

The portraits come courtesy of McKinney artist Colin Kimball, who has completed and donated 70 portraits for the *North Texas Fallen Warrior Portrait Project*. Those portraits hang in the corridors off the first floor lobby of the courthouse.

Monday's 11 a.m. dedication will involve a special session of the Commissioners Court to accept the portraits of James Read and Joseph Murphy, two local officers who died in the line of duty -- more than 100 years apart.

Mr. Kimball's biographical research on these two men follows:

James L. Read, Collin County Sheriff, 1860-1864

James Read, elected in 1860, became the fifth Sheriff of Collin County. With a population of a little more than 9,000, Collin County residents voted to remain with the Union in the Secession Convention of 1861. The population lived in fear of Native American Tribes that still roamed the region, and did not want federal troops -- and their protection -- to be withdrawn.

Read originally mustered into one of the many Confederate regiments that formed in Collin County after the secession, but he remained at home to provide law and order for the citizens. Collin County, as well as other adjacent Red River Counties, earned a reputation as being loyal to the Union, which would work against them since many adjacent counties staunchly supported the Confederacy.

In the winter of 1863, a band of over 400 renegade outlaws from Missouri led by William Clarke Quantrill, migrated into the Red River Valley and took up residence primarily in Grayson, Collin and Fannin Counties. Most of the men from there were away fighting.

In addition to Quantrill's band, many men known as "Bushwhackers" also migrated into this area to avoid conscription into service for the Confederacy. The lack of men in the community and the influx of renegade outlaws and Bushwhackers contributed to an increase in lawlessness in the region.

In the Spring of 1864, Sheriff Read attempted to apprehend two men associated with Quantrill who had robbed, tortured and murdered an elderly man near the community of Millwood in southeast Collin County.

Sheriff Read, along with former County Chief Justice J. M. McReynolds, went to a hotel on the northwest corner of the square in McKinney to arrest the two men suspected of murder. A gunfight ensued. The Sheriff and his posse, being outgunned by the long rifles of the outlaws, fled on horseback to a mill south of town. A large group of men from Quantrill's band of renegades, followed them to the mill, presumed to be south of the current McKinney Airport, and continued the gun battle until nightfall.

With their horses shot dead, the Sheriff and his posse, including former Chief Justice J. M. McReynolds, fled on foot, ultimately taking refuge with family members on a farm in Van Zandt County.

With Quantrill's influence with the Confederate leadership in Texas, they were able to find and prosecute Sheriff Read. Collin County's Unionist reputation did not help Sheriff Read.

Eventually the Sheriff and Judge McReynolds were found on the family farm in Van Zandt County by men who were searching for fighting aged men who should not be at home. They were arrested and accused of robbing an elderly lady in the area.

On May 18, 1864, Sheriff Read, Judge McReynolds and one other man were put on trial in a Kangaroo court in Tyler and quickly found guilty on false charges of robbery as well as charges of being “Jayhawkers”, a derogatory term associated with people who were accused of supporting or being saboteurs for the Union. They were sentenced to death.

After the trial, they were immediately taken to a grove of trees near the present day intersection of Erwin Street and Confederate Avenue in Tyler and hung. Their executioners only had one rope, so the Sheriff was hung first, followed by Judge J. M. McReynolds. A third man who was tried with them was given a reprieve after someone in the crowd vouched for him.

Sheriff Read, greatly outnumbered, was run out of town by renegade outlaws who had overwhelmed the region. He was 35 years old and is buried in Pecan Grove Cemetery in McKinney.

Patrolman Joe Murphy – Frisco Police Department

Joe Murphy, was the youngest child of 14 children that included older brother Audie Murphy who earned the Medal of Honor in World War II. Joe served for 12 years in the U.S. Army and rose to the rank of Specialist 5th Class before he was honorably discharged. After leaving the Army, he initially served as a deputy with the Collin County Sheriff’s Office. In the Spring of 1967 Officer Murphy left the Sheriff’s Office, and joined the Frisco Police Department where he served as a Patrol Officer.

On Jan. 29, 1968, at 1 a.m., Officer Murphy was responding to an emergency call in Celina and travelling north on Highway 289. He was killed in the line of duty when his vehicle struck a grain truck that was in the middle of the road making a U-turn.

Joe Murphy wanted to serve as a police officer since his childhood. He was well loved and admired by his friends and family. He left behind a wife and daughter, and is buried in Ridgeview Memorial Park in Allen. He was 32 years old.