

# Native Sons, Daughters holding annual banquet

By DICK BOYD

Everyone is invited by the Native Sons and Daughters of Kansas to attend their 89th annual banquet on Friday, January 26 to help them honor living legend radio sports announcer Max Falkenstien, Lawrence, as the "Kansan of the Year"; Dr. Richard Bergen, Salina, sculptor extraordinaire, as the "Distinguished Kansan of the Year" and Polly Bales, Logan, who will receive a Distinguished Service Citation.

You don't have to be a member of the organization to attend the banquet, which will be held at the Maner Conference Center, Kansas Expo Centre, 17th and Western, Topeka. Social hour will be at 5:30 p.m. with the dinner and program to follow at 6:30 p.m.

Banquet tickets are \$40 per person and may be ordered from: Native Sons and Daughters, Box 546, Topeka, Kan. 66601-0546. Tickets will be mailed for all ticket orders received by Friday, Jan. 19. If your ticket order is received after that date, tickets may be picked up from 3-5 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 25 or 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on banquet day at the coat check area in the Capitol Plaza Hotel, immediately adjacent to the Maner Conference Center. After 5 p.m., tickets may be picked up at the banquet door.

The Native Sons and Daughters was formed to preserve Kansas history, uphold our pioneer ancestors, encourage youth to embrace Kansas ideals and honor outstanding citizens.

Whether or not you are a Kansas native, you are invited to join the organization. Lifetime dues are just \$10. To join, simply add \$10 to your banquet ticket order or you may join outside the ballroom on banquet night.

**Max Falkenstien**

**Kansan of the Year for 2006**

One of the most popular and recognizable voices in all of collegiate sports history, Max Falkenstien of Lawrence became a living legend in Kansas during his 60-year career as a radio sports announcer for University of Kansas athletics.

His colorful, objective coverage of Jayhawk sports was enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of fans, including those who had an allegiance to the opposing team.

Before retiring on March 17, 2006 after Kansas played in the first round of the 2006 NCAA Basketball Tournament, Falkenstien covered over 1,750 men's basketball games and 650 men's football games — a span that included every game played in historic Allen Fieldhouse and was the longest active announcing tenure in sports history.

Max was born and raised in Lawrence. He graduated from Liberty Memorial High School and from the University of Kansas. He served 35 months in the United States Air Force during World War II.

He began his broadcasting career while still in high school as a staff announcer at WREN. After returning from the service, he began his sportscasting career in 1946. His first game broadcast was of an NCAA Playoff game between Kansas and Oklahoma A&M. The game was won by A&M and they continued on to their second straight NCAA championship. Shortly thereafter, Max originated the KU Sports Network, which subsequently was taken over by the University. His long career has included announcing all of KU's Final Fours in basketball, including national championships in 1952 and 1988, plus Jayhawk football appearances in two Orange Bowls and others.

Max's final home broadcast was on March 1, 2006 in the last home game of Kansas' 2006 basketball season. Kansas defeated Colorado 75-54 and Falkenstien was honored in a special halftime ceremony. Athletic Director Lew Perkins presented a bronze Jayhawk to Max to commemorate his long years of service. His name and "number" 60 were hung on a banner in Allen Fieldhouse with those of the great players in KU history. He is the first non-athlete to receive this honor.

Max was the first inductee into the Lawrence High School Hall of Honor. He received an honorary "K" from the KU Lettermen's Club. He has received the Baker University Lifetime Achievement Award and the Ellsworth Medal

lion, the highest award of the KU Alumni Association. He is a Paul Harris Fellow of Rotary International. He is the recipient of the Distinguished Service Award from the Kansas Association of Broadcasters and a member of the Kansas Broadcasters' Hall of Fame. With Doug Vance, he co-authored a book "Max and the Jayhawks", which chronicles his 50 year association with coaches and athletes.

Max was winner of the College Football Hall of Fame's Chris Schenkel Award for broadcasting excellence in 1996. He was the first media member of KU's Athletic Hall of Fame. Dick Vitale selected him as a member of his "Sweet Sixteen", his choice of the top 16 college basketball broadcasters in the country.

The Sporting News chose him as the "Best College Radio Personality in the Country" in 2001. Sports Illustrated featured him in a special article for his over 55 years of covering college sports. He was also elected to the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame in 2001. The Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Mass., selected him for the Curt Gowdy Award for Broadcasting Excellence in 2004. He was only the second college broadcaster ever to have been so honored.

At the conclusion of his 60th year of following the Jayhawks, the KU Athletics Corporation presented its first ever Lifetime Service Award to Max. He was honored at that time by Resolutions of Commendation from the United States Senate, the United States House of Representatives, the Kansas Governor's Office, the Kansas Senate and the Kansas House of Representatives. He was also recognized by every member school of the Big 12 Conference, as well as the Conference Office.

