



*Ohio Department of Aging
50 W. Broad St./9th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215-5928*

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Judith Y. Brachman, Director*

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*Ohio
Senior Citizens*



*Hall
of
Fame*

May 25, 1995



History of the Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame

The Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame was established to fulfill a two-fold purpose: to honor and recognize the vital role played by older men and women in their communities, state and nation, and to promote the productivity and enjoyment that should be part of every person's retirement years.

This year, 11 individuals join the distinguished ranks of the Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame. Their selection is based on contributions they have made for the benefit of mankind after age 60 or for a continuation of efforts begun before that age.

Each inductee receives a plaque with his or her portrait and a brief biography, and a lapel pin engraved with the Hall of Fame symbol. An identical plaque is permanently displayed at the Martin Janis Senior Center, Ohio State Fairgrounds, Columbus.

Nominees to the Hall of Fame must be native-born Ohioans or residents of Ohio for at least 10 years. Any individual or organization may submit a nomination by completing an application and returning it to the Ohio Department of Aging, Special Events Section, 50 W. Broad St./8th Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215-5928, by December 1 of each year. Induction ceremonies are held annually in the spring.



As Time Goes By...

Program

Welcome
Judith Y. Brachman
Director
Ohio Department of Aging
Recognition of Past Inductees
Presentation of Inductee Awards

Josephine Wenning Bruns
of Yorkshire

Thomas C. Eakin
of Shaker Heights

Helen Fero
of Youngstown

George James
of Columbus*

Austin Eldon Knowlton
of Delaware

James Lee Middleton
of Ironton

Corwin Nixon
of Lebanon

Ervin J. Nutter
of Xenia

Mary Jane Cooper O'Brien
of Columbus

Betty B. Pitzer
of Englewood

Rachel Ann Trent Rayford
of Columbus

* *posthumous*



Josephine Wenning Bruns

Josephine long ago pledged her head, heart, hands and health to the loyal service of her community and country, initiating Darke County's Patterson Patcher's 4-H club and looking after the health needs of her Yorkshire neighbors.

One of seven children coming of age during the lean years of the 1930s and early '40s, Jo, as friends call her, nonetheless put herself through St. Elizabeth Hospital's School of Nursing in 1942, finishing first in her class.

A scholarship sent her off to Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., where she earned a bachelor's degree in Nursing Education while helping fight this country's polio epidemic at nearby Georgetown University Hospital.

Upon returning home, Jo organized Darke County's first mass polio immunization, Sabin on Sunday, protecting countless children from the dreaded disease.

She has been Yorkshire's most renowned and respected nurse for 50 years, 19 of those as the school nurse and health teacher in the Versailles Public Schools. She also served 10 years as a member of the Osgood Life Squad, a local life-saving organization for whom she provided instruction regarding first-aid and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation.

Throughout Jo's professional life, her infectious good cheer has been an integral part of her medicine, especially when visiting patients at home.

And Jo has no intention of slowing down. She still works two to three days per-week at the Darke County Health Department, assisting with immunizations and health education, and also serves as a member of the Darke County Health Board as well as a member of the Darke County 4-H Board.

At age 74, Josephine Bruns remains all heart — and she's been equally endowed with the health, hands and head to put it to such beneficial use for the community, country and world around her.



Thomas C. Eakin

The better part of our lives, according to *Tom Eakin*, should be spent uplifting the dignity of our fellow men and women. By that measure there can be few who have spent their lives more valuably than Tom himself, a lifelong booster of the spirits of those around him.

For 30-some years, he has been initiating and promoting amateur and professional sports in this state, most notably baseball and golf. Tom has personally founded over 10 sports organizations in this state, helping to raise millions of dollars in doing so. The organizations benefit the young and old alike, and he has frequently inspired both age groups with his heartfelt orations.

He started the TRY (Target/Reach Youth) program in Cleveland in 1971 and has proudly watched this fund-raising initiative to aid underprivileged youth blossom into a statewide success.

