

Expanded Edition

Ayden-
Grifton's
Davis
retires
SPORTS, C1



As statues,
monuments
fall, what
comes next?

LOOK, D1

ESTABLISHED 1882 • GREENVILLE, NC

The Daily Reflector



SUNDAY-MONDAY, July 12-13, 2020

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Trustees report: ECU's COVID-19 trial nation's largest

BY ELIZABETH JOHNSON
Staff Writer

A clinical trial at ECU testing a drug that might mitigate the effects of COVID-19 has the largest number of participants in the country, its lead researcher said.

Dr. Paul Cook, chief of

the Division of Infectious Diseases at ECU's Brody School of Medicine, updated members of the Board of Trustees on Thursday about the trial of LY3127804, which could prevent often-fatal lung damage caused by the virus.

ECU began enrolling

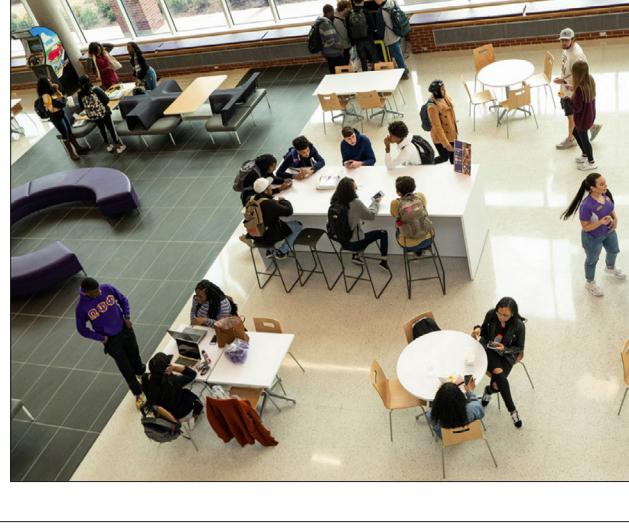
patients June 1 in the trial aimed at preventing and shortening the duration of Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome. ARDS is a characteristic of COVID-19 that occurs when fluid builds up in the lungs and prevents oxygen from entering the bloodstream.

The university is collaborating with pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly and Vidant Medical Center to test the drug in a double blind and placebo controlled study, Cook told members of the trustee's Health Sciences

See TRUSTEES, A6

ECU received \$14 million in federal CARES aid, which will be used to cover expenses related to virus safety measures in places like the student center and costs in the coming fiscal year.

FILE PHOTO/THE DAILY REFLECTOR



'Hanging Tree Guitars'

Collection of carvings, photographs paint a portrait of Greene County native's life as a black man in the rural South

BY KIM GRIZZARD
Staff Writer

The sound that Freeman Vines heard more than 50 years ago so reverberated with this artist that he would spend much of the rest of his life searching for it.

But after decades of trying to craft a guitar that could recreate it, what he found instead is a form of art that might just resonate with others seeking to be heard.

Vines' "Hanging Tree Guitars," a solo exhibition awaiting its U.S. premiere at the Greenville Museum of Art, is not only a collection of carvings by the 77-year-old eastern North Carolina native but a portrait of his life as a black man in the rural South.

Vines, who still lives on the Greene County property where his ancestors were enslaved, is the oldest surviving son in a family of 11 children. Four of his sisters went on to form the popular gospel group known as the Vines Sisters, but Freeman had different musical aspirations.

"I was a shot-house musician," he said, describing the black-market bars where he played to try to make a name for himself. "I almost perfected the electric guitar, but nobody don't know it yet because I'm a nobody."

"Thought I was going to be famous. I wanted to be a great blues man, but I didn't never get around to being one."

See GUITARS, A5



DEBORAH GRIFFIN
THE DAILY REFLECTOR

Freeman Vines, a Greene County native, has been hand-carving guitars for 51 years. Some of his guitars, along with photographs by Timothy Duffy, are on display at the Greenville Museum of Art.

