

## Allen County Wall of Fame

These people from Allen County whose accomplishments and work are recognized on national and international levels represent only a small portion of the many local individuals who deserve recognition for their contributions to American Society.



### **Calvin S. Brice (10/17/1845-12/15/1898)**

Calvin Stewart Brice was born in Morrow County, Ohio. Brice was the son of Rev. William K. and Elizabeth Stewart Brice. He did his preparatory and undergraduate work at Miami University, Oxford, where he enlisted in the Union Cause. Following his time in college and military service, he returned to Lima, where his family had moved. Brice then pursued graduate work at the law school of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and was admitted to the bar. He practiced in Lima but was not overly successful until he expanded his view to include the legal problems of the railroads. He first worked with the Lake Erie & Western Railroad and then became involved in the development of the Nickel Plate Road. Overall, he helped organize eleven railroads during his career. He was

a delegate from Ohio at the 1888 Democratic National Convention, and the following year Brice was elected Chairman of the Democratic National Committee. In 1890, he was elected Senator from Ohio and served from 1891 through 1897. At the time of his death in 1898, he was beginning to launch a Chinese railroad.



### **Phyllis Diller (7/17/1917- 8/20/2012)**

Phyllis Diller was born and grew up in Lima, just two blocks from the old Carnegie Library. Her parents, Perry and Ada Driver, lived in the Elektron Apartments on W. Market Street. The future comedienne attended the Franklin School of Trinity Methodist Church. She gave her first public performance there, playing the chimes, when she was ten years old. Phyllis graduated from Central High School in the Class of 1935. She attended Sherwood Music School in Chicago before entering Bluffton College. She married Sherwood Diller in 1939, and he encouraged her career in comedy—often being the butt of her many jokes as "Fang." Diller debuted performing at San Francisco's Purple Onion and played Carnegie Hall. In

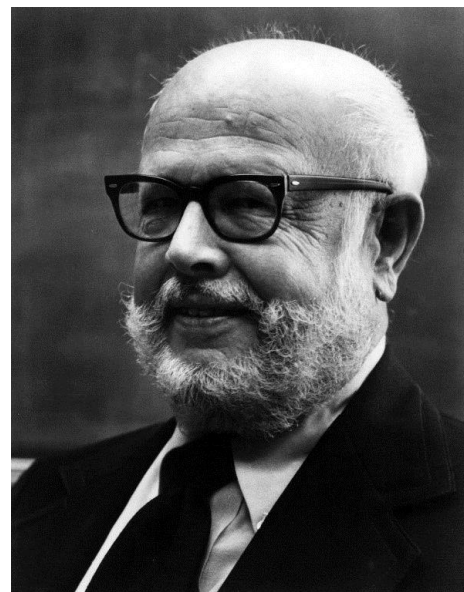
addition to her comedy, Ms. Diller was an artist and also a serious musician, having given solo

performances as a concert pianist. She was considered a pioneer in the world of female comedienues with a career that spanned over 50 years. She wrote several best-selling books and appeared in numerous films and television shows.



### **Hugh Downs (2/2/1921-7/1/2020)**

Hugh Downs was born in Akron, Ohio on February 2, 1921. Downs was the son of Milton H. and Ethel Downs. The family moved to Lima, when Hugh was two years old. Hugh would attend Horace Mann School and later graduate from Shawnee High School in 1938. He originally started school at Bluffton College in 1939 and left shortly after due to receiving a job as an announcer at Lima's WBLY radio station (later known as WLOK), earning \$7.50 a week. Soon Downs left Lima for a job at Detroit's WWJ and later went to Chicago's NBS television affiliate, where he was an announcer for the children's program *The Kukla, Fran, & Ollie Show*. In 1954 he moved to New York, where he hosted the talk show *The Home Show* with Arlene Francis all while playing sidekick to Jack Paar on what was to become *The Tonight Show* in the same year. From 1971 to 1977 he spent time traveling and writing, and in 1976 he came back to television to host the PBS *Over Easy* series, followed two years later by ABC's *20/20*, which continues to be a staple on television since it began in 1978. Hugh Down's career spanned decades, and he started some of the most influential commercial television series to date.



