



ROYAL THEATRE

“Sit back and enjoy the show!” For over 100 years -- virtually covering the history of popular cinema in the U.S. – Pauls Valley residents and visitors have been able to do just that thanks to entertainment provided by Royal Theatre.

Today, owner Revae Brewer guides a small crew who handles ticket sales, concession stand sales, promotions, operations and clean-up. Under her watch, the theatre was recognized as the Corporate Citizen of the Year in 2023 by the Pauls Valley Chamber of Commerce.

Founded in 1919 originally by the Hamly family, the theatre has from the start been a first-run movie venue – meaning mostly newly made movies are shown there. The original building cost \$15,000 to build. Admission originally was ten cents. Hamly himself had experience in movie production in an earlier job in California.

Down through the years, Pauls Valley moviegoers got early opportunities to see such classics as *Gone with the Wind*, *The Ten Commandments* and *Casablanca* all the way to current hits like *Barbie* and *Top Gun: Maverick*. That theatre’s start date coincides with the end of the era of nickelodeon amusements and the start of the Golden Age of Hollywood.

L.E. Brewer, a one-time newsreel cameraman, first started a second theatre in Pauls Valley called Folley Theatre. He then purchased the Hamly Theatre in 1924 and renamed it Royal Theatre in 1928 and in time the Victory closed. According to a newspaper article, the community provided strong support for the movie house over the years. The Chamber got involved with some of that support when, in 1929, the Chamber's leadership passed resolutions to support the newest evolution of motion pictures: the advent of "talkies."

According to the article: "The resolutions endorse the project as a worthy enterprise, and congratulates Mr. Brewer for his vision and faith in Pauls Valley and for his decision in installing the same standard equipment that is found in the big theatres in the larger cities of the state." The resolutions also "request every citizen of Pauls Valley and Garvin County to support the Royal Theatre and help make it the best show in the state, for its success means that the world's best performers may be seen and heard here without our having to go to Oklahoma City."

The Royal was renovated in 1938 and had to be rebuilt after a fire from a stray cigarette destroyed the building in 1942. The family's commitment to the business meant rebuilding the structure that is known as the Royal today.

After his death in 1970, Mike Brewer (Revae's late husband) and his mother continued the family tradition. By then, the business had grown to include Brewer's Drive-In theater near I-35 between 1950 and 1984 as well as a video rental store from 1983 to 2004. Mike and Revae Brewer bought the theaters from the family in 1973. All along the way, various renovations have kept the venue up-to-date in technology and comfort.

"It has been the perfect fit for me the past 54 years," Revae says."

Revae oversees the theatre's schedule, opening Wednesdays through Sundays every week for 7:30 p.m. showtimes and 2 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays for added matinees. The theatre has two screening rooms. The best way to stay informed about movie choices is on their Facebook page, run by Revae's daughter Angela. Additionally, for two years the theatre has been a part of the Red Brick Road Film Festival.

"I love showing movies for all ages and listening to my customers tell of their earlier experiences attending the theatre."

Revae finds the greatest pleasure, however, in opening for special viewings hosted by area schools for a field trip or a rewards party for its students. Two schools in Norman ride the Amtrak train here around Christmas each year. They come in their pajamas, enjoy treats like hot cocoa and popcorn and watch Polar Express.

She credits the Chamber of Commerce for its support over the years as most recently illustrated through her receiving the Chamber award last year.

"You have been with us since the beginning," she says. "A strong chamber makes a strong business [and] a strong community makes a business strong. Everyone working together makes it happen and makes our city better."

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