First Enshrinement
Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame

March 1, 1978
Lausche Building
Columbus, Ohio

Sponsored by the Ohio Commission on Aging

James A. Rhodes
Governor

Martin A. Janis
Director
A Salute
From the Governor

Today, as we recognize the valued contributions made to the State of Ohio by her sons and daughters who are the first to be enshrined into our Senior Citizens Hall of Fame, we know we must never overlook, and ever be aware of, one of Ohio's greatest resources — our older residents.

These citizens whom we honor here today, and their counterparts everywhere in this great state, are the solid foundation on which Ohio has continued to build an energetic and vibrant environment for all — whatever their age. And the rich leadership, innovation, motivation and contributions of these older persons, polished by their years of dedication to their homes and families, and communities and state, are still being made. We just have to look into each of our cities and villages to see these older residents continue their generous caring — a labor which benefits all of us.

And while we pay recognition to special older Ohioans at this first Hall of Fame enshrinement, we are, at this same moment, paying a special tribute to all of Ohio's older residents. A place in this Hall of Fame belongs to each one of them.

It is highly apparent that as we honor these men and women today — on the 175th birthday of the State of Ohio — we have established a heritage of attainment which, in no small way, can be directly traced to these charter inductees, and to the millions of older people they represent.

James A. Rhodes

History of the Hall of Fame

The Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame has been initiated to fulfill a two-fold purpose: to place an important emphasis on the vital role played by active men and women, 60 years of age and older, in their community, state and nation; and to promote the productivity and enjoyment that must come in retirement years.

The first enshrinement honors 18 persons. Judges made the decision because of the great number of nominations received, and the superior qualifications.

Each of those enshrined will receive a duplicate plaque reflecting their individual portrait and biography. The original plaques will be on permanent display in the Senior Citizens Hall of Fame Foyer in the new senior citizens multipurpose center at the Ohio State Fairgrounds.

The selection of persons to be enshrined is based on contributions they have made for the benefit of mankind after they attained the age of 60, or for a continuation of service started prior to age 60.

Nominees must be native-born Ohioans; or must have been a resident of Ohio for at least 10 years.

With the exception of this first enshrinement, future ceremonies will be held in October each year, beginning in 1978.
CHARTER MEMBERS
Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame

Muriel M. Allen Bertsch
Ernest J. Bohn *
Anna V. Brown
Milton Cariff
W. Fred Cottrell
Nelson H. Cruikshank
Arthur S. Flemming
Zelma Watson George
Richard Gosser *
Leslie Townes (Bob) Hope
Martin A. Janis
James Cleveland (Jesse) Owens
Sidney L. Pressley
Albert B. Sabin
Louis B. Seltzer
Dr. Julius and Mrs. Helen Weil
Aaron M. Wiesen

* Posthumous

Program

11:45 a.m.
Welcome by James F. Alexander, Assistant Director, Ohio Commission on Aging
Introductions by Bill Pepper, WBNS-TV “Senior Life” Reporter
Invocation by the Rev. Lyman Liggins of Toledo, Commission Member
Song by Sylvester Blue of Cleveland “Star Spangled Banner”

12 Noon
Hall of Fame Banquet
Master of Ceremonies, Bill Pepper
Keynote Address by Governor James A. Rhodes
Sylvester Blue “Battle Hymn of the Republic”
Enshrinements by Governor Rhodes Biographies by Bill Pepper
Closing Remarks by Kenneth M. Mahan OCoA Assistant Director, Operations
Sylvester Blue, “How Great Thou Art” Benediction by the Rev. Lyman Liggins
Muriel M. Allen Bertsch

Muriel M. Allen Bertsch is one of the rocks upon which programs for Senior Citizens have been built, statewide and nationally.

In 1954 she became the executive director of Senior Citizens, Inc., Hamilton, Ohio, one of the first centers developed for older persons in the United States. During her 16 years in that post, she originated many of the programs and services now common throughout the country.

Mrs. Bertsch founded the Ohio Association of Centers for Senior Citizens in 1957, the first association founded nationally, and was president 10 years.

She was a delegate to both the 1961 and 1971 White House Conferences on Aging. She was an original member of the first National Conference for Older People; led in the development of the National Institute for Senior Centers for the National Council on Aging, and was chairperson for the 1976 Ohio Governor’s Conference on Aging.