On the business side, Max spent a long career in the banking industry, retiring as a Senior Vice President of Douglas County Bank in Lawrence. His primary responsibilities included marketing, public relations, business development, employee training and electronic banking. He was instrumental in helping develop electronic advancements for the bank. He served as chairman of the national advertising campaign for the American Bankers Association and also headed the advertising division of the Kansas Bankers Association.

Max also currently serves as Special Assistant to Kansas Athletics Director Lew Perkins.

Max and his wife, Isobel, have two children, Jane Hart, Topeka and Kurt Falkenstien, Lawrence.

**Dr. Richard Bergen**

**Distinguished Kansan for 2006**

Dr. Richard Bergen is a 1953 Bethany College art graduate and resident of Salina, who operates Bergen's Studio & Art Gallery. He is a full-time sculptor who will quickly tell you "few people make their living as sculptors."

But, once you meet the man, you know Bergen is one of the few.

As a child, he was artistic. Both his mother and grandmother were painters and encouraged him. As a student, he admits that he probably improved his grades by illustrating his papers. "The teachers loved my drawings," he says.

Richard made his first sculpture of concrete at the age of 12.

Bergen had not planned to attend college. After military service as a U.S. Navy officer during World War II, he became a building contractor. Dinner at a minister's home changed that. The minister, Ralph Reed, had studied at Bethany College. While in Lindsborg, he had purchased a Birger Sandzen oil painting. Bergen thought the Sandzen oil was more interesting than the dinner. He was fascinated by Sandzen's style and subject.

The minister noted the young man's interest and encouraged Richard's mother to consider Bethany College. She submitted an application on her son's behalf.

When Bergen came to Bethany, he was intrigued by college, by the countryside and by the intellectual atmosphere. He married a Bethany coed, Lou Ann Lindstrom, from Marquette.

He also credits his advisor and Bethany Art Professor, Ray Stapp, for suggesting an educational and

professional plan which would hold his interest and combine his creative energy with his artistic talents and friendly spirit.

Richard Bergen taught art for 24 years. "Teaching has been important to me," Bergen said. "I like people. And, I like to see how art changes their lives."

Bergen earned a Master's degree at Kansas State University while teaching in the Public Schools in Salina. Later, while Head of the Art Department at Marymount College of Kansas, he attended Kansas University in Lawrence and earned a Doctorate in Art Education. It was at KU that Bergen developed an interest in bronze casting and stone carving. He was closely associated with Poco Fraiser and Eldon Teft, both were professors in the KU Sculpture Department.

When the Kansas Capitol Building was originally designed in the 1860s, it was intended to be surmounted with a sculpture. Legislation was finally passed and signed into law on May 10, 1984, specifying that the Kansas Arts Commission coordinate the selection of both a subject and an artist for a dome sculpture.

The school children of Kansas were asked to submit their ideas and their overwhelming choice was for a native American. In response, Salina sculptor Dr. Richard Bergen designed a bronze representation of a Kansa Indian titled "Ad Astra" from the state motto, "Ad Astra per Aspera", to the stars through difficulties.

Bergen won the arts commission's final competition in December, 1988. His sculpture was the unanimous choice from among three excellent finalists, chosen from a field of outstanding entries and is a fitting and lasting monument designed to complete the magnificent capitol building.

"The Kansa Indians were the original people of this area," said Bergen.

"Thus, the figure in the sculpture links our past and our present. The Indian draws the bow, symbolic of the energy of Kansans and points the arrow, the determination and resolve of the people to achieve their goals. The people of Kansas strive to aim high and work hard to build a better present and future. The Indian's aim is to the North Star, symbolic of a stable government.

"The North Star's position remains constant and steady as it continues to guide our state. Ad Astra, to the stars, points to a strong future for Kansas."

Most of Dr. Bergen's sculptures are bronze. Among the many sculptures are: "Heritage Woman", Heritage Square, Wichita; "Applause", Salina Community Theater, Salina; "The Brave", Council Grove High School, Council Grove; "Pony Express", Hall Brothers Park, Marysville; "The Bronco", Russell High School, Russell; "The Oil Riggers", Lincoln Park, Russell; "Bountiful Harvest", Elim Lutheran Church, Marquette; "The Muleskinner", St. John's Military School, Salina; "Logan Landscape", Dane Hansen Memorial Museum, Logan; "Blue Jay", Junction City High School, Junction City; Saline County War Memorial, Sunset Park, Salina; "Earth Seed", Geary County Community Hospital, Junction City; "Buffalo Soldier", Junction City; "K-State Wildcat", Kansas State University.

