



American Banjo Museum Quarterly

Spring 2017

2017 Hall of Fame Inductees Announced



John McEuen
Five-String
Performance



Paul Erickson
Four-String
Performance



Joel Walker
Sweeney
Historical



Roy Clark
Promotion



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Instruction &
Education

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The American Banjo Museum in Oklahoma City is pleased to announce the 2017 inductees into the American Banjo Museum Hall of Fame.

The National Four-String Banjo Hall of Fame was established in 1998 to honor jazz age four-string banjo pioneers as well as the contemporary artists, educators, manufacturers and promoters who carried on the traditions of their predecessors. The American Banjo Museum was, in its infancy, an extension of that Hall of Fame. In the years preceding 2014, the Hall of Fame honored 71 individuals and entities in the four-string banjo world whose career accomplishments might have otherwise gone unrecognized. As the museum grew and evolved to embrace all types of banjos and playing styles, it became clear that

the Hall of Fame should 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. Suggestions for nomination in the categories of Four-String Performance, Five-String Performance, Historical, Education & Instruction, Design & Manufacture and Promotion may be made by any member of the ABM association. Based on these suggestions, nominations are made by the Board of Directors and are then forwarded to the voting body - which consists of the museum board, living members of the Hall of Fame and

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SAVE THE DATE

AMERICAN BANJO MUSEUM

HALL OF FAME CELEBRATION

September 7-9, 2017





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 music and heritage of America's instrument: the banjo.

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What do you do for a living? In my case, I am blessed in making my living doing something which I love to do. Never was this more apparent than during the recent months of preparing for our new exhibition, America's Super Picker – ROY CLARK. As an aspiring banjo player and entertainer in the 1970s, to me Roy Clark represented the highest standards in both musicianship and showmanship – all perfectly blended into one unique performer. I fondly recall watching Roy play his banjo on Hee Haw every Saturday night before heading out to play my banjo at Shakey's Pizza Parlor, always hoping that someday "that would be me." Such youthful

enthusiasm soon gave way to the reality that Roy Clark is a truly once-in-a-world performer who simply could not be matched or equaled. While accepted that nobody but Roy Clark could be Roy Clark, he did provide several generations of performers with inspiration as well as a performance template with which they could please just about any audience. Like many such performers, quite simply put, I would not be who or where I am if it weren't for Roy Clark. Given my great admiration, getting a chance to work with the man himself in a project aimed at sharing the story of his incredible life and career with American Banjo Museum visitors has been a delight and the thrill of a lifetime. His kind, "never met a stranger" attitude coupled with a keen memory of every important professional milestone during his career resulted in a candid and engaging portrait of one of America's most beloved stars. As I admire the result of our collaboration and the story it tells, I can't help but humbly reflect on the unique privileges that just "doing my job" sometimes affords, being so grateful for what I do for a living.

Johnny Baier, Executive Director

Donors Save the Day!

You are our hero. Yes, you! Your support of the American Banjo Museum makes everything we do possible. Without you, the doors would shut and the music would stop. To us, you're more than just a "donor" or a "member." You're a super special human being and your generous heart is what makes everything we do possible.

By supporting the only museum in the world dedicated to America's instrument, the banjo, recognize how precious our mission is. You see the importance of preserving these rare instruments, these musical works of art. Your support makes it possible for us to rescue the history of this instrument.

Stand tall, let your cape blow in the wind and know that you are this museum's hero!

2017 Hall of Fame Inductees Announced

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lifetime members of the ABM association. Like past recipients, Hall of Fame honorees for 2017 have each displayed a lifelong commitment to the banjo in one of five categories. The American Banjo Museum Hall of Fame inductees for 2017 are:

JOHN McEUEEN - Five-String Performance - A founding member of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, McEuen is a pioneering five-string banjo stylist as well as multi-instrumentalist and vocalist with over 40 albums to his credit. From his role in the iconic Will The Circle Be Unbroken LP to countless award winning recordings, concerts and radio and television appearances (including his own SiriusXM radio show, Acoustic Traveler), McEuen has likely shared his unique and musical banjo voice with a larger audience than any other contemporary banjo figure.