Vines, at left, is shown with his collection of "Hanging Tree Guitars." The handmade instruments, along with photographs like this one from Timothy Duffy, are part of the "Hanging Tree Guitars" exhibit.



Musings
on music
and more

BY KIM GRIZZARD

Staff Writer

Timothy Duffy, who has been photographing and recording artists across the South for more than 30 years, describes Greene County native Freeman Vines as a poet.

"Freeman has a lot to say, and then when we started recording it and listening back, this is where the great Southern writers get their muse," Duffy said. "He really can talk."

Many of Vines' musings can be found in the book "Hanging Tree Guitars," to be released Sept. 1. But Vines also shared his thoughts with The Daily Reflector last week.



On education:

"I went to school three years, and that was the end of that. My mama said, 'You're big enough to go in that field and work, and you don't need to go to school.' We weren't the only one. Other people that had older boys and everyone done the same thing on the farm. They didn't just pick us out of the crowd. There were a whole lot of them, all the guys my age. They had no education. Ain't got none now."

On violent protests:

"I've seen people burning and hollering and stuff, but I ain't see what good it done them. I never understood what good it

See VINES, A5

139th year, No. 194 © 2020



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Lottery

Friday Pick 3: 3-1-4; Pick 4: 0-2-9-2 (day)
Thursday night drawings:
Pick 3: 1-2-3; Pick 4: 5-7-4-0
Cash 5: 4-7-25-33-35
Lucky for Life: 10-24-28-33-39 12

Weather

Today: 95, Hot
Tonight: 75, Clear
Monday: 90, Overcast

Forecast on A2



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FROM PAGE ONE

GUITARS

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Though his musical career never yielded the success he had hoped, Vines could never bring himself to put down the guitar. Instead, he took up making his own, mostly in an attempt to replicate a unique sound that seemed to elude him.

"A guitar out of a store has a commercial sound. All of them sound just alike," he said. "The only quality they got is tone and base. If you hear one that sounds unusual, they're using effects. But I learned to wire a guitar with the effects already in it. That still did not do nothing about that sound that I heard."

In an attempt to reproduce it, Vines resorted to a host of unconventional materials, many of them found objects such as radio parts or an old chest of drawers. He gravitated toward wood with a history, chopping and sanding pieces from objects ranging from a Steinway piano to a mule trough.

"I try to deal with wood of character," he said, "wood that has done something another besides just lay in the yard. If it has done something that interests me, then I'd pay the top dollar."

That was the kind of wood he was searching for when he came across planks of what he would later refer to as "hanging tree wood." Vines had passed a site where a barn and some old houses were being demolished and had asked about buying some of the boards. As he carried the planks to his truck, the seller cautioned that some of the wood might not be the kind Vines wanted.

"He said, 'There was a young man hung on that tree,'" Vines recalled. "He said, 'The people sawed the tree down and sawed the wood up and each one got a certain amount of the wood.'"

If the story is to be believed, the wood was from the tree where 29-year-old Oliver Moore was lynched in 1930. Moore, who was black, was accused of assaulting two white sisters, ages 7 and 5. The story, which made national headlines, indicated that as many as 200 people in masks descended on the Edgecombe County jail in Tarboro, where they



PHOTOS BY DEBORAH GRIFFIN/DAILY REFLECTOR

Hand-carved guitars by Freeman Vines hang from the ceiling and on the walls of the Greenville Museum of Art, as part of the Hanging Tree Guitars art exhibit. Some of his creations have darker themes, below.

kidnapped Moore and took him back to the scene of the alleged crime. There, they hung him in a tree and then shot him repeatedly.

The crime was said to be the first lynching in North Carolina since 1921 and the first ever in Wilson County. Gov. O. Max Gardner offered a \$400 reward for information leading to an arrest, but none was ever made.

"I thought it was just some nice John Brown walnut," Vines said. "If I had known like I know now, I would have put the wood back in the barn."