In 1976, Tom founded the "Ohio Baseball Hall of Fame & Museum," using his own collection of baseball cards, bats, gloves, balls and other artifacts of the diamond to launch the endeavor.

Earlier this year, Tom was presented with a "Lifetime Achievement Award" from the Ohio Pro/Am Committee. In 1994, the Oldtyme Baseball News named him "Mr. Ohio Baseball."

A recipient of both the Cleveland "Mayor's Award for Volunteerism" (1991) and the Ohio Governor's Award" (1978), Tom established a state landmark in 1987 when at least one city or village in all 88 Ohio counties celebrated "Thomas C. Eakin Day." He is featured in a recently published book on famous Ohioans, Webb Garrison's "A Treasury of Ohio Tales."

His induction into the Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame extends Tom's recognition into yet another realm. No doubt, at just 61 years of age, our youngest inductee this year, there will be many more honors to come.



Helen Fero

Helen Fero gets better as she gets older.

For 21 years she's been helping out in the Youngstown Community as a volunteer with Mahoning County's Senior Nutrition Services (SNS), a program providing home-delivered and congregate meals for the area's older citizens. And her assistance is valued more each year.

No job is too big or too small for Helen. She serves as an overseer of the nutrition services; but she also has made home deliveries. She goes all out for those coming to the local community and senior centers for group lunches, decorating the tables, personally serving the meals and planning special activities afterward.

She serves on the board of trustees for SNS and the District XI Area Agency on Aging, and was a Red Cross volunteer for 35 years.

Helen's kindness is extended to those on both ends of the aging spectrum. In affiliation with the Mahoning County Grange, she makes stuffed toys and knits doll clothes for children in local hospitals, and fashions quilts for babies of HIV-positive mothers. Her handiwork has brought her several awards from local grange and senior organizations.

She is secretary of the Senior Citizens Financial Club and the Investment Club of the Youngstown Multipurpose Senior Citizen Center.

On top of all this, Helen is a founder of the Friends of the West Side Library Association, which she served as president and secretary.

She is also a past president of the Chaney High School Student Exchange Program and an avid booster of the Chaney High School Band.

She was the recipient of the 1994 J.C. Penney Company Golden Rule Award and, in the same year, was formally recognized by the Senior Nutrition Services for 20-years of volunteer service.

At age 75, Helen Fero is not just getting better — she's aging to perfection.



George James

The songs no longer soar out of the golden Selmer saxophone of **George James**, but there is music in the memories of them.

The last surviving member of the Louis Armstrong Band until passing away at age 88 on Jan. 30 of this year, George never missed a beat when it came to recalling the big bands of the 1930s, '40s and '50s.

His velvet voice rolled over the scale of names and places in a whispered staccato: Duke Ellington, Fats Waller, Sidney Bechet, Coleman Hawkins; the Cotton Club, the Savoy, Dreamland, the Hot Club of France. He played with all the big horns in all the hot spots.

George always said it was love at first sight when he first set eyes on a saxophone in a storefront window in Oklahoma City at the age of 10. "I knew right then that was the instrument for me," he recalled.

After his family moved to Chicago, George was in the right place at the right time when Louis Armstrong came to town looking for some fast fingers on an alto sax.

The rest, as they say, is history. George's smooth melody lines and complementary riffs can be heard on a number of old-standard jazz recordings made in America and Europe, many of which are considered collectors' items today.

While battling Parkinson's Disease, George went right on playing his saxophone, sometimes in public on special occasions, until just a few years ago. His beautiful rendition of "Forgive Me" was the theme song for central Ohio's 1989 United Way campaign.

In his own words, "Music is like a tonic, it makes people happy, helps them forget their troubles." The music of remembering, he noted, sometimes does the same thing.

Thank you, George, for playing the memories.



Austin E. Knowlton

A builder of colleges, a builder of character and a builder of sports empires, **Austin Eldon Knowlton** has built quite a name for himself in the process.

