



Stanton Nelson, Long Island, featured entertainer at the Native Sons and Daughters Banquet in Topeka, finished playing "Love is a Many Splendored Thing" for the winner of the "Oldest Woman" contest as the crowd of over 500 clapped

loudly. At left is U.S. Senator Pat Roberts, who conducted the contest. Standing and applauding was Louise Ferguson, Manhattan, who is 99 years young, and won the oldest woman's prize.

— Courtesy photo by Larry Boyd



Polly Bales, Logan, received a tremendous applause as she approached the podium to accept her "Distinguished Service" Citation from the Native Sons and Daughters of Kansas. Among those applauding were, from left, Co-President Dick Boyd, Norton and his wife, Mary Beth Boyd

— Courtesy photo by Larry Boyd

Kansans honored at statewide banquet

By DICK BOYD

A crowd of over 500 people attending the 89th annual Banquet of the Native Sons and Daughters of Kansas in the Maner Conference Center in Topeka on Friday, January 26 honored Max Falkenstien, Lawrence, legendary sports announcer, "Kansan of the Year"; Dr. Richard Bergen, Salina, sculptor extraordinaire, "Distinguished Kansan of the Year" and Polly Bales, Logan, community and political activist, "Distinguished Service" Citation.

The banquet was one of the main events held to celebrate the state of Kansas on its 146th birthday.

The purpose of the Native Sons and Daughters organization is to assist in preserving Kansas history, show loyalty to Kansas traditions, join in honoring our pioneer ancestors and have a part in instilling the ideals of patriotism in youth.

The Native Sons of Kansas was organized in 1901 and the Native Daughters in 1915. The Native Sons and Daughters have met jointly since 1918.

This non-partisan organization is for all Kansans. Any native-born Kansan is eligible. Persons who have adopted Kansas as their native state are welcomed as associate members. Lifetime membership is \$10 and is available through the Native Sons and Daughters of Kansas, P.O. Box 546, Topeka, KS 66601-0546.

Falkenstien was born and raised in Lawrence where he was a radio announcer for 60 years for the University of Kansas sports. He covered 650 Jayhawk football games and six decades of K.U. basketball.

He has been elected to the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame and received awards from both the College Football Hall of Fame and Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame.

At the conclusion of his 60th year of following the Jayhawks, he was presented with the Athletics Corporation first ever lifetime Service Award. His mythical jersey (Number 60) was retired in Allen Field House, next to all the great K.U. athletes so honored.

Dr. Bergen is a 1953 Bethany College art graduate who taught art for 24 years but is best known for his bronze casting and stone carving. His most well-known sculpture is the bronze representation of a Kansas Indian titled "Ad Astra" from the state motto, "Ad Astra per Aspera", to the stars through difficulties which sits on the top of the Kansas Capitol Building in Topeka. Bergen's design was the unanimous choice from three excellent finalists after the school children of Kansas were asked to submit their ideas to the Kansas Arts Commission.

Many of Bergen's sculptures depict Kansas history, such as "Heritage Woman", Wichita; "The Brave", Council Grove; "Pony Express", Marysville; "The Oil Riggers", Russell; "Bountiful Harvest", Marquette; "The Muleskinner", Salina and Buffalo Soldier", Junction City.

One of his current projects is a "World War II Memorial" at Kansas State University, Manhattan, which will consist of six bronze life size figures.

Polly Bales, a native of Whitewater who has lived most of her life in Logan, has touched thousands of lives in Kansas and around the world with her unselfish devotion to their culture, art,

music and history. She was the first president of the Hansen Museum Association. The association's pride and joy is the Dane G. Hansen Memorial Plaza in downtown Logan, which is located on the same block on which Polly's uncle-in-law Dane Hansen was born and built his successful multi-faceted business career.

The Hansen Museum has been called the "Smithsonian of the Plains" due to the wide variety of traveling exhibits displayed within its walls, including many popular exhibits from the Smithsonian Institution.