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

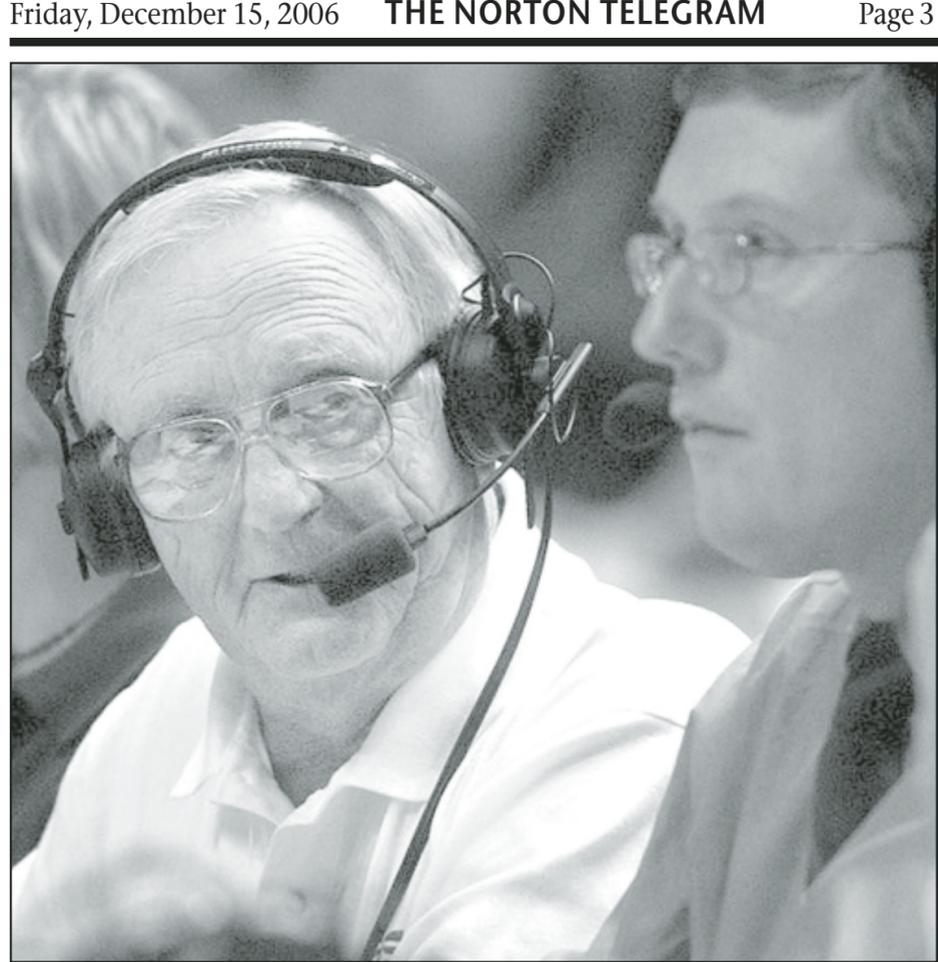
The Bergens have two children. Lori Bergen lives in San Marcos, Texas and Rich Bergen works with his father in the Salina studio.

**Polly Bales**

**Distinguished Service Citation**

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.

An authentic Kansas treasure in her own right, Polly 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



Max Falkenstien, the voice of K.U. sports, will be honored at the Native Sons and Daughters annual banquet on Jan. 26. — Courtesy photo

uncle-in-law Dane Hansen was born and built his successful multi-faceted business career.

Polly met Hansen's nephew, the late Dane Bales, while attending Kansas University in Lawrence. After their marriage, Dane served in World War II before they moved to Logan so that Dane could work with his uncle Dane Hansen in his various enterprises. Since Dane Hansen's death, Dane and Polly have played a key role in perpetuating his legacy. Polly supplied valuable information to author Billy Jones when he wrote the book, "Dane G. Hansen, Titan of Northwest Kansas".

Dane and Polly were also authors of the book, "Kate Hansen, The Grandest Mission on Earth from Kansas to Japan, 1907-1951".

The Hansen Plaza is the site of a multi-purpose building which includes a community meeting room, museum and gallery. 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.

With assistance from the Dane G. Hansen Foundation, Polly and Dane helped finance the Dane and Polly Bales Organ Recital Hall at the University of Kansas.

On April 21, 2005, Polly was inducted into the University of Kansas Women's Hall of Fame.

Although she has had the opportunity to travel around the world, Polly is sold on her native state of Kansas and wouldn't live anywhere else. "I am constantly thrilled by the gorgeous beauty and great diversity of the scenery in Kansas. The sunrises and sunsets in Kansas are magnificent!" she says.

An accomplished organist and pianist, Polly has been the organist for the United Methodist Church in Logan since 1962. And, she will sing 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. This year, she will play the piano for the 40th year at the annual meeting and banquet of the Native Sons and Daughters of Kansas.

Polly and Dane are the parents of the late Dane G. Bales, Jr., who is survived by his wife, Carol Bales.

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