

2020 Hall of Fame Inductees Announced



Gary "Biscuit" Davis
*Five-String
Performance*



Ed Erickson
*Four-String
Performance*



Don Reno
Historical



Geoff Stelling
*Design &
Manufacture*



Roger Sprung
*Instruction &
Education*

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Each year since 1998 has afforded the American Banjo Museum the opportunity to honor the best of the best in the banjo world with induction into the *American Banjo Museum Hall of Fame*. Originally established as *The National Four-String Banjo Hall of Fame*, early honorees were jazz age four-string banjo pioneers as well as the contemporary artists, educators, manufacturers and promoters who carried on the traditions of their predecessors. In its infancy, the museum itself was an extension of the Hall of Fame.

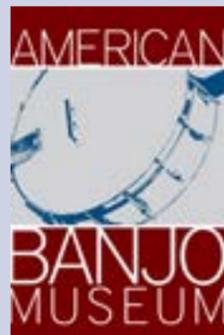
In the years preceding 2014, more than 70 individuals and entities in the four-string banjo world whose career accomplishments might have otherwise gone unrecognized were recognized by the *Hall of Fame*. As time passed and the museum grew to embrace all types of banjos and playing styles, it became clear that the *Hall of Fame* must evolve as well. As such, in 2013, the ABM Board of Directors voted to establish an annual performance category to honor all styles of five-string banjo playing as well as opening the other previously four-string banjo exclusive non-performance

categories to all types of banjos. With this move the *American Banjo Museum Hall of Fame* was established.

With each passing year, the *American Banjo Museum Hall of Fame* grows in acceptance and stature among the worldwide banjo community. The inclusive nature of its mission is seen through its honoring of a diverse body of banjo notables. From iconic names such as Earl Scruggs, Steve Martin and Belá Fleck to little known – yet equally important – contributors to the art or industry of the banjo, the American Banjo Museum Hall of Fame continues to recognize those who have shaped the banjo's colorful past, exciting present and unlimited future. Like past recipients, honorees for 2020 have each displayed a lifelong commitment to the banjo in one of five categories. *The American Banjo Museum Hall of Fame* inductees for 2020 are:

GARY "BISCUIT" DAVIS - *Five-String Performance* - Davis began playing banjo at age 10. He was Tennessee State Champion by the age of twelve and since then he has been two-time

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9 East Sheridan Ave.
Oklahoma City, OK 73104
405-604-2793
www.AmericanBanjoMuseum.com

MISSION

The mission of the American Banjo Museum is to preserve and promote the banjo while expanding appreciation and understanding of its history and music.

STAFF

Johnny Baier, Executive Director
Margie Smith-Robbins, Assistant Administrator
Rachel Reichert, Sales & Marketing
Sherril Mitchell, Reception
Ellie Burns, Administrative Assistant
Lucas Ross, Community Outreach & Promotion Coordinator

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In the short time since our last newsletter the world has become a different place and, as of this writing, where all the "chips will fall" remains uncertain. What is certain, however, is that the future will come and we all need to be as prepared as possible to embrace the new normal. For the American Banjo Museum that means that our mission endures. As our staff works through the unsettling sight and sound of a quiet facility which is normally lively and vibrant, we have embraced Internet technology to share the Museum's treasures with a worldwide audience of virtual visitors. Concurrently we are preparing to roll out the new *Women of the Banjo* exhibit as well as continuing plans for our BANJO FEST celebration in September. Hopefully, these and other activities which are keeping us very busy (what a great time to get the carpet cleaned!) will find us ready to hit the ground running when we are able to open our doors again to our treasured and missed guests. It is interesting to note that in times such as this, appreciation for music and the arts seems to soar. While we are delighted to do our part in helping our country get through one of the most difficult chapters

in its history via our Internet programming, nothing compares with an "in person" experience at the American Banjo Museum. So, hoping we can offer that experience again - sooner than later - we thank you for your continued belief and support. During this trying economic time, one touching donation came in accompanied by a simple message: "Keep going!" We plan to do just that!

Johnny Baier
Executive Director



Visit Us on Social Media!



