IN MEMORIAM

WILLIAM ROY BALDWIN
MAY 28, 1953 – JANUARY 6, 2025

Footprints

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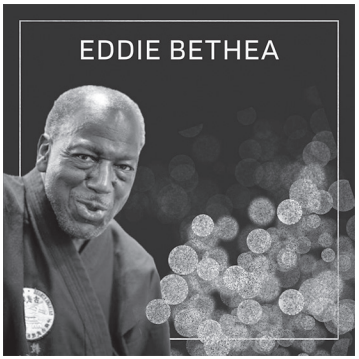

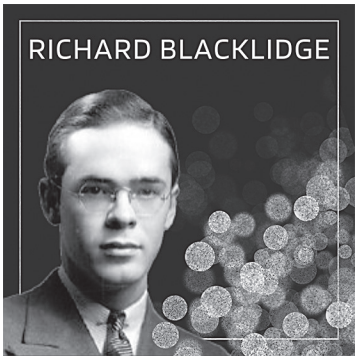

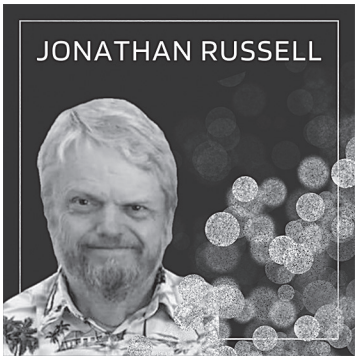

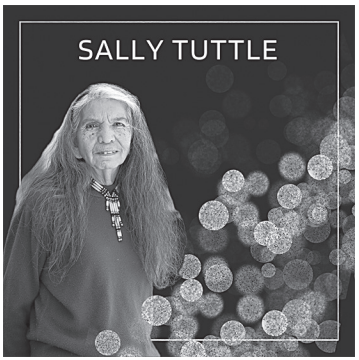

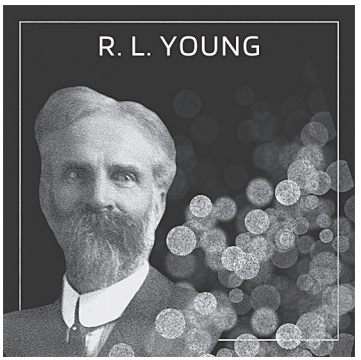

2025 Hall of Legends

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Spring 2025

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HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

From the Archives

Spring is right around the corner, and outdoor activities will be in demand. Kokomo had a Putt-Putt minigolf course for many years at 3040 South LaFountain. Clifford Signs now occupies the space that was Putt-Putt. In 1964, a 10-game ticket booklet cost $2.50. See more at facebook.com/HCHistory

From the Executive Director

Ready for 2025

We sit once again upon the changing of the seasons. The rush of Christmas is a recent memory – but a fantastic one.

Christmas at the Seiberling was a huge success in 2024! We had more than 2,400 people visitors who were able to see the magic that the decorators, volunteers, and staff put into the "Holiday Memories" theme.

Thank you to our sponsors The Wyman Group, Ivy Tech Community College Kokomo, First Farmers Bank & Trust, Community First Bank, City of Kokomo and Howard County governments, and Duke Energy for providing Opening Night, six free nights, and Candlelight Night.

We also want to thank In-Line Lawn & Lights in conjunction with Huston Electric for their massive efforts for our light display on the mansion and Elliott House.

We had four staff members who experienced their first Christmas at the Seiberling, and they stepped right in and knocked it out of the park. Curator Alyssa Witter-Pier, office manager Mary Reinhart, caretaker Patrick Williamson, and brand-new volunteer and outreach coordinator Laura Cone didn't bat any eyes at the bustle of Christmas. As always, assistant curator Randy Smith provided wisdom and experience that helped things go smoothly. I think we make a really great team!

I also want to expressly thank Christmas at the Seiberling co-chairs Judy Brown and Angela Washington, who once again successfully organized our biggest event.

Time moves on, and unfortunately sometimes that comes with sadness and heartbreak. Our beloved caretaker of 30 years Bill Baldwin passed away on January 6, 2025. Bill had recently retired due to health issues. Even well into spring, it's hard to believe he's not here fixing all the things. Bill knew our campus better than anyone and took great pride in making everything shine. Not a day goes by that I don't miss his twice-daily "check-ins" just to see if anyone needed anything. Rest in peace, friend.

In happier news, we have a couple of exciting things coming up for the organization. The 15th annual Hall of Legends event is April 24, 2025, so mark your calendars!

We will be inducting six new legends who will take their place with over 80 inductees over the past decade and a half. I was a newbie on the HCHS board in 2019 when director Dave Broman handed over the event reins to me. I didn't know anyone or anything about Howard County, but it quickly became one of my favorite events.

This year we will be inducting local karate instructor **Eddie Bethea**, long-time publisher of the Kokomo Tribune **Richard Blacklidge,**, previous county historian and artist **Jon Russell**, local Native American community champion **Sally Tuttle**, infectious disease expert Dr. **Mary E. Wilson**, and local architect **Robert L. Young**. Don't miss the event on April 24 and read on to learn more about each of these amazing people.