Mrs. Bertsch, who was born in 1905, was appointed a member of the Ohio Commission on Aging by Governor James A. Rhodes in 1976.

She is a guest lecturer on gerontology at Miami University and a consultant for the National Institute for Senior Centers, and is an internationally recognized author. It has been said of Mrs. Bertsch, "She broke ground where few had walked, and led the way for others to follow."

Ernest J. Bohn

Ernest J. Bohn (1901-1975) is recognized nationally as the "Father of Public Housing."

He was elected to the Ohio General Assembly in 1929. He resigned to run for Cleveland City Council, where he served until 1940. Bohn became interested in housing problems in 1931, and organized a slum housing conference in Cleveland in 1933, which laid the groundwork for a national housing movement.

Bohn became director of the Cleveland Metropolitan Housing Authority, first in the nation, when it was organized in 1933. He held that post until 1968.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower appointed Bohn to the advisory committee on housing which produced the 1954 Federal Housing Act.

In 1968, at age 67, Bohn set out on a new career. He joined the faculty of Case Western Reserve University in Urban and Environmental Studies.

That university established the Ernest J. Bohn Library with 50,000 pieces of material on housing which Bohn donated.

Bohn Tower, a Cleveland apartment building for the elderly, and the Ernest J. Bohn Golden Age Center were named for him.

Governor James A. Rhodes appointed Bohn to the Ohio Commission on Aging in 1975, but he passed away before attending his first meeting.
Anna V. Brown

Mrs. Anna V. Brown has been responsible for the development of many programs and services which have touched a population that was hard to reach and known for its isolation.

Mrs. Brown, who was born in 1914, has become known as an advocate of the elderly on the national level as well as the local level in articulating the needs of the low-income and minority older person.

As Director, Cleveland Mayor's Commission on Aging, Mrs. Brown was responsible for the Area-wide Model Project on Aging, better known as the "100 X 100 Project." She also was instrumental in encouraging the Cleveland Clinic to establish neighborhood health clinics in areas with large, elderly concentration.

She was responsible also for obtaining funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation to establish a transportation program which was called "Dial-A-Ride," in several highly-populated, low-income areas.

Mrs. Brown also lectures at several colleges and universities on the older person.

Milton Caniff

Milton Caniff, our nation's most honored cartoonist, smelled printer's ink early, and his appreciation of it has not diminished throughout his career.

Caniff, a native of Hillsboro (Highland County), Ohio, was born in 1907. At age 13, he became an artist's apprentice with the Dayton Journal-Herald newspaper.

While attending Ohio State University he worked with the Columbus Dispatch as a cartoonist, and his efforts were recognized by Associated Press. He moved to New York with AP, and two years later, in 1934, helped create the famous "Terry and the Pirates."

During World War II, he was asked to design a cartoon strip for military personnel. His "Male Call" became required reading for service men and women. It earned him the Exceptional Service Award, highest given to a civilian by the Department of the Air Force.

In 1947, he created "Steve Canyon." It became the quickest adventure strip success in history.

Caniff's talents have brought recognition to many organizations and their causes. His efforts have been recognized by B'nai B'rith, YMCA, Boy Scouts, Aviation Hall of Fame, Civil Air Patrol, Goodwill, Freedom Foundations, and countless others. In 1974 a library at Ohio State University was named in his honor.

He was presented the first Reuben Award, emblematic of the highest award given by the National Cartoonists Society. He again won the award in 1971.
Dr. W. Fred Cottrell

Dr. W. Fred Cottrell is one of our nation's most widely recognized experts in education and the research of aging.

Cottrell is an Emeritus Professor of both the Department of Political Science and Sociology and Anthropology at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio. He has been a member of that school's faculty since 1930.

In 1971, he was named one of the Outstanding Educators of America, and also was honored as Ohio's Outstanding Older American at the White House Conference on Aging. He served as one of 14 distinguished experts in the field of aging who chaired technical committees for that Conference.

Cottrell, who was born in 1908 in Idaho Falls, Idaho, was appointed by President Richard M. Nixon to the National Advisory Committee on Aging, and served as a member of the Advisory Board for Older Americans for the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

He also is Emeritus Director of the Scripps Foundation for Research in Population Problems, headquartered at Miami University.

