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CONTACT: Millie Craddick
Executive Administrator of the OK Hall of Fame
Oklahoma Heritage Association
Gaylord-Pickens Oklahoma Heritage Museum
405.523.3203
mc@oklahomaheritage.com

Oklahoma Hall of Fame Names 2008 Honorees

OKLAHOMA CITY – Seven outstanding Oklahomans have been selected for induction into the 81st class of the Oklahoma Hall of Fame. These accomplished Oklahomans will join the cast of 621 individuals who have been inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame since 1928.

“Being inducted into the Hall of Fame is the highest honor Oklahomans can receive for their contributions to and representation of the state,” said Shannon L. Nance, president of the Oklahoma Heritage Association and Gaylord-Pickens Museum.

The 2008 nominees are: Bill W. Burgess, Lawton; Shawnee native Robert H. Henry; Donna Nigh, Oklahoma City; Ronald J. Norick, Oklahoma City; Carl R. Renfro, Ponca City; Charles C. Stephenson, Tulsa; and China native Jordan J.N. Tang.

Bill W. Burgess, Jr.

Burgess, a native of Lawton, is chairman of the Board of Vortex, the senior partner of Burgess & Hightower Law Firm and chairman emeritus of Techrizon, which he has developed into the largest Oklahoma-owned software engineering company.

Burgess was appointed to the Oklahoma State Regents in the spring of 1993 as one of the youngest regents in state history. Burgess currently serves as chairman of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, has served as chairman of the Citizen’s Commission on the future of Oklahoma’s higher education and is a past chairman of the Oklahoma Business Roundtable, Inc. He was awarded the Oklahoma Department of Commerce’s Oklahoma Stars for the “I Believe in Oklahoma” campaign, and was named Corporate Entrepreneur of the Year Award by the U.S. Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

Burgess is a former president of the Boy Scouts of America-Oklahoma council and is an Eagle Scout. He is a recipient of the Silver Beaver, Vigil Order of the Arrow, and God and Country Boy Scouts awards.

Robert H. Henry

Judge Henry has served in each branch of government. Elected to the Oklahoma Legislature at 23, he chaired the Judiciary and Education Committees, and the Majority Caucus. Elected Attorney General in 1986, he was re-elected in 1990, the first Attorney General in state history to run unopposed. From 1991 to 1994, he was dean and professor of law at the Oklahoma City University School of Law. In 1994, President Bill Clinton appointed him to the six-state U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit. He became the circuit’s chief judge in January.

Henry serves on the advisory board for judicial outreach of the American Society of International Law, a position for which Justice Sandra Day O’Connor selected him. He also sits on the board of the VERA Institute of Justice in New York City and is chair of the Middle East/North Africa Council for the American Bar Association. In 2004, Chief Justice William Rehnquist appointed Henry to the U.S. Judicial Conference Committees on Codes of Conduct. In 2005, Chief Justice Rehnquist made Henry

chair of the International Judicial Relations Committee. In March 2008, Henry chaired the United States Delegation to the United Arab Emirates World Judicial Forum.

Donna Nigh

Nigh, former first lady of Oklahoma, was noted for political involvement in her husband's career, but is also acclaimed for her commitment to Oklahomans with special needs and improving quality of life for those with developmental disabilities. She championed the establishment of group homes for developmentally disabled, modifying zoning laws to allow group homes in neighborhoods and increasing the number of sheltered workshops. This inspired the creation of more than 100 such homes in Oklahoma. Friends created the Donna Nigh Foundation, the first statewide foundation for the developmentally disabled. In 1997, President Bill Clinton appointed Nigh to the President's Committee of Mental Retardation.

Honoring George and Donna Nigh's services as president and first lady of the University of Central Oklahoma, the student union is named the George and Donna Nigh University Center, and UCO also is home to the Donna Nigh Art Gallery.

The Nighs are active members of the Westminster Presbyterian Church, where Donna Nigh has served as a deacon. The Nigh family includes son, Mike Mashburn, (deceased), daughter Georgeann Duty and seven grandchildren.

Ronald J. Norick

Norick was born in Oklahoma City and graduated from Oklahoma City University with a B.S. degree in management. Known as a dedicated public servant and strong civic leader, Norick served as mayor of Oklahoma City from 1987 to 1998. Often referred to as the "Father of MAPS" and credited with Oklahoma City's renaissance, Norick's leadership inspired the passage of the Metropolitan Area Projects temporary one-cent sales tax in 1993.