PAUL ERICKSON - Four-String Performance - Not too long ago thought of as one of the younger generation of four-string artists carrying the torch of the jazz age pioneers, Erickson has matured into a unique and highly respected tenor banjo stylist. Built upon an exceedingly light touch, fluid motion and a distinctively jazz-flavored approach, Erickson's style is equally at ease with showy banjo standards as it is with tender ballads. As a soloist or part of a swinging Dixieland style ensemble, Paul Erickson reflects the highest standard in musicianship, personal style and banjo traditions.

JOEL WALKER SWEENEY (1819 - 1860) - Historical - Although not the "inventor of the banjo" as

was often claimed, Joel Walker Sweeney played a pivotal role in introducing and popularizing the banjo in American culture in the mid-1800s. After learning to play banjo from slaves near his father's farm, Sweeney toured as a solo entertainer both in the United States and England prior to becoming the most popular banjoist of the Minstrel Era. Sweeney is undoubtedly the most significant individual in early banjo history.

ROY CLARK - Promotion - Unquestionably one of the most important figures in the popularization of American country music, Roy Clark's sixty-year career has positively exposed the banjo to literally hundreds of millions of people. Best known as the comic host of the Hee Haw television program, Clark's banjo skills have influenced several generations of Bluegrass and country musicians. But more than this, his non-stop concerts (including historic diplomatic tours to the Soviet Union), television appearances and recordings display an unabashed joy in playing the banjo and entertaining which has resulted in countless new banjo fans around the world.

TONY TRISCHKA - Instruction & Education - Trischka is considered to be the consummate banjo artist and perhaps the most influential banjo player in the roots music world. In addition to his work and reputation as a performer, composer, arranger and producer, Trischka is one of the world's most respected and sought after banjo instructors, creating fifteen instructional books as well as a series of DVDs. In 2009, he launched the groundbreaking Tony Trischka School of Banjo, an advanced,

interactive, online instructional site that is the banjo home for students from around the world.

John McEuen, Paul Erickson, Roy Clark, Tony Trischka and Joel Walker Sweeney will be inducted into the American Banjo Museum Hall of Fame during gala ceremonies to be held atop the fabulous Devon Tower on Friday, September 8, 2017 in Oklahoma City. The following day, informal performances as well as a very special BANJO FEST evening concert performance will take place at the ABM as well as the Hudiburg Chevrolet Performing Arts Center at Rose State College.

All American Banjo Museum Hall of Fame weekend events are open to the public. For tickets and more info visit: www.americanbanjomuseum.com or call 405-604-2793.

ABM Membership

The American Banjo Museum wishes to recognize and thank new members and those that have renewed their membership the first quarter of 2017.

Individual Membership

Beth Adams
Nita Kaye Adams
Roger Burns
Alma Cochran
George S. Flink
Roy Hill
Sue Kern
Janice O'Bryan
J.T. Scruggs
Donelda Wheatley

Couple Membership

Lance & Marilou McLean
Marty & Susan Sigwing

Lifetime Membership

Lowell Greathouse

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

Mardi Gras Blows into the American Banjo Museum

The sounds of the Crescent City filled the American Banjo Museum during the second annual Mardi Gras Event on February 25th.

The good times rolled from 6 to 9 p.m. as nearly 100 revelers donned beads and masks and grabbed a glass of refreshing Hurricane. With music provided by the Jambalaya Jass Band (with special guest banjo player, Johnny Baier), those in attendance were also treated to southern cuisine including sausage gumbo, red beans & rice, cornbread muffins and apple raisin pound cake with praline glaze.

Prior to the event, the Jambalaya



Jass Band also performed for regular museum goers from 3 to 4 pm.

New to this year's event was a Wine Pull with one bottle containing a \$100 gift card. Sponsors of the Wine Pull included: Texadelphia, Bricktown Brewery, Henry Hudson's Public House, Put A Cork In It Winery, Mickey Mantle's Steakhouse, Abuelo's in Bricktown, Ellie Mowery and Lester Cowden.

And, everyone got a sneak peek at the new exhibit, "America's Super Picker: Roy Clark." It was a great night for everyone, no fan boats required!