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American.Banjo.Museum



AmericanBanjoMuseum

Virtual Tours and Videos can be viewed on the Museum's Facebook Page or Website
americanbanjomuseum.com

Hall of Fame

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Kentucky State Champion, four-time Alabama State Champion and National Banjo Champion on four separate occasions...first in 1979 at age 16 – then again in 1988, 1996 and 2012. Davis began playing professionally at age 13 in Chattanooga and later he moved to Pigeon Forge in 1988 where he joined Jim and Charlie Smith's Southstar Band and Dollywood. There he evolved to be the band leader and record producer for Dolly Parton. Davis currently performs daily at Dolly's Dixie Stampede Dinner Theater while teaching private banjo and guitar lessons and traveling to host banjo instruction clinics and concerts throughout the year.

ED "FAST EDDIE" ERICKSON

- Four-String Performance - "Fast Eddie" Erickson began his banjo/guitar career in the San Jose, California area in the mid 1960s performing at Capone's Warehouse and Disneyland. From there Ed went to the *Walt Disney World Resort* in Orlando where he was featured in the Class of '27 show, starred in the *Banjo Kings* in the Magic Kingdom and, from 1978 to 1983, led the *Riverboat Rascals* show band on board Disney's *Empress Lilly Showboat* in Lake Buena Vista, Florida. A beloved musician/entertainer in the classic jazz world, Erickson continues to be a featured performer at countless jazz festivals, parties, and concerts around the world.

DON RENO - Historical - A product of the North Carolina concentration of bluegrass banjo pioneers, Don Reno's

banjo playing stands proudly as one of the most innovative and recognizable five-string banjo styles of all time. Influenced by old-time banjo player, Snuffy Jenkins, Reno developed his own three-finger "single-string" style that allowed him to play scales and complicated fiddle tunes note-for-note. As a member of *Bill Monroe's Bluegrass Boys* and the banjoist who brought the iconic *Dueling Banjos* to life, the name Don Reno will be forever tied to innovative and musical banjo playing.

GEOFF STELLING - Design & Manufacture

Since 1959, while still in high school, Geoff Stelling has been either playing the banjo or trying to improve on its design. His Stelling Banjo Works was established in 1974 while Geoff was at a Naval Base in San Diego. As a semi-professional banjoist in various bluegrass bands since the mid-60's, Geoff developed an ear for banjo tone and experimented with the mechanics of banjo construction until he patented the revolutionary designs which his banjos are famous for today. Included among Stelling's innovations are his wedge-fitted pot assembly, the "pivot-pin" tailpiece, and compensated bridges and nut assemblies. Combined with the simple elegance of Stelling's visual dynamic, his contributions to sound and playability make Geoff Stelling's banjos internationally revered.

ROGER SPRUNG - Instruction & Education

An argument could be made that Roger Sprung was the first progressive five-string banjoist. While his contemporaries in the bluegrass world were experimenting with swing in the 1940s and 50s, Sprung was

expanding the acceptable banjo repertoire to include swing, ragtime, pop and classical styles as well. Credited with introducing bluegrass banjo techniques to the folk music world, Roger's eclectic musical influence is reflected today in players such as Bela Fleck while Sprung himself continues to explore new and exciting musical possibilities for the banjo.

Gary Davis, Ed Erickson, Don Reno, Geoff Stelling and Roger Sprung will be inducted into the *American Banjo Museum Hall of Fame* during gala ceremonies to be held on Friday, September 11th, 2020 in Oklahoma City as part of the American Banjo Museum's BANJO FEST weekend. In addition to the Hall of Fame gala, BANJO FEST will include informal performances, jamming, parties and a very special BANJO FEST concert. With details of this fun-filled weekend still in the works, save the dates of September 10-12, 2020 for BANJO FEST 2020 in Oklahoma City.

In Memory of Eddy Davis



Two-Time Hall of Fame Member

Inducted 2006 - Banjo Promotion

Inducted 2015 - Four String Performance

Pied Picker puppet show at the ABM



On March 7th and 8th David Stephens' presented his puppet-filled banjo show THE PIED PICKER to an audience of kids and adults. The one-man show told the story about a banjo player who encountered a town with an influx of puppet roaches, fun characters, original songs, and a post-show puppet demonstration. With nearly 80 attendees both days filling the event room to capacity the Museum was able to present the banjo in a different way to those in attendance. The performances were sponsored by the Jane Henson Foundation.



