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# Bourbon Street nightclub memorabilia just a small portion of New Orleans nostalgia in attorney's office

BY SUE STRACHAN | STAFF WRITER SEP 18, 2019 - 4:30 PM

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Attorney Richard Anderson sits in his office in Metairie, La., Tuesday, Sept. 3, 2019.

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**THE SPACE:** An office full of mid-20th century New Orleans photos and more

**THE OCCUPANT:** Attorney Richard E. Anderson

**WHERE:** Metairie

**WHY HE LOVES IT:** "I am surrounded by the items that shaped and define my life," he says.

No one would blame you if you got distracted in attorney Richard E. Anderson's office. In the lobby, there are posters from the grindhouse movie "Naughty New Orleans" that promise "A spicy peek at Bourbon Street." On a receptionist's desk, a 1950s-style portable tape deck plays "Pete Fountain's New Orleans."

A wall in the hallway illustrates mid-20th-century Bourbon Street with photographs of nightclubs and restaurants, including Dixie's Bar of Music and Brennan's, before it moved to its current location on Royal Street. The prints are from the thousands of slides Anderson has of New Orleans, mainly mid-20th-century images by amateur photographers.



Attorney Richard Anderson explains the significance of his historic photographs in his office in Metairie, La., Tuesday, Sept. 3, 2019.

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“We want to be the Getty of New Orleans,” said Anderson, referring to the visual media company that owns stock photography and other editorial images.

His wife, Jane Wallis Anderson, is part of his collection journey.

"I like being his collection co-conspirator because it brings me back to the New Orleans I love," she said. "I was born here, so it lets me reminisce about the places I used to go to with my parents.

"My aunt lived in the Quarter when I was little, and we would go visit her down on Royal Street. Very bohemian. New Orleans has changed so much; it lets me live a little in the past."

Her favorite part of the collection are the photos of Bourbon Street bars.

Richard Anderson finds his collectibles mainly on eBay and at estate sales. Each item has a history that Anderson is more than happy to recount: He is a walking, talking history book of New Orleans.

Anderson, 67, is an enthusiastic transplant from Denver who graduated from Tulane Law School. He received a postgraduate degree in taxation at NYU Law School and spent four years in the Army before returning to the Crescent City.

Besides being a collector extraordinaire, Anderson is a filmmaker, artist, boxing historian and self-proclaimed "part-time traveler to parallel universes."

On one wall are his diplomas and items from his military career — he served with the Green Berets as a JAGC officer. Facing it are album

covers and posters, including one promoting a show featuring the Neville Brothers, James Booker and Professor Longhair.

When Anderson sits at his desk, he can look directly at memorabilia about New Orleans boxer Pete Herman (born Pete Gullotta), who grew up in the French Quarter and won the Bantamweight World Championship in 1917. After retiring, he opened Pete Herman's Club on Bourbon Street. Anderson, his son John Anderson and Herman's grandson Ralph A. Marshall III produced a short documentary about the boxer.

Looking through a matchbook collection that covers a side table is like taking a walk through New Orleans nightclubs, such as Club My-O-My, Pat O'Brien's, Franks Jazz Alley, Prima's 500 Club and the Blue Room.

Also on the table are two pairs of cowboy boots that were owned by Earl Bellamy, a movie and television director. "Bellamy was the assistant director on two of my favorite movies: 'From Here to Eternity' and 'A Star is Born,' version two with James Mason and Judy Garland," he said.



He hasn't worn the boots. "They're too big," he said.

Another treasured item is a scrapbook put together by a woman from Wisconsin, who with seven other women from the Midwest went on a seven-day tour in 1954 of New Orleans, Biloxi and Jackson, Mississippi, and Mobile, Alabama.

"The scrapbook is filled with memorabilia of their trip. While in New Orleans, they visited a number of burlesque venues, including Pete Herman's Club, the Sho'Bar and Club My-O-My, which featured men performing dressed as women," Anderson said. "The contents of the scrapbook are in mint condition. A true time capsule of that era. I bought it off eBay and only paid \$200," Anderson said.



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Souvenir photographs reveal Club My-O-My "female impersonators" collected by eight Wisconsin women on a tour of the south in 1954, at Attorney Richard Anderson's office in Metairie, La., Tuesday, Sept. 3, 2019.

Staff photo by SOPHIA GERMER

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Like most collectors, he thinks of “the one that got away”: A menu from Fitzgerald’s seafood restaurant, which was located on Lake Pontchartrain at West End. “It was many New Orleanians’ favorite place to eat seafood, including my wife Jane’s family,” Anderson said. “The bidding for the menu on eBay went over \$250 and I was not paying attention to the flurry of bids at the end and lost out.”

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