

2018 Hall of Fame Inductees Announced



Bela Fleck
*Five-String
Performance*



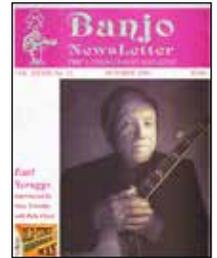
Borgy Borgerson
*Four-String
Performance*



Eddie Collins
Historical



Jim Henson
Promotion



The Banjo Newsletter
*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 our banjo world with their 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. The Museum itself was, in its infancy, 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 been forgotten 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 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 at any time 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 consisting of the museum board, living members of the *Hall of Fame* and lifetime members of the ABM association. Like past recipients, *Hall of Fame* honorees for 2018 have each displayed lifelong commitments to the banjo in one of five categories. The *American Banjo Museum Hall of Fame* inductees for 2018 are:

BELA FLECK - Five-String Performance - Widely acknowledged today as one of the world's most innovative and technically proficient banjo players, Fleck, like many banjoists of his generation, was inspired by Earl Scruggs' appearance on the *Beverly Hillbillies*. A serious banjo student from the start, Fleck became firmly grounded in banjo tradition prior to exploring new musical territory with innovative groups such as the *Newgrass Revival* and the *Flecktones*. His solo endeavors have

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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.

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Johnny Baier, Executive Director
Margie Smith-Robbins, Assistant Administrator
Janet Raines, Sales & Marketing
Sherril Mitchell, Reception
Ellie Mowery, Administrative Assistant

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Grateful reflection and new adventures...

What a year 2017 was for the American Banjo Museum! After closing our incredibly popular *Banjo World of Steve Martin* exhibit following its receiving the *Outstanding Exhibit of the Year* recognition from the Oklahoma Museums Association, we opened the new *Roy Clark – America's Super Picker* exhibit with a visit from Roy Clark himself! Signature events such as our *Mardi Gras* party and *Americana Fest* family event set the stage for the highlight of our year, BANJO FEST in early September. With Hall of Fame recipients including John McEuen, Roy Clark, Tony Trischka and Paul Erickson now spreading the word that Oklahoma City is the new center of the banjo universe, the crowning jewel of the BANJO FEST weekend was a stunning concert headlined by the internationally known, Kruger Brothers. After catching our breath, we focused on a very special November 1st outreach program entitled, *Back to Our Roots*, featuring Dom Flemons (founder of the Carolina Chocolate Drops) and Dr. Harold Aldridge (member of the Oklahoma Blues Hall of Fame). Partnering on that event with the Oklahoma History

Center and Oklahoma Humanities, *Back to Our Roots* proved to be a milestone event, introducing the history of the banjo to a new and diverse local audience. In house, finishing touches were being added to our new LEARNING LOUNGE – a new educational component in the museum allowing visitors a “hands on” banjo experience with video instruction by the likes of Tony Trischka, Jens Kruger, John McEuen, Gary Davis, Bob Carlin and others. Yes, a busy and fulfilling 2017 indeed – thanks to the ABM staff, board, volunteers and ever-growing list of supporters. With time only for a grateful glance backward, we move on to 2018 with exciting new things on the horizon - not the least of which will be our new *Philadelphia Mummers – Struttin' Their Stuff* exhibit set to open in Spring. Tracing the history of the colorful Philadelphia string band traditions, the highlight of the exhibit will be numerous examples of the flamboyant costumes worn during the famous New Year's Day Mummers Parade. Looking forward to this - and everything else that the new year has in store, we know 2018 will be another great year for the American Banjo Museum... thanks to you!

Johnny Baier, Executive Director



Krewe de Banjo
at the
**American Banjo Museum's
Mardi Gras Party**
Saturday, February 10
6-9 pm
MUSIC • FOOD
CASH BAR
**Call 405-604-2793 to
purchase tickets**



2018 Hall of Fame Inductees Announced

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seen him successfully introduce the banjo into genres such as modern jazz and world music, with a certain high point being the 2011 premier of his *Concerto For Banjo* performed with the Nashville Symphony Orchestra.

BORGY BORGERSON - Four-String Performance - Now in his 92nd year, Borgy Borgerson is often referred to as a living entertainment legend in his native Canada. Beginning in the early 1940s, Borgerson was a fixture on the Canadian radio, nightclub and concert scene. The 1970s saw Borgy's peak of success as a headline performer at the EXPO '67 world's fair. From that point forward - leading his own Dixieland jazz bands or delighting audiences with his engaging solo style at Toronto night spots such as *Diamond Lil's*, Borgerson remains an "in demand" banjoist and entertainer.