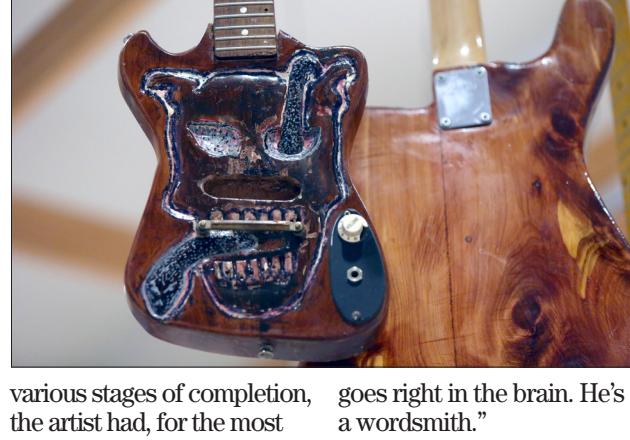
"I cleaned the wood off and started sanding it, and here were the complete features of a skull on there," he said. "I'd never see that before."

Despite the unique nature of the wood, it sat largely untouched in Vines' workshop until five years ago, when a visit from a stranger brought the story and the wood out of hiding.

Timothy Duffy, a renowned photographer and founder and president of Music Maker Relief Foundation, had heard of Vines through blues and folk artist Lightnin' Wells, and had decided to pay the guitar maker a visit.

"I've studied and have been going around the South for 30 years," Duffy said of his time spent recording and photographing traditional artists throughout the region. "When I went into Freeman's yard, I took a hard left turn. I knew this was something really special."

While Vines' property contained quite a collection of hand-carved guitars in



various stages of completion, the artist had, for the most part, stopped making them.

"His hands were swollen, and he could barely see," Duffy recalled. "He wasn't getting doctor treatment."

Music Maker, a Hillsborough-based nonprofit organization whose mission is to support musicians in order to preserve the musical traditions of the South, provided Vines with grant funding to help him with medication he needed to treat his diabetes.

"But I think what really helped him besides the material things that Music Maker does," Duffy said, "is we give artists like Freeman and many artists that are elderly a purpose."

Duffy and Vines became better acquainted through a series of portraits that also are a part of the "Hanging Tree Guitars" exhibit. Conversations and additional photographs that came from their five-year friendship resulted in a book by the same name, to be released Sept. 1.

"He said, 'I make hanging tree guitars,'" Duffy recalled of Vines' poetic self-description. "When he came up with that line, that kind of

goes right in the brain. He's a wordsmith."

Vines credits Duffy with being the first to view his guitar making as art. The photographer brought renowned artists and musicians, including Lonnie Holley, to meet his new friend.

"Lonnie got out a shovel and a canvas and said, 'Mr. Freeman, can I have some of the dirt that you walked on?' and put a pile of dirt in the canvas and hauled it off," Duffy said, laughing.

As the photographer set out to uncover the story behind the hanging tree, Freeman turned his attention to the wood, creating guitars and other objects with far darker themes than his previous works.

"When you be out there late at night working on that wood, you keep looking over your shoulder," Vines recalled. "I don't know why but I had to quit messing with it at night. I know it was a mind thing, but something (was) coming with that wood besides just the wood. I don't know if it was spiritual. I don't know what it was."

Besides guitars embellished with skulls and

snakes, Vines created carvings reflecting a lynching and a grave site. One of the last pieces of walnut was fashioned into the shape of a shoe. It is one of several forms that Vines said seemed to be hidden within the wood, waiting to be uncovered.

Duffy likens it to how Michelangelo said his great sculpture, "David," was already completed within the marble when he started. He just had to chisel away the superfluous material so that others could see it.

"When he (Vines) talks about those things in the wood, he really feels it deeply," Duffy said. "That's like when a great singer sings a song, you feel it deeply. So when Freeman says there's a spirit in that wood, you just feel it. I don't think there's a lot of explaining. It's art and art is something that is hard to explain, but you feel it."

