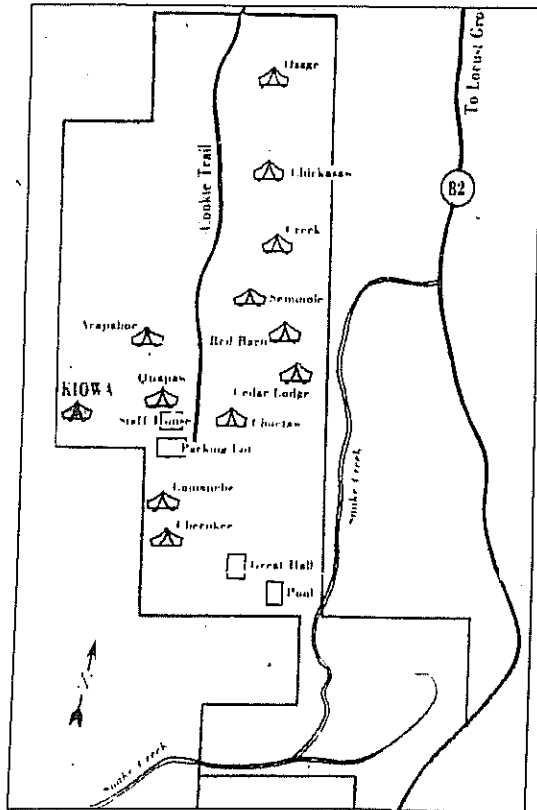
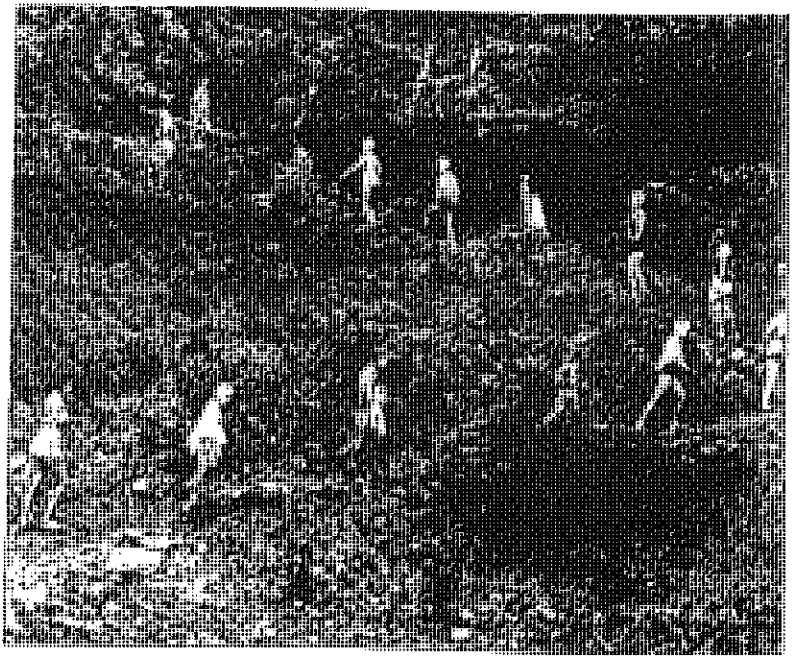
Considered one of the most modern of its kind, a new "Great Hall" was built in 1962 -- its entire \$36,000 cost financed by cookie sales.

Originally, the camp accommodated 30 girls and four adult sponsors, the camp eventually housed 140 girls for each two-week period.

In 1956, a restoration program was begun and the Girl Scouts planted literally thousands of pine trees throughout the camp.

Their motto was the same as the National Park Service, "Take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints."

After nearly 15 years of sitting dormant following the 1977 murders of three scouts, the property was bought 10 years ago by J.T. Rowland, a Locust Grove businessman and cattle rancher who was born on the same property some 65 years earlier.



... but none have attended since

