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Eight to be Inducted to the 2015 Oklahoma Hall of Fame Class

OKLAHOMA CITY – Eight outstanding Oklahomans will be formally inducted into the 88th class of the Oklahoma Hall of Fame on Thurs., Nov. 19 at the Renaissance Tulsa Hotel and Convention Center. These accomplished Oklahomans will join the cast of 669 individuals who have been inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame since 1928. Being inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame is the highest honor an Oklahoman can receive from the state.

“Each year we are proud to honor Oklahomans who have contributed to our state’s rich heritage by making strides in their industry and bettering mankind,” said Shannon L. Rich, president and CEO of the Oklahoma Hall of Fame and Gaylord-Pickens Museum. “These individuals are a true representation of the continued growth and improvement in our great state.”

The 2015 Oklahoma Hall of Fame inductees are: Kevin Durant, Oklahoma City; Jim Halsey, Tulsa; Bill Hancock, Hobart; Mike Larsen, Perkins; William Ross, Oklahoma City; Sharen Jester Turney, Ardmore; Steadman Upham, Tulsa; and Francis Theodore Tuttle, Wellston, who will be inducted posthumously. The honorees will be formally inducted into the Hall on Nov. 19, in Tulsa.

The Oklahoma Hall of Fame, formally the Oklahoma Heritage Association, was founded in 1927 with the purpose of establishing the Hall of Fame and educating Oklahoma’s youth on our rich history and heritage. The Gaylord-Pickens Museum, home of the Oklahoma Hall of Fame, was opened in 2007 with the intent of honoring these and other notable Oklahomans.

“Being inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame is the single-highest honor an individual can receive from our state,” Rich said. “The recognition of our state’s greatest asset – our people – is the foundation upon which our organization was created. Our mission is to instill state pride by preserving and telling the stories of these extraordinary people.”

Along with being honored at the formal induction ceremony, the 2015 honorees will be recognized in November with the addition of their portraits at the Gaylord-Pickens Museum. In addition to the other 669 members of the Hall, their biographies, photos and fun facts will be accessible through interactive exhibits.

The 88th Oklahoma Hall of Fame Banquet & Induction Ceremony will be held, Nov. 19, at the Renaissance Tulsa Hotel and Convention Center. Tickets and table sponsorships for the event will go on sale Aug. 28. For more information about the Oklahoma Hall of Fame Banquet & Induction Ceremony or making a nomination to the Oklahoma Hall of Fame, contact Millie Craddick, honoree relations and induction administrator, at 405.523.3203 or mc@oklahomaheritage.com. For more information about the Oklahoma Hall of Fame or Gaylord-Pickens Museum, call 405.235.4458 or visit OklahomaHoF.com.

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Biographical information on the 2015 Oklahoma Hall of Fame inductees:

Kevin Durant

A leader on and off the court, Kevin Durant has established himself as a pillar of the Oklahoma community throughout his career with the Thunder. Durant's on-court resume speaks for itself, as it includes six All-Star appearances, four scoring titles, one MVP award and a trip to the 2012 NBA Finals. Just as important, Durant has illustrated an impressive civic responsibility during his time in Oklahoma. After tornadoes tore through much of Oklahoma in May of 2013, Durant immediately toured the devastation, but not before donating \$1 million to the Oklahoma Red Cross to aid those impacted by the storms. His community mindedness is also prevalent throughout the year, as he attends multiple Thunder community initiatives including the team's Thunder Fit program, Book Bus and Holiday Assist events.

Prior to being selected with the No.2 pick in the 2007 NBA draft, the Suitland, Maryland Native, spent one session at the University of Texas where he was named the Associated Press National Player of the Year while also becoming the first-ever freshman in NCAA history to win the Wooden Award and the Naismith Award.

After winning the NBA's Rookie of the Year in 2008, Durant has helped transform the Thunder into one of the NBA's most winningest franchises. With Durant helping to lead the way, the Thunder has amassed the second best record in the NBA over the last six years. (.664 winning percentage.)