This position led him to conduct numerous research projects in the field of aging, including the effectiveness of transportation of older persons, women in retirement, and the problems of railroaders.

Nelson H. Cruikshank

Nelson H. Cruikshank, who was appointed the White House Counselor on Aging in 1977, has had a long and distinguished career in community, labor and the public service areas.

As the top spokesman for older persons in the federal government, Cruikshank advises the President, Congress and the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, on all policies affecting Senior Citizens. He also serves as Chairman of the Federal Council on the Aging.

He was born in Bradner (Wood County), Ohio, in 1902, and attended Oberlin College before earning his undergraduate degree from Ohio Wesleyan University.

Cruikshank served as Director, Department of Social Security, at the AFL-CIO in Washington from 1953 until his retirement in 1965.

After retirement, he served as a visiting professor at Michigan State University, Pennsylvania State University, and the University of Michigan.

He is also credited with helping write and pass the bill which established Medicare.

Cruikshank served as President of the National Council of Senior Citizens from 1969 to 1977; and was a member of the Advisory Councils on both Employment Security of the Labor Department, and Employee Welfare and Pension Benefit Plans.
Arthur S. Flemming

Arthur S. Flemming is one in a long list of students who have been graduated from Ohio colleges and universities and have gone on to our nation's capitol to serve with distinction and honor.

Flemming, who was born in 1906, was graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University in 1927, and, 21 years later, returned to the Delaware-based campus as its president. He also served as president of both the University of Oregon and Macalester College.

He was a member of the U.S. Civil Service Commission, War Manpower Commission, and Director of the Office of Defense Mobilization. In 1958, he was appointed Secretary, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, by President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Flemming became U.S. Commissioner on Aging in 1973, at age 68. He also serves as Chairman, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

Dr. Zelma Watson George

The contributions to mankind attributed to Dr. Zelma Watson George literally reach around the world.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower appointed her an emissary for the U.S. Department of State to tour troubled areas of the world and assist with solutions to a wide variety of problems.

In 1960, she was appointed U.S. Delegate to the United Nations XV General Assembly.

Prominent in working with youth, Dr. George served as Director, Cleveland Jobs Corps Center for Women, a probation officer, and Director of Personnel, Tennessee State University.

Dr. George also earned a national reputation as an opera singer, performing in Cleveland, New York, and Pennsylvania.

She has been honored with the U.N. Dag Hammerskjold Award in 1961, the Dahlberg Peace Award in 1969, and the Mary Bethune Gold Medallion in 1973. The Civic Recognitions Committee of Ohio presented her with the Distinguished Daughter of Ohio Award.

Mrs. George, who was born in 1903, continues to maintain a schedule of lectures at colleges and universities which number some 50-60 annually.
Leslie Townes (Bob) Hope

For a onetime song and dance man from Cleveland, who frequently had to accept a second billing to animal acts, Leslie Townes (Bob) Hope has managed to do pretty well for himself, and even better for mankind.

Bob Hope has been hailed as the only performer who has triumphed in all five major show business media: vaudeville, stage, radio, motion pictures and television.

The honors and awards bestowed upon him are legend. He is recognized as the most decorated civilian in the history of the United States.

Typically, however, Hope, who has appeared before presidents and royalty throughout the world, lists playing before servicemen through his famed U.S.O. tours and graduation addresses to college students as his most gratifying performances.

Bob Hope is also recognized as the “king” in fund-raising for charitable causes of all kinds. He averages two benefits per week.

He was born in Eltham, England, in 1903. His family moved to Cleveland when he was four, and he was educated in the Cleveland school system. His first professional stage appearance was in the Lake Erie city, and catapulted him into entertainment history.

It has been said of Bob Hope that “if he could live his life over again — he wouldn’t have time.”

Martin A. Janis

Martin A. Janis, a native of Toledo, is recognized as the foremost architect of programs and services for Senior Citizens in Ohio.

He was very active as a community leader in the Toledo area prior to entering a career in government as a member of the Ohio House of Representatives.

In 1963, Janis, who was born in 1913, was appointed Director, Ohio Department of Mental Hygiene and Correction. He served through 1970, longer than anyone in the state’s history.

As Director, Janis testified before Congress in behalf of the national Community Mental Health Act. After its passage, he was instrumental in similar legislation in Ohio which created Community Mental Health and Mental Retardation Boards.

