

# Meet the 2022 HALL OF LEGENDS INDUCTEES

Each year since 2010, a nominating committee, made up of a variety of community members, HCHS board members, and the HCHS executive director, comes together to sift through the many nominations for the Howard County Hall of Legends that have been submitted by people from the public. It is a monumental task. The nominating committee's process has continuously evolved to ensure a diverse slate. To consider what makes a Howard County legend takes a reliable and agreed-upon framework reflecting fairness, depth, and breadth. This current cohort exemplifies these qualities. Read on to learn more about each honoree.

## Dr. Marjorie Nelson

As the war in Vietnam raged on, members of the Friends Church, Quakers, looked for ways to live out their belief that war is wrong and that the lives of all people are to be valued. Dr. Marjorie Nelson, whose Quaker faith was forged in Kokomo's Courtland Avenue Friends Church, decided she would travel to South Vietnam to, as her father said, "help the common people of Vietnam who are suffering

through no fault of their own."

She quickly became headline news, a 28-year-old woman from the American Midwest held by the Viet Cong as a prisoner of war.



MARJORIE ELLEN NELSON  
*Chemistry*

Dr. Nelson was four months into a two-year stint in an American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) rehabilitation center in Quang Ngai when she went to visit an American friend about 30 miles away in Hue. On Feb. 9, 1968, the two women disappeared

during the bombing of the Viet Cong's Tet Offensive. On Feb. 11, the Kokomo Tribune reported that Mr. and Mrs. Earl Nelson were anxiously awaiting word about their daughter. The Feb. 12 story said there was still no word and that U.S. Senator Birch Bayh of Indiana, who had spoken with Dr. Nelson during a recent visit to Vietnam, was making inquiries. A page 1 story on Feb. 25 said the AFSC was reporting Dr. Nelson might be a captive of the enemy. On March 31, a front story trumpeted the news that the Viet Cong were releasing the Kokomo doctor and her companion.



What happened in those 57 days of captivity was a testament to Dr. Nelson's abiding faith and her love of all people. She and her friend endured cold rainy nights sleeping outside, trekked through the jungle with little food or water, and survived dysentery. But Dr. Nelson had learned enough Vietnamese to communicate with her captors and they expressed respect for her work. She came back with reports of compassionate treatment, of connecting with the humanity of "the enemy," of friendships that would survive the war. It began a lifetime of service in promoting peace and justice.

Dr. Nelson was born June 14, 1939, in Kokomo. At Courtland Avenue Friends, she felt led to a life as a medical missionary. There she

was introduced to the idea of becoming a doctor, an unexpected career path for a woman in the 1950s. She graduated in 1956 from Kokomo High School at the age of 16, Earlham College in 1960 and the Indiana University School of Medicine in 1964, later earning a master's degree in public health from Yale University.

Her brother Beryl was also a participant in the Quaker protest of the war, a volunteer crew member on a 50-foot ketch that sailed around Southeast Asia to bring medical equipment to both North and South Vietnam.

Dr. Nelson recorded her and her brother's experiences in a book of memoirs titled "To Live in Peace in Midst of the Vietnam War," available on Amazon.

Dr. Nelson retired in June 2009 after 32 years of teaching medical students at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. After retirement, for several years she traveled to Quang Ngai province in Vietnam, where she volunteered with Madison Quakers Inc. She now lives in Foxdale, a Quaker Continuous Care Retirement Community in State College, Pennsylvania.

## Dr. Joseph Klein

What do jet engines, Mars missions, the Space Shuttle, gas turbines, and chemical manufacturing plants have in common? All operate in extremely high-temperature and/or corrosive environments – and all depend on superalloys like those invented and manufactured at Haynes International in Kokomo, Indiana.

And Kokomo native and life-long resident Dr. H. Joseph Klein is the internationally recognized metallurgist whose leadership in the company's research and development organization led to this industry-leading success. Every one of the applications mentioned above – and thousands

more – depend on the kind of melting processes Dr. Klein was involved in perfecting.

Born in Kokomo in 1941, Joe graduated from Kokomo High School in 1959. Summer employment jobs included Allison Division of General Motors and Stellite Division of Union Carbide (now Haynes). He earned his bachelor's degree in metallurgical engineering from Purdue University and completed his master's degree at the University of Alabama and doctorate at the University of Tennessee, where he studied on a National Science Foundation Fellowship.



