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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 1 at the State Capitol.

The foundation will honor John Gottschalk of Omaha, Lloyd Castner of Columbus, retired Maj. Gen. Roger Lempke of Lincoln, Ashland native Clayton Anderson, Don Overman of Scottsbluff and Jane Hood of Lincoln.

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 can be ordered by calling (402) 483-2747.

Gottschalk will receive the Distinguished NEBRASKAlander Award, which is given for service to the state's social, historical, cultural or economic well-being.

Gottschalk served 18 years as publisher of the Omaha World-Herald and chief executive officer of the newspaper's parent company before his retirement Jan. 1 to become the company's chairman. His extensive civic and philanthropic leadership has benefited the Omaha community, Nebraska and the nation.

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

Caster has served as a city official for Columbus, Bellevue and two Oregon cities and as marketing manager for the Nebraska Public Power District. His generous giving of his time has aided numerous community, state and professional organizations.

Lempke enjoyed a distinguished 38-year military career, including Air Force active duty and service as adjutant general of the Nebraska Military Department. As adjutant general from 2000-07, he oversaw mobilization of National Guard units to Afghanistan and Iraq as well as responses to floods, wildfires and ice storms in Nebraska.

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

Anderson, who has served with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration since 1983, is Nebraska's first astronaut. He was onboard the International Space Station for five months in 2007.

Overman had a successful insurance career and served as Scottsbluff mayor from 1974-94. His renowned civic service has benefited a long list of community, state and educational organizations.

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

Hood, who has taught at three universities, has significantly expanded the scope and reach of the Nebraska Humanities Council since becoming its executive director in 1987. Her leadership has aided numerous community, educational and professional organizations.

Nebraska Secretary of State John Gale serves on the NEBRASKAland Foundation 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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