EDDIE COLLINS - Historical - A journeyman musician and Detroit celebrity, the impact Eddie Collins' 40 plus year banjo career was felt nationally. Playing at a virtuoso level on both banjo and guitar as the instruments each came of age in the 1920s and 30s, Eddie Collins' career hit high gear when he joined *Art Mooney's Orchestra* in 1948. Touring nationally on the heels of their million selling hit recordings such as *Four Leaf Clover* and *Baby Face*, Collins' years with Art Mooney postured him to return to Detroit a musical hero - an admirable status which he enjoyed until his sudden passing in 1972.

JIM HENSON - Promotion - Through his creation of the Muppets - and the inextricable connection of the banjo with Kermit the Frog, Jim Henson and the modern day company which

carries on his legacy, introduced - and continues to expose - the banjo to a mainstream audience in the most entertaining and positive manner possible. In addition to the inclusion of Kermit's banjo along with other banjo icons such as Roy Clark and Steve Martin on countless memorable episodes of *The Muppet Show*, Kermit's soulful rendition of *The Rainbow Connection* from *The Muppet Movie* has become nothing short of a modern day banjo anthem. (Photo Courtesy of The Jim Henson Company)

THE BANJO NEWSLETTER - Instruction & Education - Founded in 1973 by Hubbard "Hub" Nitchie, Banjo Newsletter covers a wide range of banjo topics, including features on banjo players, banjo techniques (predominantly the three-finger or Scruggs style and the clawhammer playing style), beginning banjo, music theory, banjo set-up and accessories,

ABM Membership

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

Individual Membership

Robert Alexius
Scott Anderson
James Beaver
C. Graham Burton
Raymond James Cisneros
Doris Clark
George Donaldson
Matt Fleury
Wallace Gibson
Mark Greathouse
Sue Kern
Christian Vincent Lawlor
Ken Lee
Clarence Leverenz
Dick Neuman
Garry Peterson, MD
Becky Rickard
Randy Shumard

product and record reviews. Since 1993, BNL has been published by its founder's sons Donald and Spencer, who serve as editor and business manager, respectively. The International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) awarded Hub Nitchie its *Print Media Person of the Year* award in 1992 and *Banjo Newsletter* its *Distinguished Achievement Award* in 2008.

Bela Fleck, Borgy Borgerson, Eddie Collins, Jim Henson and the *Banjo Newsletter* will be inducted into the *American Banjo Museum Hall of Fame* during gala ceremonies to be held on Friday, September 7, 2018 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 6- 8, 2018 for BANJO FEST 2018 in Oklahoma City.

Sam Stone
Todd VanBebber
Budd Walker
David Weibel

Couple Membership

Robert & Janice Bicknaver
Jim & Alicia Bottorff
Glen Phillip Cartwright
Neil L. Duresky
Russ & Diane Morton
Bill & Marilyn North
Michael & Jane Sigmon

Family Membership

Julie Marehwa
Glenn N. Snyder
Barbara J. Thomas
Linda Thompson
Vincent VanBebber

Lifetime Membership

Chantelle Cory

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

Back to Our Roots: An Exploration of Roots Music

As part of its ongoing community outreach efforts, on November 1, 2017 the American Banjo Museum partnered with both the Oklahoma History Center as well as Oklahoma Humanities to present a very special program entitled *Back to Our Roots: An Exploration of American Roots Music*. A diverse audience of over 200 people were on hand at the History Center as the banjo's role in the intersections of jazz, blues and roots music



Dom Flemons and Johnny Baier at the American Banjo Museum during a morning Q&A with music students and professors.



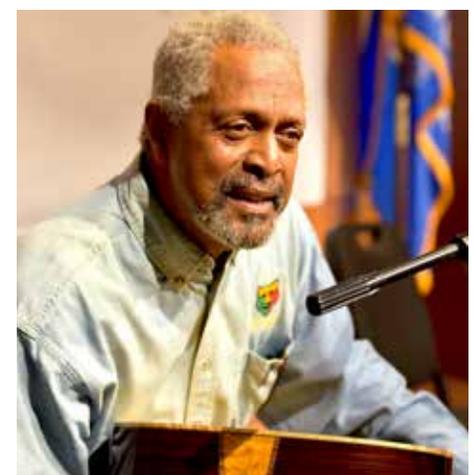
Dom Flemons at the American Banjo Museum. Photo Credit: Americana Media Group

– as well as the influence of race, emancipation and desegregation on the evolution of this music in both Oklahoma and throughout the country - was discussed. Panelists for the event included Grammy award winning artist and founder the *Carolina Chocolate Drops*, Dom Flemons; member of the Oklahoma Blues Hall of Fame, Dr. Harold Aldridge, and; American Banjo Museum Executive Director, Johnny Baier. While the delicate issues of racism in relation to banjo history were presented and discussed very openly, Dom Flemons put it best when he

stated, “That was stuff of the old culture...we’re more interested in what’s happening today.” Both Flemons and Dr. Aldridge took turns presenting musical examples with material ranging from minstrel songs to blues, jazz and tunes associated with Songster traditions of the early 20th century. The evening’s discussion, audience interaction and musical performances – including a crowd-stirring impromptu blues and bones duet between Dom and Dr. Aldridge - proved that music has the power to cross cultures and overcome generations of misunderstanding.



