

CAROLE BENDER

Writer/Artist,
Ponca City & Tulsa



As a life-long reader of the Alley Oop comic strip as well as a published author, Carole Bender was the ideal choice to write the strip when the opportunity came in 2001. She had been contributing to the strip as calligrapher and assistant artist since 1992.

In addition to writing the strip, she also colors each Sunday strip and adds grey and black tones to the dailies, all done on the computer, as well as drawing most of the backgrounds and some of the characters. Her skill as a graphic artist has made Alley Oop one of the most modern-appearing strips in spite of its nearly 75 years of existence.

These talents have made her an invaluable half of the team that produces today's Alley Oop episodes. The other half of the team is her husband, cartoonist Jack Bender. Jack will tell you that her contribution amounts to much more than half of the final product. The Benders are the only husband-wife team in the comics.

In addition to her work on Oop, Carole is an accomplished painter in oils and author of the book, "Bob Gibson: I Come For To Sing," a biography for which she interviewed the likes of Pete Seeger, Peter, Paul and Mary, Glenn Yarbrough, Gordon Lightfoot, Joan Baez, Shel Silverstein, George Carlin and Tom Paxton, among many others.

She was born in Stillwater, grew up in Ponca City and is a graduate of Oklahoma State University in Stillwater.

The Benders were given a writing tryout on the Alley Oop strip in 1998 when the syndicate editor asked them to produce a Christmas episode that would be sold to newspapers separately from the regular strip. When Dave Graue retired as writer in 2001, the Benders were hired to replace him.

This soon evolved into Carole becoming the chief writer and to date she has written more than 2,000 daily and Sunday episodes for the strip which reaches some 26 million readers each day.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carole Bender". The signature is stylized and cursive.