

Rockland's Wall of Fame

Five former residents of Rockland will become the newest members of Rockland's Wall of Fame located at Rockland City Hall. Joining the current 19 members will be Abbie Burgess (1839-1892) of lighthouse fame. Recognized nationally as a heroine, she is the subject of folklore through the years because of her tenacity and bravery during a nor'easter in January of 1856. It was up to Abbie to keep the light burning and protect her family from the elements on Matinicus Rock. A Coast Guard boat bearing her name is stationed at the Rockland base.

William Partridge Burpee (1846-1940). Burpee, an American marine impressionist painter, is known for landscapes and coastal views. In 1904, he was honored with a medal for his work in pastel at the St. Louis World Fair. Mr. Burpee kept his work close to home, family and friends. Because he didn't actively promote his paintings, his name has remained somewhat buried in American art history long after his death.

Gertrude Elliott (1874-1950). Younger sister of Maxine Elliot, Gertrude was an internationally acclaimed stage and screen actress. Her career began in 1894 in Oscar Wilde's *A Woman of No Importance*. Then both her and her sister joined a company in San Francisco that toured Australia in 1895. Miss Elliott joined the company of Johnston Forbes-Robertson of London. She married Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson in 1900 and shared his title as Lady Forbes-Robertson.



Leo Connellan (1928-2001). Achieved national recognition as an American Poet. Awards included the Shelley Memorial Award from the

Poetry Society of America. He served as Connecticut's second Poet Laureate from 1996 until his death. He was designated one of Maine's most prominent poets in the Maine Literary Hall of Fame.

Wesley A. Hoch (1932-2004). When Lt. Commander Hoch was dispatched to Vietnam as a senior advisor in 1963 he was dropped off on a remote air strip deep in the jungle with no one to meet him. As advisor to the Vietnam navy junk fleet his leadership was so effective the he received many awards and national recognition. Awards included: Wall of Honor Maine Maritime Academy, Medal of Honor, 1st Class Government of Vietnam, Bronze Star by the U.S. Navy and lifetime Achievement Award as a composites industry legend. He was the subject of articles in the Boston Globe and appeared on the television programs *The Today Show* and *To Tell the Truth*.

Rockland's Wall of Fame was created by the Rockland Share the Pride, an organization of civic minded area residents which is now inactive. The plaques that have been hanging in city hall since 1995 have been discolored and will all be replaced. Once the plaques have been made the Rockland Historical Society will have a public event at which time the new members will be officially added to the Wall of Fame. The current Wall of Fame Committee includes Brian Harden, David Hoch, Gil Merriam, Ben Perry, and committee chairman Wayne Gray. Gray chaired the original committee in 1995 when the wall was established.