Being president of the association and overseeing the museum activities was just the beginning of Polly Bales' service to the community. She has a long and impressive record of service to various causes, starting with her family and church. She has been deeply involved in various organizations, dealing with women's groups, the University of Kansas and the Republican Party. In 2005, she was inducted into the University of Kansas Women's Hall of Fame.

An accomplished organist and pianist, Polly has been the organist for the United Methodist Church in Logan since 1962. And, she sang with the choir in the Christmas cantata. Polly is always present during Kansas Day activities in Topeka, many times playing for as many as three different organizations. In addition to being honored this year, she played the piano for the 40th year at the Native Sons and Daughters Banquet.

Polly was President of the Native Daughters of Kansas in 1966.

All three honorees spoke during the program following the banquet meal. All indicated that they were humbled by the honor and it was obvious that their words came directly from the heart.

U.S. Senator from Kansas Pat Roberts introduced Polly. "What an honor and a pleasure it is for me to introduce a virtual icon of the loyal Native Daughters of the Great State of Kansas, my very good and long-time friend and faithful supporter and advisor, Polly Roth Bales," said Roberts.

"If you Google the phrase, 'Outstanding Citizen of Kansas', Polly's picture will pop up in every one of the top ten choices.

"Polly met the love of her life, who happened to be Dane Hansen's nephew, Dane Bales, while they were attending the University of Kansas. Dane and Polly, members of the 'Greatest Generation', sent Dane off to World War II and, after it was finished, they moved to Logan to enter the family business.

"After a long and distinguished career, which was a partnership between Dane and Polly, and after the death of uncle and co-worker Dane Hansen, they devoted a great deal of time in perpetuating Dane Hansen's legacy to our great state. That legacy is important and monumental.

"Polly has not only supplied valuable information to various authors but has written a book herself entitled, 'Kate Hansen, The Grandest Mission on Earth; from Japan to Kansas 1907-1951'.

"She and Dane were keys to organizing and contributing significantly to the Dane and Polly Bales Organ Recital Hall in the Lied Center for Performing Arts at the University of Kansas."

Senator Roberts also read a let-

ter from former U.S. Senator and former Kansan of the Year Bob Dole. "It's not often when an honoree is also part of the program but you are a well-deserved exception," said Dole.

"Polly, you have enhanced the lives of Kansans for decades. You have had an impact on my life and countless other Kansans. The Dole Institute of Politics would not be doing so well without the support of the Hansen Foundation.

"As an ambassador for Kansas, you make us proud. Congratulations and thanks again for your friendship over the past 45 years."

"I'm so proud to be a Kansan," said Polly. "Every year, this banquet is a happy experience. It's been a pleasure to play for the banquet each year but I did not ever dream that I'd be honored.

"I'm only 86 years young so I hope to be back for several more years."

Falkenstien was introduced by Kathleen Sebelius, the Governor of Kansas, and Bergen was introduced by former longtime Kansas Senator Ben Vidricksen, Salina.

Senator Dole also sent a personal letter to Falkenstien and Bergen. "Max, you are a fixture in Kansas, part of Kansas folklore along with the likes of Dorothy Gale," said Dole.

"For six decades you were the voice of the Jayhawks and I know it is difficult to believe the show goes on without us but somehow it does.

"We share membership in a great generation, one that met challenges of its day. You and I are the lucky ones who lived to see the results of sacrifice and hard work of millions of Americans.

"Thank you for your service to our country and for your years of commitment to the University of Kansas. Congratulations, Mr. Kansan of the Year."

In Dole's letter to Dr. Bergen, he said, "Few people can preserve Kansas history, embody its ideal and inspire generations in a more lasting way. I join many thousands who are proud of your creativity. Your work adorns our Capitol, it enlightens our campuses and even touches a place I call home in Russell.

"We shared the sacrifices and tests of a generation caught up in extraordinary times. We returned home and went to work doing things that we love and that we hoped would give meaning to others.

"Thank you for your service and for all you do to improve the beauty of Kansas and preserve its heritage."