Jim Halsey

Jim Halsey's career spans 65 years as artist manager, agent and impresario guiding the careers of many music legends: Roy Clark, Hank Thompson, Wanda Jackson, Minnie Pearl, Reba McEntire, Jody Miller, Jana Jae, Brenda Lee, The Judds, Clint Black, Tammy Wynette, Merle Haggard, Dwight Yoakam, Lee Greenwood, Mr. James Brown, Roy Orbison, Leon Russell, Freddy Fender, Jimmy Dean, Conway Twitty, Don Williams, Mel Tillis, Woody Herman and for 42 years The Oak Ridge Boys, 2015 Country Music Hall of Fame inductees. These stars broadened the international scope of Country Music with their appearances on major television and movies, headlining important venues such as Las Vegas major casino showrooms, Carnegie Hall, Radio City Music Hall, Royal Albert Hall, Montreux Jazz Festival, Monaco, Wembley and a ground breaking cultural and diplomatic tour of the Soviet Union in 1976 with Roy Clark/Oak Ridge Boys.

An author and educator, Halsey's music and entertainment degree program at OCU received the Governor's Excellence in Arts and Education Award. He is now focused on the introduction of a cutting edge online educational program.

Jim Halsey currently resides in Tulsa, OK with his wife, Minisa Crumbo Halsey. Children include Sherman Halsey (1957-2013); Gina Halsey; Woody Carter; Crissy Rumford.

Bill Hancock

Bill Hancock, a Hobart native and OU graduate, has achieved a unique trifecta at the highest echelon of intercollegiate athletics. He was the first full-time director of the NCAA Final Four, the first executive director of the Bowl Championship Series (BCS) and the first executive director of the College Football Playoff.

Bill is an accomplished writer, with two books to his credit. His memoir about his trans-continental bicycle journey, "Riding With the Blue Moth," was among the top sports books after its release in October, 2005. It was re-issued in 2015.

His second book, "This One Day in Hobart" is a history of his home town.

After graduating in three and a half years, Bill worked at OU, then edited the Hobart *Democrat-Chief* newspaper, then spent 11 years at the Big Eight Conference office before joining the NCAA in 1989.

Hancock is married to his high school sweetheart, the former Nicki Perry. They had two sons, Nate and the late Will Hancock who died in the OSU basketball team's airplane crash in 2001. Bill and Nicki have three grandchildren.

Hancock has served on the U.S. Olympic Committee staff at 11 Olympic Games and two Pan American games. He is a proud ambassador for his state and his home town.

Mike Larsen

Mike Larsen, a student of history, immerses himself in the past events of the subjects he paints and sculpts. He knew early what he wanted to do with his life and has achieved that goal by being a professional fine artist for over 40 years. Mike studied traditional art disciplines, beginning his training at Amarillo Junior College, continuing at the University of Houston, and concluding at the prestigious Arts Student League in New York City.

Born in 1944 of Chickasaw heritage, Mike grew up in farming communities in Oklahoma and Texas. Mike started his career doing street fairs, rapidly progressing to nationally known festivals. That phase ended in the early 1990's and for over 20 years he has been represented by galleries through out the United States. He now spends most of his time creating paintings and sculpture commissioned by Governments, Corporations and Individuals.

Mike's love for painting and sculpting dancing figures began when he was commissioned by the State of Oklahoma to paint a 26 foot long mural for the State Capitol Rotunda of five internationally prominent ballet dancers, all born in the state. He has been honored to paint several series of murals for institutions through out the state of Oklahoma, which portray the history of the state he calls home. Added to his recognition was being chosen by the United States Post Office to create the Oklahoma Centennial Stamp.

William Ross

William J. "Bill" Ross, a native of Oklahoma City and the son and grandson of '89ers, attended Rosary, Classen High School and OU. He was an Oklahoma City Assistant Municipal Counselor until joining the law firm Rainey, Flynn, Green and Anderson in 1960. He became senior partner in 1975 and the firm was renamed Rainey, Ross, Rice & Binns.