### **William A. Fowler (8/9/1911-3/14/1995)**

Our Nobel laureate in physics was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to John M. and Jennie Watson Fowler. The Fowlers moved to Lima, Ohio, in 1913, and Bill attended Horace Mann School across the street from his 901 N. Jameson Street home. He was the president of Central High School's Class of 1929, and he also played on Central's football team. Fowler received a degree in engineering physics from the Ohio State University. He then enrolled in graduate school at Cal Tech, where, after receiving further degrees, he remained affiliated with their W.K. Kellogg Radiation Laboratory in Pasadena. His major contribution to the field of physics consisted of an explanation of how the

chemical elements of the universe were formed following the “Big Bang.” In essence, he said, “We are all stardust.” In addition to the Nobel Prize in Physics, which he received in 1983, Fowler received numerous other awards, including France’s Legion d’Honneur in 1989 and the United States National Medal of Science in 1974.



**Alfred Joseph Frueh (9/2/1880-9/14/1968)**

Alfred Joseph Frueh was born on Main Street, Lima, Ohio, on September 2, 1880. He was the eldest son of Henry and Anna Roemer Frueh. Alfred attended St. Rose School and then graduated from the Lima Business College around 1894, but not before he took up the habit of doodling. There he was, turning Pitman Shorthand symbols into the faces of his teacher and friends. He farmed and worked for his father’s Lima Brewing Co. until 1903, when he left Lima to attend the St. Louis Post Dispatch School of Newspaper Art from 1904–1908, earning himself \$6 per week. His work graced their editorial page from 1905 on. In 1907, his editorial cartoon of a music-hall star attracted notoriety, when she was angry enough to cancel her St. Louis performance. In the following years, he spent time in various European capitals (including studying with Henri Matisse in Paris) and worked for Pulitzer’s *New York World*. Frueh helped launch *The New Yorker* in 1925 with two cartoons in the first issue and even one on the cover! He remained with them, where he became famous for his caricatures of theatrical personalities as well as for his political commentary until 1962. His avocation was that of a horticulturalist specializing in nut trees, and his final years were spent on his Connecticut fruit and nut farm, where he died on September 14, 1968.



### **Joe Henderson (4/24/1937-6/30/2001)**

Joe Henderson was born in Lima, Ohio, on April 24, 1937. Dennis and Irene Henderson and the fifteen Henderson kids lived at 1135 S. Metcalf Street. Joe developed a love for music and first started playing the drums. He eventually started playing the tenor saxophone, when he was around 13 years old. He earned the money for the saxophone by selling newspapers. Joe attended South High School, where he played in the band. During those years, he also played in the house band at Oliver's (later the Club Utopia) and became an expert in the "new" jazz of Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. After joining the local musicians' union in 1955, Henderson left Lima for bigger things. Henderson led his own band in Detroit until 1960, when he entered the army and played in the army band until 1962. In 1993, Joe Henderson was awarded the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences' Grammy for best solo of the year for the title track from his 1992 release album, *Lush Life*. He received Grammys in 1994 for best jazz instrumental solo and best jazz instrumental performance (individual or group) for the cut "Miles Ahead" and the title track from his 1993 album *So Near, So Far (Musing on Miles)*. His career spanned more than forty years.



### **Dean Jagger (11/11/1903-2/5/1991)**

Dean Jagger was born in Monroe Township, Allen County, to Albert and Lily Mayberry Jagger. The family moved to Whitley County, Indiana, in 1913, where Albert was an onion farmer. Dean studied at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana, and at Chicago's Lyceum Arts Conservatory. He performed in theater and vaudeville later in the twenties, debuting in 1929 in the film *Women from Hell*. In the thirties, he appeared in the play *Tobacco Road*. Jagger was a character actor with roles in over 150 movies. He won an Oscar for Best Supporting Actor in the 1949 film *Twelve O'clock High*. Other notable films include *Elmer Gantry*, *Jumbo*, *White Christmas*, *Rawhide*, and *The Robe*. The major television role for which he is remembered is that of the high school principal in *Mr. Novak*, which aired from 1963 to 1965 and starred James Franciscus. Jagger also received an Emmy in 1989 for his performance in *This is the Life*. He died in Santa Monica, California.