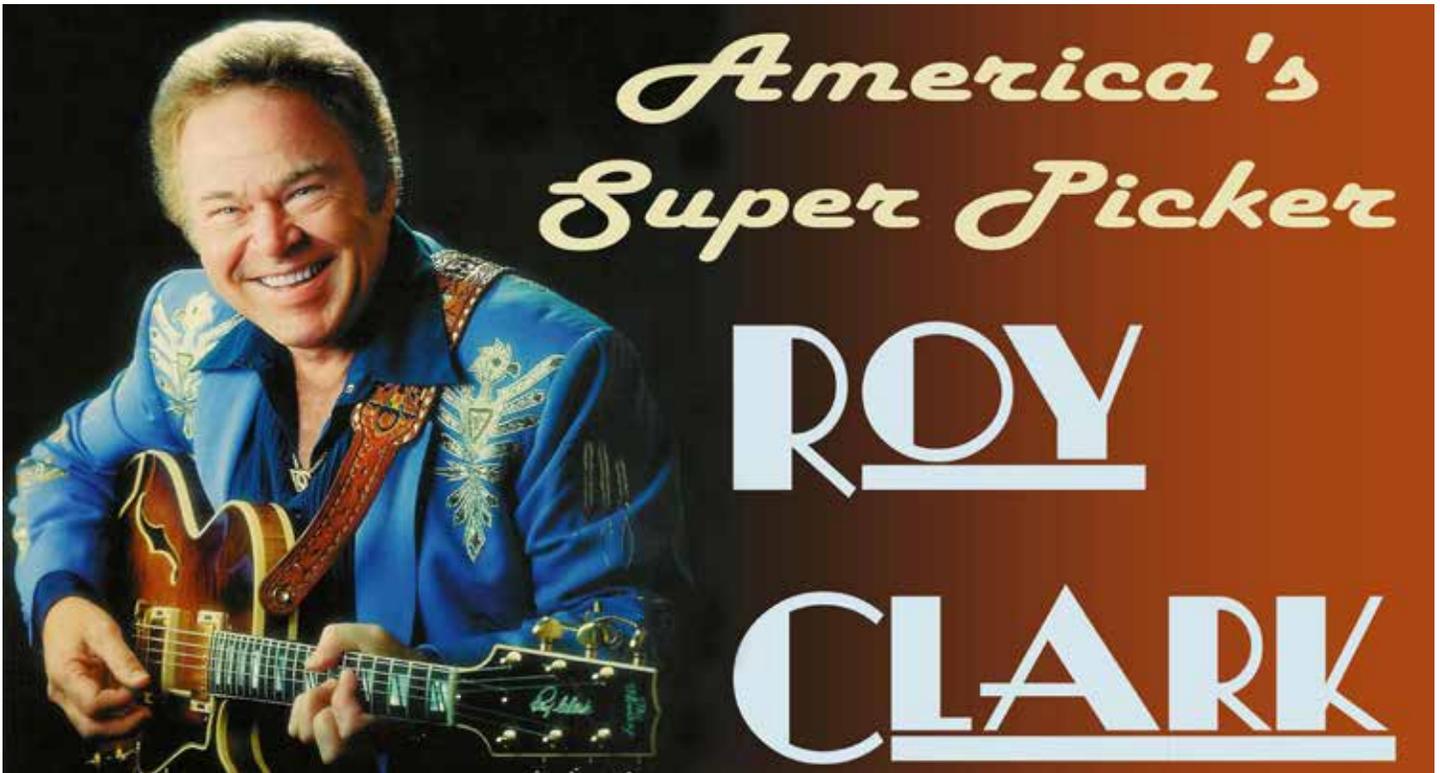


Open Jam Sessions at the ABM

The American Banjo Museum has hosted some great local acts as well as the biggest names in music, but, it's the homegrown pickers and strummers that are the backbone of banjo music. During our new series of open jam sessions, the spirit and fun of playing with friends on the front porch is alive and well. The open jam sessions are the first Saturday each month and rotate between four-string, old time, ukulele and bluegrass jams. Admission is free when you bring an instrument and participate in the jam! Grab your instrument, tune up and come make some new friends!



Check out the event calendar for upcoming jam sessions!



