



2015-2019 NOMINEES FOR INDUCTION INTO THE NEBRASKA HALL OF FAME

(Listed in alphabetical order)

The Hall of Fame Commission determined that the following 12 nominees meet eligibility requirements. In a series of public hearings conducted in July, public testimony was heard in support of each nominee. The descriptions below are for reference purposes and was taken from the Nomination Form for each nominee.

Solon Hannibal Borglum

Born, Dec. 22, 1868 – Died January 20, 1922

World renowned sculptor (younger full-brother of Gutzon Borglum who carved Mt. Rushmore) was born in Ogdon, UT, but spent his most formative years in Nebraska. He owned a cattle ranch near Cairo, Nebraska. Many of his later western statues and other artwork have ties that refer back to the things that happened while living on his ranch. He was known nationally and world famous as a cowboy, rancher, artist, sculptor, humanitarian and WWI hero. A Nebraska State Historical Society Historical marker was placed in his honor along Hwy 2 in 2016.

Calvin Chapman

Born, May 16th, 1843 – Died, August, 1927

Born in Madison County, Ohio, migrated to Nebraska City, Nebraska in 1859 at the age of 16. A Cooper by trade, secretly worked as a “conductor” of the Nebraska City branch of the Underground Railroad. Served in the 2nd Nebraska Cavalry. In later years he served as Mayor and City Councilman of Nebraska City. He founded and built the Grand Army of the Republic Hall in Nebraska City. His home in Nebraska City is listed on the National Register of Historic Homes.

Charles Gere

Born 1838 – Died Sept. 30, 1904

Born in Gainesville, NY, moved to Nebraska in January of 1865. Elected to the First State Legislature in 1886 and was instrumental with the arrival of the railroad to the area. Gere owned and edited the local newspaper and organized the Nebraska Press Association in 1873. He also founded the Lincoln Reading Room that eventually became the Lincoln City Library. He was instrumental in shaping Lincoln as the hub of state government, introduced and steered to passage the bills creating the University of Nebraska, the state penitentiary and the state mental hospital, all located in Lincoln. He later served as a University Regent, and president of the Nebraska State Historical Society and the Lincoln Board of Trade (predecessor of the Chamber of Commerce).

Thomas Vincent Golden

Born Dec. 22, 1853 – died January 22, 1928

Golden arrived in Nebraska in 1883 at the age of 29 and remained until his death. He was the son of Irish immigrants, and was instrumental in bringing Irish Immigrants to Nebraska, a task that was begun by John O’Neill in 1874. Unable to afford schooling, Golden was self-taught and became a teacher. He used his earnings to study law. He was also a newspaper publisher as well as the Mayor of O’Neill. He was a leading irrigation proponent, and a leader in the Democratic Populist movement. He built the Golden Hotel which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Golden’s success in surmounting many of the obstacles to settlement in Nebraska helped engender and appreciation of Irish-Americans as a capable, intelligent people who not only belonged in the West but exemplified its progress.

Howard Hanson

Born Oct. 28, 1896- Died Feb. 26, 1981

Born in Wahoo, NE

He was the son of Swedish immigrants and became a performing musician playing the piano and cello. He was the Director of the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY from 1924 to 1964 and composed "Dies Natalis" for the 100th anniversary of Nebraska statehood in 1967. Hanson won a Pulitzer Prize for his Symphony No 4 in 1944. Contributed to society as a musician, composer, conductor, music educator, and administrator. The music he composed has enriched the lives of the people in Nebraska and throughout the world.

George E. Johnson

Born March 17, 1885 Died Oct. 29, 1967

Johnson served as Chief Engineer and General Manager for the Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District.

He was the chief engineer during the construction of the District's hydro-irrigation project, including Kingsley Dam/Lake McConaughy, three hydroplants on the Supply Canal, and the irrigation canals. He helped lay out the "chain of lakes", fed by water diverted from the Platte River, including Johnson Lake near Lexington, which was named for him.

Member of the State Capitol Commission and the Federal Highway Advisory board, a member of a number of state and national electrical and civil engineering societies, the Society of American Military Engineers, the Nebraska State Water Conservation Congress, the International Board of Technical Engineers, and a charter member of the Hastings Planning Commission. In 1961 the University of Nebraska Board of Regents presented Johnson with its highest non-academic honor for distinguished service – the Nebraska Builder Award – in recognition of his "conspicuously effective leadership in the fields of engineering and administration."

Omer Madison Kem

Born Nov. 11, 1855, Died February 13, 1942

Moved to Nebraska in 1882.