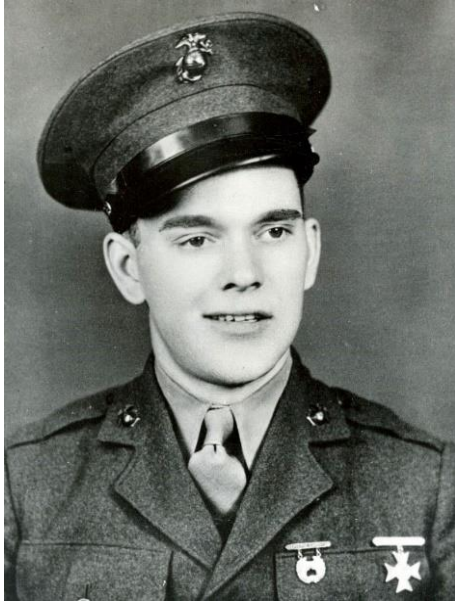
**Robert W. King (6/20/1902-7/30/1965)**

Dr. Robert W. King was born on June 10, 1902 in Los Angeles, California. He was the son of Marion C. and Maude Shafer King. The family moved to Lima the year after their son's birth, locating at 709 W. North Street. Robert King graduated from Lima Central High School in 1924 and attended Stanford University, where he became a member of their track and field team and participated in the Olympic competition in 1928. King won the gold medal for the high jump in Amsterdam, Netherlands, with a 6 foot, 4.5-inch jump. After graduating from Stanford in 1929, he went on to Northwestern University's Medical School. He served in the Medical Corps in World War II, and he established his medical practice in California. Dr. King died on July 30, 1965.



**Thomas C. Lynch (4/7/1942-)**

Thomas C. Lynch was born on April 7, 1942, and he was raised in Lima, where he graduated in 1960 from Lima Central Catholic High School. His parents, Rodney and Marie Lynch, raised a strong closely knit family that also included brother Jim- and American football star in a W. Circular St. home. Tom Lynch started playing football in high school, but he decided on the Navy as a career. Lynch graduated from the Naval Academy, where he was captain of the football team as well as their boxing champion. He has an M.B.A. from George Washington University (Washington, D.C). Lynch has been a ship's commander, Naval Chief of Legislative Affairs, and battle group commander during Operation Desert Shield. After spending 31 years on the seas, now retired Rear-Admiral Lynch rose to the post of 54<sup>th</sup> superintendent of the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland. Following Lynch's retirement from the navy, he has served as vice president, managing director, and executive chairman of multiple organizations and businesses.



**Leonard F. Mason (2/2/1920-7/22/1944)**

Leonard F. Mason was born on February 2, 1920 in Kentucky, but he was attributed to Allen County, Ohio, when he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. His family came to Lima in 1937. His parents were Hillery and Mollie Mason, and they lived on 1132 S. Union St (later of Lafayette, Ohio). Prior to entering the U.S. Marine Corps, Mason had been employed at the Superior Coach Corporation. Pfc. Mason was killed on Guam in the Pacific Theatre of Operations during World War II on July 22, 1944, while serving as an automatic rifleman. He was awarded the medal for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty in action against the Japanese forces on the Asan-Adelup Beachhead, Guam." Two

years later, the destroyer USS Leonard F. Mason was named in honor of the medal of honor recipient. This destroyer picked up NASA astronauts Neil Armstrong and David Scott after their 1966 emergency landing at sea following complications during the Gemini VIII (8) mission.



**William E. Metzger, Jr. (2/9/1922- 11/9/1944)**

An Allen County recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor, William E. Metzger, Jr. was born on February 9, 1922 to William E. and Ethel V. Metzger of 105 N. Baxter Street in Lima. Metzger was a graduate of Central High School in 1940 and had been employed at the Lima Electric Motor Co. prior to his enlistment in the armed forces. The Medal of Honor was awarded posthumously as a result of bravery that ultimately led to Metzger's death. Second Lieutenant Metzger was killed in the crash of the B-17 bomber "The Lady Janet" of which he was co-pilot on November 9, 1944, near Saarbrücken, Germany. He had previously given his parachute to a wounded gunner, when the plane was disabled. Another crew member was unable to parachute, and pilot and co-pilot attempted unsuccessfully to bring the airplane in Allied territory for a controlled crash landing. Lima's Metzger Lake Reservoir was named to honor the airman and was dedicated on September 14, 1947.

