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For more information:

Hannah Stewart, Marketing Specialist

hstewart@nationalcowboymuseum.org

(405) 839-7876

**Entertainment Icon Reba McEntire, Actor Mo Brings Plenty
Among Those to be Honored at 63rd Annual
Western Heritage Awards**

Oklahoma City, OK – The National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum is proud to name entertainment icon Reba McEntire and actor Mo Brings Plenty among the distinguished panel of award recipients being honored at the 63rd annual Western Heritage Awards ceremony on April 13, 2024.

“We are thrilled to announce the exceptional inductees and award recipients for this year's Western Heritage Awards,” said National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum President & CEO, Pat Fitzgerald. “Each individual being honored embodies the spirit of the American West in their own unique way, contributing to its rich tapestry of culture and history. We’re excited to celebrate and honor their vast talent and contributions for generations to come.”

The Western Heritage Awards honors individuals who have made remarkable contributions to Western heritage through their creative endeavors in literature, music, television and film. The event also serves as the induction ceremony for the National Cowboy Museum’s Hall of Great Westerners, Hall of Great Western Performers and the presentation of esteemed honors such as the Lifetime Achievement Award and Chester A. Reynolds Award, named after the Museum's founder.

This year, the Museum will also present the New Horizon Award for the very first time. The New Horizon Award is bestowed upon a living individual who has shown exceptional promise and made a significant impact in the Western genre while demonstrating the values and integrity of Western culture.

Each inductee and honoree receives a *Wrangler*, a bronze sculpture of a cowboy on horseback created by the late Oklahoma artist and 2017 Hall of Great Westerners inductee Harold T. Holden. The recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award also receives a commemorative three-piece Western buckle set created by Traditional Cowboy Arts Association silversmiths Scott Hardy and Beau Compton.

Due to limited space and overwhelming support from the award recipients' families and friends, tickets to the awards dinner are not available for purchase at this time. For event details, visit nationalcowboymuseum.org/western-heritage-awards/. For media resources, contact Hannah Stewart at hstewart@nationalcowboymuseum.org.

2024 Hall of Great Westerners

Jack LeForce

Buster Welch (1928-2022)

About Jack LeForce

Jack LeForce, a prominent figure in the agricultural community, boasts an impressive career spanning decades of dedication and leadership. Serving as the Beef Superintendent at the Oklahoma Junior Livestock Show for over two decades, he contributed significantly to the success of the largest Junior Livestock Show in the United States. LeForce's expertise extends beyond showmanship; he held esteemed positions such as President of the Oklahoma Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers and President of the Sirloin Club of Oklahoma, demonstrating his commitment to the industry. Throughout the 1980s, LeForce made substantial contributions as a writer for AgriFinance Publication and served as President of the Oklahoma City Farm Club and the Southwest Livestock Foundation. His influence also resonated within the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce Livestock Council, where he served as Vice-Chairman from 1987 to 1990. Recognized for his outstanding contributions, LeForce received numerous accolades, including the Honorary State Farmer Degree by the FFA and recognition from the Oklahoma State University Animal Science Department. Even after his retirement in 1993, LeForce remained actively involved in agriculture, establishing his own successful cattle operation in Noble County. His dedication to community is evident in his volunteer work, spanning from Land Judging Events to neighborhood improvement projects. In 2014, LeForce was honored as a Graduate of Distinction by Oklahoma State University Animal Science, a testament to his lasting impact on the industry.

About Buster Welch (1928-2022)

Though a new generation of Western enthusiasts might know him as “one of the three gods in the state of Texas” from his cameo in season 4 of *Yellowstone*, Buster Welch was a legend long before this television appearance. He was one of the rare links to the world of old-time cowboys and the open-range methods of working with cattle and horses. A Texas native, Welch knew he wanted to cowboy from an early age. As a child, he would often skip school to visit the stockyards. There, he learned to ride broncs. At 13, he left home to work for cattlemen Foy and Leonard Proctor in Midland, Texas. This launched a lifelong career working for ranches; after leaving the Proctors', he honed his horsemanship skills working for prominent ranches including the 6666 Ranch, Pitchfork Ranch, and King Ranch. By the early 1950s, Welch had begun making a name for himself as a cutting horse rider and trainer. In a competitive career that spanned decades, Welch collected awards and accolades beyond measure. He won the National Cutting Horse Association World Championship four times and the NCHA World Championship Futurity five times and was inducted into the NCHA Members Hall of Fame, the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame, and the Texas Cowboys Hall of Fame. He also received the Charles

Goodnight Award and AQHA's 30 Year Breeder Award. In 2012, he was chosen as the recipient of the National Golden Spur Award for his "outstanding contributions to the ranching and livestock industry".

