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Recipients to receive the Wyoming Business Hall of Fame Award

CHEYENNE, Wyo. - Neil A. "Mick" McMurry, Howard Woody and Kelly Lockhart will be inducted into the Wyoming Business Hall of Fame during a Nov. 13 banquet at the 2019 Governor's Business Forum.

Created in 2013, the Wyoming Business Hall of Fame recognizes business and industry leaders who have demonstrated substantial business merit while making a virtuous impact on their community. The Wyoming Business Hall of Fame is a cooperative project of the Wyoming Business Alliance/Wyoming Heritage Foundation, the Daniels Fund, the University of Wyoming (UW) College of Business and the Wyoming Business Council.

The late McMurry, of Casper, and Woody, of Mountain View, have been selected for the Legacy category, which recognizes individuals for making historic and significant long-term contributions to the business community. Kelly Lockhart, of Jackson, was selected for the Contemporary/Visionary category, which recognizes an individual who is an up and coming emerging business person or entrepreneur who has a vision for Wyoming's future.

"The 2019 Hall of Fame inductees truly embody business excellence in financial, telecommunications, agriculture, and mining industries in Wyoming," said Governor Mark Gordon. "They also stand out for their unwavering dedication to improving the lives of others."

"The Hall of Fame awards give us the opportunity to celebrate ethical business leaders who have made and continue to make significant contributions in Wyoming," said Cindy DeLancey, President of the Wyoming Business Alliance/Wyoming Heritage Foundation. "I have so much respect for how these businessmen have grown their companies and invested back into their communities. Their business acumen and integrity serve as a model for others to follow."

"Mick McMurry, Howard Woody and Kelly Lockhart are not only outstanding business leaders, they are true trailblazers," says David Sprott, dean of the UW College of Business. "Leading a business to success can be a tough challenge, and I am proud to recognize and honor this year's three outstanding Wyoming Business Hall of Fame inductees. Their successes reached far beyond our state borders and represent the very best of Wyoming."

"The Business Council extends its congratulations to all of this year's honorees," said Ron Gullberg, Business Development Director for the Wyoming Business Council. "These entrepreneurs embody efforts to add value to Wyoming's core industries and activate new ones while investing in communities and quality of life."

LEGACY AWARD - NEIL A. "MICK" MCMURRY

Businessman and philanthropist Neil A. "Mick" McMurry dedicated his life to building a better Wyoming. He died in 2015 and will be given the award posthumously.

“Jonah Bank of Wyoming nominated Mick McMurry to be inducted into the Wyoming Business Hall of Fame as a Wyoming Entrepreneur and Philanthropist. Mick’s vision, dedication and hard work, along with others developing the Jonah Field, has resulted in staggering revenues for the State of Wyoming, and every single citizen of this state continues to be a beneficiary of his business acumen and his personal generosity. Mick McMurry’s legacy carries on as Jonah Bank of Wyoming remains to Build a Better Wyoming and the McMurry Foundation keeps Paying It Forward,” said Mark Zaback, President and CEO of Jonah Bank.

After graduating from the University of Wyoming’s College of Business in 1968, McMurry served his country for two years in Vietnam. After his service, McMurry and his brother Vic owned and operated McMurry Brothers Company, a heavy construction company from 1979 to 1990. Following the sale of McMurry Brothers in 1990, McMurry established Nerd Enterprises Inc. In a decision that would change the economic picture of Wyoming, McMurry purchased a working interest in the original Jonah Field leases in 1992. Over the next eight years, McMurry actively helped develop two of the largest on-shore domestic gas fields discovered in the Rockies, the Jonah Field and the Pinedale Anticline.

One of McMurry’s favorite investments was made in 2006 with the founding of Jonah Bank of Wyoming. Jonah Bank exemplifies McMurry’s desire to create good-paying, stable jobs in a business built around serving the people and businesses of Wyoming. The bank has fulfilled McMurry’s business motto of “Building a Better Wyoming.”

In 2000, McMurry and his wife, Susie, co-founded the McMurry Foundation, a philanthropic foundation with the motto of “Paying It Forward.” Its mission is to serve the youth, the underprivileged and civic institutions of Natrona County and Wyoming in general. The McMurrys have been generous supporters of numerous programs, including the Child Development Center of Natrona County, UW Business Incubator, the Boys and Girls Club of Central Wyoming, “Jonah Field” and the High Altitude Performance Center at War Memorial Stadium at the University of Wyoming (UW), the UW Gateway Center, and other non-profits far too numerous to mention. From its founding date through 2018, the McMurry Foundation has donated over \$88 million to over 100 entities in Wyoming.