Krewe de Banjo Mardi Gras Party

The American Banjo Museum held its fifth annual Krewe de Banjo Mardi Gras event February 22nd. The event began at 6 pm with attendees donning masks and Mardi Gras beads as the sounds of Steve Ham and his Jambalaya Jass Band (joined by our own executive director, Johnny Baier on banjo) filled the second floor with New Orleans jazz and guests enjoyed hurricanes, wine and other libations. The dinner buffet included Lobster Bisque, Red Beans & Rice, Cajun Shrimp Fondue, Sausage & Chicken Jambalaya, Garlic Flat Bread, and Caramel Praline Cheesecake.

A Wine Pull was held during the festivities. Twenty dollars bought participants a cork with a corresponding number on a wine bottle with one bottle containing a \$100 Mastercard gift card. Thanks to Put a Cork In It and several anonymous donors for sponsoring the wine pull. Next time you are in Bricktown, please stop by Put a Cork In It located at 115 E. California Ave. and let them know you appreciate their support of the American Banjo Museum. Krewe de Banjo was also made possible with a grant from the Oklahoma Arts Council.



Lucas travels to Ghana

In January I traveled with my wife and her team to visit the Village of Hope in Ghana Africa.

In addition to bringing medical supplies, and volunteers to build needed resources, I was asked by director Fred Asaré and his team to teach a banjo music and art class. Fred had visited the banjo museum on a trip to the states a few years back and loved the presentation and our youth programs. I took over enough art supplies to make 300+ paper banjos and the kids loved them. The art teacher, Rosina Lartey, was so taken by the story of the banjo and its African roots, that they continued art concepts based on design, story and music.

Lucas Ross
Community Outreach & Promotion Coordinator



The American Banjo Museum and COVID-19

It's difficult to put together a newsletter as though everything is normal in a time like this. So many people have had to sacrifice so much in order to combat the spread of the COVID-19 virus. It's a scary time for everyone as we all attempt to navigate a new normal. The Museum has closed our doors to the public for the time being in accordance with our state and city guidelines. Although our doors are closed we are still continuing our mission of promoting America's instrument, the banjo, through our new daily virtual program. Everyday at noon we have been going live on Facebook with concerts, workshops, interviews, and in-depth tours of the museum's artifacts. We plan on continuing these everyday until we're able

to open the museum again. Like many other museums, we are trying to do our part to bring cultural history to your living room as you can't come to ours. We hope you can tune in to our programs and spread the word to all your friends and family. If you've missed our daily streams they are still available on our Facebook page as well as linked on our website.

Many musicians in our global community make their living through shows and in person experiences. For many of these folks two weeks without income due to COVID-19 related cancelled shows can be devastating. Without the ability to travel and perform in person, most are turning to online live streams with virtual tip jars

and teaching virtual lessons. We have put together a database of lesson instructors to hopefully make it easier for teachers to reach potential students who are also in isolation. This is available through a link on our website. We hope that anyone in isolation who wants to learn/improve an instrument will take this time to do so virtually and support the global musical community in a way it desperately needs right now while improving their own skills.

We can't wait to see everyone when our doors re-open. As of now we plan on re-opening our doors on May 1st, but that is very tentative. Keep an eye on our social media for the latest update, and stay safe.

New Staff at the Banjo Museum



Orchestra for two years prior to graduating Summa Cum Laude with BA in History and Music.