Lastly, we are busy planning our next exhibit Indiana University at the Seiberling. IU Kokomo is such a large part of the campus' past and we are excited to open an exhibit showcasing that history. As part of that effort, we are looking for previous students, professors, or anyone associated with IU Kokomo while it was at the Seiberling. Our curators would like to speak to YOU! Read on to find out how you can help us and stay tuned for more details!

Sincerely,
Anne Shaw
HCHS Executive Director

William Roy Baldwin
May 28, 1953 – January 6, 2025

By Anne Shaw
HCHS Executive Director

Bill Baldwin started his career at the Howard County Historical Society in 1994 as a custodian.

Over the next 30 years, he became the ultimate expert of the four historic buildings and the grounds of our campus. He began and ended every day with a "check-in," pulling out a chair in the office and chewing on a toothpick. Whatever anyone needed, he was ready to tackle it. "What do you need?" was his common refrain.

He took immense pride in keeping the place running and making everything look the very best that it could. No one knew this place better than Bill.

Bill was born right here in Kokomo on May 28, 1953. He took great pride in his family, and was never happier than when he was busy hanging out with his children and grandchildren.

He was a very proud "North-ender," calling upon his locational experience to fix anything that was awry. He loved to "north-end" whatever needed fixed.

He never met a cardboard box he didn't like, and woe to the person who touched anything in his basement that didn't get put back exactly as it was.

If he caught anyone glancing at his impressively organized tools, he'd throw out a quick "Don't even think about it" just to make sure you weren't, in fact, thinking about moving anything.

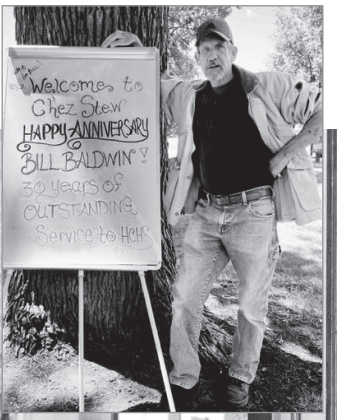
His ability to put up the lights for Christmas at the Seiberling was nothing short of an outstanding feat. The beauty of the buildings and grounds at all times was due to his direct efforts, especially at Christmas. He was always ready to lend a helping hand to decorators and didn't think twice about keeping everything clean.

We are extremely lucky that Bill was so organized that he labeled absolutely everything. It is one of the biggest reasons that the first Christmas without him went smoothly. Even when he couldn't be here, he was so helpful.

Bill always had a smile on his face and would go beyond the extra mile for anyone who needed it.

Bill wasn't just a good coworker, he was a good friend. He always had a smile on his face and would go beyond the extra mile for anyone who needed it.

Bill was a large part of the very fabric of HCHS and he is deeply missed every day.



Bill Baldwin was friend and co-worker to all the staffers at HCHS, from the time he was hired by then-director Kelly Karickhoff. From upper left, Bill chats with now retired curator Stew Lauterbach, poses with acknowledgement of his 30 years at the Seiberling, and goes over a to-do list with the late Dave Broman, who worked with Bill as a board member, president and HCHS director.

Remembering Mary Ransopher (1912-2025)

Gathered togther to celebrate Mary Ransopher's 112th birthday on Dec. 25, 2024, were, from left, son Ed Ransopher, daughters Susan Thomas and Jane Dunn, and Judy Sheets, the mayor of Frankfort, Indiana. (Photo provided by the family.)

Mary Isabel (Farlow) Ransopher, who was born on the family farm five years before the United States entered World War I, died on Feb. 13, 2025.

At the time of her death at the age of 112, she was unofficially reported to be the oldest living Hoosier. She passed away at Wesley Manor Retirement Community in Clinton County, Indiana, where she had been a resident for 30 years.

Mary was born on Christmas Day 1912, in the family home near New London, Indiana. She was the daughter of Ed Orlif and Pansy (Thompson) Farlow. On Aug. 28, 1935, she married J. Marland Ransopher, and he preceded her in death on July 15, 2006.

According to her obituary, Mary was a 1932 graduate of New London High School and served as a 4-H leader in Honey Creek township until she was married. She was a teacher's aide and substitute teacher at Western High School in Howard County, Indiana.

Besides raising her family, Mary taught piano lessons privately at her home. Known as a strong-willed, independent, and tenacious woman, she was a 50-year member of the Better Homes and Garden Club and a member of the United Society of Friends Women International.

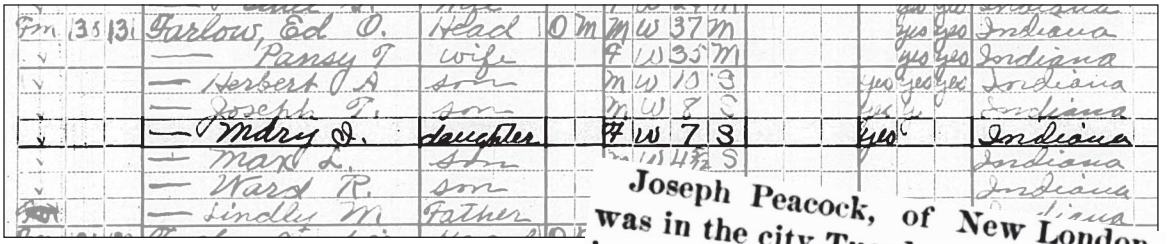
Mary will be remembered for her the wonderful stories about her long life. She was proud to be a life-long member of New London Friends Church, where she was the church organist for many years.