While the story of Moore's lynching has been well documented, Duffy said there is no way to determine if the wood that Vines used for carving is, in fact, from the lynching. But he believes that the wood's origin is not the point.

"It doesn't really matter if it was exact," he said. "You'll never be able to ascertain that. But it (the lynching) did happen. There was a tree. Any tree can be a hanging tree."

"I think the first day I met him (Vines), I said we need to do an exhibit of this work," Duffy said. "It's very powerful stuff."

Vines said he wants people who view his work to consider the agony that Moore felt.

"By looking at this wood and everything that's formed and messed up and all the little characters in there and stuff, I hope they'll learn something about it," he said.

"The tree actually told it. It will do something to you when you see it. The tree's the one told the story."

Greenville Museum of Art Executive Director Trista Reis Porter said the story that Vines' work tells is different from what might traditionally be included in an art exhibit.

"I don't think we've ever had a show of hand-carved musical instruments, and it's not something you typically expect to see in a museum space," she said. "I also like that it sort of bridges this kind of intersection between music and visual art form."

Porter said museum's hosting of the exhibit, which has been planned for more than two years, is perhaps more timely today than it was in 2018.

"It's sort of sad how relevant it still is today," she said.

"It really tells more of a history and hopefully it illuminates how the recent past is still important and how it affects people today," Porter said. "I think that's the most important thing that I hope that people take away from this is understanding trauma of discrimination and racism and lynchings and understanding how that trauma continues to reverberate today."

Some of Vines' guitars hung alongside works by Holley, and artists Dinah Young and Joe Minter in "We Will Walk: Art and Resistance in the American South" at England's Turner Contemporary art gallery earlier this year.

The Greenville Museum of Art, which was scheduled to open the "Hanging Tree Guitars" exhibit on July 15, remains closed due to the coronavirus pandemic. But Vines' work has been hung, awaiting word from the state that restrictions on public gatherings have been loosened.

It is scheduled to remain on exhibit until Oct. 10, although concerns over COVID-19 have prompted the museum to curtail many of the events that would have been associated with the exhibit, including a series of concerts and a public dialogue.

Still, Duffy is glad to see Vines' work, which received funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities and National Endowment for the Arts, begin its tour near his home community. Afterward, it will move to Danville and then Portsmouth, Va., for a second and third showing.

"A lot of these kind of artists' work gets plowed under for another tobacco field," Duffy said. "Freeman Vines is an important man, important to the landscape of our nation. I hope his voice is heard."

A virtual exhibit is scheduled to be made available later this month on hangingtreeguitars.com. The Greenville Museum of Art is located at 802 Evans St. There is no admission charge. Visit gmoa.org for information on the museum's reopening plans.

VINES

Continued from A1

would do to burn down people's buildings when they ain't done nothing to

you, you know?"

On aging

"My granddaughter told me, she said, 'Papa, your neck is just as wrinkled as

a prune.' That's how come I quit shaving. I come from a strange family. What needs to be said be said and there ain't nobody walking around with their lip poked out because I had already

seen the wrinkles on my neck to start with."

On eating habits

"A human ain't nothing but a too-legged buzzard. Everything they eat is

dead."

On looking for a special sound

"Maybe I'll accidentally run into my sound. It ain't

going to happen. I've done bought all kinds of guitars that were already made, and every one of them sound just alike. Tone, treble and bass. That's all you can get out of them."

Body cameras, N.C. 43 plan on county commissioners' agenda

The Daily Reflector

The Pitt County Board of Commissioners on Monday is scheduled to consider a \$1.15 million contract to purchase body camera equipment for the Pitt County Sheriff's Office.

The board will meet virtually at 9 a.m. due to COVID-19 restrictions, but the meeting will be accessible on Suddenlink Cable Channel 13 and the county's YouTube Channel.

In addition to the body camera contract, the board is scheduled to discuss a proclamation declaring racism a public health crisis, COVID-19 hazard pay for deputies and several appointments to boards and associations.