As owner and chief executive of the Austin E. Knowlton Companies, this Ohio State University School of Architecture graduate has overseen the construction of facilities at Ohio University, Bowling Green University, Miami University, Kent State University, Capital University and Otterbein College, as well as at his alma mater.

This 85-year-old business leader recently endowed The Ohio State University with a \$10 million gift for the establishment of a new building to house the School of Architecture. The bequest is in keeping with a generous spirit that has quietly left donations and scholarships benefiting Ohio educational institutions — both high school and college — statewide and in other parts of the country. He has established a private charitable foundation to administrate his various philanthropic concerns.

Austin flourished as a sportsman in the 1950s with the breeding on his Delaware County farm of several world champion thoroughbred horses. His sporting interests broadened in the 1960s when he became owner of the Cincinnati Reds and shortly thereafter helped bring a professional football franchise for the Queen City, the Cincinnati Bengals. Austin remains a part-owner and chairman of the board of the Bengals.

Wishing to showcase both his teams in comfortable, spacious surroundings, he helped create one of the country's nicest, most well-designed ballparks, Cincinnati's Riverfront Stadium.

In 1994, Austin received the OSU Alumni Association's Professional Achievement Award for the countless accomplishments and kindnesses he has bestowed upon his fellow Ohioans and fellow citizens across the country.



James Lee Middleton

As with society at large, a vital mark of a man may be found in how well he looks after those not altogether able to look after themselves.

Accordingly, **James Middleton**, age 71, stands very tall, indeed. For some 40 years, Jim has been working on behalf of older Ohioans and their younger counterparts who are mentally ill, mentally retarded or have physical disabilities.

In the 1970s, he successfully fought for state legislation de-institutionalizing thousands of Ohioans and was instrumental in obtaining other human rights and housing for the elderly and those with handicaps. (Jim personally oversaw the building of the Middleton Estates senior residences in Gallipolis).

He continues to protect those rights today as a longtime member (and former chairman) of the Lawrence County boards of Mental Retardation and Mental Health.

He also serves on the board of directors of the Area Agency on Aging, District 7 (Southern Ohio), where he is chairman of the board's finance committee.

A deacon of the Central Christian Church in Ironton, he is also chairman of the Central Christian Church Food Pantry, the largest pantry in Southern Ohio, distributing some 1,700 pounds of food daily.

Jim is a former Ironton "Citizen of the Year," who has received official recognition from Congress, the Ohio House of Representatives and four Ohio governors.

Fittingly, his most prized honor comes in relation to his two daughters, Carla and Mary Lee, who helped make him Ironton's "Father of the Year in 1990. "Dad has that extra measure of love, he goes the extra mile for others ... We are so glad to share our father with those in the community," they noted.

All of Ohio is glad they did.



Corwin Nixon

A long-time breeder and driver of standardbred horses, Lebanon's **Corwin Nixon** knows as well as anyone that life is a matter of pacing yourself.

The 82-year-old former public official perfected his pace during the 42 years he held elected office in Ohio, always making time for his constituents and their needs. Altogether, Corwin served 30 years as the representative from the state's 84th district (Warren County and part of Clinton County), and 12 years as Warren County Commissioner. Additionally, he was president of the Lebanon Chamber of Commerce.

He is well-known in the area for his special contributions in building and renovating local libraries, parks, the County Courthouse and the County Fairgrounds, home of the Lebanon Raceway, one of the finest trotting tracks in the country.

In 1992, after serving his last 14 years as Minority Leader and ranking member of the Rules Committee in the Ohio General Assembly, Corwin retired to spend time with his family and look out after his beloved horses on his prized Lebanon farm.

As durable on the racetrack as in the political and civic arenas, Corwin was still driving his horses into the winner circle as recently as five years ago.

He was inducted into the Ohio Harness Racing Hall of Fame in 1986, received the Harness Horsemen International Appreciation Award in 1989, and was recently elected to his third term as president of the United States Trotting Association.