She is survived by her children: Jane Dunn, Ed (Marilyn) Ransopher, Susan (Ron) Thomas, and Tad (Julia) Ransopher. In addition, she leaves 10 grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren, nine great-great-grandchildren, and a large extended family of nieces and nephews.

Mary was preceded in death by her parents, her husband and her brothers, Herbert Farlow, Joseph Farlow, Max Farlow, and Bob Farlow; a son-in-law, Glenn Dunn; and a grandchild, Randy Ransopher.

Ransopher was interviewed and featured last year in the *Clinton County Daily News*: "Community to Celebrate Mary Ransopher's 112th Birthday," November 29, 2024; and the *Lafayette Journal & Courier* on July 12, 2024: "Indiana's oldest resident credits good food, 'the Good Book' for long life".

Family has deep roots in Howard County



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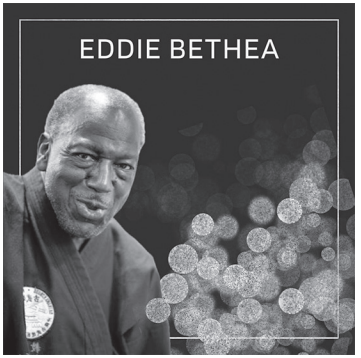
			— Pansy T	wife			F	W	35	M		yes yes	Indiana
			— Herbert A	son			M	W	10	S		yes yes	Indiana
			— Joseph T.	son			M	W	8	S		yes	Indiana
			— Mary D.	daughter			F	W	7	S		yes	Indiana
			— Max L.	son			M	W	4½	S			Indiana
			— Ward R.	son									Indiana
			— Lindley M	Father									Indiana

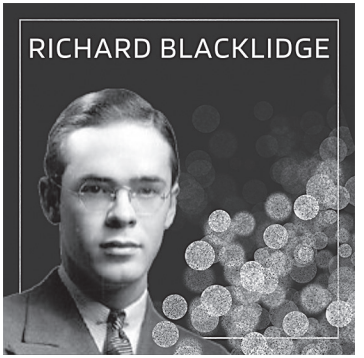
Mary Farlow in the 1920 federal census for Monroe Township. Her father, Ed, inherited the Farlow Orchard from his father, Lindley. Lindley Farlow purchased the property in 1891 from his father-in-law, Joseph Peacock. Peacock was said to be the oldest citizen of Howard County when he died in 1921.

Joseph Peacock, of New London, was in the city Tuesday with a fine invoice of sweet pure country butter. Mrs. Peacock is one of the best butter makers in Howard county and always sells the product of her churn to the Hotel Clinton.

Kokomo Saturday Tribune July 29, 1884

2025 Hall of Legends



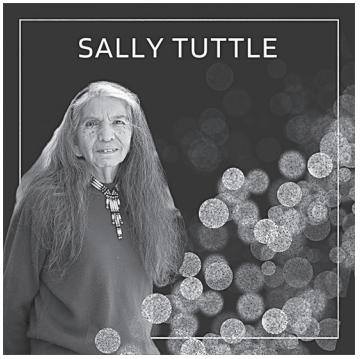


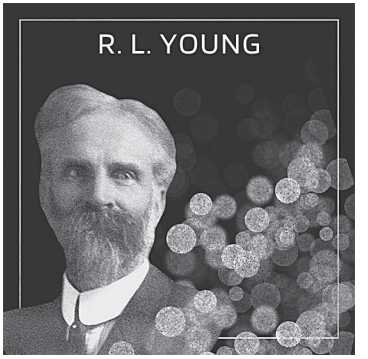
SIX VERY INTERESTING AND INFLUENTIAL people will be honored Thursday, April 24, when the 15th Howard County Hall of Legends event takes place in Hingst Hall. They will join more than 80 accomplished individuals and organizations honored since the first induction ceremony in 2010.

Members of the 15th Hall of Legends class, chosen by a volunteer committee of community leaders from a wide range of organizations, are **EDDIE BETHEA** (a ninth-degree blackbelt who has guided thousands of karate students in their journeys), the late **RICHARD BLACKLIDGE** (publisher of the Kokomo Tribune who revolutionized newspaper operations in his 40 years in the industry), the late **JONATHAN RUSSELL** (accomplished artist, Army veteran, and champion of local history), **SALLY TUTTLE** (an Oklahoma transplant and member of The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma who has established multiple non-profits benefiting Native Americans in the state), **DR. MARY E. (LAUSCH) WILSON** (an internationally recognized expert in the geographic distribution of infectious diseases), and the late **ROBERT L. YOUNG** (a local architect who designed more than 100 buildings in Howard County between 1890 and the 1920s).

The April 24 banquet, a program of the Howard County Historical Society (HCHS), will begin at 6:30 p.m. (doors open at 6 p.m.) in Hingst Hall on the Ivy Tech Community College Kokomo Campus, 1815 E. Morgan St. Tickets are available through the HCHS website at https://www.howardcountymuseum.org/programs/howard-county-legends or by calling the office at 765-452-4314. Anyone interested in helping to sponsor the program should also contact the HCHS office.

