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## Online Form Submittal: 2025 Winston-Salem Arts, Culture and Entertainment Memorial Walk of Fame Nomination Form

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**From** noreply@civicplus.com <noreply@civicplus.com>

**Date** Mon 2/10/2025 11:05 AM

**To** Susan Spainhour <susans@cityofws.org>; Catalina Stewart <catalinas@cityofws.org>

### 2025 Winston-Salem Arts, Culture and Entertainment Memorial Walk of Fame Nomination Form

#### Nominations and Election Procedures

Starting January 1, the Arts, Culture, and Entertainment Memorial Walk of Fame Committee will accept nominations for election to the Arts, Culture, and Entertainment Memorial Walk of Fame (Walk of Fame).

Nominations will be accepted through February 28, 2025: at which time the Walk of Fame committee will review the nominations.

A total of up to five nominees will be recommended to the city of Winston-Salem's City Council Community Development/Housing/ General Government Committee. The Council Committee will consider the Walk of Fame Committee's recommendations and submit the slate of nominees to the Mayor and City Council for final approval and election.

Those not selected for the current year are encouraged to resubmit during the next year's nomination period. The decisions of the committee are final and entirely within the committee's discretion. Nomination and selection procedures, forms, and qualifications are guidelines only, and entirely within the committee's discretion, and are subject to change at any time, without notice.

The ceremony to unveil the stars around the Benton Convention Center will take place in August 2026.

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#### Criteria

- The nominee(s) exhibited sustained excellence in his or her field for at least five years.

- The nominee(s) made distinguished contributions to the community and civic-oriented participation.
- The nominee(s) is deceased (must provide copy of death certificate or obituary).
- The nominee(s) was a resident of Winston-Salem for at least five years.
- The nominee(s) made a significant contribution to the arts or entertainment industry in one or more of the following areas: music, dance, theater, writing, visual arts, motion pictures, television, or radio.

A “significant” contribution would be iconic in terms of renown and the impact on the artistic disciplines or popular culture.

Nominee's Stage Name	Bill Benton
Nominee's Given Name	William Grady Benton
Date Range of Winston-Salem Residency (ex: 2015-2020)	1945-2025
Arts, Culture & Entertainment Category	Visual Arts

#### Required Documentation

- Attach nominee's performance/accomplishment biography which must include at least 5 years of accomplishments in the arts, culture, or entertainment field.
- Attach a list of nominee's civic/community involvement.
- Attach a copy of nominee's death certificate or obituary.

Nominee's Professional Accomplishments/Biography	<a href="#">Bill bio.docx</a>
Nominee's Civic/Community Involvement	<a href="#">Bill Civil.docx</a>
Nominee's Death Certificate or Obituary	<a href="#">William Benton Obituary (1945 - 2025) - Winston-Salem, NC - Winston-Salem Journal.pdf</a>

(Section Break)

#### Nominator Information

First Name	Brooks
Last Name	Jewett
Address	1056 Kenleigh Cir
City	Winston Salem
State	NC

ZIP Code	27106
Phone Number	3038622008
Email Address	brooksjewett@gmail.com
Did you personally know the nominee?	Yes
Do you have contact information for nominee's family or a close friend?	Yes
First Name	Carey
Last Name	Benton-Jewett
Phone Number	3368170773
Email Address	careybentonjewett@gmail.com

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## **Honoring the Legacy of Bill Benton**

Winston-Salem has lost a visionary leader, a devoted philanthropist, and a true champion of the arts. A successful businessman, William “Bill” Benton was the President of Salem Senior Housing Inc, CEO of Residential Properties Management, and was involved with numerous other partnerships in residential development. Bill has been involved in the renovations and development of the Glade Street YWCA. His quiet yet powerful leadership strengthened the foundations of numerous initiatives, ensuring that Winston-Salem would continue to be a thriving place to live, work, and create.

Beyond his business acumen, Bill was a steadfast advocate for the arts, believing in their power to inspire, connect, and transform communities. His unwavering support of the Arts Council of Winston-Salem, the Sawtooth School for Visual Art, and countless other organizations fostered a thriving creative environment that continues to enrich the lives of artists and audiences alike. His vision and commitment helped secure vital resources, ensuring that arts education, public programs, and cultural initiatives would flourish for generations to come.

Bill’s leadership extended far beyond financial contributions. He served on boards, guided capital campaigns, and encouraged others to invest in the arts as a cornerstone of a vibrant society. His passion for creative expression and his belief in the unifying power of the arts were evident in all he did.

Though he is no longer with us, Bill Benton’s influence lives on in every brushstroke, every performance, and every artistic endeavor that continues to shape Winston-Salem’s cultural identity. His legacy is one of generosity, vision, and an enduring commitment to the arts—a gift that will inspire and uplift this community for years to come.

Below is a list of organizations benefiting from Bill's philanthropic spirit. We suspect there are more that we are unaware of.