A member of the Lebanon United Methodist Church and a 33rd-degree Mason who is also in the Mason Christian Village Hall of Fame, Corwin heads the boards of area hospitals, banks and various charitable agencies.

With the finish line still in the distance, we can count on Corwin Nixon to be out in front of a number of good causes for some time to come.



Ervin J. Nutter

The name "Nutter" is increasingly getting around Greene County and thereabouts: the 11,000-capacity **Ervin J. Nutter** Center for sporting and entertainment events at Wright State University, for example; the Nutter Physics and Science Center at Miami Valley School in Dayton, for another; and the Ervin J. Nutter Award presented annually to the citizen making the greatest contribution to Greene County.

As a young man, Ervin put himself through the University of Kentucky, graduating in 1943 and taking a job with Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. In 1951, he parlayed \$400 and one employee into a thriving aerospace business.

Later, under the auspices of The Ohio State University, he helped pioneer new techniques in the breeding of cattle in Ohio and nationwide.

Ervin has played a major role in the growth of Wright State University, where he is a former chairman of the board of trustees and a member of the president's club.

He is just as involved in the progress of his hometown of Beavercreek, where he has donated 19 acres of land to provide baseball fields for the community. A card-carrying member of the Beavercreek High School Boosters, he built a new press box and a refreshment stand at the school's football field, donated labor and materials to erect new goal posts, and raised money for band uniforms.

Of many formal recognitions, Ervin has received an honorary Doctor of Law degree from the University of Kentucky, where he is enshrined in the University's Hall of Distinguished Alumni.

This 80-year-old community leader is also the recipient of the U.S. Air Force's Exceptional Service Award and the Beavercreek Chamber of Commerce's "Man of the Year" award. Now, the Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame is proud to add the name Ervin J. Nutter to its list of distinguished honorees.



Mary Jane Cooper O'Brien

You're never too old to realize your dreams. And there's no better proof than **Mary O'Brien, R.N., Ph.D.**, who credits her husband, Gene, for being the wind beneath her wings as she achieved her goals.

After raising 11 children and working some 30 years as a general duty nurse and nurse educator, Mary Jane went back to school to pursue her higher education. She earned a bachelor's degree in nursing at age 56 and got her master's degree in guidance and counseling at 58.

At age 71, Mary Jane completed her doctoral dissertation, "Family Caregivers of the Frail Elderly," and was awarded a Ph.D. in health education. "Age is not a deterrent but a springboard for achieving greater things in life," she says. "One is never too old to learn or take risks." Mary Jane is professor emerita at Columbus State Community College. In 22 years of teaching there she touched the lives of more than 1,600 nursing students, many of whom have expressed their appreciation for her positive influence upon their lives and careers.

At Capital University, where she currently serves as an adjunct professor in the Adult Degree Program, Mary Jane teaches a course on "Life-Time Health." She is now in the process of developing a "Parish-Nurse/Wellness" program for her church, which stresses the value of health-education and self-responsibility as integral parts of wellness.

Believing that physical exercise is crucial to total health, she stays in shape herself with a thrice-weekly routine of aqua exercises at the local YWCA.

Despite her various activities, Mary Jane, three times named the *Mother of the Year* by local and state Mother of Twins clubs, makes plenty of time for her 11 children and 15 grandchildren — all of whom have something to add to her lifelong penchant for learning, loving and laughter — at the family's frequent and joyous gatherings.



Betty B. Pitzer

At a time when people often begin thinking about how they're going to relax in their retirement years, **Betty Pitzer** was thinking up ways to keep busy serving her community.

In 1968, at age 54, she founded the Elderly United Multi-purpose Senior Center in Springfield, starting out with a staff of just two people offering three services. The center's initial annual budget was \$13,500.

Betty served as Elderly United's executive director from its inception until 1991.