2025 Hall of Legends





Several threads run through the Hall of Legends Class of 2025, similarities and differences found in research on their lives. Two (Eddie and Jon) were accomplished practitioners of the Japanese martial art of karate. In an interesting twist, one (Robert L. Young) was a friend of the grandfather of another (Richard Blacklidge), playing golf occasionally with J.A. Kautz. Only one (Richard Blacklidge) was born in Howard County; the other five "legends" moved here later in life. Several (Blacklidge, Russell and Young) were known for their contributions to the economic and architectural history of Kokomo; others (Bethea and Tuttle) are known for their contributions to the cultural growth of the community and its sometimes forgotten citizens. One (Wilson) has made her mark in the broader world, working to control diseases across the globe.

The 2025 honorees join a list of more than 80 truly exceptional people and organizations with Howard County connections who have been honored in the first 14 years of this program. Some were born in Howard County and have made their mark here or in the broader world. Some came here and made outstanding contributions in their "adopted" home. These "legends" include America's first female U.S. Marine, the "Father of Modern Optometry," the creator of Clifford the Big Red Dog, two pioneers of the automobile industry, one of the world's leading heart surgeons, a country music superstar and an opera singer, three award-winning journalists, and multiple educators, among others.

A video tribute to the Class of 2025 will premiere during the April 24 program

Read on to learn more about the Legends of 2025 ....

EDDIE BETHEA HAS BEEN SEEN walking the downtown streets of Kokomo since 1988 when his karate studio, the Kokomo School of Self Defense, took up residence at its current home at 119 W. Sycamore St.

Bethea's walk is that of a man of dignity and purpose. A ninth-degree blackbelt in karate and winner of five world grand championships, Bethea also has the walk of an athlete. But the most distinctive quality of Bethea's walk is his habit of speaking to anyone who crosses his path – young or old, professionally dressed or in rags, black or white.

Bethea has embodied this inclusive style over the 44 years he has taught karate in Kokomo, but the inclusion comes with standards. "I tell my students 'I am going to love you and learn you and lead you," he says. Another of his favorite teaching points: "You don't look down on someone unless you are trying to help them up."

Over these many years, Bethea's students have responded with love and respect, addressing him as "sensei," an honorary title defined as "one who comes before."

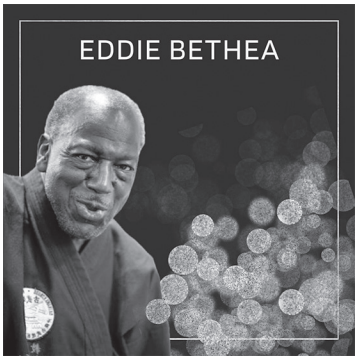
Donnie Michael, a man now in his 50s with his own karate studio, is one of Bethea's greatest success stories. Donnie was a teenager headed in the wrong direction when his parents brought him to Bethea. "I was a thug and would have died a thug if it had not been for Sensei," noted Michael. Of Michael, Bethea said, "He was my student; now he is my son." Bethea says that they both work hard to be champions of people to show them how to climb the ladder of success.

Bethea was born in Wilmington, N.C., on Dec. 20, 1943, the second of eight children. Growing up in the South, Bethea became all too familiar with racism. "I grew to be an adult infested with negativism," he said. "There was one consolation to becoming an adult and that was the fact that maybe I could get out of that environment which made me like a nobody."

After high school, he joined the U.S. Air Force, eventually going to Okinawa. He had become fascinated with the television show "Wild, Wild West" starring Robert Conrad, who displayed karate moves Bethea longed to master. This desire and his overseas assignment converged in Okinawa when he saw a sign that read "karate." Inside, he met Grand Master Shugoro Nakazato who would prove crucial to Bethea's life journey.

Michael estimates that 10,000 students in the Kokomo area have been impacted by Bethea since he came to Kokomo in 1971. Michael also notes that Bethea is a popular figure and sought-after speaker in the broader karate community. With a smile on his face, Bethea offers the same greeting to everyone he meets: "I 'spect I reckon I'm gonna make it. Can't sing, can't dance, fish ain't bite-en, way too nice to plow."

He says his greatest rewards have been the relationships he has established and maintained, and he loves to sit and laugh and talk about all he has shared over the years. Those things include a legacy not only of martial arts, but of leading young and old alike on a journey of self-reflection and learning how to be part of a family – no matter who they are.



LEADER, FAIR, COMPASSIONATE, FATHER, EXTRAORDINARY wit, exceptionally kind, innovator -- just a few of the words used to describe Richard H. Blacklidge, CEO of the Kokomo Tribune from 1938 to 1978.

Richard (also known as “Dick,” “RHB,” and “Mr. B”) started his career there in 1936 in the advertising department after graduating from Purdue University. His father, Kent H. Blacklidge, son-in-law of J.A. Kautz who had owned the newspaper since 1897, wanted Richard to work his way up the ladder. When his grandfather died in 1938, Richard, then 24, was named CEO and general manager. In 1956, he took the title of publisher, a position he held until his retirement in 1978.

Under Richard’s 40 years at the helm, the Tribune grew, earning a reputation as “the heart of the community.” At one point, they employed more than 30 reporters. One quick look at nearly any edition during the 20th Century would show the number and scope of topics covered.