Upon graduation Rachel moved to Colorado to tour for a summer with the internationally recognized group Thunder and Rain. From there she moved to Johnson City, TN and started Graduate School at East Tennessee State University. At ETSU she majored in Appalachian Studies, a unique program which allowed her to focus on traditional bluegrass music in addition to the history of the region. Rachel is currently in the process of completing her thesis on the Bureau of Freedman, and Abandoned Lands in Knoxville and Jonesborough, TN. While in Johnson City, Rachel worked as PR and Marketing Coordinator for the Bluegrass, Old-Time and

We'd like to welcome to the American Banjo Museum, our latest employee Rachel Reichert. Rachel comes to us from Stevens Point, Wisconsin by way of East Tennessee. Rachel was born in central Wisconsin to Sharon and Dale Reichert. She spent much of her childhood around Bluegrass music hanging around her banjo playing father's regionally touring bluegrass band. Her father likes to claim her first words were Bob Wills, so she was destined to play fiddle, although her mother disputes that. At age 5 she started playing violin in the Suzuki program, and at age 15 started performing Americana music as part of the Wednesday night house band at The Northland Ballroom in Rosholt, WI. At age 16 Rachel founded her own band, The Back Alley Blossoms, which toured through-out the Upper Midwest for several years.

Rachel started college at the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point later transferring to the University of Wisconsin Superior where she majored in History and Music. Rachel served as Principal Violist in the UWS Chamber

Country Music Studies Program at ETSU as well as waitressed at the historic music venue, The Down Home.

Rachel is excited to be at the American Banjo Museum where she will be eventually taking over Janet Raines' current position as Events and Sales Coordinator

Rachel moved to Oklahoma City this January and resides near the Paseo district with her dog Hazel.



AMERICANA FEST

FUN FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY!

SATURDAY, JUNE 27TH, 11AM-5PM

FEATURING MUSIC BY:

THE BYRON BERLINE BAND

SINNER FRIENDS (TN)

JOHNNY BAIER

LUCAS ROSS

WAYNE CANTWELL

PLUS KIDS CRAFTS, UKULELE WORKSHOPS, DOOR PRIZES, & MORE!

\$10 GENERAL ADMISSION INCLUDES:
Shows, Prizes, and Activities (children 15 & under are free)

Letter from the Board

As I sit here in my office, at home, holed up to stay away from the Corona Virus, as I have done most days, I spend some time each day at noon, (central time), to tune into the American Banjo Museum's lunch time live on Facebook. Today as I am watching Johnny Baier's interview of Roy Clark, I can't help but think of all the wonderful things that have happened and continue to happen at the American Banjo Museum and what a great way for the Museum Staff to share the treasures of our Museum with the world!

Sharing our exhibits and archives online is another of the innovative, interactive, and entertaining things that have been going on at your Museum. Just in the last few weeks we have had *Pick a Tune with Lucas*, the *Pied Picker* Puppet show with David Stephens, and the *Krewe de Banjo* Mardi Gras party. These are extraordinary community outreach programs for sure but more importantly, they are fulfilling our mission as "the place for all things banjo". These events get folk into our building, then the magic begins. Events like these help us raise awareness, tell the story of the banjo from its early roots and let people experience the music of the banjo. All of this is only possible because of the generosity of Banjo Players and people just like you!

When you consider the times we find ourselves in right now, this effort by the ABM to bring the Museum to you, our followers and to the public, worldwide, is clear evidence of our staff's commitment to the Museum's mission; "Preserve, Present and Promote the Banjo". While we must be closed to the public because of COVID-19, we can and will continue

to share the beauty and resources of our collections and archives with all who are willing to take the time to visit us on Facebook. We exist for you and continue on because of you.

I hope you will join me in supporting the American Banjo Museum, our staff and its mission with your generous donations. If you would like to discuss ways to support us, feel free to contact me through the Museum, I would love to help you help the American Banjo Museum. Stay safe and healthy!

Paul Poirer, Board Member

ABM Membership

The American Banjo Museum wishes to recognize and thank new members and those that have renewed their membership the first quarter of 2020.

