

KEATINGS UNVEIL NEW HOLIDAY TRADITION

By Shawn Ashley
Staff Writer

■(GIT) Governor Frank Keating and First Lady Cathy Keating unveiled the plans for a ceremony they hope will become an annual tradition — the lighting of two capitol Christmas trees, the bathing of the state capitol in red and green holiday lights and the lighting of the governor's mansion with decorative holiday lights.

"We hope that this is going to be a wonderful tradition for Oklahoma that will last, and as the trees grow, the tradition will grow with us as well," said First Lady Cathy Keating.

The event will take place Monday, Dec. 2, in the State Capitol Park located just north of the Connors and Hodges state office buildings. Governor and Mrs. Keating will light two live trees, donated by Weyerhaeuser, on the north grounds of the State Capitol Complex. The event begins at 5:30 p.m. and the tree lighting will take place at approximately 6:10 p.m. A public reception featuring entertainment and refreshments will be held at the governor's mansion, where an open house will be held, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

State employees and the general public are invited to attend and to bring a non perishable food item for donation to the Oklahoma City Food bank.

"The holiday season is such a momentous and spiritual occasion for Oklahomans and their families," said Governor Keating. "The holiday season has always been a special time for our family and Cathy and I hope the public will joins us December 2 as we celebrate the holiday season with our Oklahoma family."

NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH/ WEEK PROCLAIMED

From Okla. Dept. of Human Services

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) Gov. Frank Keating has proclaimed the month of November as National Adoption Month and the week of November 24-30 as National Adoption Week in Oklahoma.

The Keating family has asked that all Oklahomans join them in focusing on the family and how important family life is in our society. Every child deserves to have a permanent home they can call their own, and the child who comes into state custody for many reasons is no different.

Jane Morgan, programs supervisor for Oklahoma Department of Human Services Adoption Services, said "A few of the words the children who are waiting to be adopted would love to hear are commitment, love, caring, belonging and family. They are waiting for someone to come forward and provide a safe, healthy and caring home where they can live, belong and grow up."

DHS George A. Miller said, "National Adoption month and week are set aside nationally during the Thanksgiving holiday season to focus attention on the things that many people take for granted, i.e., how important it is to have a family to love us and care for us, in good times and bad. My wife and I have been blessed with four fine children who are responsible adults today with families of their own. When I see them and our grandchildren, it's difficult to imagine what it would be like for any one of them to be without us as their family and support system.

"We have too many children in state fos-

ter care who deserve the same love, care and attention we give our own family. There are Oklahoma families who can adopt a child or sibling group and provide them a permanent place to call home.

"I believe that a caring family is a better parent for a child than the government or any foster home could ever be; however, we are mandated to care for these children until prospective adoptive families come forward to open their hearts and homes to these children who want so desperately a place to belong."

Many children in state custody have been abused, neglected or abandoned by their parents of birth and by law, are being cared for in foster homes. Foster homes are only a short-term solution for these children. These children need families who will provide loving and caring homes for them permanently.

Both public and private social services groups work throughout the year to find persons who would be willing to adopt these children with special needs. The groups join together in November to host a variety of public education events to highlight the need for adoptive homes across the state.

DHS, along with the One Church, One Child Interdenominational Ministerial Advisory Council, the Metropolitan Tulsa Urban League, the Urban League of Greater Oklahoma City, the Indian Child Welfare Association and the Oklahoma Adoption Coalition are working with parent groups to recruit adoptive parents.

DHS Child Welfare Specialists placed
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NORMAN VETERANS CENTER OPENING

From Division of Veterans Affairs

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) The Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs opened its new Norman facility Monday, Nov. 18, consisting of 239,000 square-feet with a 301-bed capacity to serve both male and female Oklahoma wartime veterans.

Total cost of the facility was \$29 million, with 65 percent of the funding provided by the Federal Veterans Administration and the remaining 35 percent funded by the State of Oklahoma.

Gralla/Rees Associates, architects and planners of Oklahoma City, designed the facility to create a cheery, comfortable atmosphere for the residents. Hardwood floors, wood trim and columns, combined with plenty of light from several skylights are just some of the home-like touches found throughout the facility. Three two-story patients' wings originate from a central area encompassing a physical therapy room, recreation area with pool tables, pinball machines and a canteen. The veterans can also enjoy a dining room with a balcony and terrace, as well as a gallery displaying the works of local artists. The spacious facility also features additional exterior activity areas, such as pavilions along the walking trails, a fishing dock, scattered ponds and natural hillside with plenty of vegetation.

Oklahoma leads all other states in the number of institutions providing intermediate-to-skilled nursing care and domiciliary care for wartime veterans. Veterans centers are located in Ardmore, Claremore, Clinton, Norman, Sulphur and Tahlequah, as well as the Rehabilitation Institute of Okmulgee for treatment of physically disabled veterans and dependents and other eligible patients.

"No soldier starts a war — they only give their lives to it. Wars are started by you and me, by bankers and politicians, excitable women, newspaper editors, clergymen who are ex-pacifists, and Congressmen with vertebrae of putty. The youngsters yelling in the streets, poor kids, are the ones who pay the price."

Father Francis P. Duffy
sermon, Marshall Joffre memorial
service
New York City, Jan., 1931