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### **Maidie Ruth Norman (10/16/1912-5/2/1998)**

Maidie Norman was the daughter of Louis C. and Lila Graham Gamble. She moved from Georgia to Lima in 1916. From age nine Maidie studied drama and gave Expression Recitals. The family lived on W. Spring Street, and Maidie graduated from Central High School in 1930. She graduated from North Carolina's Bennett College and was a member of their touring Ladies' Quartette. While at Bennett, she married McHenry Norman, Jr. Maidie took graduate training at Columbia University then returned to Bennett to teach. She began her Hollywood career in 1946 and became one of its first Black professionals in breaking the traditional role of a Black woman in film and television by removing the "old-time slavery talk." Her credit for 200 stage and screen roles

include: *The Cradle Will Rock*, *Two in Bed*, *The Amen Corner*, *Sugar Hill*, *Andromache*, *The Well*, and many more. She was a founder of the American National Theatre Academy and taught at Stanford University and U.C.L.A. She was inducted into the Black Film Maker's Hall of Fame in 1977, and in 1992 she received an honorary doctorate from Bennett College.

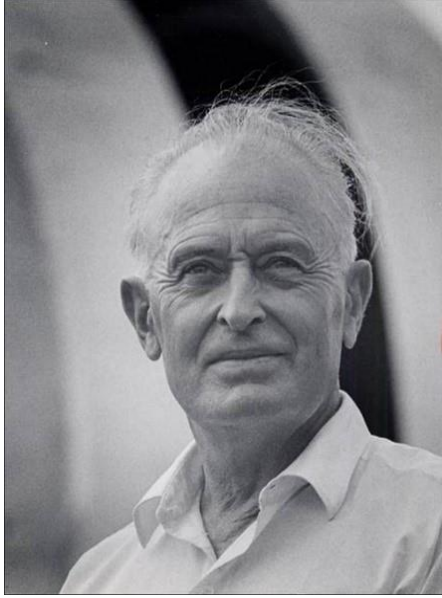


### **Helen O'Connell (5/23/1920-9/9/1993)**

Helen O'Connell was born to J. Ralph and Mildred B. O'Connell in May of the early twenties above a grocery store on Lima's E. Circular Street, near S. Central Avenue. By 1928, the family had left Lima to take up residence in Toledo, but O'Connell always claimed Lima as her hometown. Coming from a musical family, she got her break in her late teens filling in for her sister (who had gotten married) singing with Fostoria's Jimmy Richards' dance band. Richards' tour took them to New York City, where Helen O'Connell was "discovered" by Jimmy Dorsey and hired to sing with his band. In fact, she popularized some of their biggest hits, such as "Green Eyes" and "Tangerine." After her music career, she became a television celebrity and beauty-pageant hostess,

and even went back on the road to sing her old standbys with another "big band" and with the "4 girls 4" act. O'Connell, who had been married to composer/ conductor Frank DeVol, died on September 9, 1993.





**Leslie C. Peltier (1/2/1900-5/10/1980)**

Nationally known amateur astronomer Leslie Peltier was born on a farm east of Delphos, Ohio, on January 2, 1900. He was born to Stanley and Resa Copus Peltier. As a youth, Peltier was given a book on the stars for Christmas, and by age sixteen, he had become so interested in stargazing that he picked 900 quarts of strawberries to earn \$18 to purchase a two-inch telescope. Peltier may not have finished high school, but he perfected his craft as a draftsman by charting the stars, especially noting the variable ones. His careful reporting of his avocation led scientists at Harvard and Princeton Universities to loan him larger professional instruments. He built a small observatory on his Scott's Crossing farm, where on May 14, 1936 he discovered a new comet that would be named in his

honor. Later, Peltier obtained an 1868 observatory from Miami University, which he set up near his Delphos home. Eventually, Peltier would discover and or co-discover twelve comets and two stars while developing products to patent for his employer, the Delphos Bending Co. (a toy factory). The self-educated farm boy — an expert in history, mineralogy, natural history and astronomy — authored three books before his death on May 10, 1980.