He is Chairman of Inasmuch Foundation and Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation, founded by Edith Kinney Gaylord. Ross served as attorney for Ms. Gaylord as well as her father, E.K. Gaylord, and her brother, Edward L. Gaylord.

His honors include: OU Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters, OCU Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters, OKCPS Wall of Fame, Oklahoma College of Law Order of the Owl and Beaux Arts King. He served as Co-Chairman of the Board of Visitors of OU College of Law and headed the building campaign raising \$15 million.

Ross was a Director of: United Energy Resources, PetroUnited Terminals, Hadson Petroleum, Clinton and Oklahoma Western Railroad, and First Interstate Bank of Oklahoma.

Bill Ross is a member of Christ the King Catholic Church. He is married to Lil and has three adult children and four grandchildren.

Sharen Jester Turney

Sharen Jester Turney was born and raised in Ardmore, OK where she learned the value of hard work and love for community that have been the foundation of her business success and philanthropic commitment.

Turney received a B.A. from the University of Oklahoma and is an inductee in the university's Business of Education Hall of Fame. After graduation she joined the renowned Foley's Department Store management program. She continued her retail career at Byer California, Federated Department Stores, and Neiman Marcus. She joined Victoria's Secret in 2000 and holds the title of president and CEO.

Through the Turney Family Foundation, Sharen, her husband Charles and son Matthew have provided more than \$2 million in support for organizations focused on cancer research and children's causes. Advocates of higher education, the Turneys have provided scholarship funds to the University of Oklahoma, Eastern Oklahoma State College and Southeastern Oklahoma State University. Sharen is the recipient of the Hug Award, an honor given to individuals in the fashion industry "with a heart" and received the Dr. Catherine White Achievement Award from HeartShare Human Services.

Sharen currently serves as chairman of the board for the Research Institute at Nationwide Children's Hospital and serves on the Jay H. Baker Retailing Initiative advisory board at The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania.

Steadman Upham

Steadman Upham served as the 17th president of The University of Tulsa (TU) from 2004 to 2012, then returned as the 19th president beginning in October, 2012. Highlights of his administration include the addition of nearly 40 academic programs, including doctoral programs in chemistry, physics and anthropology; the creation of interdisciplinary research institutes in fields including nanotechnology and bioinformatics; the completion of a \$700 million fundraising campaign; the addition of about 700,000 square feet of campus facilities; the launch of the College of Health Sciences; a partnership agreement with the City of Tulsa whereby TU manages Gilcrease Museum; the opening of the Henry Zarrow Center for Art and Education in downtown Tulsa; and construction of the Helmerich Center for American Research at Gilcrease Museum.

Upham also has fostered a culture of community service engagement. The university's True Blue Neighbors initiative in the Kendall-Whittier neighborhood includes youth mentoring, tutoring, food and clothing drives, home maintenance assistance, and close partnership with neighborhood schools.

Upham, who completed a doctorate in anthropology at Arizona State University, previously served as president and chief executive officer of Claremont Graduate University. He and his wife, Peggy, were married in 1971 and have two children and one grandchild.

Francis Tuttle

Francis Tuttle was born in 1920 on a small farm in Wellston, Oklahoma, but his outstanding vision, innovative spirit, and commitment enabled him to become the architect of Oklahoma's Career & Technology Education system.

In the early 1960's, he determined Oklahoma was not meeting the needs of all children, with many falling by the wayside. His humanitarian concern led him to develop a bold vision for a system that would provide services to high school students, adult students, and businesses that would also directly enhance and secure the state's economic future.

Governors and key stakeholders embraced his philosophy. Along with others, Dr. Tuttle evaluated what was and wasn't working in vocational programs across the country, determining how Oklahoma could do things even better (an activity we now call "benchmarking"). Tuttle's bold determination to make a difference in the lives of young people led him and his supporters to persuade the citizens of Oklahoma to pass State Question 434 in 1966 to amend the Oklahoma Constitution so the Career Tech system could be created. Citizens in local school districts voted to add to their ad valorem taxes and form what were then known as "area vocational-technical school districts," now technology center.