

WR Murfin
KQHA Hall of Fame Inductee

Born in El Dorado, Kansas, in 1920, William R. (Bill) Murfin spent most of his childhood in Wichita. Under the influence of his father, who founded Murfin Drilling in 1926, young Bill learned the oil and drilling business from the ground up. Beginning as a truck driver at age 13, Bill progressed to keeping the company's books for his father while still in high school. He became a pilot at age 16, flying his father's Stinson.

After graduating from high school, Murfin attended the University of Kansas, graduating in 1942 with a degree in business. He then served in the U.S. Navy Air Corps as a pilot until 1946.

After World War II, Murfin returned to Wichita and became involved in his father's oil business, becoming the sole owner in 1970. He also served as president of the Kansas Independent Oil and Gas Association, president of the Wichita Crime Commission, and as a board and executive member of the Forth National Bank & Trust of Wichita. He also owned John Deere dealerships in Kansas and Nebraska as well as the Dold Packing Plant from the 1960s to the mid-1980s. In addition to these, he was a board member of the YMCA, the Chamber of Commerce, Wesley Foundation, Junior Achievement, and the Kansas Quarter Horse Association. In 1991 Murfin was inducted into the Kansas Oil and Gas Hall of Fame.

Although Murfin experienced much success in business, his real pride and joy was his family, and he was never too busy to give time to them. He was married to Betty; they were the parents of three children: Barbara, Dave, and Nancy. He considered his employees to be part of his extended family, a family that he enjoyed and appreciated.

While Murfin had always loved horses and owned one as a boy, his horse show experience began at the Saddlebred shows with a horse purchased for Barbara. Before long they bought her a Quarter Horse, which she began showing in gymkhanas when she was in middle school. Later, a black Quarter Horse named John became the family barrel horse and soon proved his versatility by going all out in the men's classes with Bill, the ladies' classes with Barb, and then going slowly with Nancy in youth classes.

As the years passed, Murfin was proud of his daughters' success in the show ring, especially their AQHA All-Around wins at the World Championship Quarter Horse Show. Bill later took up showing in AQHA shows himself. He began by showing Nancy's horse the Investigator in amateur pleasure, horsemanship, and showmanship classes, earning a superior in pleasure and qualifying for the AQHA Amateur World Show twice. At the 1981 Amateur World Show he placed ninth and placed tenth at the 1982 World Show; he also placed sixth in western pleasure at the 1981 Congress. Murfin later showed Grey Escort in pleasure and showmanship classes, sharing him with his grandson Marshall Murphy.

Although he was a competitor at AQHA shows, he is probably best known for supporting his family and friends as they competed. He could always be found in the stands between his classes, with a video camera ready to record his family and friends, as well as cheering them on. In spare moments he could be found catching up on his reading.

W. R. Murfin was inducted into the KQHA Hall of Fame for his outstanding support of the Kansas Quarter Horse Association and all its members.