***Dr. Joseph Klein***

In 1969, Dr. Klein began a 23-year career at what is now Haynes International. During that time, his leadership touched nearly every part of the company, from engineering to manufacturing to plant management to sales and marketing. Along the way, he earned 16 patents recognizing advances in the process technologies of Haynes materials, advances that dramatically reduced the cost and lead time of production. He oversaw

implementation of a new mill using these processes here in Kokomo that was the largest expenditure Cabot Corporation, the parent company at that time, had ever made. He served as the division's worldwide production manager and later as general manager of the Haynes High Temperature Alloy Business, working with customers around the globe. He is remembered for mentoring and guiding countless engineers in R&D, plant and market development areas who went on to great success at Haynes and other companies. Since 1993, he has owned and operated Newlon Metals, a ferrous and non-ferrous scrap metal recycling company based in Kokomo.

During his career, Dr. Klein served on the boards of a number of national and international metallurgical organizations and visited and spoke in the USSR and China in collaboration with the U.S. State Department. His work was honored with awards recognizing it as among the outstanding contributions in aerospace structural materials in the 1970s and one of the 100 most significant products developed in industrial research in 1975 and 1977. Dr. Klein has been honored as a distinguished alumnus of Purdue University and the University of Tennessee.

Dr. Klein has also been a very active volunteer in the Kokomo community, serving in leadership positions for St. Joseph Hospital, St. Vincent/Ascension, the YMCA, United Way of Howard County, and Kokomo Chamber of Commerce, among others. He has been a leading advisor at Purdue and a member of the Indiana Golf Association Board of Directors.

Dr. Klein and his wife Lynda raised five children in Kokomo and now enjoy following the activities of their grandchildren. He continues to enjoy weekly breakfasts with fellow Haynes retirees and a round of golf almost every day.

## Hollis King



*Artwork of Hollis King by JC Barrett.*

From an early age, he faced hatred. When he was only nine years old, he talked his way out of being lynched in Middleton, Tennessee, after he tried to protect his family from being terrorized.

But when this grandson of a slave saw a white man later intervene to save a Black child from yet another lynch mob, the youngster learned that “all people do have some good in them,” and that “violence is hate, and hate breeds violence,” as he described it later in life.

Hollis King never let hatred win, and if history is the story of struggles and success, then King’s version makes him a towering local hero.

Champion of civil rights, preacher of progressive values, and fierce defender of freedom for all people, King’s life paralleled a crucial period of American history.

He came to Kokomo, Indiana, around 1916 as a teenager and found menial work in a local factory – “for Negroes and foreigners,” as the job descriptions put it then. He later sold life insurance and worked at the city parks department. Yet despite his modest work

record, this washerwoman’s son with a 7th-grade education is today revered as perhaps the most influential leader for human justice in Howard County history.

Indeed, King’s contribution to the cause of civil rights in Kokomo is nothing less than a résumé of results. He helped organize a revived local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and 56 people gathered for its first meeting on Feb. 1, 1942, at Douglass School. For four decades, until his death in 1982 at the age of 82, most of the changes affecting racial policies in Kokomo were due to his galvanizing leadership. He was NAACP local chapter president for 18 years, served on the state NAACP board for nine years (three years as vice president), and spent 35 years with the branch executive committee.

King combined action with intellect. To combat a proliferation of racially motivated propaganda, he submitted an ordinance to the Kokomo City Council to outlaw the distribution of hate literature. Among his notable contributions were the creation of Kokomo’s Human Rights Commission, influencing the city



*Hollis King attending a gathering.*

to hire its first modern-era Black police officer and firefighter, and working to ensure African Americans had equal job opportunities in Kokomo’s manufacturing industry.



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From the factory to the home, King focused on powerful – and peaceful – changes to help make the community better for all citizens. He led the effort to integrate city public housing and assisted in desegregating the public school system and the municipal swimming pool. He made voter registration a priority all of the time.

King's philosophy is his legacy, with words worthy to be remembered and repeated by future generations: "Through concern we need to seek for proper understanding. When we find that, trust and respect follow. With action, may we all endeavor quickly to build bridges of understanding and not ditches of mistrust and prejudice."