Today, thanks very much to her innovative, cooperative and dedicated spirit, the center has: 80 employees; four satellite operations; a Care Annex, offering mental health counseling and a range of other services for "at-risk" older persons; and, overall, provides more than 30 services with an annual operating budget of \$1.5 million.

The center, one of the best senior operations in the state, has been honored on numerous occasions for its contributions to older Ohioans.

Though she has stepped down from the helm of Elderly United, Betty, at age 82, continues to serve the organization as a member of its board of trustees. She has also remained in service to her community as a part of the United Way Speakers Bureau and co-chair of a successful school levy campaign.

Betty received the 1982 Ohio Governor's Award for Excellence of Achievement and was inducted into the United Way Hall of Fame in 1987. In that same year she was honored with the Alpha Delta Pi's Alumna of the Year award. Among a host of other tributes, she was recognized as the "Clark County Outstanding Senior Citizen" in 1991.

But, the highest honor, Betty Pitzer will tell you, is just being able to help out; knowing she's made a difference.

And what a difference it's been for Clark County and the older population of Ohio.



Rachel Ann Trent Rayford

At 92 years of age, **Rachel Trent** always has a smile on her face, a song in her heart, and praise on her lips. It's a habit she's been practicing ever since she first started volunteering her time and talents at the Union Grove Baptist Church shortly after the turn of the century.

As early as age 12, Rachel began helping out at the church by playing piano at services and acting as secretary for Bible training classes. She went on to become president of Union Grove's Bible class, as well as president of the church's workers' council and women's usher board.

Rachel's devoted work with the church's youth groups, especially, her ability to instill faith and self-confidence, inspired many of Union Groves' younger members to become teachers, ministers and successes in various walks of life. She was active with the church's tutoring program until age 90.

Rachel was just a few years younger than that when she finally retired from her formal work life as a senior nutrition site manager at Poindexter Tower in 1988. She became central Ohio's first senior nutrition site manager in 1973, appointed to that position at Sawyer Tower by the Ohio Commission on Aging.

While Rachel has had her share of health problems, she has never found it in her nature to say "no" to any good cause and rushes right back to her volunteer work as soon as she is feeling better. She served on the Union Grove "pulpit committee" and organizes transportation for older persons wishing to attend church functions.

Also, she has served as a member of the National Black Caucus and of the Community Metropolitan Action Committee Council for the Elderly.

Rachel Rayford's life has truly been a shining example that time can add genuine beauty to one's life, actions and purpose on this earth, and that we can all truly grow finer with age.

Members

Charter

Muriel M. Allen Bertsch
 Erbest J. Bohn*
 Anna V. Brown
 Milton Caniff
 W. Fred Cottrell
 Nelson H. Cruishank
 Arthur S. Flemming
 Zelma Watson George
 Richard Gosser*
 Leslie Townes (Bob) Hope
 Martin Janis
 James C. (Jesse) Owens
 Sidney L. Pressey
 Albert B. Sabin, M.D.
 Louis B. Seltzer
 Dr. Julius &
 Mrs. Helen Weil
 Aaron M. Weisen

1978

I. W. Abel
 John W. Bricker
 B. Bernard Caplan, M.D.
 John W. Galbreath
 Wayne W. (Woody) Hayes
 Frank J. Lausche
 Rose L. Papier
 Theodosia Sochasky
 Ella P. Stewart
 Lowell Thomas

1979

Paul E. Brown
 Phyllis Diller
 Gertrude W. Donahey
 Joseph W. Fichter
 Lillian Gish
 Edwin C. Heinke
 Sister M. Henrietta, C.S.A.
 William O. Walker
 Stella Walsh
 Floyd E. Wenger

1980

James T. Flood
 Sherman L. (Jack) Frost
 Edward D. Kuekes
 Edward C. Haaf
 Dominick Labino
 Helen G. McClelland
 The Mills Brothers
 (Herbert, Harry, Donald)
 Elijah Pierce
 William Presser
 Donald B. Robinson
 David Rubinoff
 Murtis H. Taylor-Mills

