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Statehood Day Dinner to honor six Nebraskans

LINCOLN – The NEBRASKAland Foundation will present six notable Nebraskans with achievement awards at the Statehood Day Dinner March 3 at the State Capitol.

The foundation will honor Carl “Ky” and Jane Rohman of Lincoln and Elwood, D. William “Bill” Smith of Lincoln, Kenneth Morrison of Hastings, Carol Cope of Kearney and William E. Barrett of Lexington.

The foundation also will present the Nebraska ethanol industry with the newly created Economic Rising Star Award.

The formal-attire event starts with a 6 p.m. reception, followed by dinner at 7 p.m. in the Rotunda.

Tickets to the event are \$100 per person and can be ordered by calling (402) 483-2747.

The Rohmans will receive the Distinguished NEBRASKAlander Award, which is given for service to the state’s social, historical, cultural or economic well-being. They are being recognized for their leadership in promoting the arts in Nebraska.

The Rohmans have been major benefactors of the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery in Lincoln and the Museum of Nebraska Art in Kearney. They also have been active supporters of opera, the Meadowlark Music Festival in Lincoln and projects in historic Brownville.

Smith will receive the Trailblazer Award, which recognizes individuals who by their service set an example for others to follow.

Smith is well known in the auto industry as owner of Speedway Motors, the world’s largest maker, distributor and retailer of products for the racing and street-rod markets, and creator of the Museum of American Speed. He has been inducted into eight auto industry halls of fame.

Morrison and Cope will each receive the Pioneer Award, which recognizes individuals whose contributions embody the spirit of Nebraska's heritage.

Morrison made his mark in agricultural production and processing with operations in the United States, Canada, Central America, South America and Malaysia. He has been a generous supporter of the University of Nebraska, and the Lincoln campus recently honored him by naming its virology research building after him.

Cope and her late husband, Ron, earned business success in Nebraska with ownership of shoe stores and farms. She is a major arts benefactor, who has supported the Museum of Nebraska Art, the Kearney Area Symphony Orchestra, music scholarships and the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial.

Barrett will receive the Wagonmaster Award, which recognizes leadership in causes that benefit the state or nation.

Barrett operated a Lexington firm specializing in general insurance and real estate brokerage and appraising. He then went on to have a long political career, serving in the Nebraska Legislature from 1979-91 (including a stint as speaker) and in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1991-2001.

Nebraska Secretary of State John Gale serves on the NEBRASKAland Foundation's board and helps host the dinner.

The foundation sponsors numerous activities and programs as part of its mission to promote Nebraska and the state's "good life."

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