2024 Hall of Great Western Performers

Keith Carradine

Noah Beery Jr. (1913-1994)

John Smith (1931-1995)

About Keith Carradine

Keith Ian Carradine was born in San Mateo, California, on August 8, 1949. Carradine dropped out of Colorado State University to pursue his career and soon after, he auditioned for *Hair* and made his Broadway debut in the 1969 rock musical, playing the role of Claude. Carradine next appeared with his father in a stage production of *Tobacco Road* (1970) in Florida. The following year he broke into films with a part in the Kirk Douglas/Johnny Cash western *A Gunfight* (1971). Legendary director Robert Altman was quite taken by Carradine's work and gave him a part in his own movie *McCabe & Mrs. Miller* (1971), which sparked the first of many endeavors together. He also made a strong showing on TV, making his mini-movie debut with *Man on a String* (1972), and appearing with brother, David Carradine, in the TV movie pilot and various episodes of the cult series *Kung Fu* (1972). One acting trick that worked was pairing all three Carradine brothers in *The Long Riders* (1980), which recalled the infamous lives of brothers Cole, Jim and Bob Younger, and boasted three other sets of acting brothers (Keach, Quaid and Guest) as various other outlaw siblings. Many of his best notices came from the Altman and Rudolph films, appearing in two of Rudolph's acclaimed 80s works -- *Choose Me* (1984) and *The Moderns* (1988). His role in the mini-series *Chiefs* (1983) netted an Emmy nomination, while his recurring role as Wild Bill Hickok in *Deadwood* (2004) earned a Golden Satellite nomination and his work in the made-for-TV-film *Half a Lifetime* (1986) scored a CableACE nomination. In addition to strong roles in *Another Part of the Forest* (1982) and *Detective Story* (1984), he won the Outer Critics Circle Award for his excellent work in 1982's *Foxfire* opposite Jessica Tandy and Hume Cronyn and then roped a Tony and Drama Desk nomination as humorist Will Rogers in the Broadway musical *The Will Rogers Follies* (1991). More recently he starred in the American premiere of David Hare's satire *Stuff Happens* as none other than George W. Bush while expounding on the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Millennium films include *Wooly Boys* (2001), a top-billed role in *Falcons* (2002), *The Adventures of Ociece Nash* (2002), *Our Very Own* (2005), *Bobby Z* (2007), *Cowboys & Aliens* (2011), *The Family Tree* (2011), *After the Fall* (2014), *Dakota's Summer* (2014), *Bereave* (2015), *A Quiet Passion* (2016) and *The Old Man & the Gun* (2018).

About Noah Beery Jr. (1913-1994)

Noah Beery Jr. is a familiar and well-liked character actor of very different persona than either his father, Noah Beery, or his uncle, Wallace Beery. He attended Harvard Military Academy but managed to make a number of appearances on film and on stage with his father before adulthood. At age 19, he began playing leading roles, primarily in westerns, before settling into what would be the pattern for much of his career: good-natured supporting roles, usually as a pal of the hero. He kept going in such parts into his late 70s, transforming slowly into warm (or,

rarely, curmudgeonly) rustic sages. In later years, he achieved great renown as the father of the James Garner character on TV's *The Rockford Files* (1974). He married the daughter of cowboy star Buck Jones. Their son Bucklind Beery is an actor. They also had two daughters, Muffett and Melissa. Beery died in 1994 at the age of 81.

About John Smith (1931-1995)

John Smith, born Robert Errol Van Orden, embarked on an extraordinary journey from early tragedy to Hollywood stardom. His passion for acting ignited during his teenage years, leading him to join the Robert Mitchell Boys Choir and make his film debut alongside Bing Crosby in *Going My Way*. Despite initial setbacks and odd jobs, John's determination paid off as he secured roles in notable films like *The High and the Mighty*, earning acclaim for his performances. His career soared with starring roles in television series like *Cimarron City* and *Laramie*, showcasing his versatility and charisma on screen. Amidst personal challenges, John's resilience and talent continued to shine, paving the way for future success in the entertainment industry.