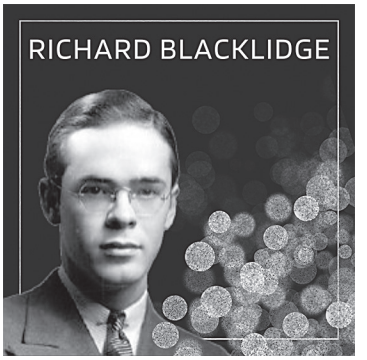
Importantly, Richard also made sure that the paper grew technologically as well. In the 1960s and 1970s, his small-town daily newspaper revolutionized printing and put Kokomo on the map for newspaper production. The Tribune became one of the first papers to convert to offset printing and photo composition. They also had one of the first two Gross Metro presses in the nation, a marvel displayed in a wall of windows on Union Street for all to see. Kent Blacklidge, one of Richard’s three sons, noted that people came from all over the world to see how the Kokomo Tribune did business.

Richard’s professional accomplishments included serving as president of the Hoosier State Press Association; secretary, vice president, and then president of the American Newspaper Publishers Association (ANPA) (chosen from some 1,000 publishers, and the first president from a smaller local paper); president of the Inland Daily Press Association; vice president of the International Press Association; and founder and president of radio station WIOU here in Kokomo.

Not only did he hold these impressive positions, but unsurprisingly was hailed as an effective leader in all of them. In a note to Richard as he stepped down as president of the ANPA in 1972, J. Montgomery Curtis of Knight Newspapers, Inc., wrote, “I do not believe that ANPA ever had two better years than under your presidency.”

While Richard compiled a long list of professional accomplishments and innovations, his staff, friends, and family remember him for his kindness and strong leadership. He cared deeply about his family, and time with them was very important. Despite working almost around the clock, he made it to family dinner seven days a week. Son Kent recalls that his father loved pie and insisted it be served along with the main dish for dinner.

Richard passed away in his sleep in 1993 at the age of 78 after a normal day that had included a great golf game and a steak dinner (presumably with pie), leaving an amazing legacy. Kent wrote that his father “cared for people. He hurt with people. He had no tolerance for injustice, bigotry, or hypocrisy. He quietly shared of himself and his resources with those in his life.”



WHEN CANCER AND PNEUMONIA CLAIMED Jon Russell on Dec. 7, 2023, at the age of 76, the world lost an artist, patriot, historian, and consummate storyteller. To those who knew him well in Howard County, he was also a dear friend.

A true Renaissance man, Jonathan Russell's interests ran from sculpture to painting, from the history of the United States to his family history, from etched glass to pipe organs, from military service to K-12 art teacher, from restoring historic buildings to creating modern spaces. Sculptor, painter, sign maker, karate master, preservationist, county historian, muralist, teacher, mentor, leader.

Born in La Porte, Indiana, in 1947, Jon was the son of a traveling pastor. The family's moves took them as far east as Delaware and then back to Indiana, where Jon graduated from Carroll (County) High School in 1965. Jon served as an Army medic in Vietnam and completed a bachelor's degree in art education, fine art and art history at Purdue University in 1976.

During some 50 years in Howard County, working under the name Russell Design, Jon racked up an impressive list of experiences. While his professional credentials were extraordinary, he was also a family man. Jon and his wife, Amy, who recently retired after decades of local library work, raised three children in Kokomo and welcomed their first grandchild in 2023.

Jon was a member and former president of the Howard County Historical Society and the Howard County Genealogical Society, served as president of the Kokomo Historic Review Board, and served on the advisory board of the Russiaville Historical Society. Jon was also Instrumental in obtaining National Register of Historic Places designation for a number of local historic properties. Many buildings throughout Howard County regained structural integrity and historic authenticity thanks to Jon's work as carpenter and contractor.

As a member of Preserving Wildcat Valley, Jon helped promote the history of the creek's winding path. He worked with the Kokomo Early History Learning Center, looking at the area's history before the arrival of Europeans. In addition, Jon was a founding member of the Kokomo Designers' Showhome project, an annual fundraiser for the YWCA.

Military service and military history were also subjects dear to this U.S. Army veteran. He was a member of the American Legion and active in the Sons of the American Revolution. As a member of the board of the Howard County Veterans Memorial Committee, he was an integral part of the development of monuments at Darrough Chapel Park and on the courthouse square to honor veterans' service and sacrifice.

In the 1990s, Jon turned his talents to sculpting, creating the lion's head that decorates "Old City Hall" (now the Hobson) as well as the figure of Jesus Christ that graces the Kokomo Rescue Mission. In 2015, his impressive statue of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was unveiled as the centerpiece of the MLK memorial park on Apperson Way at Jackson Street.

When Jon died, the tributes poured in, attesting to his skills – and how much he is missed.

WHEN INDIANA GOVERNOR ERIC HOLCOMB presented the 2024 Civil Rights Humanitarian Award to Sally Tuttle in January 2024, it was fitting acknowledgement for her many decades of community service.

As a member of The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, the longtime Kokomo, Indiana resident has long worked to promote and protect Native American culture and history. The civil rights award, presented during the state's official Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. celebrations in Indianapolis, expressly recognizes individuals who address poverty, economic disenfranchisement and social injustice.

Born in Oklahoma, Tuttle went to that state's Chilocco Indian School, attended Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas, and then joined family living in Sacramento, California. There she met and married David Tuttle from Galveston, Indiana, who was serving in the United States Air Force.