Taking the best from an impoverished childhood and developing innate talent into international superstardom, the life and career of the man known as America's Super Picker, Roy Clark is celebrated in a new exhibit at the American Banjo Museum.



Born with music in his heart in Meherrin, Virginia in 1933, Roy Clark is best remembered and loved as the co-host of the long-running television musical comedy program, Hee Haw. But before and since

his nearly 400 episodes of "pickin' and grinnin'" with Buck Owens, Clark's life and career has taken many interesting twists and turns. His recent honor of being named Oklahoma's Musical Ambassador for Children by the Oklahoma House of Representatives is reflective of Clark's lifetime of milestones and accomplishments: Multiple Entertainer of the Year awards from both the CMA and ACM; Grammy winning hit recordings; Guest appearances on countless television programs – including frequent guest hosting duties on the Tonight Show starring Johnny Carson; Honors as the first country artist to appear in concert in the Soviet Union; and, countless tours, taking his music to his favorite place – the live performance stage.

Through his own words, artifacts of his career – including his very first guitar, and rare photographs from his personal collection, Roy Clark shares what only can be described as an amazing life and career in a



new exhibit entitled, AMERICA'S SUPER PICKER – ROY CLARK opening March 15, 2017 at the American Banjo Museum. Scheduled to run through March of 2018, the exhibition chronicles the entire spectrum of Clark's musical life - from his earliest musical exploits to performing with Brad Paisley on the nationally televised Country Music Association awards program in 2016.

New Faces at the American Banjo Museum



Alma Cochran

When you visit the American Banjo Museum you may see a few new people. At the American Banjo Museum, we pride ourselves on our wonderful volunteers. And we're proud to have added some new smiling faces. Karen Lennox, Alma Cochran and Bill Elliott have joined our volunteer team as they work the reception desk and greet visitors.

One of those smiles belongs to Alma Cochran. Cochran comes to us after 40 years as a registered nurse. She has worked in the medical field in Kansas, Oklahoma and even Hawaii. At one time Cochran served as the Vice President of Nursing at University of Oklahoma Medical Center.

Cochran was recruited from the Oklahoma Retired Citizens Travel Club.

"Janet Raines asked if I knew anyone who would volunteer and I said, 'me!'," said Cochran. "I was looking for something different after I lost my husband two years ago. I even got Karen (Lennox) involved!"

Cochran also has a musical background of her own. "I played oboe, trumpet, percussion and piano and I started singing when I was only six years old."



Karen Lennox

Karen Lennox comes to the American Banjo Museum after nearly two decades with Devon Energy, Inc. where she was responsible for monitoring 1,600 wells in the Ft. Worth Basin.

Lennox also worked for the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, the State Corporation Commission, and the University of Oklahoma Medical Center, Oklahoma City.

"I always walked by the museum and I thought, 'someday I'm going to go in and see what it's about,'" said Lennox. "Little did I know that I'd be volunteering here someday."

Like Alma Cochran, Lennox was recruited from the Oklahoma Retired Citizens Travel Club.

As for how she likes her new volunteer gig, Lennox said, "I love it! I really like banjo music. And everyone is so nice."

Bill Elliott is recently retired from Haliburton where he spent thirty-five years working as a computer programmer.

Elliott, who was born and raised in Oklahoma City, has also played the five-string banjo for the past



Bill Elliott

40 years. He proudly brought his Imperial banjo to work with him on his first day and kindly played for a family visiting the museum from Texas.

Elliott's favorite banjo player is Earl Scruggs. When he's not playing the banjo, Elliott enjoys cycling. He participates in cycling tours and his longest bicycle ride is 500 miles in one week.

"I enjoy playing the banjo and I'm recently retired," said Elliott. "I wanted to help out in the community!"

Americana Fest

A day of fun, food and entertainment for the family.

Saturday, June 24

11 am-5:30 pm

Looking to our museum friends and members for

Volunteers

3 1/2 hour shifts
Sign up with a friend!

Please call 405-604-2793
or email
events@americanbanjomuseum.com

Better Know a Board Member



Michael Mason

This is a series where we will introduce you to members of the American Banjo Museum's Board of Directors. In this column, we get to know Michael Mason!