LEGACY AWARD - HOWARD WOODY

Under Howard Woody’s leadership, Union Telephone Company transformed from a small, local telephone exchange to a viable, multi-million-dollar telephone service provider.

“The fact that Union is now a thriving Wyoming business in its second century of life would not have been possible without the vision and drive of Howard Woody, states Brian Woody, Union Chief Customer Relations Officer. “Throughout his life, in business and in private, he has always acted with integrity, fairness, and compassion for everyone he met, no matter their status. We’re all the better for having known him.”

“While Mr. Woody has never been one to draw attention to himself, his family and his Union family believe his induction into the Wyoming Business Hall of Fame, at the tender age of 97, is a fitting tribute to an extraordinary career and a life well-lived.”

Today, at age 97, Woody is no longer involved in the day-to-day running of the business but is still the President of Union and maintains a daily presence at the company’s headquarters in Mountain View. Because of his efforts, Union has 275 employees, 14 retail stores and serves a base of over 40,000 residential and business landline, wireless and broadband customers.

Woody’s father, John D. Woody founded Union Telephone Company in 1914. From the young age of eight, Woody could be seen “walking the lines” with his father and climbing phone poles.

World War II interrupted Woody's role in helping with what was a financially struggling venture. After returning from Europe, Woody took over day to day management of the business.

Over time, Woody transformed the small telephone exchange that had never been profitable into a regional landline network encompassing a service area of millions of acres across southern Wyoming. During the same period, the majority of other regional phone companies across the US either shuttered or were sold to larger companies.

Today Union maintains thorough policies, established by Woody and his wife Esther, that support transparency, accountability, integrity, and trust. The same can be said about Woody's loyalty to his customers and his treatment of Union employees.

Over the years, Woody was approached multiple times to sell the company, but he refused each time. He had a strong feeling that none of the "Big Outfits" would care about Union's customers and its employees as much as he does.

CONTEMPORARY/VISIONARY - KELLY LOCKHART

With over 40 years of experience in ranching, real estate, and investment management, Kelly Lockhart stands out for his dedication to serve his community and the state on numerous boards.

"The Business Council is proud to see Kelly recognized for his dedication to promoting broad and lasting growth in Wyoming," Gullberg said. "He brings a genuine and common sense approach to his work on boards like ours, and his expertise has greatly benefited the Business Council's mission."

Born and raised on a farm near Pavillion, Lockhart has enjoyed a complimentary career in both finance and agriculture.

In 1981, Lockhart opened an AG Edwards and Sons office in Jackson. This was the first investment management office in Jackson. Today that business has grown into Wind River Capital Management, a leading Wyoming capital management company. He has been rated by Barron's magazine as the top financial advisor in Wyoming many times.

Lockhart, along with his family, has also built and run Lockhart Cattle Company, which is a fully integrated beef business, growing, butchering, and distributing grass-fed beef throughout the area. This family tradition has been operating for six generations.

As a long-time resident of Teton County, Lockhart has volunteered for numerous boards and activities, including various planning, open space, and housing committees/stakeholder groups over the past 38 years. Currently, Lockhart serves on the board of the Wyoming Business Council, the Teton County Natural Resource Stakeholder Group, Teton County Housing Supply Board, and Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust. In 1997, the Governor appointed Lockhart to the Board of Agriculture, where he served as president from 1997-2001. He was Treasurer of the Jackson Hole Land Trust from 2003-2009, and served on the Teton County Planning Commission from 1987-1992. Lockhart has been a leader in the Teton County 4-H for 20 years and is the former president of the Teton County Fair Board.

Lockhart is a devoted husband, loving father, and proud doting grandpa. His sons Cody and Chase both work with him in the family business in Jackson.

“My Dad has dedicated the majority of his life to his belief that hard work and dedication can make Wyoming a better place for all to have the opportunity to build a family and be successful,” states Cody Lockhart. “We are definitely proud of him.”

WYOMING BUSINESS ALLIANCE/WYOMING HERITAGE FOUNDATION

The Wyoming Business Alliance/Wyoming Heritage Foundation serves as the state’s premier business advocate and proponent with the mission of promoting and advocating a growing economy by connecting business leaders from across Wyoming, representing business interests and issues, and partnering with key business organizations and trade associations. For more information, visit www.wyomingbusinessalliance.com.

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