Individual Membership

Nita Kaye Adams
 Bill Bird
 Dolores Borrow
 Max Bowman
 Garry Carroll
 Jim Cox
 Virginia Demerson
 George Donaldson
 John Doyle
 Greg Englebretson
 Jerry Eyster
 George Flink
 Barry Gainor
 James Gibbons
 Jeffrey Grosser, D.D.S.
 Kevin Grove
 Scott Hannan
 Ellen Harmon
 Ron Hinkle
 Budd Hoas
 John Hoft
 Norval Kennedy
 Christian Lawlor
 Leonard Leedy
 Madeline Lombardi

Ned Luberecki
 Laura McNutt
 Kevin McNutt
 Nina Molin
 John Mumford
 Kim Nakae
 Marilyn North
 Janice O'Bryan
 Katie Odom
 Edward Owen
 Annie-Alexandra Pike
 Charles Preston
 Matt Ritz
 Kathleen Shelton
 Richard Shinske
 Margie Smith-Robbins
 Jack Snyder
 Cindy Solomon
 Barry Tripp

Couple Membership

Jim Bottorff & Alicia Valencia
 Scott & Mary Anderson
 Robert & Janice Bicknaver
 William & Suzie Cude
 Edwin & Bernice Evarts
 Bruce & Jo Ewing
 John Heiman
 Eric O'Reilly & Sarah Sparks
 George & Carol Peabody
 Glenn & Sandra Snyder
 Scott & Karen Whitfield

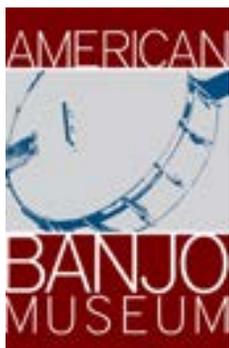
Family Membership

Steve Boyd
 Michael Dalby
 Timothy Dang
 Juston Givens
 Michelle McAllister
 Paul McNutt
 Ernest Messner
 Erin Smith
 Robert Stevens
 Jeffrey Woidke

Lifetime Membership

J. Shayne & Beth Carter
 David Ogden

To become a member, gift a membership, or upgrade your current membership call 405-604-2793 or visit americanbanjomuseum.com.



9 East Sheridan Avenue
Oklahoma City, OK 73104



Save the Date...BANJO FEST...September 10-12, 2020

Upcoming Events...

MAY

SATURDAY, MAY 1, 1 PM

Performance

Wayne Cantwell will perform traditional music of the open prairie on banjo, fiddle, and mountain dulcimer. Performance is free with museum admission.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 12 PM

Performance

Join ABM's Executive Director and Banjo Hall of Fame member Johnny Baier perform for our monthly Brown Bag Lunch Concert. Admission is free when you bring your packed lunch.

SATURDAY, MAY 9, 1 PM

Banjos in Space

A family friendly music, puppet, banjo, bee variety show that will take you on a musical journey to the Space - the only place where the INSTRUMENTS get to play. Under 16 free, adults half-price.

SATURDAY, MAY 16, 1 PM

Bluegrass Jam

Join other players for an Open Bluegrass Jam Session. Free

admission when you bring an instrument and participate.

SATURDAY, MAY 16, 2 PM

Pick-A-Tune with Lucas Ross

For those that have never played the banjo and wanted to try, come "Learn to Pick a Tune with Lucas". Limited seating, by reservation only!

SATURDAY, MAY 23, 1 PM

Celtic Open Jam

Join other players for an Open Celtic Jam Session. Free admission when you bring an instrument and participate.

JUNE

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 12 PM

Performance

Join ABM's Executive Director and Banjo Hall of Fame member Johnny Baier perform for our monthly Brown Bag Lunch Concert. Admission is free when you bring your packed lunch.

SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 1 PM

Ukulele Jam

Join other players for an Open Ukulele Jam Session. Free admission when you bring an instrument and participate.

SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 1 PM

Guided Tour

Join ABM Executive Director, Johnny Baier, for a guided tour of the Museum. While this special tour includes everything a typical museum visitor experiences, Baier's focus on special treasures as well as behind the scenes access will provide a unique perspective to our one-of-a-kind facility.

SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 2 PM

Pick-A-Tune with Lucas Ross

For those that have never played the banjo and wanted to try, come "Learn to Pick a Tune with Lucas". Limited seating, by reservation only!

SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 11 AM-5 PM

Americana Fest

Fun for the entire family! Enjoy a day of food, fun, and entertainment for one low price. Adults \$10, 15 & under free with accompanying adult.

Events are subject to change due to COVID-19 please visit www.americanbanjomuseum.com or call 405-604-2793 to confirm events