Each of the three honorees received a framed proclamation of their honor from Governor Sebelius.

The violin music of Stanton Nelson, a talented musician from Long Island, Kansas who is a sophomore at Northern Valley High School, was featured throughout the banquet. He played the "National Anthem", "Corrente" by Corelli, "The Orange Blossom Special" and "Home on the Range". His mother, Sara, was his piano accompanist.

During the dinner, he strolled among the tables, delighting people by playing their requests.

Senator Roberts conducted the annual contest to determine the oldest man and woman attending the banquet. Louise Ferguson, Manhattan, who is 99 years young, won the woman's prize and Bill Reece, Scandia, who is 87 years young, was the winner of the man's prize.

Nelson played "Love is a Many Splendored Thing" for Ferguson and "Wabash Cannonball" for Reece.

Dick Boyd, Norton, was this year's Native Sons President. "I have been a member of the Native Sons since I was nine months old, thanks to my grandmother Mamie Boyd purchasing my membership," said Boyd. "It has been my distinct pleasure to serve as your Native Sons President this year along with Pat Reeder, Topeka, President of the Native Daughters.

"It's wonderful once again to see so many in attendance to celebrate the greatest state in the union and recognize the people who made it great. This gathering reminds us to appreciate our Kansas heritage and the values found in our Midwestern culture that provide us with a source of pride and strength.

"It is a time to reflect on the courage of our pioneer ancestors who broke the prairie sod, used family values and a great work ethic and teamwork to create thriving communities and had faith that the almighty would look with favor on their survival.

"It is also a time to remember the brave, resourceful generations of Kansans who followed in our ancestors' footsteps to the stars through difficulties. They paved the way for the transition from pioneers to the space age to produce the great state of Kansas we know today.

"Your presence tonight is proof that you do truly believe it is important to celebrate and cultivate our great heritage while honoring three very special individuals."

Monetary awards were presented to the top three plus two honorable mentions for essays in the Olive Ann Beech Factual Story contest. Third place went to Cass Bruton, Bogue.

A cash prize was also awarded for the winning essay in the Mamie Boyd "Kansas!" Say It Above A Whisper contest.

The winners of the "Kansas ... As Beautiful as You Think!" high school art competition also received awards. Competition was held in five categories: painting, drawing, color photography, black and white photography and pastel. The winning entries were on display at the banquet.

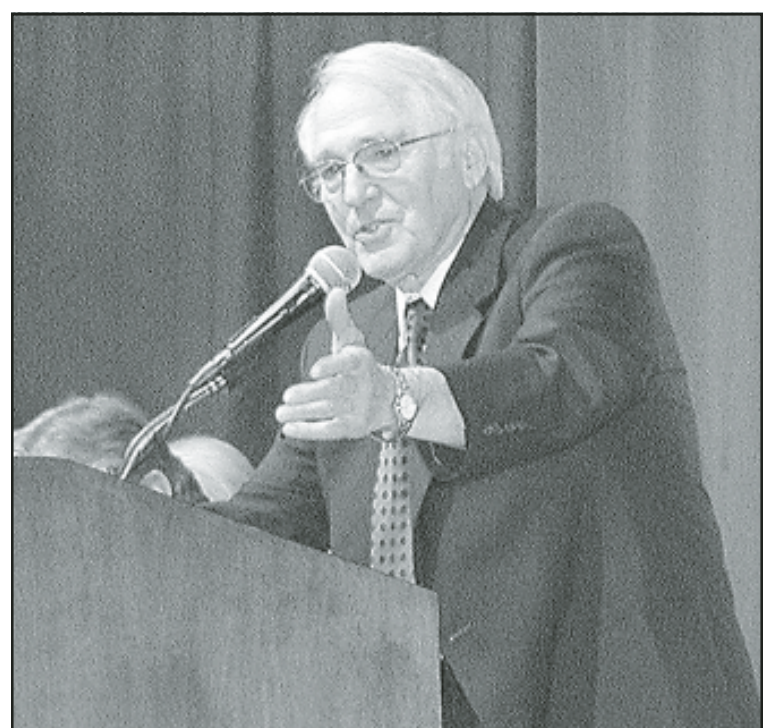
In addition to Pat Reeder and Dick Boyd, other officers of the Native Sons and Daughters of Kansas in 2006 were Edward R. Moses, Topeka and Sue Peterson, Manhattan, Co-Vice-Presidents; Steven Bitner, Pittsburg and Darlene Elwood, Topeka, Co-Secretaries; John Fager, Topeka and Mary Lou Reece, Wichita, Co-Treasurers.