Dr. Harold Aldridge and Dom Flemons at the Oklahoma History Center. Photo Credit: Americana Media Group



Dr. Harold Aldridge Photo Credit: Americana Media Group

Sowell Family Donates Banjo Ukulele to ABM



Sowell Family presenting custom banjo ukulele to Johnny Baier, ABM Executive Director and Doug Parsons, ABM Board President at IBMA.

During the International Bluegrass Music Association conference held recently in Raleigh, North Carolina, the *Sowell Family Pickers* stopped by the American Banjo Museum booth to present a very special gift. Strongly rooted in faith coupled with musical excellence, the banjo community has watched with pride as the Sowell children have progressed from enthusiastic aspiring youngsters to professional level musicians and performers. In Raleigh, in addition to their showcase performances for the international Bluegrass community, the Sowell family presented the museum with a custom banjo ukulele which was built in the 1980s by Hall of Fame luthier Dale Small. This instrument is special in so many ways... First off, it is a beautiful example of Dale Small's early period craftsmanship which was originally made for June Bealmear – a longtime friend of the museum and the entire four-string banjo world. The instrument features a unique design with the tailpiece integrated into the armrest assembly as well as

construction elements of exotic wood and inlay materials. And, above all, it sounds and plays absolutely marvelous. Cemented into public consciousness by

British entertainer, George Formby, the banjo ukulele is a combination of a ukulele neck on a banjo body, providing ukulele players with more volume and percussive rhythm than is available from a typical wooden uke. With a worldwide ukulele craze going on, the acquisition of this special instrument comes at a perfect time, allowing the museum to continue sharing with its visitors the varied and colorful evolution of different types of banjos. Dale Small was inducted into the American Banjo Museum Hall of Fame in 2008 in recognition of the nearly 500 custom made banjos built during his lifetime. The museum is pleased and proud to welcome this new addition from that storied craftsman to our permanent collection and thank the Sowell family for their donation as well as the spirit in which it was given.



Better know a board member



Paul Poirier

Q: *Easy question first, do you play four-string or five-string banjo?*

A: Four-string, specifically a tenor. My favorite is a 1924 Vega Style X #9.

Q: *When did you start playing?*

A: Growing up in an exceptionally large family, music lessons were reserved for the girls only. The boys learned a trade from dad. So, as a child music was out. But, as I grew older, music became more interesting, and I always had the inner need to play music. I began playing banjo in 1989 at age 33, taking lessons from Steve Caddick on a cheap tenor banjo that I bought for \$60 at a yard sale.

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

A: I never considered being on the ABM's Board, in fact I didn't know much about the Museum and had never been to Oklahoma City until Doug Parsons recruited me to be a board member. After doing a little research, I knew that I was being given the opportunity of a lifetime, to help take the ABM into the future. This is what drives me. I like to work on projects, and this one is one of the largest, most interesting projects of the banjo community. I don't think it will ever be complete.

Q: *I understand your father-in-law, Emile "Pete" DeBlois, had an impact on you playing the banjo. Can you tell us about that?*

A: I had wanted to play the banjo for years, but just never had the time to devote to practice, but when I found a banjo for sale at a yard sale, I had to have it!

My wife, Theresa's dad, Pete DeBlois, taught me a few chords, but always said he would be a poor teacher. One day, Pete introduced me to Steve Caddick. Pete said Steve would be a great teacher. As always, Pete was right! In 1989, I started taking lessons and continue even today.

When Pete had a major heart event, we were told that he would never walk, talk or play banjo again. Theresa and I would not accept that and insisted that Pete be sent to a rehab facility and we sent a banjo along with him. It wasn't long before he was walking, talking and to everyone's amazement playing his beloved banjo.

Although Pete never fully recovered, he went on to play for another few years, and I made it my mission to ensure that he had every opportunity to share his musical talent and enjoy his banjo. I think every day about Pete, his sense of humor and his smooth counter melody style of playing. He is the reason I am dedicated to the banjo!