Janis was one of the first state officials in the nation to recognize the problems of older persons. As a result, he created the Ohio Administration on Aging in 1965.

He also developed seven geriatric centers and, with Governor James A. Rhodes, established Ohio’s two Golden Age Villages, recognized nationally as models for low-income, elderly housing with personal care services.

In 1975, Janis was appointed Director of the Ohio Commission on Aging, and continued to develop unique programs, including the Golden Buckeye Card, the nation’s first statewide discount program for the elderly.

Janis was appointed to the Advisory Council of the National Institute on Aging in 1977.
James Cleveland (Jesse) Owens has achieved the unique distinction that few experience — becoming a legend in his own time.

Owens, who was born in 1914, was educated in the Cleveland public school system, and was graduated from the East Technical High School, where he set a world record and equalled a second in track and field.

He attained even greater prominence at Ohio State University where, as a sophomore, he became the only athlete in history to set three world records and tie a fourth in a single track meet.

At the 1936 Olympic Games in Germany, Owens gained international acclaim by setting three Olympic and world records in track, and running on the victorious relay team to win four gold medals for the United States.

Jesse Owens has gained respect and honor, not only for his athletic achievements, but because of his many activities in community service.

His work with youth has been an inspiration to many who would otherwise have become delinquents. One of his many activities centered around the Chicago Boys’ Club, where he was a board member and director.

In 1973, the National Collegiate Athletic Association selected Owens as the recipient of the Theodore Roosevelt Award. The following year he was an original inductee into the National Track and Field Hall of Fame.

President Gerald R. Ford, in 1975, presented Owens with the Medal of Freedom, the highest honor the United States can bestow upon a civilian.

Dr. Sidney L. Pressey, who began his research work in 1917, is one of the true pioneers in life-span development and gerontology.

His early studies, while an intern at Boston Psychiatric Hospital, regarding changes in abilities of elderly patients, led Dr. Pressey to author many articles on the psychology of education and gerontology. His most distinctive book is “Life: A Psychological Survey.” It is believed to be one of the first books covering human development from birth to death.

Dr. Pressey, who was born in 1888, served on the faculty of the Ohio State University for 38 years, and currently enjoys professor emeritus status with the Department of Psychology.

In 1948, he founded and served as first president of the Division of Maturity and Age of the American Psychological Association.

Dr. Pressey also holds four patents on teaching machines based on immediate feedback to the students. He has also been the recipient of several grants to continue his studies in both the educational and gerontological fields, including one from the National Institute of Health, to study outstanding older persons.
Albert B. Sabin, M.D.

The contribution Dr. Albert B. Sabin has made to mankind during an illustrious career can never be measured.

Dr. Sabin will best be remembered for his development of the oral, live polio vaccine that has been extensively used since 1960. However, he has been involved in the basic studies of many infectious diseases and of cancer since he was a premedical student in 1926.

He earned the recognition of Emeritus Distinguished Professor of the University of Cincinnati, where he served on the faculty for more than 30 years. He is also an active Distinguished Professor of Biomedicine at the Medical University of South Carolina.

Dr. Sabin, who was born in 1906, continues to serve as an advisor and consultant to many of the world’s most prestigious health organizations, including the World Health Organization and the U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command.

His efforts have been recognized by virtually every country in the world through awards and honors. Among his most cherished is the 1970 U.S. National Medal of Science.

Louis B. Seltzer

Louis B. Seltzer, or “Mr. Cleveland” as he became known, earned the reputation as one of the nation’s most fabled newspaper figures during a career with the Cleveland Press that spanned nearly half a century.

In 1928, at age 25, Seltzer became the nation’s youngest editor of a large newspaper. Since that time, he has been a confidant of all Presidents of the United States, as well as Ohio’s most distinguished public officials and corporate officers.

Seltzer, who was born in 1897, was never able to finish grade school. He gained his education through everyday experiences. However, he never allowed his lack of formal education to be a detriment. He has since been awarded 22 honorary degrees.

Always mindful of the community responsibility that was attached to his position with the Cleveland Press, Seltzer served on some 61 separate organizations as a member, officer or director.

He has received countless awards and honors, including the 1951 Brotherhood Award of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and a Freedom Foundation Award from Washington, D.C.