June Windscheffel, Topeka, is Executive Director and John Pinegar, Topeka, is Assistant Executive Director.

Officers advance each year. The new co-treasurers for 2007 are Gary Sebelius, Topeka, a native of Norton and Carol Nazar, Wichita. Bishop Scott Jones, Kansas Area United Methodist Church and husband of Mary Lou Reece, gave the invocation and benediction.

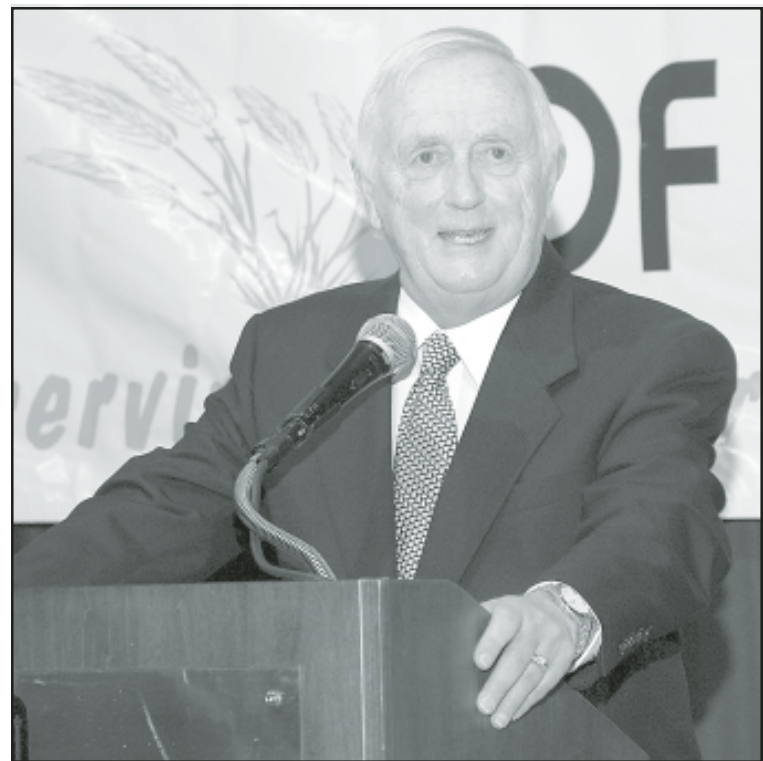
The Topeka High School Marine Corps Junior ROTC presented the colors following the welcome by Co-President Boyd.

The banquet concluded with those present singing in unison as Nelson played the Kansas song, "Home On The Range", written by Dr. Brewster Higley, Smith Center.



Dr. Richard Bergen, Salina, spoke from the heart as he related some insight into his art career in his adopted state of Kansas during his acceptance speech as "Distinguished Kansan of the Year".

— Courtesy photo by Larry Boyd



Max Falkenstien, Lawrence, revealed some of the humorous side of his 60-year career as K.U. sports announcer when he gave his acceptance speech for his "Kansan of the Year" award.

— Courtesy photo by Peggy Clark

Ag Valley

CO-OP

All of our Ag Valley Locations will be CLOSING

at 12:00 noon on Wed., Feb. 28, 2007.

This is for our fiscal year-end inventory. We will resume regular business hours on Thurs., March 1, 2007

Thanks for the opportunity to serve you and for your patience during this time!