Norick is controlling manager of Norick Investment Company, LLC. He previously was employed by Norick Brothers, Inc. for more than 30 years, serving as president of the company from 1981 to 1992. He is chairman of the board for Sport Haley, Inc. and serves on the board of directors of BancFirst Merlon International, Inc.

Norick serves on the board of trustees, executive committee and is the chairman of the investment committee for Oklahoma City University. He is vice chairman and on the executive committee for the State Fair of Oklahoma, chairman of the Oklahoma City Riverfront Redevelopment Authority, vice chairman of the Oklahoma Industries Authority, member of Committee of One Hundred and chairman of Oklahoma City Downtown TIF Review Committee.

Carl R. Renfro

Renfro, who lives in Ponca City, graduated from the University of Missouri, Kansas City, in 1960 and joined Pioneer Bank & Trust in 1968. He became chairman and CEO in 1979, and although he retired in 2007, continues as chairman of the board.

Renfro, who is devoted to higher education, served as an Oklahoma State Regent for 12 years and was chairman in 2004. He also was instrumental in establishing the University Center at Ponca City.

In 1993, Renfro co-founded the Standing Bear Native American Foundation. The Standing Bear project encompasses a 170-acre park with a 22-foot bronze statue of Chief Standing Bear, eight tribal courts, a permanent powwow arena, and a museum and education center.

A visionary leader, Renfro dedicates his time, talents and experience to projects that make a significant difference in his community and state. He is a true community supporter, serving on numerous boards and committees. Additionally, the Renfros have made contributions to establish endowment funds for the operations of the Standing Bear Foundation, student scholarships through the University Center Foundation, restoration of Marland Mansion through its Foundation, a lectureship series through the Northern Oklahoma College Foundation and scholarships for patients with addictions through Cushing Valley Hope.

Renfro and his wife, Carolyn, have three children and five grandchildren.

Charles C. Stephenson

After graduating from Antlers High School, Stephenson attended the University of Oklahoma where he earned a degree in petroleum engineering. Following service in the U.S. Army, where he served as an officer, he joined Amerada Petroleum Corporation.

Between 1973 and 1982, he was part-owner and president of privately-held Andover Oil Company. After the sale of Andover, Stephenson co-founded Vintage Petroleum, Inc. where he served as president, chief executive officer and chairman of the board. The company grew from three employees at start up to more than 750 with operations in four countries and reserves of approximately 500 million barrels.

Stephenson is co-founder and chairman of the board of Premier Natural Resources, an independent oil and gas company and partner of Regent Private Capital. He is co-founder and director of Growth Capital Partners, president of Stephenson Investments, Inc. and serves a board member of AAON, Inc.

Stephenson is a founder of the Sarkeys Energy Center and, through his foundation, has funded the construction of two research facilities at the Research Campus at the University of Oklahoma. He also serves on the board of trustees for the University of Tulsa.

Stephenson was inducted into the Tulsa Hall of Fame in 2000. Both he and his wife were honored with the 2002 Tulsa Humanitarian Award.

Jordan J.N. Tang

Tang holds the J.G. Puterbaugh Chair in Medical Research at the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation, where he heads the protein studies research program. Tang came to Oklahoma from Taiwan in 1955 to attend Oklahoma State University, where he earned a master's degree. Later, he received his Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma and completed postdoctoral training at the Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge, England.

In 1957, Tang joined OMRF, where he became one of the world's leading experts on proteases, a group of proteins crucial to human health. Over the next 51 years at OMRF, his work has led to a deeper understanding of these vital proteins and to a new treatment for HIV/AIDS, hypertension and, most recently, an Alzheimer's drug that is undergoing human clinical trials.

Tang has lectured and taught at 50 universities on five continents and has published more than 200 articles in the world's leading scientific journals. His research has been recognized and honored by the Guggenheim Foundation, National Institutes, Chinese Academy of Sciences and the United Nations. He

is the only Oklahoman ever to receive the Alzheimer's Association of America's highest research prize: the \$1 million Pioneer Award.

The 81st Annual Oklahoma Hall of Fame will be held Wednesday, November 12, 2008 in Oklahoma City at the Cox Convention Center. Tickets for the event will go on sale Friday, September 5, 2008. For more information about the Oklahoma Hall of Fame or making a nomination to the Oklahoma Hall of Fame, please call Millie Craddick, executive administrator of the Oklahoma Hall of Fame, at 405.523.3203 or e-mail her at mc@oklahomaheritage.com.