

The painting, **Here Tonight**, was commissioned by Laurie and Rick Dover for the Hyatt Place Hotel in Knoxville, TN. It is acrylic and collage on a wood panel and is 6x7 feet. The painting was completed in November of 2024. A central theme of the painting is the history of the hotel, which previously was the Farragut Hotel, named after the Civil War navy admiral David Farragut, who was born in Knoxville.



The name of the architect, William Stoddard and the phrase Spring of 1919 (which refers to when the hotel was completed), is on the bottom right of the painting. We found Stoddard's original drawing of the floor plan of this hotel from 1919, and I projected and then carved into the center of the painting.

The East Tennessee History Center is located across Gay Street from the hotel and, with the help of historian Susan Knowles, we were able to find ephemera and objects from the Farragut Hotel's history, which I used in the painting. On the top left are the words *Hotel Farragut*, which came from a letterhead from 1933. The phrase, *staying here tonight, very nice room*, comes from that letter, written by a hotel guest. The Knoxville postage mark is from the envelope that letter was in. It marks a moment in time and that person's life--September 6, 6:39 p.m., 1933.

The phrase *Good Roads* refers to the Good Roads Movement from the early twentieth century, organized to improve Tennessee's economic prospects by upgrading and expanding its roads. This allowed people access to the newly founded Smoky Mountains National Park. The first meetings to develop the Park were held at the Farragut Hotel. The ten-cent postage stamp for the Smoky Mountains was made from a photograph taken in the smokies by legendary Knoxville photographer Jim Thompson.

WJBE was one of James Brown's radio stations, housed in the basement of the hotel. Below the station logo is James Brown's handwritten note saying, *Good Luck- James Brown- Soul #1*.

I make reference in the painting to the formation of the Southeastern Conference, which was formed in meetings at the hotel in June of 1936. I photographed an old room key from the hotel at the history center and re-created it in wood for the painting. The little figure with his back leg on the key is an image I created that I call *The King of Falling Fruit*. It is meant to be a hopeful image about reaching and striving in this life because there is fruit everywhere to be caught.

The hammer and two rusty nails represent the construction of the hotel. The baby shoe is a symbol of what we all have in common, that all of our feet once fit in this shoe. The stars and sunrise remind us of the cosmos we all share.

Although the hotel history is a theme in this painting, I invite the viewer to experience and interpret the work in any way they can imagine. There are always multiple meanings and ideas in my work. Some I may not even be aware of.

Andrew Saftel (Dec. 2024) – More info about the artist can be found at AndrewSaftel.com.