

NEWS RELEASE
National Western Stock Show
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Denver, CO 80216
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PETRY INDUCTED INTO MUSEUM'S HALL OF GREAT WESTERNERS

The National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum announced the induction of Nicholas R. Petry, businessman and longtime chairman and president of the National Western Stock Show, into its prestigious Hall of Great Westerners, April 20, 2002. Selected by the museum's board of directors, Petry was honored posthumously during the ceremonies of the 41st Western Heritage Awards held in Oklahoma City.

Inductees into the Hall of Great Westerners and the Hall of Great Western Performers, along with the best in movies, television, literature and music were presented with the coveted Wrangler bronze during the black-tie ceremonies.

Petry was inducted along with the late Lewis Douglas, Arizona cattle rancher and U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain.

A well-known philanthropist in the Denver area, Petry was a great influence in the agricultural and construction industries. Born in Wheatland, Wyoming in 1918, Petry's family moved to Denver when he was four years old. His father, Nicholas G. Petry, was named "Man of Achievement" in Wyoming in 1915, and was recognized for building the City Hall and Courthouse in Laramie, a venture that would enjoy continued success with a construction company in the Petry name.

The younger Petry graduated from the University of Colorado in 1940 with an economics degree, and served as a Lieutenant in the Civil Engineering Corps of the United States Navy during World War II, supervising construction of airplane manufacturing plants.

Petry later returned to Denver to work with his father and the N.G. Petry Construction Company, and in the late 1950s, became the president of the company. He prompted the beginning of high-rise buildings in Denver, constructing among others, the Petroleum Building, the Brown Palace addition, and the Denver National Bank Building, helping to shape Denver's skyline.

A rancher at heart, Petry established Grizzly Ranches in Walden, Colorado in 1958, and Mill Iron Ranches, in Saratoga, Wyoming in 1977. It was a natural fit in 1966 when he was elected the seventh National Western Stock Show President. Petry was a well-known and highly respected community leader, who, having exhibited in the prestigious livestock show as a youth, was instilled with the importance of the event to the livestock industry and Denver.

Petry assumed his new position with a businessman's understanding and long-term goals. He worked quickly to carefully plan for a more long-term commitment with the city of Denver regarding the rental of the stock show's facilities. Due to the historically ongoing popularity of the show, expansion was a necessity.

With the support of a number of the stock show's directors and Petry's leadership, plans for new facilities and additional acreage were made. In 1970, Petry led a \$2.5 million fund drive for the construction of a Hall of Education, Beef Palace and additional horse and cattle stalls, to replace outdated barns and smaller buildings in the stockyards area.

Eventually, he also founded the National Western Scholarship Fund, which has now exceeded more than \$2 million. Petry is credited as a "prime mover in the show's continuing improvement, expansion and success," by long-time friend and author of Ten Days Every January, Willard Simms, who served as the show's general manager from 1955-1978.

During Petry's 19-year run as president of the National Western Stock Show Association, he was extremely active with numerous other boards and associations. He served as board chairman of Colorado National Bank, and a director for United Airlines, Eaton Corporation, Westin Hotels, and the Public Service Company of Colorado. He resigned to become chairman of the Stock Show Board of directors in 1986.

Petry and his wife, Nancy, also remained very active with the University of Colorado, making generous donations on behalf of CU Boulder's Construction Engineering and Management Program, as well as various renovations and scholarships. Petry also served as chairman of the board of the CU Foundation. Serving as Denver Water Board president, Petry was instrumental in implementing the city's water expansion program, which involved boring the Roberts Tunnel through the Continental Divide 23 miles to bring water to Denver citizens.

As a guest at the Petry ranch in Saratoga, fellow Citizen of the West Award recipient and friend, Pete Smythe, recalls seeing Petry decked out in "an old pair of jeans and cowboy shirt, an old Stetson hat and a pair of well-worn cowboy boots." Smythe added despite Petry's countless successes, he was still a man with "a down-to-earth attitude ... and has never lost that cowboy feeling ..." Petry died July 21, 1999.

Lewis Douglas, the other inductee, carries an additional linkage to the National Western Stock Show. His son, Pete, serves as an active member of the Advisory Board of the Coors Western Art Exhibit and Sale at the National Western.

The 97th anniversary National Western is scheduled January 11-26, 2003.