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Barbara Bartholic (1939-2010)

by [Shawna Lewis](#)



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Courtesy Braden Bartholic
January 30, 2011

Barbara Bartholic stands out as one of our city's most daringly eccentric individuals. In fact, she stands out in several ways: a beautiful cover girl, a talented artist, a hopeless romantic, and brave investigator.

In the late 1950s, she was a model living in New York City. In her autobiography *Barbara: The Story*

of a UFO Investigator, she recounts being driven to jobs in a black limousine and taking drastic measures to stay thin. At age 20, her father passed away and she returned to her home state. She writes, “Coming back to Tulsa was sad because of my father’s death, but being in Tulsa was thrilling to me. Life seemed better here in Oklahoma, somehow.”

In Tulsa, she married artist Bob Bartholic, and together they started the Barking Dog art gallery. In a 1998 interview, she remembers downtown Tulsa in the 1970s as a wild, bohemian place with some of the country’s best artists and philosophers—the likes of Bill Rabon and Alice Price—who she couldn’t have survive without.

“It can be hard for creative people,” Bartholic once said. “It’s like you’re a stranger in a strange land. You have to stick with your own kind.”

In addition to creating her own art and running the Barking Dog, Bartholic ran her own weekly television show called *Arts Arena*, onto which she invited her artistic friends and acquaintances to speak on whatever they like.

“Sometimes they brought up things dealing with the occult, and my station manager never liked that,” she wrote.

A year after the show was going strong, Martin and Margaret Wiesendanger, two well-known Tulsa art critics, came on her show and discussed drawings they’d found on a cave wall that seemed to prove the existence of UFOs. They also mentioned a “cigar-shaped craft” that had been hovering over Tulsa.

While Bartholic was endlessly fascinated and began personally investigating UFO activity herself, the television station did not approve of the material she had discussed with the Wiesendangers, and fired Bartholic.

She wrote, “I was overcome with sadness... I stopped by the grocery store in Turley, [where] I found a whole group of *TV Today Magazines* lined up on the newsstand ... I was that month’s cover girl. The feature story praised me and my show, a show which no longer existed.”

The UFO investigations became her primary passion. Bartholic eventually became a leading expert on extraterrestrial life, often putting her clients into hypnosis to allow them to recount their abductions more clearly. Her autobiography provides her accounts of her own abductions, as well as a quiz to help the reader decipher whether they’ve ever been abducted.

For seven years, she traveled and investigated all over the world with Jacque Valle, the famous UFO expert on whom the *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* character Claude Lacombe was based. Together they dashed to sites of mysterious fires, cattle mutilations, sightings and abductions. They also worked closely with members of the Heaven’s Gate, a cult whose teachings include UFO theology.

In spite of her expertise, her glamorous past and her famous husband, the Bartholics remained poor their entire lives, a fact she openly discusses in a recorded interview. “We’re made to stay poor, I think, and humble, so we can produce and create. You know if we really were safe and secure in our

prosperity, well, we'd just be doing nothing. We would be too happy.”

Though Bartholic often admitted to sounding crazy with her widely varying interests and philosophies, she never wavered in them, often encouraging others to accept the unbelievable. “Look, we’ve always been one living art production, no matter what we’re doing, every day of our lives. You cannot believe what happens.”

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Posted by [Tweets that mention Barbara Bartholic \(1939-2010\) | This Land Press -- Topsy.com](#) on Jan 30th, 2011

[...] This post was mentioned on Twitter by 73847, Goodbye Tulsa. Goodbye Tulsa said: GOODBYE BARBARA BARTHOLIC: The wife of artist Bob Bartholic was once a world-class model. Over time, she became... <http://fb.me/GVrH1JjD> [...]

Posted by [Transcripts Page \(is a link\)](#) on Jan 30th, 2011

Greetings;

It sound like Barbara was not fearful of the powers-that-be, but rather had escaped the space/time illusion in order to discover.

May we all, again know such freedom.

The very best to you on your journey of discovery

Posted by Logan on Mar 30th, 2011

It was my distinct pleasure to consider Barbara a friend and was deeply saddened by her passing. Her unique perspective on life gave me new insights on my own experiences which I will carry on through life.

Posted by Dr. R. J. Lindsey, MscD, PhD, MpsyD on May 28th, 2011

It was my great honor to have been a close personal friend of Barbara for 26 years. She had the unique ability to always see the great “I Am That Which I Am” within each person she came into contact with. She bravely sought her own truth and stood her ground, no matter what obstacles or opposition she encountered, always taking great joy in each new and exciting discovery within her field of expertise. You set the gold standard for your work, Barbara, and you’ve left the world a great legacy.

Thank you for sharing your journey with me, Barbara. Your friendship changed my life. I’m richer for having walked this path with you.