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Citizen Hall of Fame Announces 2018 Historic Inductees

Spokane, WA—The Spokane Public Library Foundation (SPLF) and the City of Spokane announce the historic inductees into the Citizen Hall of Fame. They include Dr. George Bagby, Sonora Smart Dodd, Akhoy Kumar Mozumdar, and Myrtle Woldson. They will be honored at our May 1st breakfast.

Dr. George Bagby (1923 - 2017), was an orthopedic surgeon, inventor and philanthropist who invented the “Bagby Bone Plate,” a self-compressing bone plate which helped facilitate the healing of fractures. Bagby is known for operating on triple-crown winner, Seattle Slew, in 2000. He was named Spokane Physician of the year in 1990, was awarded the Humanitarian Service award in 2003 by Rotary International and arranged fishing trips often for children hospitalized at Shriner’s Hospital for Children in Spokane. He lived in Spokane from 1956 until his death in 2017.

Sonora Smart Dodd (1882 - 1978), was a Spokane mother, artist, and poet who came up with the idea of Father’s Day after listening to a sermon about Mother’s Day and the virtues of motherhood. Sonora was sixteen when her mother died. Her father, William Jackson Smart dedicated himself to raising Sonora and her five younger brothers. After deciding that a day was needed to honor fathers, Sonora went to the Spokane Ministerial Alliance and the YMCA and they endorsed her proposition, proclaiming June 19, 1910 as the first Father’s Day. Preachers around Spokane delivered Father’s Day sermons and wire service stories picked it up. Other cities quickly began celebrating Father’s Day and by 1925, the entire country was paying tribute to fatherhood. As honorary president of the International Father’s Day Association, Dodd worked to get formal recognition. In 1966, President Johnson signed a proclamation declaring the third Sunday in June as Father’s Day and in 1970, the U. S. Congress passed a joint resolution making it a national holiday which was signed by Richard Nixon.

Akhoy Kumar Mozumdar (1864 - 1953), spiritual leader, was born in a small village about twenty miles north of Calcutta, India and settled in Spokane in 1907. Mozumdar was a teacher and lecturer who formed the Christian Yoga Church in downtown Spokane. Mozumdar wanted to become an American citizen, but the law at the time offered citizenship only to “free born whites.” In 1912, Mozumdar applied for naturalization, ready to challenge the meaning of “whiteness.” He argued before a Spokane judge that as a member of the ruling caste in India, he should be considered white under the law. Spokane judge Frank H. Rudkin ruled for Mozumdar in May of 1913, making Mozumdar the first Hindu to become a U. S. citizen though in 1923 the Supreme Court overturned the victory, ruling that Hindus were not “free born whites” after all and stripped him of his citizenship.

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Mrytle Woldson (1910 - 2014), was a Spokane businesswoman and philanthropist, who had real estate investments in Spokane and Seattle that propelled her toward a life of generosity. She gave money to gardens in honor of her mother and $3 million dollars to the Fox Theater in honor of her father. She developed a relationship with Gonzaga and after she died in 2014 at the age of 104, she left $55 million to Gonzaga, to build a performing arts center and to establish an endowment to provide scholarships. Her gift to Gonzaga was the largest in Gonzaga’s history and the largest private gift to any university in Washington State. Her generous spirit and lasting legacy will be remembered in Spokane for years to come.

Please go to www.spokanelibraryfoundation.org for more information about the event and to purchase tickets.

The Spokane Citizen Hall of Fame recognizes individuals, both living and deceased, who have made significant contributions to the city of Spokane in one of six categories while providing an opportunity to raise funds for the Spokane Public Library. The Spokane Public Library, as one of the centers of our community, is a resource to the citizens of Spokane, providing the tools and resources to enhance the lives of all citizens. The library is a valuable resource which includes experts, curators and navigators of knowledge for our city. Together, the City of Spokane and the Library Foundation, want to honor these outstanding citizens who make Spokane great.

Citizens will be honored for their achievements in the following categories:

1. **Arts and Letters:** for activities that enhance and support the artistic/cultural and literary life and well-being of the community
2. **Economic Development and Business:** for entrepreneurial activity or significant contributions toward the economic betterment of Spokane
3. **Education:** for enriching and inspiring lifelong learning in our community
4. **Innovation and Leadership:** for activities that cultivate strong innovation and leadership city-wide
5. **Public Service and Philanthropy:** for exemplary voluntary and public service activities that benefit the community
6. **Science and Medicine:** for individuals who have made significant contributions in the area of science or medicine

**About Spokane Public Library Foundation**

The Spokane Public Library Foundation, a 501(c)3 enhances programming, services and resources offered by the Spokane Public Library through advocacy, partnerships and private dollars to ensure the library’s excellence. For more information about us visit www.spokanelibraryfoundation.org and follow the library @spokanelibrary on Facebook and Twitter.

**About the City of Spokane**

The City of Spokane, home to more than 210,000 people, is located in the heart of the Inland Northwest. Our 2,000 employees strive to deliver efficient and effective services that facilitate economic opportunity and enhance the quality of life for all our citizens. For more information visit spokanecity.org and follow us @spokanecity on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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