

The Legends at Village West Offers Visitors a Walk through Kansas History

The Legends at Village West, offers a new component to the one-of-a-kind experience found at the center: education. Along with shopping, dining and entertainment, visitors of all ages can enjoy an audio walking tour of the more than 80 Kansas legends represented visually on medallions, posters, murals and in sculpture throughout the center.

The Legends honors legends of Kansas in athletics, music, exploration, science, technology, politics, art and much more, recognizing the things that truly make the state unique. The legends theme is interwoven through the landscape, hardscape, amenities and architectural motif, offering a glimpse into Kansas' history, heritage and environment. Each corridor and courtyard of the center is dedicated to a particular category of famous Kansans or aspect of the state and its history. A free self-guided audio walking tour leads visitors through each corridor, providing information about the legends and the artistic representations in which they are depicted.

The Legends is proud to provide such a uniquely fun and educational option for visitors looking to enhance a traditional shopping excursion. The tour was created for listeners of all ages and is ideal for class projects, field trips and family outings.

The self-guided audio tour allows visitors to move at their own pace, spending as much time as desired at each of the 28 stops along the way and anywhere in between. The easy-to-use audio player is perfect for all ages, providing listeners the opportunity to pause, move forward or move backward at any time for a completely customized experience. The complete tour is 100-minutes, however an abbreviated version is available upon request. Additionally, a map of the tour and index of the legends is provided for handy reference.

The audio tour is free to the general public, and reservations are accepted. Headsets can be obtained from the Customer Service office during office hours. The map and index are available to visitors touring with or without a headset. For more information or to make your reservation, call 913.788.3700. For details on the walking tour, [click here](#).

Below is a list of featured legends at The Legends:

KANSAS MUSICIANS

Lester Young (Woodville MS) – Tenor saxophonist jazz musician

Eva Jessye (Coffeyville KS) - Female dean of black music and the first internationally recognized black female choral group director.

Merle Evans (Columbus KS) – Circus Maestro for the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus from 1919 until 1970.

Mary Lou Williams (Atlanta GA) - Pianist and composer; promoted the Kansas City Swing style.

Samuel Ramey (Colby KS) - Opera star; the most recorded bass in history.

Julia Lee (Kansas City MO) – Singer and pianist; one of the great female blues singers of all time.

Jay McShann (Muskogee OK) - Master of all jazz piano styles and a Kansas City jazz legacy for more than 60 years; developed the hard swinging music of Kansas City and helped launch jazz greats like Charlie Parker.

Big Joe Turner (Kansas City MO) – Singer; along with Pete Johnson achieved national recognition with their participation in John Hammond's "Spirituals to Swing" concert in 1938.

Pete Johnson (Kansas City MO) – Pianist; became one of the giants of boogie woogie piano in the 30's and 40's.

Coleman "Hawk" Hawkins (St. Joseph MO) - "Father of the Jazz Sax." Attended college in Topeka, Kansas and was discovered in Kansas City in 1921.

Bennie Moten (Kansas City MO) - Ragtime oriented pianist and bandleader; helped establish the Kansas City jazz style with his Kansas City Orchestra.

Charles "Yardbird" Parker (Parsons KS) - Alto saxophonist jazz musician

Count Basie (Red Bank NJ) - Legendary pianist and bandleader Count Basie formed the Count Basie Orchestra in Kansas City in 1935 which became one of the leading bands of the swing era. (*This medallion is under construction.*)

Wilbur "Buck" Clayton (Parsons KS) - Jazz trumpeter, songwriter and arranger (*This medallion is under construction.*)

"The Golden Mean" or Tuning Fork Statue – The Golden Mean is the ratio defined as the number Phi (1.618). Musicians employ this natural way of dealing with divisions of time within compositions.

KANSAS ATHLETES

Tom Watson (Mission Hills KS) - One of the greatest & most successful professional golfers of all time.

Ralph Houk (Lawrence KS) – Baseball manager that won three consecutive American league pennants and the 1961-62 World Series championship with the New York Yankees.

Barry Sanders (Wichita KS) – Record-breaking NFL football player with Detroit Lions and 1988 Heisman Trophy winner

Adolph F. Rupp (Halstead KS) - "The Baron of Basketball"; retired in 1972 as the winningest basketball coach in NCAA history with 876 victories.

