

Photo by Mike Strasinger

# You greek, me greek

Michael Cooper was forced to discontinue his painting efforts Monday when a controversy erupted over what he should include in the mural on the wall of You Greek, Me Greek. The controversy was quickly resolved.

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# 'Greek' mural wall controversy resolved

By Megan Moriarty

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For a few hours Monday, it looked as though a tradition that goes back a decade might end.

The controversy concerned a wall. The wall in question is a famous one — the You Greek, Me Greek wall on West End Avenue painted with the likenesses of Vanderbilt's football and basketball coaches.

The controversy was over who owned the wall and what could be painted on it.

It started when muralist Michael Cooper began replacing the face of former football

coach Woody Widenhofer with new head coach Bobby Johnson and updating the likeness of Lady Commodore's head coach Jim Foster.

Cooper, who painted the original mural more than 10 years ago, has been contracted by Vanderbilt to create every new coach's portrait on the wall.

Cooper said he was asked by store owner Steve Roppel, who leases the space, to paint his logo on the front of the building. Roppel then changed his mind and requested that Cooper add it to the coaches' wall.

"I said, 'No, it's Vanderbilt's

mural,'" Cooper said. "So he got upset, he said it's his wall and he'll paint the whole thing black and put his own name up there."

Roppel declined to comment.

Cooper called it quits for the day leaving the Vanderbilt coaches' images undone and looking a little scary.

"It's not my best work," Copper laughed. "So I would like to get this resolved. I've never been in a situation like this before. Fighting over a wall."

Cooper will be back today to finish the wall, which will now include Roppel's logo at Vanderbilt's request. ☐

## Artful Artist



JASON MILLER/STAFF

Artist Michael Cooper stands in front of his mural that marks the new Centennial High gym. The Cougars played their first home game last week.

**Mural, mural on the wall,**

be a part as artist michael cooper begins



**Church Street's going**



his work on the mural at church street park



**to have the fairest of all.**



# Downtown Nashville turns its attention to art & culture, impact of new stadium

A new mural and a new task force, initiatives the Nashville Downtown Partnership launched last year, will ensure Nashville's downtown remains an attractive destination for residents and visitors.

## Stadium Games Task Force

Helping downtown merchants and residents get ready for the Tennessee Oilers is the emphasis of the NDP's new Stadium Games Task Force.

"Downtown Nashville will have more visitors and more national attention when the new stadium opens," said Lewis Lavine of The Ingram Group,

who serves as task force chair. "We want to make sure everyone enjoys the increased exposure, businesses, residents and visitors, because it will benefit the entire area."

The task force will focus on communication strategies, primarily to inform visitors about parking, transportation and entertainment options; the public about game activities and times; and, government agencies about infrastructure needs.

Task force members include representatives from downtown businesses and non-profit organizations, and Metro government.

## New Mural

A committee of downtown business owners and city officials has commissioned artist Michael Cooper to paint a mural on the Work & Greer building, 206 Capital Blvd., facing the new Church Street pocket park.

The NDP is coordinating the project, initiated by building owners Dwight Work and Ronny Greer.

Cooper is an experienced artist specializing in large-scale interior and exterior murals.

His most recent work includes a series of murals at the Rutherford County YMCAs Teen and Family Center.

Mural committee members include representatives from Work & Greer, P.C., Metro Board of Parks and Recreation, Public Library of Nashville & Davidson County, Metro Arts Commission, Watkins Institute College of Art & Design, The Cumberland Apartments, Gobbell Hays Partners, Inc., and Urban Residential Interests.

The building's owners, Background America, Inc., The Cumberland Apartments, Powell Building Group, Steve and Judy Turner, the Nashville Downtown Partnership and other downtown businesses are providing the project's funding.

The mural project, which began in December 1998, will become another fixture in the NDP's growing Avenue of the Arts project, an initiative to highlight the downtown area's artistic and cultural offerings from Lafayette St. to the Bicentennial Mall.

For more information on the Stadium Games Task Force or the downtown mural project, contact Sara Miller, NDP member relations manager, at 259-4763.

