

Altus man to join state Hall of Fame

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ALTUS — Longtime Altus banker Ken Ferguson will be inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame during a special banquet and ceremony in Tulsa on Thursday.

Ferguson, 62, is being honored for supporting and promoting the arts while working as chairman of the National Bank of Commerce in Altus, according to the announcement by the Oklahoma Heritage Association.

"It means a lot to me," Ferguson said of the induction. "There's no one, I don't think, west of Lawton that's ever been in the Hall of Fame and it's nice that they recognize there are things going on outside of Oklahoma City and Tulsa."

Since moving to Altus from Enid in 1985, Ferguson has spent countless hours working with state and local non-profit organizations to support the arts and education in Oklahoma.

"I don't play golf and I don't go hunting," he said. "This is my hobby, working with non-profits throughout the state and nationally."

He said he got involved in these functions while working with former Oklahoma Congressman David McCurdy to recruit business and industry to Oklahoma.

"Always the first question they had was, 'What do you have for our people?'" Ferguson said. "They wanted to know about the symphony, ballet, the schools. So arts, to me, was integral in economic development, and ever since then I've had a

passion to make sure that art is represented, especially in rural Oklahoma."

A strong supporter of arts

He said there's not a lot of population or money to draw on in Southwest Oklahoma, so keeping the arts scene vibrant has been a full-time commitment.

"It's just a struggle if you get outside the large metropolitan areas to keep the money coming, to keep the attendance up," he said. "So you have to either have a very large population to keep that up or you've got to work very hard at it."

He said promoting arts in education has also been a difficult, but necessary, undertaking. "We have to realize that it is our responsibility and obligation to offer our children the best we can offer in education and arts, and that arts are an integral part of education," he said.

"It's not an add-on, it's not a frill, it's something that is needed and required."

Ferguson said he wants to use his induction into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame to continue giving arts and other nonprofit organizations in Southwest Oklahoma a voice in the state's metropolitan areas.

A voice for smaller towns

"I think I can be the voice that brings attention to the Altus' and Elk City and the Woodward and Enids," he said. "I think it's my duty to bring these to their attention and highlight them."

He also said he wants to expand the Quartz Moun-

Ken Ferguson Fact Sheet:

- Chairman, National Bank of Commerce in Altus, Creative Oklahoma Inc, and the Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics;

- Treasurer, Americans for the Arts, and Mid-America Arts Alliance;
- Former chairman of the American Bankers Association, the Oklahoma Bankers Association, Oklahoma State Chamber of Commerce, and Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence



FERGUSON

- Active member of: Oklahoma Heritage Association, ONE Awards of the Oklahoma Center for Nonprofits, Oklahoma Arts Institute, National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum Associate Board, Three Rivers Foundation for the Arts and Sciences;

- Governor-appointed member of: Oklahoma Turnpike Authority, and the Native American Cultural and Educational Authority Board;

- Past member of the Oklahoma Art Council Board; the Quartz Mountain Musical Festival board, the Shortgrass Arts and Humanities Council, the Jackson County Memorial Hospital Health Care Corporation

- Honored by the Oklahoma Education Association for outstanding service to public education;

- Recipient Governor's Arts Award in 1994 and 2000;

- Recipient 2001 Business in Arts Leadership Award by the Business Committee for the Arts Inc and Forbes Magazine.

tain Music Festival, which brings classical music and music workshops to the area, as well as continue to highlight the state's innovations and arts as chairman of Oklahoma Creative Inc, which will host the International Creativity Conference next year.

"It will be in Oklahoma City, but we hope to involve the whole state," Ferguson said. "There's just a lot of neat things going on around the state that we need to have highlighted and celebrated."

The 82nd annual induction ceremony and banquet for the Oklahoma Hall of Fame takes place Thursday evening at the Renaissance Tulsa Hotel & Convention Center, 6808 S 107 E.

Other nominees, joining the cast of 628 others who have been inducted since 1928, are: Marlin G. "Ike" Glass Jr, Newkirk; V. Burns Hargis, Stillwater; Polly A. Nichols, Oklahoma City; Lee Roy Selmon, Eufaula; Steven W. Taylor, McAlester; and Wayman Lawrence Tisdale, Tulsa, will be inducted posthumously.

Portraits of these 2009 inductees will be on display in the Oklahoma Hall of Fame Gallery at the Gaylord-Pickens Oklahoma Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City, as will information about the nominees from past years.

For more information about the Oklahoma Hall of Fame or Thursday's ceremony, call (405) 523-3203.