Q: *You were instrumental with the development and funding for the Museum's Banjo Players Directory. What was the driving factor for you in supporting this exhibit and online database?*

A: Theresa's dad and the Stone Street Strummers had given me the opportunity to do a lot of playing and promoting. The Early Spring Banjo Fling and the Boston Banjo Bash had introduced me to so many

banjo players, many professionals and many players, like me, who are really just enthusiasts. At these events people told me their banjo story, stories about who encouraged them to play the banjo. They told these stories because they wanted to keep the story alive for others to hear and enjoy. Every banjo has a story!

I had given a lot of thought to how we get the "regular folks" involved with the Museum, how can we make the Museum accessible to all banjo players. The Banjo Players Directory just seemed like a great way to preserve the history of all the banjo players, and make a part of the ABM available to everybody, everywhere. "Telling the history of the banjo, one player at a time". I support this project because I truly love the banjo and the people. I feel strongly the need to preserve the legacy of the banjo, and the players making banjo history and sharing the stories of all the folks whose paths have crossed because of the banjo.

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

A: Without Jack Canine there would be no American Banjo Museum to have a future so first Thank you Jack!

Having said that, my personal vision for the Museum is to grow! The ABM is a world class facility, that we need to preserve, and it is the foundation for the future.

We have dreams to expand the Museum in the future, physically and through its collection and archives. To add more interactive exhibits, traveling exhibits, and educational programs about the banjo. While we are well on our way to achieving some of these dreams, other dreams will depend on how well we as board members direct and affect the future growth. My vision is to never stop dreaming and never stop growing!

More than a Candy Cane Christmas



Santa visiting with a few of the children in attendance.

By Pamm Tucker, Americana Media Group, Entertainment Editor

Santa Claus made his way into Bricktown and the American Banjo Museum, Sunday, December 10th. It was a very special occasion, as not only was it a Candy Cane Christmas but it had a meaning, a meaning of the spirit of Christmas and the gift of giving! You might be asking what is the Red Andrews Christmas Dinner? Ernest Andrews (Red Andrews) was promoting boxing matches at the Stockyards Coliseum in the 1940s when he discovered the living conditions of some of his young parking lot workers who lived in the Mulligan Flats area. Some of them lived in one-room houses with mud floors. Moved to help these families find joy during the holidays, he invited them to participate in a Christmas dinner. Because of the ongoing needs of the city's less fortunate families, Andrews built the dinner into a tradition, one that continued long after his death in 1977. "The community embraced it, and we've since grown to serve over 8,000 people," said Mary Blankenship

Pointer, Red Andrews Christmas Dinner secretary and treasurer. "Its had a ripple effect as people invited people, and it just grows and grows and grows. It's now one of the largest community dinners in our region." Not only does the entire state of Oklahoma back the Red Andrews Dinner, but the American Banjo Museum played their role in the spirit of giving. ABM had a live show featuring Johnny Baier playing to a full house in fact standing room only! Baier performed a plethora of Christmas tunes, known by most with full audience participation. He performed oldies, such as *Sleigh Bells*, to "one-liners" of *Mr.*

Grinch. Probably the fan favorite, since it was performed twice, was *Jingle Bells*. Several of the younger generation performed on the stage with Baier, assisting with the bells. Coen from OKC, summed the day up the best, "It was fun, but the reason we came was so other kids that can't have Christmas get to." Coen, his Mom, and siblings brought a new unwrapped toy for the event, and in return got in for FREE. With a knot in my throat, I tried to finish up my interview with Coen, age 7, by asking him how it was to perform on the stage. "I didn't come here to be on the stage, I came here to give." Now that's the Christmas Spirit!



Photo Credit: Budd Walker, Americana Media Group



Johnny Baier, Executive Director of the American Banjo Museum



The Okie Dokies Banjo Band donated their time and played Christmas favorites in the lobby during ABM's Candy Cane Christmas.



9 East Sheridan Avenue
Oklahoma City, OK 73104

Save the date...BANJO FEST...September 6-8, 2018

Upcoming Events...

January

SATURDAY, JANUARY 6, 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, JANUARY 13, 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, JANUARY 27, 1 PM
Celtic Open Jam

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

February

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1 PM
Old Style Open Jam

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

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2-3 PM
Krewe de Banjo

Join us for a live jazz performance and get American Banjo Museum Mardi Gras beads. Performance included with paid museum admission.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 6-9 PM
Krewe de Banjo Mardi Gras Party

Enjoy an evening of jazz and New Orleans style food. Pre-purchase tickets today \$20 Members / \$25 Non-Members. CASH BAR

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 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, FEBRUARY 24, 1 PM
Celtic Open Jam

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

March

SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 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.

SATURDAY, MARCH 31, 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!

April

SATURDAY, APRIL 7, 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.

**For more information on events
call 405-604-2793 or visit
www.americanbanjomuseum.com**