

## ★ NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

## The Oklahoma Historians Hall of Fame

**Sally Bourne Ferrell, Jimmie  
Lewis Franklin, Edwin C.  
McReynolds, and John Wooley**

*By Paul F. Lambert*

Since 1993 the Oklahoma Historical Society has annually honored up to four individuals, both professional and amateur, in its Oklahoma Historians Hall of Fame. Recipients are selected on the basis of their contributions to the preservation, collection, interpretation, and dissemination of Oklahoma history. These criteria were first published in *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 72 (Summer 1994). To date, ninety-one individuals have been inducted.

Early honorees included Grant Foreman, Joseph B. Thoburn, Muriel H. Wright, Edward Everett Dale, and Angie Debo. In addition to historians, the award has been bestowed on artist Charles Banks Wilson, Cherokee genealogist Emmet Starr, author John Joseph Mathews, and Apache educator Mildred Imach Cleghorn. The inductees are honored at the awards banquet held during the Oklahoma Historical Society's Annual History Conference in April each year. In April 2015 Sally Bourne Ferrell, Jimmie Lewis Franklin, Edwin C. McReynolds, and John Wooley were inducted into the Oklahoma Historians Hall of Fame. The inductees are featured in this issue of *The Chronicles*.



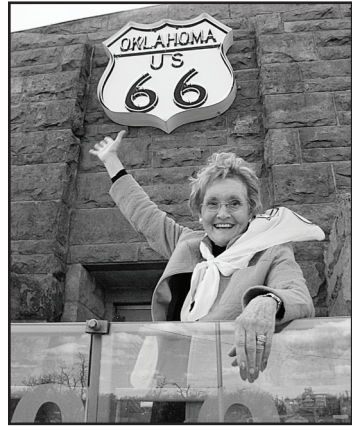
*Sally Bourne Ferrell receiving her Oklahoma Historians Hall of Fame medal from OHS Board of Directors President Bill Corbett and OHS Executive Director Bob Blackburn at the OHS Annual History Conference in Sulphur, Oklahoma, April 24, 2015 (photograph by Terry Zinn).*

## Sally Bourne Ferrell

Sally Bourne Ferrell is co-owner and copublisher of the *Lincoln County News*. She grew up on the historic Bourne Dairy Farm in Oklahoma City, which was established by her grandfather and father. The site of the dairy was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. In 1953 she married Don Ferrell, and in 1962 they purchased the *Lincoln County News*. Ferrell became interested in the history and historic buildings of her new hometown, Chandler. She put her curiosity to good use, researching and writing weekly historical feature stories titled "Historic Highlights" and "Significant Scenes" for the newspaper. She became actively involved in the Museum of Pioneer History and the Lincoln County Historical Society, collecting historical photographs for inclusion in their collections. She eventually became president of the society and raised funds for the purchase and restoration of a building adjacent to the museum to make room for expansion.

Ferrell also spearheaded the establishment of a new museum division: the Children's Historical Resource Center. The center provided cash prizes for students who entered the Oklahoma National History Day competition, published and distributed a second edition of Alberta Wilson Constant's book *Oklahoma Run*, and established Miss Fay's Historical Marionette Theater. The theater has been in operation for

*Sally Ferrell outside the Chandler Route 66 Interpretive Center, housed in the Chandler National Guard Armory.*



more than twenty years. In addition to these activities, Ferrell has researched and written historic walking tours of homes and business structures in Chandler.

The Ferrells have restored nine historic commercial and residential buildings in Chandler. Sally Ferrell founded the Brick Boosters, an organization created to restore and preserve the brick streets in her community. She also established the Old Armory Restorers to rescue and restore the Chandler National Guard Armory, built by the Works Progress Administration in 1936–37. The armory is now the home of the Chandler Route 66 Interpretive Center, which opened in 2007. Ferrell was a founding board member of the Oklahoma Route 66 Association and of Preservation Oklahoma, Inc. She was the recipient of the George H. Shirk Award for Historic Preservation from the Oklahoma Historical Society State Historic Preservation Office in 1993 and the Lifetime Achievement Award from Preservation Oklahoma in 2014. The OHS is pleased to induct Sally Bourne Ferrell into the Oklahoma Historians Hall of Fame.

## **Jimmie Lewis Franklin**

Jimmie Lewis Franklin grew up in the strict Jim Crow environment of Meridian, Mississippi, with parents who believed in the power of education and self-discipline. Inspired by his parents, by a Baptist minister who took a personal interest in Jimmie after his father died, and by outstanding high school teachers and professors at Jackson State University, he validated his parents' beliefs by becoming a nationally prominent historian of the African American experience.

## THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA



*Oklahoma Historians Hall of Fame inductee Jimmie Lewis Franklin.*

Franklin received a basketball scholarship to attend Jackson State University, earning a bachelor's degree and impressing members of the faculty. He decided to pursue graduate studies in history. At the time, the state of Mississippi, and several other states, offered a grant for college study to African American students, but only if those students attended institutions outside of Mississippi. Franklin enrolled at the University of Oklahoma (OU) to study under Arrell M. Gibson. Gibson was inducted into the Oklahoma Historians Hall of Fame in 1995. After two years of study, Franklin was out of money and within weeks of returning home to Mississippi. Gibson encouraged him to ap-

*Jimmie Lewis Franklin receiving his Oklahoma Historians Hall of Fame medal from Bob Blackburn while Bill Corbett (left) and Paul Lambert (above) look on (photograph by Terry Zinn).*



ply for a teaching assistantship, and he successfully became the first African American teaching assistant in the OU Department of History.