Three term Populist Congressman representing the State of Nebraska – 1891-1897. Known as the first person elected to congress that lived in a sod house. As a Populist and leader of the Farmer's Alliance, Kem was an early leader in the advocacy of western farmer's rights. Kem conquered an established political dominance by both major parties, and was carried all the way to the halls of congress representing the hopes and futures of western Nebraska farmers and homesteaders. He served in the 52nd, 53rd, and 54th United States Congresses as an elected Populist from Nebraska. His political aspirations grew out of his involvement with the Farmer's Alliance and he saw his role as representing farmer's interests and the interests of an ever growing western Nebraska frontier in times of great natural and man-made challenges.

Thomas Rogers Kimball

Born April 19, 1862, Died, Sept. 1, 1934

Born in Linwood, OH moved to Nebraska in 1871.

Architect; Master Planner, Professional Advisor Nebraska Capitol Commission

He was a national leader in the architectural profession and the business community of our state, having created a large number of Nebraska landmark buildings and exhibition facilities during his lifetime. His career also included civic leadership in advising his clients during national design competitions for such prominent structures as the Nebraska Capitol and the planning and design of such facilities as the 1898 Trans-Mississippi Exposition in Omaha. Kimball's greatest gift of his adoptive state was the distinctive National historic Landmark, the Nebraska Capitol. In 1920 the Capitol Commission shoes him to be its professional advisor. He retained his position for 14 ears, administering the construction of the Capitol.

Rachel Abbie Holloway Lloyd

Born January 26, 1839, Died March 7, 1900

Born in Smyrna, OH

Arrived in Lincoln, NE in 1887 as Associate Professor of analytic chemistry at UNL. She was the 1st American woman to receive a Ph.D. in chemistry when she graduated from the University of Zurich in 1887. She left two legacies to the State of Nebraska. One was spurring the construction of the Sugar Beet Processing Plant in Grand Island in 1891, the Nation's third sugar beet plant, which contributed to Nebraska's economy for the next seven decades. Her other legacy was her iconic status as the first female chemist who encouraged women to pursue chemistry graduate and undergraduate degrees at a time when no other institution of higher learning was doing so.

Francis Patrick Matthews

Born March 15, 1887, Died, October 18, 1952

Born in Albion, NE

Matthews practiced law, founding his own law firm. He co-founded the Securities Acceptance Corporation, and the First Federal Savings and Loan of Omaha. He was a part owner and director of Radio WOW, now known as WOW-TV. He was elected a director of the Omaha Metropolitan Utilities Dist. Matthews was the founding Director and Vice-President of the United Service Organization (USO) and also served as Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus from 1939-1945.

During WWII he travelled throughout Europe, Asia and Africa to monitor the welfare of those in the US Armed Forces. He was awarded the nation's highest civilian medal, The Award for Merit in 1946. In 1947 President Harry Truman appointed him to the President's Commission on Civil Rights. On May 24, 1949, President Truman appointed him our nations forty-ninth Secretary of the Navy, he served until 1951 when he resigned to accept posting as US Ambassador to Ireland.

Anna Sadilek Pavelka

Born in the Czech Republic immigrated to America in 1880

Born March 16, 1869 died, April 24, 1955

Most recognized as the prototype for the character Antonia Shimerda in Willa Cather's famous novel *My Antonia*. Anna was not a scholar, nor did she pursue a career beyond that of a wife and mother, yet she remained lifelong friends with Willa Cather. It is the unique friendship between Anna Pavelka and Willa Cather, as well as Anna Pavelka's pioneer spirit and determination to create and nurture new life on the Nebraska prairie that make her a noteworthy Nebraskan.

Matthew Savidge

Born October 10, 1886 Died, June 17, 1916

Born in Deloit, Nebraska, Savidge was a pioneer Nebraska aviator. He and his six brothers were the first Nebraska-born designers, mechanics, and pilots of a self-powered flying machine in Nebraska. From 1911 to 1916 the brothers traveled throughout Nebraska and several Midwestern states with their aerial shows with Matt as their primary pilot. He was known for his daring stunts, especially loop-the-loop. He is credited with being the first ever to develop a method of skywriting, demonstrating it by writing his name, MATT, in the sky with smoke, at Orange days in Alvin, TX in the spring of 1916.

Mat's contributions to early aviation, including his acrobatic piloting skills and innovation of skywriting, were witnessed by hundreds and undoubtedly inspired many advances in aeronautics by showing the unlimited possibilities of flight. He was killed during a flight at the age of 29.