2024 Chester A. Reynolds Award

Don Reeves

About Don Reeves

As a young boy from Iowa, Don Reeves' life changed when he experienced Cimarron, New Mexico, smelled the sage after a summer rain and fell in love with the American West. The fascination with this magical region brought Reeves to the University of Oklahoma where he received both bachelor's and master's degrees in Anthropology with an emphasis in Museum Studies. After working several years at the Natural History Museum at the University of Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Historical Society, in 1979 he was asked to join the staff of the then National Cowboy Hall of Fame & Western Heritage Center. Reeves was on the curatorial staff of the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum for 38 years and curated the Children's Cowboy Corral, the American Cowboy and the Western Performer galleries. He was instrumental in the formation of the Traditional Cowboy Arts Association and has authored numerous publications and magazine articles on the American West. Throughout his curatorial career Reeves participated in a host of television and documentary film projects. At the urging of his mentor, David Dary, he joined the Board of Directors of Westerners International as Secretary of the Board, a position he held for more than twenty years. Reeves and his wife Val are now retired and living in Williamsburg, Virginia, near his two sons, their wives, and grandchildren.

2024 Lifetime Achievement Award

Reba McEntire

About Reba McEntire

Multi-media entertainment mogul Reba McEntire has become a household name through a successful career that includes music, television, film, theater, retail and hospitality. The Country Music Hall of Fame and Hollywood Bowl member has more than 50 award wins under her belt,

earning honors from the ACM Awards, American Music Awards, People's Choice Awards, CMA Awards, GRAMMY® Awards and GMA Dove Awards. Reba was also a 2018 Kennedy Center Honors recipient, in addition to multiple philanthropic and leadership honors. Reba has celebrated unprecedented success including 35 career No.1 singles and more than 58 million albums sold worldwide. Reba earned her 60th Top 10 on the Billboard Country Airplay chart, extending her record for the most Top 10 hits among female artists. Reba's Top 10 success spans five straight decades, landing her in the singular group with only George Jones, Willie Nelson, and Dolly Parton who have the same achievement. The Oklahoma native and Golden Globe® nominated actress has multiple movie credits to her name, a critically acclaimed lead role on Broadway in Irving Berlin's *Annie Get Your Gun*, and starred in the 6-season television sitcom. Reba has also proven to be a savvy entrepreneur, with longstanding brand partnerships including her Dillard's clothing line and western footwear collection REBA by Justin™. She has even added restaurateur to the list with Reba's Place, a restaurant, bar, retail and entertainment venue in Atoka, Oklahoma. Reba is set to return as a coach on Season 25 of NBC's *The Voice*. Her new book *Not That Fancy* landed on the New York Times bestseller list. For more information, visit www.Reba.com.

2024 Western Heritage New Horizon

Mo Brings Plenty

About Mo Brings Plenty

Mo Brings Plenty is an enrolled Lakota who hails from the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. His traditional name -- given to him as a young boy -- is Ta Sunke Wospapi ("catches his horse"); it befits a man who spends more time on his horses than anywhere else. As a Makes Room on his mother's side and a Brings Plenty on his father's, he is the stock of his grandfathers who fought at the Battle at Little Big Horn. As an actor, Brings Plenty is best known in his self-titled role as "Mo Brings Plenty," Chief Thomas Rainwater's enforcer on the Taylor Sheridan/ViacomCBS record-breaking juggernaut series *Yellowstone*. Moviegoers can catch him playing "Shep Wauneka" in *Jurassic World Dominion* (2022) and as "Ottawa Jones" in Showtime's Peabody award-winning limited series *The Good Lord Bird* (2021). He has played "Crazy Horse," "Sitting Bull," and many other historical Indian notables who have solidified their place in this country's history. And he has spent a fair amount of time in the biopic world twice portraying Charlie Soap -- the husband of the first woman elected Chief of the Cherokee Nation, the late Wilma Mankiller-- in *The Cherokee Word for Water* and Gloria Steinem's *The Glorias*, respectively. Brings Plenty is an actor, horse stunt rider, rancher and American Indian storyline consultant. But above all, he is a man who wholeheartedly believes in human kindness, and he trusts the good in humanity still exists and feels it just needs to be dusted off a bit. When Brings Plenty isn't working as an actor, he can be found ranching or seeking ways to give back to his Lakota communities and Indian Country -- ways that include preserving culture, tradition and seeking cultural truth in diversity.

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About the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum

The National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City is America's premier institution of Western history, art and culture. Founded in 1955, the Museum collects, preserves and exhibits an internationally renowned collection of Western art and artifacts while sponsoring dynamic educational programs to stimulate interest in the enduring legacy of the American West. The Museum is located only six miles northeast of downtown Oklahoma City at 1700 Northeast 63rd Street. Annual memberships are available beginning at \$50. For more information, visit nationalcowboymuseum.org. For high-resolution images related to this release, visit nationalcowboymuseum.org/media.