Q: Easy question first, four-string or five-string?

A: I grew up listening to the banjo in groups like the New Christy Minstrels, the Kingston Trio, the Chad Mitchell Trio and others. That is the sound I had in my head. While taking guitar lessons at a local music store, I saved my pennies and the owner sold me my first banjo. He was an old Vaudeville player and he sold me a four-string tenor banjo. I had no idea what I had.

Q: How long have you played the banjo?

A: That was in high school, back in the dark ages and my mother didn't like the noise in the house. But the store owner had promised me that if I bought a banjo from him, he would give me free lessons for as long as I wanted. He gave me two lessons and died of a heart attack. I didn't think I was that bad!

But as many other people have said, family, career, and the pressures of life kept me from playing all that much.

It wasn't until I joined the St. Louis Banjo Club and met other four-string players that I began to play a little more seriously.

Q: What made you want to serve on the American Banjo Museum's Board of Directors?

A: It was in meeting other four-string players that I got involved in conventions and jazz gatherings. I began to realize that the banjo community is like one big family that gets together on occasion and enjoys the music and the company.

One of my favorite venues was the Guthrie Jazz Banjo Festival. And, I got to be familiar with the Banjo Museum.

After a purchase of a large collection of banjos by the museum, I remember seeing dozens of banjos stacked in corners and leaning against the stage. When Sandy Singleton approached me and asked me if I would be interested in serving on the board as they considered a new museum location, I didn't hesitate.

Q: Where do you see the museum going in the future?

The expansion and growth of the museum in the past five years has been incredible to watch and to be a part of. With the inclusion of five-string, bluegrass, classical banjo and early banjos, the museum is becoming more of a voice for the whole, broad history and heritage of the banjo. I see this continuing.

And maybe the American Banjo Museum can help usher in a "New Roarin' 20's" in the next decade and a half. Heaven knows we could use some optimism, joy, and happiness in our culture and in our music.

Q: You're a professor of Religion

at Linwood University's School of Humanities. Do you ever bring your banjo to class and play during a lecture?

A: Several years ago the Dean of Humanities told me that I had to teach our Religion in America course in the summer session.

So, since I had been studying the history of the banjo reflected in the minstrels shows, classical banjo performances, Vaudeville, and the Roarin' 20's, I offered to teach a course on the effect of the banjo on American religious culture from the Great Awakening in the 1700's to the 1920's. I offered that suggestion as a joke and it has become one of my and the students' favorite courses.

Q: If you didn't play the banjo, what other instrument do you wish you knew how to play? And, do you play any other instruments?

A: I lost my harmonica several years ago and keep meaning to replace it. But it may be better for people's hearing if I don't. I also have spoons and bones, but am not all that good on them. I started playing a lap steel guitar and I used to have a stand-up bass, but I've long since forgotten most of what I knew on them.

I do go back often and pick up one of my first loves, the six-string guitar.

Q: What's something you wish people who have never visited the museum knew about it?

That is a tough question because there is so much to see and know. And I realize that I am unashamedly biased. But the artistry, the history, the influence of the banjo on American culture and the effect of musical performances on our history may be at times overwhelming for a first time visitor. Maybe they need to know that they have to come more than once.



9 East Sheridan Avenue
Oklahoma City, OK 73104

Upcoming Events

April

SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 1 PM **Old Style Open Jam**

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

SATURDAY, April 22, 2 PM **Education**

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!

May

SATURDAY, MAY 1, 1 PM **Ukulele Open Jam**

Join other Ukulele players for an

Open Jam Session. Free admission when you bring an instrument and participate in the Jam Session.

SATURDAY, MAY 20, 2 PM **Education**

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!

June

SATURDAY, JUNE 3, 1 PM **Bluegrass Open Jam**

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

SATURDAY, JUNE 10, 2 PM **Education**

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 24, 11AM-5 PM **Americana Fest**

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

July

SATURDAY, JULY 1, 1 PM **Four-String Open Jam**

Join other four-string players for an Open Jam Session. Free admission when you bring an instrument and participate in the Jam Session.

**For more information on events call 405-604-2793
or email events@AmericanBanjoMuseum.com**