- The Arts Council of Winston-Salem / Forsyth County: Major donor, Board Member several terms over 30 years, board Treasurer, former co chair
- Sawtooth School of Visual Design: Major Donor, Past Board Member
- Piedmont Craftsmen: Major Donor, Past Board President, Capital Campaign Cabinet , Board Member in the 1980's, 1990's, 2000's.
- Winston-Salem Symphony: Major donor
- Carolina Chamber Symphony: Major Donor and past Board Member
- Forsyth Human Society: Capital Campaign Donor (naming rights in new facility)
- Habitat for Humanity: Annual and major donor since inception of the organization, 2 terms on the Board, Search Committee for Executive Director, Advocate for housing, encouraged focus on senior and veteran housing
- Second Harvest Food Bank: Major Donor
- Piedmont Opera: Annual Ticket holder
- Senior Services: Longtime board member, annual donor, capital campaign committee member and donor
- Tanger Factory Outlet Centers: Board member

Bill's passion is the arts and compassion is for the people! The organizations that he supports with his time, talent and treasure demonstrate this. Not only does he enjoy the performing arts events, he is an avid collector of fine crafts. He understands the value of strong arts organizations in shaping and bringing character to a community, its economic impact and contribution to fostering lively creativity that enriches education, science, and business. Bill Benton has literally helped build the material landscape of our nonprofit community. For example, he has worked closely with the Millennium Group which fostered much of downtown W-S redevelopment. He played a key role in the Arts Councils move downtown in the in the late

1970, acquiring the (Sawtooth) building and assisting with the many aspects of its redesign. He helped Arts Council again in 2008-10 with the capital campaign and the remodel of the building well as acquiring the Delco building on Spruce Street to build the Hanes Brands Theater. In 2004 he led Piedmont Craftsmen in their efforts to get a permanent home, locating the property on Trade Street, guiding the guild in acquiring the building, navigating the 'historic properties' issues, the design competition, finding a construction company and more. Milton Rhodes says that "Bill was the go to' person for 13 years of service in selling property on coliseum drive, downtown real estate for Sawtooth and anything regarding deals and building. Of course this was all done as a volunteer, Bill gained nothing materially.

Bill's business knowledge of urban development and passion for affordable housing helped shape the success of Habitat for Humanity during some formable years. He was brought onto the board of Director's as Habitat for Humanity national was making their shift to Neighborhood Revitalization which is their current mode of operation of deep and impactful service to a neighborhood that involves new construction, repairs, remodels, community development and training. His guidance on the board helped establish the local affiliate as one

#### Outstanding Philanthropist – Winston-Salem Nominees

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of the premier Habitat for Humanity's in the country and being recognized for their work in the historic Boston Thurmond neighborhood. During his tenure on the board the organization held a successful capital campaign to open the large ReStore on Coliseum drive and move the offices and the Dan Pearson Construction and Technology Warehouse to the corner of 14th Street and University Parkway in the former Contract Office Furnishings building, and built the 40 bed Jimmy Johnson Volunteer Lodge for visiting and local groups. After his board terms he stayed involved and agreed to serve on the search committee as the organization made another

transition from Sylvia Oberle's retirement to a the new executive director, Mike Campbell.



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# William Grady Benton

1945 - 2025



1945 - 2025



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## William Benton Obituary

**W**illiam Grady Benton

August 15, 1945 - January 22, 2025

William Grady "Bill" Benton died on the morning of January 22nd. He was born to Elizabeth Holmes and M.C. "Red" Benton, Jr. in Tampa, Florida, where his father was serving in the military. He was 79 years old. He was a graduate of R.J. Reynolds High School and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He served as a Second Lieutenant stationed in Germany in the 2nd Armored Cavalry of the U.S. Army, receiving an honorable discharge. He married Eunice Howze Milton in 1968, and they settled in Winston-Salem. Primarily a real estate developer and syndicator by trade, he was a Director, President, or CEO of numerous enterprises. A life-long lover of dogs, his appreciation for animals expanded to cats and other furry mammals. His hobbies included sailing, photography, reading, and listening to music. His civic involvement in Winston-Salem was deep; he was a past board member of the Arts Council, Piedmont Craftsmen, the Winston-Salem Symphony, the Carolina Chamber Symphony, Habitat for Humanity, and the WSSU foundation, among many others.

In 2018, he was honored to receive the Lifetime Achievement in Philanthropy Award from the Triad chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

He is survived by his wife, Eunice Benton, three sisters, Katherine Broadhurst, Carey Benton-Jewett, and Alice Lanham-Reeves, a son, Michael Benton, five nieces and nephews, and five grand-nieces and grand-nephews.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that any memorials be made to the Arts Council of W-S/FC or the Forsyth Humane Society.



A memorial service will be held in the Davis gallery of the Sawtooth School on Saturday, May 3rd at 2:00 p.m.

To plant trees in memory, please visit the [Sympathy Store](#).

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