

Eisenhower Foundation honors 3 supporters

Staff report Oct 18, 2016



Mike Heronemus • Reflector-Chronicle

About 140 people filled the courtyard at the Eisenhower Presidential Library Saturday evening to witness the Eisenhower Foundation honor three people who played significant roles in the life of General of the Armies and President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

The annual legacy dinner took “Everybody Likes Ike” as its theme, harking back to his campaign for the nation’s highest electoral office in 1952. Some of “Ike’s” campaign memorabilia was displayed in the foyer outside the courtyard for dinner guests to vote for their favorite.

Eisenhower Foundation Executive Director Meredith Sleichter concluded by evening’s program by announcing that the bumper sticker had gotten the most votes and was, therefore, the most popular piece of Ike’s campaign memorabilia.

**Something
for Everyone**
8,000 SQ. FT. OF QUALITY
ANTIQUES & COLLECTABLES
*Yesterday's
Rose*
ANTIQUE MALL
101 NE 21st St. Abilene, KS
Behind Dollar General

Eisenhower's granddaughters Ann and Mary Jean Eisenhower were in attendance to help the foundation honor the late Edward F. Arn, Kansas governor from 1951 to 1955; Harry Darby, a U.S. senator from Kansas from 1949 to 1950; and J.C. Hall, founder of Hallmark Cards.

Edward F. Arn

Arn was a native Kansan who was admitted to the Kansas and Missouri bars and who served in the U.S. Navy aboard an aircraft carrier in the Pacific Ocean.

His interest in politics led him to serve as chairman of the Wyandotte County Republicans while just a freshman at the University of Kansas. He became the state's attorney general in 1946 and served two terms as governor.

Arn helped persuade Eisenhower to run for president in 1952. He gave the seconding speech for Ike's nomination at the national convention and then played a key role in the drive to establish the Eisenhower Center in Abilene.

Harry Darby Jr.

Darby, another Kansas native, worked in his father's boilermaker company in Kansas City and earned a mechanical engineering degree from the University of Illinois in 1917. His early interest in politics resulted in his election as student body president at the university.

He took his university exams early so he could join the Army during World War I and served as a captain in the field artillery in France. After the war, he bought his father's firm and founded Darby Steel Company.

During World War II, Darby Steel Company built about 1,400 landing craft that were floated downriver to New Orleans for overseas deployment. The were nicknamed "Prairie Ships" and played a significant role in the D-Day Normandy invasion on June 6, 1944.

Politics again called Darby to public service as a U.S. senator, filling the unexpired term of Clyde Reed, who died in office. But, instead of seeking election to that seat, Darby turned his political efforts to persuading Ike to run for president in 1952. He is credited with playing a key role in Ike's decision to run.

Darby's admiration of the 34th president of the United States continued until the end of his life. He is credited with raising money to build the Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene. In 1985, he donated the statue erected in the center of the library's grounds just 18 months before he died.



J.C. Hall

Hall, a native of David City, Neb., was just 18 years old when he took a train to Kansas City, Mo., carrying two shoeboxes full of post cards. He later founded one of America's most well-known and respected corporations _ Hallmark Cards.

Hall met Ike Sen. Darby and Roy Roberts of the Kansas City Star. That was in 1950 while Ike was serving as the head of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. At that meeting, Hall was asked to join the Eisenhower Museum Committee. He agreed to join and a long friendship between the two men developed.

After the museum was opened, Ike wrote to Hall, "The Museum gets better all the time. I know that you are responsible for much of its impressiveness of design and for the general excellence of the exhibits. It's nice to know that I have a friend fairly close by to keep an experienced eye on the entire thing."

Throughout his presidency, Ike called on Hall in various capacities. Together they created People to People International in 1956, an organization still going strong today and with a new chief executive officer, Ike's granddaughter Mary Jean Eisenhower.

Ike also worked with Hall to create personal and official White house Christmas cards for the eight years he was in office.