He recognized the need to focus attention on the problems of the elderly and originated one of the first newspaper columns devoted to Senior Citizens. He also founded the Annual Press Golden Wedding Parties in Cleveland.
The names of Dr. Julius and Mrs. Helen Weil and gerontology are synonymous throughout the world.

The couple, both of whom were born in 1902, list among their countless contributions to the field many national and international firsts.

They initiated occupational therapy for the aged at the Montefiore Home in Cleveland in 1941 and that same year, established the first sheltered workshop program in the world for the aged. In 1942, another new concept, physical therapy, was developed by the Weils. In 1944, Helen Weil became the first social worker in a home for the aged in the United States.

In 1958, the Weils founded Schnaumann House for retirees, which served as a model for non-profit housing.

Pioneering is nothing new to the Weils. Dr. Weil, a renowned psychologist, was one of the first to emigrate to the United States from Germany to avoid Nazi persecution.

In 1941, Helen Weil became the first woman to be graduated from John Carroll University in Cleveland.

Aaron M. Wiesen

Aaron M. Wiesen, a native of Cincinnati, cares about people. He especially cares about the Older Ohioans.

Wiesen, who was born in 1907, has made numerous contributions to his church, community, state, and nation.

His involvement in the field of aging preceeds the formation of any statewide program. In 1961, he was appointed a delegate to the first White House Conference on Aging. Ten years later, Wiesen was chairman of the Ohio delegation to that same conference.

In 1965, he was appointed to the first Ohio Advisory Committee on Aging and, in 1976, was appointed chairman of the Title III State Advisory Committee of the Ohio Commission on Aging. He was one of the founders of the Council on Aging of the Cincinnati Area.

Wiesen was a member of the National Advisory Committee to the Office of Economic Opportunity on Poverty and the Aging; the board of directors of Jewish Family Services of Cincinnati; Jewish Federation of Cincinnati; and the Community Health and Welfare Council of Cincinnati.

He has received many honors, including being named "Man of the Year" in Cincinnati by B'nai B'rith.
Richard Gosser

Richard Gosser spent a large part of his life in developing programs which today benefit countless millions of older persons.

A Toledo native, he was elected vice president of the United Auto Workers International and, as such, was one of the first national labor leaders to establish programs to deal with problems encountered in later life as a result of retirement.

He was one of the developers of the nation's Social Security Program, and also was responsible for the development of the UAW national pension plan.

Gosser, who was born in 1900, also spent much time and energy within the Toledo area in founding programs for the elderly.

He founded the Toledo Health and Retiree Center, which provides reduced costs to older persons in obtaining prescription medicines, dental and medical work, and hearing aids. He was also a founder of the Toledo Council of Elders, which has more than 9,000 members.

His activities were not restricted to gaining benefits for workers in the automotive industry or for older persons. He established a children's summer camp for those who otherwise would not have been able to attend such a program.

The Ohio Commission on Aging

The Ohio Commission on Aging was created by the 110th General Assembly and officially came into being in November, 1973. As the State's focal point for the 1.5 million Ohioans aged 60 and over, the Commission on Aging is charged with:

— Allocating grants under the federal Older Americans Act and state subsidies.
— Providing technical assistance.
— Serving as a clearinghouse for information on Ohio's older people.
— Developing and coordinating statewide services and activities such as the Golden Buckeye Card discount program, Governor's Conference on Aging, Senior Citizens Day, Hall of Fame, and State Fair programs.
— Representing Ohio's older population as an advocate.
— Coordinating with other federal and state agencies operating aging programs.

— Providing services at Ohio's two Golden Age Villages. Martin A. Janis was appointed Director of the Ohio Commission on Aging on July 1, 1975, by Governor James A. Rhodes.

James F. Alexander serves as Assistant Director, Special Programs, and Kenneth M. Mahan is Assistant Director, Operations.

The 12 members of the Ohio Commission on Aging are appointed by the Governor. They are:

Marjorie L. Ater, Columbus
Muriel M. Bertsch, Hamilton
Clarence H. Borgelt, Toledo
A. Donald Campbell, Guysville
James E. Carnes, Barnesville
Howard Chesler, University Heights
Joseph W. Fichter, Oxford
Jack Gregorac, Euclid
Carl Griffith, Columbus
Rev. Lyman W. Liggins, Toledo
Fred Robbins, Dayton
Guy R. Taylor, Canton