The Nashville Downtown Partnership, an affiliate of the Nashville Chamber, is dedicated to planning, managing and developing the downtown area as the vibrant urban center of the Nashville area. ▲

## IN TOWN THIS MONTH. . .

A listing of conventions bringing 1,000 or more attendees to Nashville in January 1999.

DATES	EVENT	LOCATION	# ATTENDEES
Jan 3-11	Childrens' Pastors Conf	Opryland	1,170
Jan 4-11	Premier Designs	Opryland	1,170
Jan 7-15	Amer Football Coaches Assn	Opryland	2,640
Jan 13-18	Setzer Intl	Crowne Plaza	1,400
Jan 15-17	Natl High School Assn	Renaissance/NCC	1,000
Jan 16-20	Amer Correctional Assn	Opryland	2,200
Jan 16-24	Sherwin Williams	Opryland	4,860
Jan 18-20	Natl Baptist Conv	Renaissance/Dwtn Hls	1,400
Jan 23-27	Nortel	Opryland	1,470
Jan 27-Feb 5	Natl Religious Broadcasters	Opryland	1,397
Jan 29-30	United Meth Church Youth Retreat	Renaissance/NCC	1,500
Jan 29-Feb 27	Natl Assn of Wheat Growers	Renaissance/NCC	1,000
Jan 31-Feb 7	Amer Heart Assn	Opryland	1,400

**Total Number of Conventions for January:** 121

**Direct Impact:** \$23,078,534.00

## Commercial Real Estate Specialists

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# Downtown mural pays tribute to county's history

By **TIM ADKINS**  
Editor

Michael Cooper will be easy to spot over the next three weeks.

The Franklin artist is painting the new mural in downtown Dickson on the WDKN building on College Street.

The mural was unveiled Saturday night during a reception at Restoration Place. The reception was hosted by the Community Arts Development, the organization behind the \$25,000 mural - the first piece of public artwork in the county.

A few of the county's jewels will be highlighted in the mural, which depicts a "Greetings from Dickson County" postcard.

It will feature the railroad industry, the military, the his-

toric Dickson County Courthouse, Old Timers Day, Montgomery Bell State Park and The Renaissance Center.

Cooper plans to have the mural finished by Old Timers Day, which is the first weekend in May.

Cooper, a well-known artist in the Midsouth, said he's excited about painting the mural.

Cooper said it's important for communities to display public artwork, such as murals because "it's something that stirs the soul and it's something that makes people talk."

Cooper has painted several large-scale murals in downtown Nashville, including one across from the Nashville Public Library and at the Arcade. Perhaps his most recognizable one is the

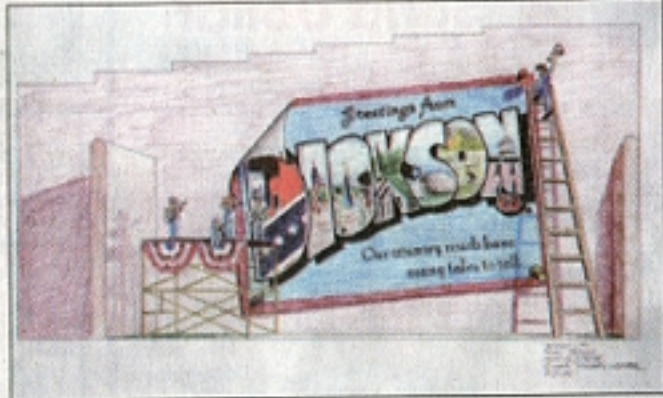
Vanderbilt coaches mural at You Greek Me Greek on West End Avenue.

"Everyone knows about the Vanderbilt coaches one," Cooper said.

Cooper has been painting for about 15 years.

"I have simply always painted large," he said. "Others paint on canvas. I never did that. I always painted on walls."

**SEE MURAL PAGE A12**



A few of the county's jewels will be highlighted in the mural, which depicts a "Welcome to Dickson County" postcard. It will feature the railroad industry, the military, the historic Dickson County Courthouse, Old Timers Day, Montgomery Bell State Park and The Renaissance Center.

Submitted image

## Inside

See more photographs from the Community Arts Development's reception at Restoration Place on page A12.

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