Making their home back in Kokomo, David spent a career with the Chrysler Corporation and he and Sally raised two children. Over the years, Sally and David became vintage car enthusiasts and longtime participants in the annual Haynes-Apperson Festival. Since David's death in 2020, Sally has continued to support the area auto activities and remains a familiar face at community events.

But her vision extended beyond Kokomo's city limits and out to the many Native Americans who live In the Hoosier State long after the tribal governments were removed in the 1800s. "I couldn't understand the state named Indiana after the land of Indians and there was such a blank history of Native American Indians. It was all pre-removal," Sally told the Kokomo Tribune in 2022. "We have a long tradition. We have a different way of life, but we are all part of the community of the state of Indiana."

Sally has consistently turned advocacy into results. She created or has consulted with several nonprofit organizations throughout Indiana focusing on Native American healthcare and housing issues, as well as Indian veterans' benefits, and especially working to correct the use of racial caricatures for school mascots.

Sally remains committed to helping with statewide Native issues. She currently serves as vice-chair of the Indiana Native American Indian Affairs Commission. Most recently she has been working with the Kokomo Native Initiative, a collective committee including the City of Kokomo and local history organizations that promotes Native culture and creates educational programs. The "Drums Along the Wildcat" public gathering each September in Kokomo is one of its signature events.

"My goal is to make sure that the Native community of the state of Indiana is projected in a positive, correct vision of who we are today," Sally told the Tribune in 2022. She is a steadfast and adamant voice for the many communities she serves, but her Indian heritage is always first and foremost. She proudly affirmed that point while accepting the 2024 Humanitarian Award at the ceremony in Indianapolis: "I will never give up in making sure Native American Indian people have a voice within the land of Indians called Indiana."

WHAT DO GROWING UP ON a farm with three brothers, a love of the outdoors, a passion for science, and a drive to achieve what most girls could not have in common?

They are factors that combined to lead Dr. Mary E. (Lausch) Wilson to defy the defined societal norms of her generation's upbringing and blaze a trail for female doctors.

Mary started life in 1942 as a city girl in Indianapolis. In 1951, when she was in third grade, the Lausch family moved to Howard County to take over the operation of the Kurtz family farm. Mary quickly became a country girl, exploring the woods, helping with harvest, and participating in 4-H.

Schools at the time did not allow girls to play competitive sports, so she became a cheerleader, and sang and played the flute. After graduating from Northwestern High School in 1960, Mary headed to Indiana University, earning a degree in French and English. After three years of teaching in public schools in Madison, Wisconsin, where she also did graduate work in English literature, Mary remembers, she was reading in the rare books library when she had an epiphany:

What she really wanted was to go to medical school. The next day, she called the University of Wisconsin Medical School to inquire about applying. Like many other women in the 1960s, she says, "I was told that I was not a good candidate, wasn't serious, and would be taking the place of a man." Persistence paid off; the next year, she was accepted into the medical school, one of eight women in a class of 104.

During a summer rotation at the Mallory Institute of Pathology in Boston in 1969, Mary fell in love with the city and returned for training in internal medicine and infectious diseases. While doing clinical work in Haiti, she started to grapple with the question of what determines where specific infectious diseases occur and how and why they move.

Since then, she has been a trailblazer in the field, recognized internationally as an expert in global health and a pioneer with her work on the geography of infectious diseases, the role of travel in their spread, and on the relationship of global environmental change and infectious disease.

Mary worked at Mount Auburn Hospital, becoming the Chief of Infectious Diseases while teaching at Harvard University, and served on national and international panels on infectious disease and immunization.She authored "A World Guide to Infections: Diseases, Distribution, Diagnosis" in 1991, at the time the first and foremost book on the topic. Her second book, "Antibiotics: What Everyone Needs to Know," came out in 2019.

Mary and her husband of 50 years love to travel and remain active in the field of global health. Today she is a clinical professor at the University of California, San Francisco, School of Medicine and adjunct professor in the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Her advice for women and girls today? "Go for it. If something interests you, pursue it. There are so many options today." Options that women like Dr. Mary E. Wilson helped make possible.

ROBERT LINCOLN YOUNG WAS BORN in Belfast, Ireland, on January 30, 1862, his birthplace and his name courtesy of his prominent father's association with President Abraham Lincoln.

Robert's father, John, was a native of Ireland. He'd worked as a pastor in Mason County, Kentucky, and a teacher (and president) at North Western Christian University (later Butler University) in Indianapolis before moving to Ladoga, Indiana (likely teaching at the Ladoga Old Normal School), where he married his wife, Clarissa, in 1860.

In 1861, President Lincoln appointed him consul to Belfast, sending the Youngs across the Atlantic for the duration of the Civil War. John held that position until 1866 when the family, now including Robert, moved back to the United States. Robert attended Indianapolis schools, including Butler, and graduated from the University of Illinois in 1883.