### Mike Wyatt

When it ended and the lights were extinguished for the last time in 2020, well over a million dollars had been raised, and thousands of people's lives were better.



*Mike greeting visitors at We Care Park. Photo by Tim Bath, Kokomo Tribune.*

Spread across seven city lots on the north side of Kokomo, Indiana, the annual Christmas lights and displays event known as We Care Park had dazzled and delighted visitors from all around the United States for

27 years. And it was quite a show each year. Besides about a million lights, there were wreaths and trees, an enormous stuffed teddy bear and fire-breathing dragons, amusement rides and a Ferris wheel, and a live-action Santa and Mrs. Claus in their house. One part of the park was dedicated to military veterans, and each year an honored guest was invited to "flip-the-switch" turning on the Christmas lights, very often a child suffering from cancer or other life-threatening condition.

The money it raised – every dime of it donated by those who came to see the show – all went to We Care, a nationally recognized Kokomo non-profit that raises money each year to support social services at Christmas time. (The We Care organization was a Hall of Legends inductee in 2018.)

Mike Wyatt, who started the project in his garage with his brother Ralph in 1995, is quick to acknowledge all the help he's had – from his own family to the countless friends, community groups and local businesses, who all generously volunteered their time, talent and resources to test the bulbs and dust off the displays each year in time for the holidays. Their collective efforts resulted in record fundraising for We Care, extensive local and even national media attention, and earned Wyatt the state's prestigious Sagamore of the Wabash honor, along with numerous other awards and much acclaim.

Wyatt maintains that he couldn't have done it alone, but there's no doubt that without Mike, there would have been no show. Helping others is as essential as breathing to him, a lesson he learned from his parents. Paul and Mary Wyatt had 16 children (Mike, born in 1945, was number 11). From an early age, everyone worked. The family economics went like this: If you made \$5 picking tomatoes for a local farmer, half of it went back to their mother. The large family had to move around

a lot, usually renting, sometimes struggling, somehow surviving. Life was so lean that young Mike didn't even know what lunch was until he started school.



**Jim, Ralph and Mike Wyatt, Ron Humerickhouse and Charlie Michael in 1999. Photo by Sarah Stefko, Kokomo Tribune.**

To find steadier work, a 17-year-old Wyant eventually talked his way onto the midnight shift at a large printing and bindery factory. One month before dying of cancer, his steelworker father then directed him to the employment office at Continental Steel Corporation and that first day stretched into 22 years at the mill.

His other hours were devoted to Mike's Sewer Service and plumbing business, still going strong after some 60 years in Howard County. Wyant also made time to be a voice for the First District with 17 years on Kokomo Common Council and is a familiar face on the city's Redevelopment Commission.

Retired now, Mike and his wife, Nancy, have 55 years of marriage memories, grown children and three grandchildren to celebrate. He still speaks to schools and civic groups, encouraging everyone he meets to find a way to contribute to the community. The message he learned as a boy remains the same today: "Give back. It makes your heart feel full."

## Symposium

With little more than housework, children and church to occupy their thoughts in 1896, a group of women in Kokomo decided they wanted more.

Kokomo was small, with only about 8,000 people living there. But it was growing. The gas boom was bringing in more and more people. But opportunities for enrichment were limited, especially for women.

So, 126 years ago, two women, Elizabeth Carroll and Evaline Darby, organized a club called Symposium. An organization that endures today.

On May 20 of that year, a few women met in the home of Evaline Darby, forming a "literary circle for the establishment of good feeling, liberality of thought and speech, and for general advancement intellectually." Their wish was to broaden their experiences both culturally and spiritually.

By October 1896, this circle had grown to 25 women. The group studied serious topics, including socialism, child labor, Jewish heroes and prophets, Siberian exiles, wireless telegraphy and liquefied air, as well as American humorists and "woman's duties." Members studied and prepared papers on subjects – without the aid of the internet – to present to the group. They also studied art, and presented the first art exhibit in Kokomo.



Through the years, Symposium expanded its emphasis on art and extended it to the beautification of Kokomo. Additionally, members decided to extend their desire to education not only themselves, but the entire community. In 1964, Symposium received a \$25,000 endowment from Ann Darby McCann, in memory of her mother and founding member Evaline Darby, that would help finance its efforts.