**Edmund Battelle Taylor (4/4/1904-4/30/1973)**

Although he was born in Chicago in 1904, Vice-Admiral Taylor always returned to his hometown of Lima for visits. His parents were E.B. and Rebecca Battelle Taylor, who had moved to Lima in 1915. Edmund graduated from Central High School in 1921, where he was involved in a variety of sports as well as in Student Government and the Glee Club. He graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1925, where he was captain of the football team and an All-American lacrosse player. During World War II, Taylor commanded the destroyer USS Duncan, which torpedoed the Japanese cruiser Furutaka before it sank in the Battle of Cape Esperance. During his military career, Taylor received the Distinguished Service Medal, Navy Cross, Silver Star, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and

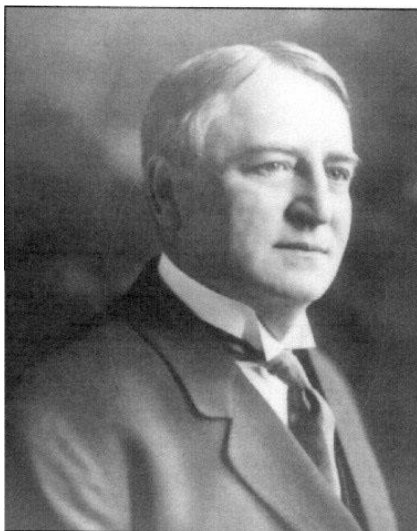
Legion of Merit. At his retirement, he was commander of the U.S. Navy Fifth Naval District. Previous assignments in his career include the Atlantic Anti-Submarine Force, Guantanamo Naval Base, and the Atlantic Fleet Destroyer Force. Vice Admiral served as Chief of Information for the Navy and Aide to Naval Secretary Forrestal. Edmund Battelle Taylor died on April 30, 1973.





### **Leon L. Van Autreve (1/29/1920-3/14/2002)**

Sergeant Major of the U.S. Army (ret.) Leon L. Van Autreve was born in Eckloo, Belgium, on January 29, 1920. He came to America with his parents, Antonine L. and Gabrielle Martens Van Autreve, and siblings Edgar and Mary Josie in October of the same year. Both parents were originally French, and the senior Mr. Van Autreve had been much-decorated for valor in WWI. The family first went to Montana then came to Delphos, Ohio, where they lived at 203 E. Second Street, and both parents became naturalized citizens. Leon graduated from Delphos-Jefferson High School and Ohio Northern University. Following graduation, he enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1941 and served as a demolition specialist during the invasion of Africa in World War II. He remained overseas until 1945 and later served tours in Germany; Ft. Knox, KY; Indonesia; Ft. Belvoir, VA; Korea; Vietnam, where he was command Sergeant Major (CSM) of the 20<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade; and finally as CSM in Alaska. Van Autreve served as an advisor to the Chief of Staff of the United States Army, and he retired in 1975 after 32 years of service, thus ending his career as the highest-ranking non-commissioned officer in the United States Army. During his career he received numerous medals, including the Distinguished Service Medal through the Fouregerre of Belgium.



### **John W. Van Dyke (1849-9/13/1939)**

John W. Van Dyke, nicknamed the "Dean of the Oil Industry," was not an Allen County native, but he spent 16 years living in Lima after establishing the Solar Refining Company here. Van Dyke was born about 1850 in Mercersburg, PA, and when he was young, he ran away to work in the oil fields in western Pennsylvania. He became associated with Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company in the early 1880's and came to Allen County in 1886, when he was sent here to build and operate a refinery to utilize the newly developed Lima crude oil. Here he worked with Herman Frasch on the desulfurization of Atlantic Refining Co., which was then a unit of Standard Oil, where he eventually became chairman and president of its board of directors. He was known for designing the tank car and the first modern service station in Pittsburgh, PA. Van Dyke was also involved in other refining companies, railroads, shipbuilding companies, and more. Van Dyke died on September 13, 1939.