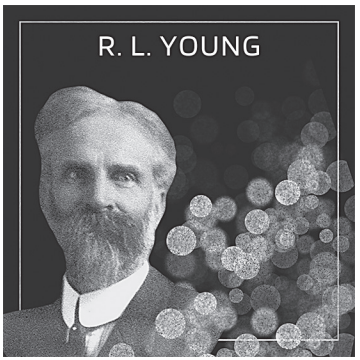
By the 1890s, Robert (also going by R. L.) was working as an architect in Kokomo with the firm Armstrong-Landon & Co. During this time, he designed many buildings in Kokomo including Palmer School (1895), Willard School (1896), Grace United Methodist Church (1896), and the second Kokomo High School (1898).

Robert met Clara Kitchen, a widow with two daughters, and the couple was married in 1897. After a few years living in Newton, Massachusetts, they were back in Kokomo by 1903. In 1908 the family lived on East Jefferson Street but had yet to build their house at 1223 E. Jefferson. The year 1908 also saw a new architectural firm comprised of H. A. Butz and R. L. Young.

Robert was prolific in his work up until around 1918. An advertisement by Robert in the Kokomo Tribune in 1921 announced his return from "approximately three years" spent at several engineering and architectural firms in Chicago. One source reports that the Youngs retired in 1922 and headed to Florida, but were back in Kokomo by 1928. The Depression hit hard and Robert and Clara suffered, eventually losing their house on Jefferson Street. Clara died in 1935, and Robert ended up in the care of his son J. Russell in Indianapolis. Robert was admitted to Central State Hospital a few months before his death on November 17, 1944, of several physical and mental ailments.

Robert was a versatile architect and his buildings include Italianate, Gothic, Queen Anne, Richardsonian Romanesque Revival, Prairie, Craftsman, and even Egyptian Revival styles. His larger works include the former Y.M.C.A. building (1910), the Russiaville train depot (1912), the Elwood Haynes house (and possibly the gardener's house and lab house across the street) (1916), the Johnson mansion on North Washington (early 1900s), the "Waiting House" at Crown Point Cemetery (1905), Citizens National Bank, and the Isis Theater.

He was involved in several housing developments including the Miller Highlands neighborhood (1916) and the planned Lafayette Place neighborhood (1917). He designed a number of residences in Kokomo, many of which are still standing today. Robert certainly made his mark on Kokomo and Howard County, a legacy that remains visible if you know where to look.



At one time, Indiana University held classes in the Seiberling Mansion.

Were you a student here? HCHS wants to hear from you!

In 1946, Indiana University purchased the Seiberling Mansion, along with the adjacent Elliott House and carriage houses, to serve as IU's Kokomo Extension Center, a purpose that continued until the campus moved to its current location on Washington Street in 1965.

During those years, the IU Extension Center was led by directors Virgil Hunt, Smith Higgins, and Victor Bogle. In 1971, IU leased the Seiberling Mansion to the Howard County Historical Society to be used as a museum, with the university retaining ownership until 1997.

The IU years are the focus of the historical society's latest history project with the goal of capturing the personal stories and experiences of students who passed through the halls of the IU Kokomo Extension Center at the Seiberling Mansion. The curatorial staff and exhibits committee are hard at work preparing "IU at the Seiberling," a new exhibit set to open this fall at the Howard County Museum.

We are interested in speaking to anyone who either has knowledge about the Seiberling Mansion while it served as a college campus or anyone who attended classes at the at the Seiberling Mansion from 1947 to 1965.

In addition to stories, we are seeking photographs and artifacts related to the IU Kokomo Extension Center for our upcoming exhibit.

Anyone with information can reach out to the historical society at 765-452-4314 or contact the curatorial staff at alyssa.witter-pier@howardcountymuseum.org. By participating, you can contribute valuable insights to the historical record, helping to preserve and understand the Seiberling Mansion's history as a college campus.

MEET THE NEW TEAM MEMBERS: Patrick Williamson

We would like to welcome Patrick Williamson as our new head of maintenance here at the Howard County Historical Society!

Born and raised in Kokomo, Indiana, Patrick has been connected to Howard County for quite some time. A 1998 graduate of Kokomo High School, he has also been an active member of Beta Nu, the Kokomo chapter of the national Phi Delta Kappa Fraternity, for the last 27 years.

Patrick has been happily married to his wife Holly for 22 years, with whom he shares sons Greyson, 19, and Brennon, 18. Their family includes two loving pets, a cat named Keykey and a dog named Kevin.

Being an avid musician since he was 10 years old, Patrick oftentimes finds himself playing blues with his guitar or harmonica. In his free time, Patrick enjoys playing music and traveling alongside his band.

Before working at the Howard County Historical Society, Patrick worked for the county at the Robert J. Kinsey Youth Center for more than 18 years. For over 10 of those years, he worked in the maintenance department and as the maintenance director.

Patrick is looking forward to his new role as head of maintenance at HCHS as he is excited to help restore and maintain the historic property and its buildings.

FUN FACT: Patrick is a musician who often finds himself playing blues guitar or harmonica.

MEET THE NEW TEAM MEMBERS: Laura Cone

Our new outreach coordinator Larua Cone has always called Kokomo home. She was born and raised here and graduated from Kokomo High School in 1996. After high school, Laura worked with STAR Financial Bank for several years and later with a local law firm as a legal assistant.

Laura earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Health and Wellness from Kaplan University in 2014. From 2016 to 2018, she worked as a food and nutrition educator and outreach specialist for the Kokomo Downtown Farmers Market.

Laura has also volunteered with the Kokomo School Corporation in various capacities.

