



Connecticut Hall of Fame

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TO: Donald E. Williams, Jr., Senate President Pro Tempore
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John McKinney, Senate Minority Leader
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FROM: Senator Joe Crisco
Representative Betty Boukus
Senator Sam Caligiuri
Representative Michael Caron

DATE: September 17, 2008

RE: Connecticut Hall of Fame Report for 2007-2008

The Connecticut Hall of Fame Committee is composed of Senators Joseph Crisco (D-Woodbridge) and Sam Caligiuri (R-Waterbury) and Representatives Elizabeth "Betty" Boukus (D-Plainville) and Michael Caron (R-Danielson).

The Connecticut Hall of Fame is designed to recognize those individuals from Connecticut who have distinguished themselves in their professions, nationally or internationally. It also serves to educate the great number of students who visit the Capitol and Legislative Office Building (LOB) annually.

This year the committee reviewed the applications of 30 nominees and, after several meetings, referred their selection to the legislative leaders for approval. The following individuals were inducted into the Connecticut Hall of Fame, and an awards ceremony was held in their honor on June 18, 2008 in the Legislative Office Building.

The 2008 Connecticut Hall of Fame Inductees:

Marian Anderson, the first Black opera singer to perform with the Metropolitan Opera is considered to be Connecticut's Voice of Freedom. A powerful contralto, she made history in 1939 with her concert at the Lincoln Memorial after the Daughters of the American Revolution refused to let her perform at Constitution Hall because she was Black. Marian Anderson was born in Philadelphia, but for many years her home was in Danbury.

Harry J. Gray, one of the outstanding business managers in the United States is the retired Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of United Technologies. He is a well known philanthropist. The cancer center at Hartford Hospital is named after Harry Gray and his wife Helen.

Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in major league baseball. He was the first Black man to play major league baseball in the 20th century when he was signed to play with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947. He promoted black businesses and was a civil rights advocate. Jackie Robinson moved to Stamford after he retired from baseball. He was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962.

Chief Ralph Sturges was the lifetime leader of the Mohegan tribe. He was instrumental in helping the tribe gain federal recognition. He also worked with financial supporters to help develop and build the Mohegan Sun Casino, one of the leading Native American owned casinos in the world. Chief Sturges died last October at the age of 88.

The 2007 Connecticut Hall of Fame Inductees:

An awards ceremony for the 2007 inductees was held February 21, 2007 in the LOB.

The first honoree was legendary actress **Katharine Hepburn**, who won four Oscars for Best Actress. The award was presented to Ellsworth Grant, her brother in law.

The second honoree was **Mark Twain**, the great American writer and Humorist. The award was presented to Debra Petke, the Executive of the Mark Twain House & Museum.

The third honoree was **Igor Sikorsky**, an aviation pioneer and designer of the first helicopter. The award was presented to his sons, Igor Sikorsky, Jr. and Nikolai Sikorsky.

Nominations are now being accepted for the third round of inductees to the Connecticut Hall of Fame. Nomination forms are available in the Office of Legislative Management or on the Connecticut Hall of Fame website at:

<http://www.cga.ct.gov/halloffame.htm>.

The deadline for submitting nominations is Friday, November 28, 2008. If you have any questions, you may contact Sandra Forte' at (860) 240-0100.