Planning Director James Rhodes is scheduled to give a presentation on the N.C. 43 South Land-Use Plan, and the board will hear latest on COVID-19 impacts from the Public Health Director John Silvernail and Elections Director Dave Davis.

The body camera contract with Axon Enterprises of Scottsdale, Arizona, will outfit the sheriff's office with 140 cameras and related equipment and services including computer cloud storage for video recordings over five years, according to agenda material.

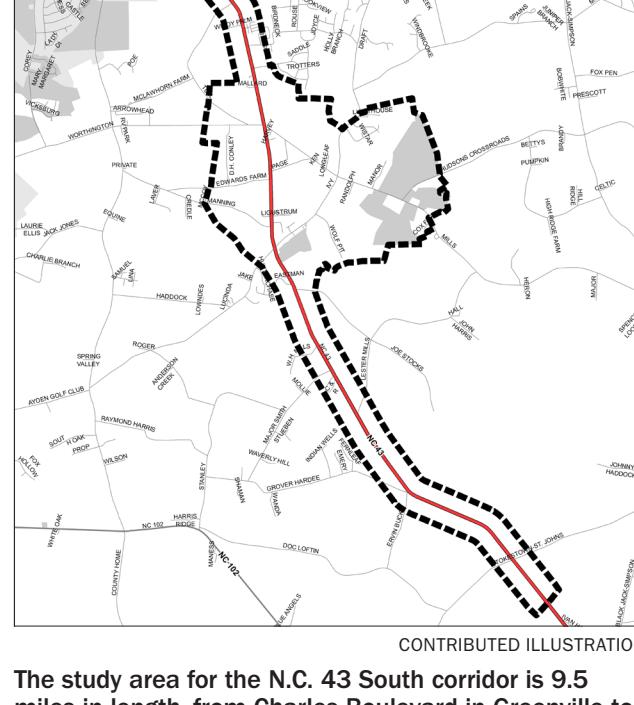
The total cost of the contract is \$1,147,737.58 to be paid with \$229,657.58 in the first year and \$229,520 in subsequent years.

The sheriff's office obtained a \$100,000 grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance to assist with funding. The county met a required match for the grant and secured additional funds for the cameras by increasing the rate the federal government must pay to house inmates at the Pitt County Jail.

Commissioners must vote to approve the contract before delivery and activation of the cameras.

N.C. 43 Plan

The county is creating the



The study area for the N.C. 43 South corridor is 9.5 miles in length, from Charles Boulevard in Greenville to Chicod.

land-use plan for the N.C. 43 South corridor in preparation for eventual widening and improvements to the highway. The work is in collaboration with the Green-

ville Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, the City of Greenville and the N.C. Department of Transportation.

In addition to an update during the Board of Commissioners meeting Monday morning, the county also has scheduled a virtual public input session Monday afternoon to gather feedback on the plan from residents.

The study area is approximately 9.5 miles in length, extending from Bells Fork Road in Greenville to just south of the intersection with Stokesdale-St. Johns Road in Chicod, according to the county. The study area encompasses an additional area to the east along Mills Road, including properties that have been annexed by Greenville.

N.C. 43 South is primarily a two-lane roadway that includes a center turn lane on the northern end. NC DOT is proposing to widen the northern end of the corridor between Fire Tower Road and Worthington

Road to a four-lane, raised median, divided roadway.

The intent of the land-use plan is to guide anticipated growth and development along the corridor, particularly at major intersections and crossroads areas, such as Hollywood Crossroads, Cox Crossing and Chicod, officials said.

The county has conducted interviews with more than 20 stakeholders within the study area, and received 145 responses to an online survey conducted from May through June 2020, a news release said.

Following Monday's the Public Input Meeting, a second survey will be available online to provide additional comments.

The input meeting will be 4-5 p.m. via Zoom. To participate, contact Eric Gooby of Pitt County Planning and Development at 902-3250 or eric.gooby@pittcountync.gov to receive login information.

For more information visit www.PittCountyNC.gov/NC43SouthPlan.