Lynette Woodard (Wichita KS) - First Female Harlem Globetrotter, four-time All-America basketball player at K.U. and two-time U.S. Olympian. By unanimous vote in 1996, she was named the greatest female player in Big Eight Conference history.

"Buck" O'Neil (Kansas City MO) – First baseman and manager in the Negro American League with the Kansas City Monarchs. First African-American coach in Major League Baseball.

Gerald Roberts (Strong KS) - Two-time all-around World Champion cowboy and may be the greatest rodeo champion in Kansas history

Dr. James Naismith (University of Kansas) – Inventor, professor & physician at Kansas University that invented the game of basketball and its 13 original rules; known as the "Father of Basketball."

Jess Willard (St. Clere KS) - Tallest man ever to win a world boxing championship; nicknamed "Pottawatomie Giant."

Gale Sayers (Wichita KS) – NFL player for the Chicago Bears; youngest inductee into the Pro Football Hall of Fame at the age of 34.

Lynn Dickey (Osawatomie KS) - Green Bay Packers and Houston Oilers Quarterback; named by AP as the greatest quarterback in history of Big Eight Championships.

Glenn Cunningham (Atlanta KS) - Two-time Olympian track star dubbed The Kansas Flyer

Wes Santee (Ashland KS) - Olympic track star; first runner to break the four-minute mark in the mile run.

Jim Ryun (Wichita KS) - Olympic track star; first high school athlete to run the mile in less than four minutes.

"Runners Sculpture" – This sculpture includes a series of five poses that are sequential of the mile run from start to finish and represents three dominant mile runners in Kansas: Glenn Cunningham, Wes Santee and Jim Ryun.

Maurice Green (Kansas City KS) – Holds several world and Olympic records

Walter Perry Johnson (Humboldt KS) - Hall of Fame Pitcher that pitched 110 shutouts in his 21-year career. Nicknamed Big Train.

Rick Mears (Wichita KS) - Racecar Driver that won the Indianapolis 500 four times.

Wilt Chamberlain (University of Kansas) – Played basketball for K.U. 1955-58 where he led Kansas to the Big Seven championships in 1957 and 1958 and became the NCAA tournament MVP in 1957.

Iva Pembridge Jarvis (Phillipsburg KS) - All-time great women's trap shooter; first female honorary member of the Kansas All Sport Hall Fame.

KANSAS INVENTORS, PIONEERS AND INDUSTRY LEADERS

Walter P. Chrysler (Wamego KS) - Automotive mogul heading up the Chrysler corporation.

Clyde Tombaugh (Burdett KS) - astronomer who discovered Pluto in 1930; studied the night sky from his boyhood home in Burdett, KS.

Jack St. Clair Kilby (Great Bend KS) - 2003 Kansan of the Year; invented the microchip, for which he shared the Nobel Prize in physics in 2000.

Amelia Earhart (Atchison KS) – Aviator that became the first woman passenger to cross the Atlantic by plane.

Clyde Vernon Cessna (Wichita KS) - Clyde Vernon Cessna founded the Cessna Aircraft Company

Russell Stover (Mount Ayr Township KS) - Confectioner and business owner

Ronald Evans (St. Francis KS) – Astronaut that commanded Apollo 17

Joe Engle (Chapman KS) - Commanded the second flight of the Space Shuttle Columbia.

David Blanton (Wichita KS) - Invented the autopilot in 1954

William Purvis & Charles Wilson (Goodland KS) – Inventors; held the patent for America's first helicopter

William Menninger (Topeka KS) – Co-founded The Menninger Foundation and The Menninger Clinic which is an internationally known center for treatment of behavioral disorders.

KANSAS EARLY EXPLORERS

Wyatt Earp Marshal (Wichita and Dodge KS) – Assistant Marshall of Dodge City where he was known for “laying down the law” and was involved in the famous gunfight at the O.K. Corral in Tombstone, Arizona.

Osage Indian – Native American tribe that prospered on the reservation; reported as the largest Native people in North America, with many Osage men averaging over 6-feet tall.

