

**Economic Growth & Redevelopment Services Office
Cultural Arts Division**

2008 Austin Music Memorial Nominations

Year 1

Carl William Besserer (1851- unknown; Caucasian Male) An early pioneer of Austin music. A talented pianist, he founded one of the first bands, which became celebrated state-wide. He also founded the Austin Saengerrunde or singing society for German songs in 1879.

Virgie Mae Dewitty (1913-1980; African American Female) Mrs. Dewitty composed many anthems, spirituals and gospel songs over her lifetime. She was the first African American choir director to have a commercial radio program in Texas.

McKinley “Kenny” Dorham (1924-1972; African American Male) One of Austin’s greatest Jazz musicians during the 1940s and 1950s with an extensive recording career. Raised in Austin’s public school system, he would later become the first African American instructor at the Julliard School of Music.

Lavada Durst (1913-1995; African American Male) Known as “Dr. Hepcat,” he was the first African American disc jockey in Texas. He also brought many major African American entertainers to Austin’s Dorris Miller Auditorium. He performed at numerous blues and folk festivals as a barrelhouse pianist and singer.

Ignacio “Nash” Hernandez (1922-1994; Hispanic Male) After serving as a bugler for the Army Air Corp during World War II, Nash gave music lessons to children in East Austin neighborhoods with whom he formed his own big band. His greatest legacy lies in the younger Austin musicians he influenced.

Roy Montelongo (1938-2001; Hispanic Male) An original Tejano legend, his unique singing style and accomplishments as a saxophonist and arranger brought him much acclaim. He had a lengthy career in broadcasting over Austin’s airwaves.

Americo Parades (1915-1999; Hispanic Male) Recognized as one of the seminal Mexican American scholars of the twentieth century. He had a long academic career at the University of Texas at Austin educating students in corridos, folkloric ballads, machismo and border stereotypes.

Doug Sahm (1941-1999; Caucasian Male) A musical prodigy, Sir Doug began circulating the Austin music scene in the 1970s helping to put it on the map. During his life, he explored many musical genres and formed multiple bands, defying typecasts and earning national acclaim.

Roosevelt Williams (1903 – 1996; African American Male) Grey Ghost was a founding father of Texas barrelhouse blues, inspiring generations of blues musicians. Having played regularly in the 1940s at Victory Grill, his musical career was resurrected in the late 1980s.

Tary Owens (1942-2003; Caucasian Male) Intimately involved in the Austin music scene since the 1960s, Mr. Owens was a kind of “Renaissance Man” from songwriter to record and film producer, manager, promoter and historian. His greatest gift to the community was the preservation of music.