Five inducted into Hall of Fame

By DEBRA JENSEN-DE HART For the Daily News | Posted: Monday, November 7, 2016 4:00 pm

BELOIT — About 100 people filled the Beloit Historical Society on Sunday for ceremonies honoring five people inducted into the Hall of Fame.

The five Stateline Area inductees were chosen for being outstanding contributors to the community. Inductees Fran Fruzen and J. B. Elzy Jr. attended the ceremony and accepted their awards. Family members accepted the awards for Roger Bryden, Sarah “Sally” Kramer and Frank Marsden who were inducted posthumously.

The inductees were chosen by members of the Selection Committee, including: Tom Nightingale, Barbara Hickman, Richard Gerhard, Fran Fruzen, Bobbie Smith, Teri Downing, Bonnie Wetter, William Bolgrien and Kelly Washburn.

Roger Bryden

Roger Bryden and his father, Bill Bryden, were humble and kind to everyone, said David Luebke who gave the introductory remarks for inductee Roger Bryden.

Luebke said Bryden helped many people and did so in a quiet manner not wanting to draw attention to himself.

Roger Bryden was a life-long resident of the Beloit area and a well-known businessman. He joined the family-owned business in 1962 and became president of Bryden Motors in downtown Beloit. He was married to his wife, Vicki, for 50 years and had two children.

He took a special interest in the community. In the downtown, he supported preserving large parcels of land and in removing depreciated properties at his own expense. He served as a board member of Blackhawk Bank and the Boys and Girls Club.

Bryden was a sportsman and active sponsor of the Rockton Boat Club, Star Zenith Boat Club, the Beloit Rifle Association, Whitetail Unlimited and Pheasants Forever. He died in 2014 and 3,000 people attended his visitation.
Roger would love to be here; it's really an honor for Roger,” his wife, Vicki Bryden, said upon accepting the award.

J. B. Elzy Jr.

“He’s always a gentleman,” Nightingale said of J.B. Elzy Jr. and he thanked him for his many contributions. Elzy was born in 1942 the third of five children born to parents who did not graduate from high school. He graduated high school and college and became an educator. He taught in Michigan, Delaware and Virginia. In Beloit, he served as assistant principal at Beloit Memorial, principal at McNeel Middle School and as the district administrator of multicultural affairs.

Upon receiving the award, Elzy said to the crowd: “I want to thank you all in the humblest of ways.” He also thanked a long list of people who have inspired him and helped him with his success.

“Never in my wildest imagination did I think I would receive this award,” he said.

But he also said he always sought excellence no matter what the job before him.

He married Janet L. Pounds and has two children. He and his wife are the photographers for the Office of the National Black Student Union.

He has served as the president of the Board of the Merrill Community Center and is a member of the Black Male Role Model group.

Elzy also enjoys helping others, volunteering, writing, exercising and standing up for worthy causes.

Fran Fruzen

“He was my history teacher in high school and my line coach in football,” recalled Nightingale. “He was a good athlete, is a great human being and a great contributor with an unbelievable supportive family,” he said.

Fran Fruzen was born in 1929 in Green Bay. He began his career in education in Beloit in 1956 as a social studies teacher. In 1972, he took a leave of absence to become president of the Wisconsin Education Association. After returning to Beloit, he became the associate principal at Beloit Memorial High School.

Upon receiving the award, Fruzen gave thanks and noted: “This is all about giving back. All the candidates have taken the time to give back,” he said.

Fruzen retired in 1990 but came back to serve as principal of the district’s Alternative Education Program. In 2004, he became the supervisor of the Safe and Drug Free Programs for the district.

Fruzen also served as president of the Stateline United Givers Fund; chairman of the Greater Beloit Chapter of the American Red Cross and president of the Inner City Council.

He received many other awards for his contributions and a Beloit middle school was named after him.

Sarah “Sally” Kramer
Sarah “Sally” Kramer served the Greater Beloit Area with the American Red Cross for 57 years. She was a 1944 graduate of Beloit High School.

She began her work with the Red Cross after graduation and under her leadership of the local chapter, people in the area received disaster relief service, training in CPR and First Aid and were able to donate blood to help others.

Fruzen said she helped many, but she did not seek the spotlight. Although she often was written up in the local newspaper. Nightingale said there are many similarities among the inductees. “These people are just plain givers.”

Kramer married Walter Kramer and had a son and a daughter, was a member of St. Jude Catholic Church and was an active member of the Marion Guild.

She started many local programs such as the Red Cross Christmas Day dinner for shut-ins; implemented the first Red Cross civilian blood program in the area; and developed First Aid, CPR and lawn safety programs for children. She received many other awards. She died in 2015.

Her son, Jerry, accepted the award on her behalf.

“This is a great honor. Thank you for putting her in the spotlight one more time,” Jerry Kramer said.

Frank J. Marsden

Frank Marsden had a very positive and outgoing personality, Luebke said.

He was a businessman, an elected official and long-time court bailiff. Born in 1932 in Beloit, he graduated from Beloit High School in 1950. He joined the Air Force and served in the Korean War.

He later became a purchasing agent for Hanson Equipment and salesman for a local radio station.

He and his wife, Sue Marsden, became the owners of the Dari Rippl ice cream stand from 1976-1992. He was appointed as a bailiff for the Rock County Circuit Court, a position he held until his death in 2013.

“We are thrilled my dad got this award,” said his daughter, Kristi M. Hayden. She said her father read four newspapers a day and taught his children to give back, get involved, vote and pay attention to politics.

Marsden also served on the Beloit City Council, Board of Education and the Rock County Board of Supervisors. He was appointed to the Beloit Police and Fire Commission, Alcohol Advisory Board and the Board of Review. He was a charter member of the Town of Turtle Fire Department, member of First Baptist Church.

He was named Chamber Ambassador of the year and the Beloit Daily News Volunteer of the Month.