Laura has been happily married to her husband of 20 years with whom she shares three sons. Their family also includes a 3-year-old Portuguese Water Dog named Emma. Laura is very family-oriented and chooses to be an advocate for her three autistic sons.

Laura enjoys traveling with her family to Crystal Lake in Michigan, reading, and cultivating learning opportunities for her family.

Through her role as outreach coordinator, Laura hopes to increase the community's awareness and accessibility of the Howard County Historical Society and Howard County Museum.

She supports and celebrates the diverse people who come together to ensure the preservation of Howard County history, including members, volunteers, sponsors, and staff.

FUN FACT: Laura was a food and nutrition educator at the Kokomo Downtown Farmers Market.

Making Holiday Memories

By Judy Brown

HCHS President and Co-chair of Christmas at the Seiberling Committee

Starting Nov. 12, 2024, 24 decorators – individuals and groups – began to interpret the historical society's festive 2024 theme – "Holiday Memories."

Seven of these groups were totally new to "Christmas at the Seiberling," their experience limited to what veteran decorators could describe or show in photos. It was all new as well for Patrick Williamson, the new caretaker of the HCHS campus, who admirably embraced all of the decorating chaos that goes into transforming the mansion into a holiday extravaganza. Laura Cone, the new volunteer and outreach coordinator and Mary Reinhard also stepped right into the chaos, providing much-needed planning and execution of scheduling volunteers.

After a hugely successful opening night with more than 500 guests in attendance, the new volunteers and staff members had a much better understanding of the significance of this annual community event and the value of their efforts!

On opening night Nov. 30, while visitors waited on the lawn in the cold, Santa was escorted with blaring sirens into the lighting ceremony that officially opened the holiday season. At 6 p.m., sponsor Paul Wyman turned the switch to reveal a decorated mansion festooned in the new outdoor lighting design sponsored by In-Line Lawn & Lights.

Thanks to sponsors The Wyman Group, Ivy Tech Community College Kokomo, First Farmers Bank & Trust, Community First Bank, City of Kokomo and Howard County governments, and Duke Energy, the community was invited to visit the mansion on eight evenings in December.

Ivy Tech employee Kristen Jenkins and her children had a great time with Santa Bob Sucharski, an Ivy Tech instructor when not decked out in red.

Those evenings were made special by visits from volunteer Santas and volunteer musical groups including the Kokomo Chamber Brass, Hoosier String Players, Winding Creek Friends, the Choraliers, Kokomo Park Band Brass Group, and the Indiana University Kokomo Flute Choir.

In all, more than 2,400 people visited "Christmas at the Seiberling" during the month of December hosted by a group of faithful volunteers. Once again, guests voted by donation for their favorite decorated room and, for the third year, the Dining Room decorated by Marella Williams was the top vote getter.

Not far behind were the Parlor decorated by Christmas at the Seiberling Committee co-chair Angela Washington and the Walnut Bedroom decorated by Symposium.

Thanks to the many who volunteered in any way and all who visited in 2024!

Above, Eunice Jackson and Marella Williams greeted guests in the Dining Room that again took first prize in the people's choice competition. Below, nutcrackers stand at attention in the Walnut Bedroom while garlands festoon the grand staircase. The IUK Flute Choir was among the musical groups that entertained.

Membership

Our new and renewed members

Carol Anderson
June Beck
Judy Brown
Janet Duchateau
Norma Dunn
Brett Ellison
Teresa Fields
Tom & Lynn Folkers
Brandy Hayes-Manning
Sarah Heath
Taylor Henry
Charmaine Herda
Cary Hiers
Amy Huffman
Ken & Marcheta Humphrey
Patty Jones
Dave & Linda Kitchell
Shirley Lee
Marshall & Donna McCoy
Mary Jo McClellan
Steve Daily & Michelle Martin
Richard & Marsha Miller
Thomas & Donna Morr
Alexandra Metcalf
Richard Moser
David & Lisa Olmstedt
Caele Pemberton
David & Melody Rayl
Jon Rodgers
Randy & Mary Rusch
Darrell & Tonia Sherrod
J Alan Teller
Rosie Wiggs
Wilda Wolford

2025 EVENTS

HOWARD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

APRIL 24 — **HALL OF LEGENDS**
15th annual event

JUNE 21 — **JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION**
Free museum admission

JULY 4 — **CELEBRATING VETERANS**
Free museum admission for veterans

JULY 25-26 — **MR. KINGSTON'S AUTO EXHIBITION**
Free event on mansion lawn

OCT 10-11 — **HCHS CEMETERY WALK**
Meet local historic figures

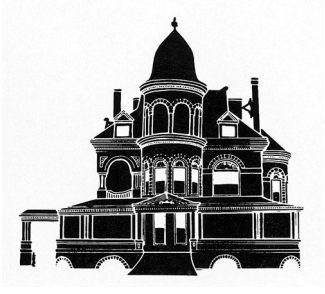
NOV 18 — **ANNUAL MEETING**
All society members welcome

NOV 29 — **CHRISTMAS AT THE SEIBERLING**
Sponsored nights:
Dec 4-5, Dec 11-12, Dec 18-20

Open Tuesday-Sunday 1-4 pm

www.hchistory.org

Howard County
Historical Society
1200 W. Sycamore St.
Kokomo, IN 46901



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