Franklin earned his master's degree in 1968 and became the second African American to earn a PhD degree in history at OU. He launched a teaching career that eventually led him to Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. He earned three of Vanderbilt's most prestigious awards and served as president of the Southern Historical Association. He never forgot Oklahoma, and much of his research and writing has been on Oklahoma topics. Three of his four books address Oklahoma subjects: *Born Sober: Prohibition in Oklahoma, 1907–1959*, *The Blacks in Oklahoma*, and *Journey Toward Hope: A History of Blacks in Oklahoma*. All of these books were published by the University of Oklahoma Press. He also wrote chapters entitled "Black Oklahomans and a Sense of Place" and "An Essay on the Quest for Freedom" for inclusion in books edited by his friend and fellow historian Davis Joyce. The OHS welcomes Jimmie Lewis Franklin to the Oklahoma Historians Hall of Fame.

## Edwin C. McReynolds

Edwin C. McReynolds was born in Missouri in 1890 and moved to Oklahoma with his family in 1892. As a young man living in Stillwater, McReynolds did yard work at the residence of Angelo C. Scott, the president of Oklahoma A&M University (now Oklahoma State University). In later years, McReynolds recalled that "the wisdom that fell from [Scott's] lips became a treasure of inestimable value." He developed an interest in history and, after serving in the US Army during

*Edwin C. McReynolds (Oklahoma Publishing Company Photograph Collection, 2012.201.B0392.0644, OHS Research Division).*



## THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

World War I, earned bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees at the University of Oklahoma. After teaching in several high schools, junior colleges, and Central State Teacher's College (now University of Central Oklahoma), he became a member of the faculty of the University of Oklahoma Department of History in 1943. He retired from OU in 1960.

McReynolds authored *Oklahoma: A History of the Sooner State*, which was published in 1954 and revised in 1964. His work *The Seminoles* was published as a part of the University of Oklahoma Press's Civilization of the American Indian Series in 1957. He coauthored *Oklahoma: The Story of Its Past and Present* in 1961 with Alice Marriott and Estelle Faulconer. McReynolds and John W. Morris wrote *Historical Atlas of Oklahoma* in 1965. His stature in the profession was recognized in numerous ways, including at his funeral in 1967 where his pallbearers were the distinguished scholars Donald J. Berthrong, Arrell M. Gibson, William E. Livezey, Savoie Lottinville, John W. Morris, and Gilbert C. Fite. The OHS is proud to include this eminent historian in the Oklahoma Historians Hall of Fame.

## John Wooley

John Wooley of Foyil, Oklahoma, was born in Saint Paul, Minnesota, but moved at the age of four with his mother to her hometown of Chelsea, Oklahoma, following the death of his father. He earned a degree in biology from Oklahoma State University in 1970, but this educational path did not foreshadow his life's work as an author and authority on the popular culture of Oklahoma and the United States. After serving in the US Navy, Wooley returned to Oklahoma, where he



*Oklahoma popular culture historian John Wooley. Wooley is the author, co-author, or editor of more than thirty books on popular culture.*



*John Wooley making remarks after receiving his Oklahoma Historians Hall of Fame medal at the OHS Annual History Conference (photograph by Terry Zinn).*



earned a master's degree in English with an emphasis in creative writing from Central State University (now University of Central Oklahoma). He has been working as a full-time writer since 1979.

During the past thirty-six years Wooley has written, cowritten, or edited more than thirty books on a variety of popular culture topics. He also has written novels, and movie and documentary scripts. He presently is a contributing editor and columnist for *Oklahoma Magazine* and produces *Swing on This*, Tulsa's only western swing radio program. It is primarily his books and articles dealing with the popular culture of Oklahoma, however, that have garnered him entrance into the Oklahoma Historians Hall of Fame.

Wooley authored *Shot in Oklahoma: A Century of Sooner State Cinema*, a critically acclaimed work that was named the 2011 Best Book on Oklahoma History by the Oklahoma Historical Society. His book *From the Blue Devils to Red Dirt: The Colors of Oklahoma Music* was one of three books commissioned by the Oklahoma Centennial Commission and was a finalist for the 2007 Oklahoma Book Award. He also wrote *Ed Galloway's Totem Pole Park: The Story Behind One of the Greatest Folk-Art Attractions on America's Mother Road* and *Voices From the Hill: The Story of Oklahoma Military Academy*. He coauthored *The Home Ranch: Stories of the Hughes Family and the Oklahoma Land They Call Home* and *J. M. Davis Arms and Historical Museum*. He also wrote a play titled *Time Changes Everything*, which is the story of two imaginary meetings between Bob Wills and Woody Guthrie. He is currently working on a book celebrating Roy Clark's sixty years in show business and a history of Cain's Ballroom. For his contributions to the body of scholarship on Oklahoma's popular culture, the OHS is pleased to induct John Wooley into the Oklahoma Historians Hall of Fame.