Notable speakers, including Steve Kroft of 60 minutes (and former Kokomo resident), Arlene Francis and Col. John Cottell, were brought to Kokomo to speak in public gatherings. Kokomo native and musical conductor Margaret Hillis performed with the Kenosha, Wisconsin Symphony Orchestra and the Kokomo Festival Chorus at Havens Auditorium through the efforts of Symposium. As the cost of bringing public speakers to Kokomo has increased drastically, present Symposium President Mary Tetrick said the group has joined with other local organizations to sponsor events. These include bringing authors Delia Owens, *Where the Crawdad Sings*, and Jamie Ford, *The Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet*, in conjunction with the Kokomo-Howard County Public Library, and CNN reporter and author Bakari Sellers in conjunction with IVY Tech, a presentation unfortunately limited due to Covid restrictions. Symposium continues to focus on educating each other and the community. Recently, Symposium donated to the Children's Education Science Lab at the Russiaville Library.

Today Symposium continues to meet in members' homes as it did in 1896 and limits membership to 30 so they can continue to do so. Members come from diverse backgrounds and religions. Members still research subjects and present papers to each other, a task much easier in 2022 than in 1896 with the assistance of the internet. Today, the Symposium president chooses a topic for the year. The 2022

theme is about dwellings, with members learning everything from Native American homes, to log dwellings, Frank Lloyd Wright homes, dwellings of the Gilded Age and Sears homes.

Although Kokomo women's lives are no longer as restricted as they were 126 years ago, they are still as driven to learn as they were in 1896, Tetrick said.

## Richard "Dick" Cardwell

The First Amendment. Freedom of the press. The public's right to know.

For Kokomo native Richard Wyatt Cardwell, these three concepts came together in a legendary career committed to the highest principles of law and journalism and a vision of better government at every level. Over a 50-year span, Dick Cardwell became known as a staunch defender of freedom and the father of Indiana's "Open Door" law establishing the public's right to attend government meetings.



Raised in Kokomo, Dick excelled at sports as a child and was a three-sport letterman at Kokomo High School (Class of 1951). At Indiana University, he was a good enough athlete to participate in three varsity sports, football, basketball and golf, but it was in the classroom and the newsroom that

he found his calling. In 1955, he graduated from IU with a double major in journalism and government; in 1958, he graduated from the Indiana University School of Law with a doctor of jurisprudence. Dick combined his love of journalism and the First Amendment by defending newspapers and freedom of the press as the general counsel and executive director of the Indiana State Press Association for more than 35 years.



Dick's distinguished career included serving as chairman of the board of publications of Indiana University and on the committee on public notice advertising for the National Newspaper Association. He was the primary author of the Indiana Open Door Law and Access to Public Records Act, enacted and signed into law in 1979, and he represented the newspaper industry before the Indiana General Assembly on First Amendment causes throughout much of his career. He also served as a member of the Indiana Supreme Court Committee on Character and Fitness from 1974-1982 and 1990-1998.

Dick won numerous awards including the Distinguished Service Award from the

Indiana Press Club, the Friend of Freedom Award from the Indiana Professional Chapter of Professional Journalists Sigma Delta Chi, Indiana Newspaper Publisher's First Freedom Award, and the Consumer Protection Services Award for Service. In 1980, Dick was awarded "The Sagamore of the Wabash" by Gov. Otis Bowen, the highest honor bestowed on a citizen of the state.

In 1982, Dick was inducted into the Indiana Journalism Hall of Fame. Here's an excerpt from that announcement:

*"As general counsel of the Hoosier State Press Association since 1961, Richard Cardwell has the job of attending to legal concerns of interest to the association. He has gone far beyond the mere perfunctory performance of his duties; however, because of his interest in journalism and his demonstrated awareness of the role that freedom of the press plays in our political system, he has become not only the leading spokesman for journalism in Indiana but a state and national leader involved in various aspects of journalism as well."*



Dick also was known as a loving husband, father, son, brother, writer, poet, golfer, and friend to everyone he met. He and his wife Marcia Huston began a life-long relationship in middle school that lasted more than 70 years, including 63 years of marriage. He passed away September 1, 2020, at the age of 86, survived by four children, 11 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren. ■