



2026 TULSA HALL OF FAME

Inductee Biographies

KEN BUSBY

A lifelong Tulsa resident, Ken is the Executive Director & CEO of the Route 66 Alliance. And here we are in the 100th anniversary of Route 66! Before, Ken served as head of the Arts & Humanities Council of Tulsa for twelve years. He has held leadership posts at the Tulsa Zoo as well as Gilcrease Museum. He has dual degrees in French and Communication from the University of Tulsa, and a graduate degree in Journalism from Indiana University at Bloomington. His involvement in the community is vast, ranging from chairing the Tulsa Performing Arts Center Trust to being elected to the Arts Education Advisory Council of Americans for the Arts.

REUBEN GANT

Born in Tulsa, Reuben Gant was an outstanding athlete at Booker T. Washington High School where the team won the football state championship three times. He then continued as an outstanding tight end at Oklahoma State University and was drafted into the NFL by the Buffalo Bills where he was a tight end for seven years where he averaged 15 yards per reception. After his career in football, he returned to his hometown of Tulsa where a life of service began. He served for 15 years as President of the Greenwood Chamber of Commerce and then as one of the founders and now Executive Director of the John Hope Franklin Center for Reconciliation. When asked how he wished to be described, he simply said, “community servant.”

ELLIOT NELSON

One might say that Elliot Nelson has shaped Downtown Tulsa one bite at a time.

As head of McNellie’s Group, he has created a complement of dining experiences that are truly extraordinary. There is no “chain” to this group as he has created unique experiences and epicurean delights at each of his 22 locations throughout the Tulsa area. Born in Tulsa, he has been an advocate for downtown Tulsa as a place that is the defining point of the region. He is as passionate about this city as he is about food. He is an active member and past Chair of the Downtown Tulsa Partnership, the Metro Tulsa YMCA, and the Oklahoma Restaurant Association. He also currently serves on the board for Tulsa Tough and St John's Health System, as well as being a past chair of Tulsa's Economic Development Commission.

He is a man willing to take risks on his hometown, from restoring over 30 historic properties, developing a retail center from shipping containers, and recently finishing Tulsa's largest mixed-use project, Santa Fe Square.

RODGER & JUDY RANDLE

You can trace Rodger Randle's ties to Tulsa to a time before Statehood. He served in the Oklahoma legislature from 1970 – 1988 and as Mayor of Tulsa from 1988 – 1992. His world travels are legendary with colleagues and friends in all four corners of the globe. He has the distinction of being Honorary Consul for Oklahoma to His Majesty's government and this distinguished career began with service in the Peace Corps. Today, he is professor at University of Oklahoma – Tulsa where his speaker programs are a constant source of education to the community.

Judy Randle's career began as a beat writer and then an editor of a section at the Tulsa World. At the heart of it, she is a lover of books. For 26 years Judy Randle served on the Tulsa City-County Library Commission. She has led, as chairperson of the commission, the monumental changes that transformed library science from finding a book in the card catalog to actually finding the book somewhere in the stacks to the retrieval of information from all across the globe, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The Tulsa City-County Libraries underwent incredible changes physically through renovation but also philosophically in terms of citizens as constant learners. Coincidentally she, too, was in the Peace Corps.

GAILARD SARTAIN

Gailard Sartain, a proud Tulsan, attended several schools where it was suggested that he not return. After such a suggestion at Cascia Hall, he was enrolled at Will Rogers High School by his parents Elizabeth and Gailard Sartain, Senior, then Tulsa's Fire Chief. At Will Rogers, his art was encouraged and a serendipitous exposure to the renowned artist Paul Davis, also a Tulsa native and Will Rogers Graduate, led him to a stint at Hallmark Cards in Kansas City and then as Paul's assistant in NYC. He went on to graduate with a degree in fine arts from the University of Tulsa.

He is warmly remembered by many Tulsans as Dr. Mazeppa Pompazaoidi, a late night, skit-based show. Jim Halsey, another Tusa based legend, saw Gailard on Mazeppa and recommended him for Hee Haw. Hee Haw led to roles in over sixty movies including Mississippi Burning and Fried Green Tomatoes. Gailard was a prolific painter and illustrator with a wide range of styles. Leon Russell's "Will O The Wisp" and an album cover for Roy Clark are among his works.

He passed away from natural causes in June of 2025 but his wife, Mary Jo, offered an official statement that Gailard "died of silliness."