1981

Alfred A. Antenucci
 Jessie Z. Barlett
 Anthony J. Celebrezze
 Beulah Fawcett
 Carl F. Graf
 Walter E. Havighurst
 Charles D. Hill
 Charles Y. Lazarus
 Larry W. Pelton
 (Russell) Games Slayter

1982

Walter E. Alston
 Clarence H. Borgelt
 John B. Conrad*
 Helen W. Evans
 Dorothy Fuldheim
 Ruth Lyons
 C. Stanley Mechem
 Capt. H. Mowrey
 Norman Vincent Peale
 William A. Pepper
 James A. Rhodes

1983

Lucille Chenault
 Avis W. Cullen
 Ethel Straw Guthrie
 David Leahy
 Irvin H. Ryan*
 James E. Saunders
 Myrl H. Shoemaker
 Sidney Spector
 C. Umahau Wolf
 Johann J. Zabka

1984

Ora McCain Barrett
 Charles Blakeslee
 Frank P. Celeste
 Orland C. Duke
 Catherine Gillie
 David N. Myers
 Wesley (Branch) Rickey*
 Vernal G. Riffe, Sr.
 Dorothy V. Ryan
 Carl E. Smith

1985

Ronald Brown
 Lucille & Fred Grumley
 Howard L. Hofacre
 Helen E. Landry
 Charles W. Peckham
 John G. Pfund
 Ralph H. Romig
 Helen H. Santmyer
 Loretta Yoder

1986

Anna Bishop
 Lois Filipic
 Jack Halbeisen
 Helen Hawley
 Ruth Kane
 David Lusk
 Kenneth Miller
 Durwood Neff
 Erie Sauder

1987

Alma Cahill
 Phil Chelnick
 Ocie Hill
 Alice Hoffman
 Edward Huber*
 Thaddeus Hurd
 Melvin Miller
 Edwardina Riggans
 Robert Secrest
 Georgia Silliman
 Alice Weston

1988

Al Boffo
 Frank Brockmeyer
 Sister Ann Jeanne Chisholm
 Lucile S. Costello
 Lucille Dryden
 G. Fred Graf
 Kay Reidel
 Mary Jo Stafford
 Robert Thomas
 Mamie L. Williams

1990

Mercedes Cotner
 Raymond C. Drake, Jr.
 Mable Hardeman Edwards
 Eleanor Kahle
 Jerome Kaplan, Ph.D.
 Ilse Kershner
 Albert A. Neideck
 Bernice Cisco Williams

Members

1991

James T. Foley
 Rev. Kay M. Glaesner
 Marie Haug, Ph.D.
 Ruby Long
 Vance B. O'Donnell
 Mildred M. Seltzer, Ph.D.
 Vernon Rodney Young, Sr.

1992

Thomas E. Hairston
 Clem Hamilton
 Harold W. Kohn
 Martha McCrary
 Vera Saunders
 Morrie Sayre
 Rev. Wray C. Smith
 Josephine B. Voinovich
 Furl P. Williams
 Judge Warren C. Young
 Helen W. Zelkowitz

1993

Tilmon Adamson
 Don Barrett
 Evelyn Darnovsky Bonder
 Joseph E. Cattarin
 Jimmy Crum
 Dorothy F. Davis
 Bob Feller
 Roberta M. Graham*
 Philip C. Johnson
 Zenobia Perry
 George R. Smith

1994

George Adcox
 Morris Becker
 Byron Winfield Brown
 Mary Callow
 Paul M. (P.M.) Gillmor
 Dr. Helen I. Glueck
 Kathryn Hagler
 Deseree Mitchell Liddell
 Grace E. Maratta
 Lois Nelson
 Eldon H. Phillips
 Audrey A. Rowan
 Frances Saunders
 James S. Savage
 John J. Schiff

1995

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 Thomas C. Eakin
 Helen Fero
 George James*
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