KANSAS FACTS AND FIRSTS

The first bulldozer was built by Earl McLeod and Jim Cummings in Morrowville in 1923.

The first national hamburger was White Castle founded in Wichita, Kansas in 1921 by Walter Anderson.

Dodge City is the windiest city in the United States

Helium was first discovered by chemists at the University of Kansas.

Jim Roper from Halstead, Kansas won the first NASCAR sanctioned stock car race.

Barred Tiger Salamander – Kansas state amphibian

American Bison – Kansas state animal

Honeybee – Kansas state insect

Meadowlark – Kansas state bird

Ornate Box Turtle – Kansas state reptile

Cottonwood Tree – Kansas state tree

Sunflower – Kansas state flower

KANSAS PERFORMING ARTISTS

"Buster" Keaton (Piqua KS) - Vaudeville and silent film star.

Hattie McDaniel (Wichita KS) - Vaudeville, film, radio and television star that became the first African American ever to receive an Academy Award for her supporting role as Mammy in Gone With the Wind.

Vivian Vance (Cherryvale KS) - Stage and film actress.

Emmett Kelly (Sedan KS) - Professional clown. Created the hobo cartoon character, Weary Willie.

Klondike Kate (Junction City KS) - The famous Yukon territory dancehall girl of the 1898 Canadian gold rush.

KANSAS CIVIC LEADERS

Dwight D. Eisenhower (Raised in Abilene KS) - Served as the 34th President of the United States (1953-1961) and Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe during World War II.

Charles Curtis (Topeka KS) – The first Native American Vice President of the United States. Curtis served under Herbert Hoover as the nation's 31st Vice President.

Susanna Madora Salter (Argonia KS) - Nation's First Woman Mayor

Robert Dole (Russell KS) - Five term Kansas Senator and World War II hero

Carol Marinovich (Kansas City KS) – First woman mayor of Kansas City, Kansas

Alfred Landon (West Middlesex, PA) – Governor of Kansas 1933-1937 and ran unsuccessfully for President on the 1936 Republican ticket.

KANSAS ARTISTS, POETS AND WRITERS

John Cameron Swayze (Wichita KS) - The first TV network news anchor on the "Camel News Caravan" and the pitchman for Timex Watches and the expression "Takes a Licking and Keeps on Ticking."

Frank Marshall Davis (South Central KS) – Combined his vision with free verse to imagine a new way of expressing himself poetically. Ultimately, he would write three major collections of poetry: Black Man's Verse (1935), I Am the American Negro (1937), and 47th Street: Poems (1948).

William Inge (Independence KS) - Novelist and playwright William Inge, born in Independence, Kansas in 1913, won the 1953 Pulitzer in drama for Picnic.

Damond Runyun (Manhattan KS) - Noted as a sports writer and columnist, Runyun also wrote short stories, some of which included in the book, Guys and Dolls, later a successful Broadway musical and movie.

John Steuart Curry (Dunavant KS) – Artist painting canvases inspired by the lives of fellow Kansans as he celebrates the rural Midwest.

Merrell Gage (Topeka KS) - Sculptor

Aaron Douglas (Topeka KS) – An artists dubbed "the father of Black American art."

Gwendolyn Brooks (Topeka KS) - The first African American to win a Pulitzer Prize

Eugene Smith (Wichita KS) - Famed WWII and Life Magazine photojournalist

Gordon Parks (Fort Scott KS) - Writer/photographer Gordon Parks, author of The Learning Tree, was born outside Fort Scott, Kansas and became the first black director, screenwriter and composer of a major motion picture.

Clarence D. Batchelor (Osage City KS) - Pulitzer Prize winning political cartoonist

Elizabeth "Grandma" Layton (Wellsville KS) – An artist that healed through creativity. Layton began creating art at the age of 68 gaining national and international recognition with a one-woman show at the Smithsonian Institution.

William Allen White (Emporia KS) - Newspaper owner and editor, known as "The Sage of Emporia"

Rudolph Wendelin (Herndon KS) – Artists known for making Smokey Bear friendly and personable.

"Paintbrush Sculpture" – Standing 9-feet tall and weighing 1500 pounds, this piece of art represents the many achievements by Kansas artists, visual artists, poets and writers.