



KENTUCKY BOURBON HALL OF FAME® | 2022 CLASS

Bios, as provided by each inductee, are below in alphabetical order:

Retiring Rep. D. Chad McCoy, R-Bardstown, Majority Whip, Kentucky House of Representatives, two-time recipient of the KDA’s “100 Proof” award for public service and champion of several landmark pieces of legislation.

Since his first election in 2016, Chad McCoy has worked tirelessly to bring opportunities to Nelson County and advocate for business in the Bourbon Capital of the World.

Rep. McCoy has proved himself to be a true representative for Nelson County, frequently holding town halls to meet with constituents to engage with the most pressing issues. Time and again, Rep. McCoy has used information from these meetings to fight for Nelson County and he is willing to reach across the aisle to accomplish these goals.

During his first term, Rep. McCoy was the primary sponsor of an unprecedented five bills that were signed into law, including the Vintage Spirits bill for the Bourbon Industry. That was the start of a series of bourbon related bills including the “Bourbon Without Borders Bill” and this year’s Private Barrel Select Bill.

At the beginning of his second session, Rep. McCoy was elected Majority Whip by his peers and found time to sponsor several of his own bills. One that passed was a bill to help veterans’ groups with charitable gaming remove some restrictions on how often charity fundraising events may be held at unlicensed facilities.

Rep. McCoy was reelected Majority Whip for his third term and currently serves not only in leadership but also on the Licensing, Occupations & Administrative Regulations Committee as well as the Judiciary and Education Committees.

Rep. McCoy graduated from the University of Kentucky College of Law in 1995. Throughout his legal career he has represented the spectrum of legal needs, including large multinational corporations in merger and acquisitions and indigent clients in criminal court. He is a life-long learner, avid reader and pilot. He is married to Dr. Holly McCoy and they are the proud parents of adult twins Hunter and Woody McCoy.



KENTUCKY BOURBON HALL OF FAME® | 2022 CLASS

The late Stephen Francis Thompson, Founder and President, Kentucky Artisan Distillery (Lifetime Achievement Award), former president of Brown-Forman Distilleries and a pioneering resource for craft distilleries across the country.

Ethical, compassionate and hard-working, Stephen F. Thompson lived a life rich full of family, friends, and spirits for 78 years. He was a man who embraced every moment as an adventure and opportunity to learn and challenge the norm. He never hesitated to take a risk, encourage others to be courageous, and most of all annoy people. He often said, annoying people was a hobby of his.

With an inquisitive mind he was a natural when it came to creative solutions to complex challenges. “Being a problem solver is something you just have to be to work in the spirits industry,” or “figure it out,” he would often say.

Prior to beginning his 40-plus-year career in the spirits industry, he received multiple degrees from Cali Poly, Stanford University and University of Hartford, as well as making professional stops in manufacturing.

His formal introduction into the spirits industry would begin at Heublein, before it became known as Diageo. While here, he oversaw all manufacturing activities at numerous plants that produced such brands as Smirnoff Vodka, Cuervo Tequila and a variety of pre-mixed cocktails – the original RTD.

From Diageo, Brown-Forman would hire him to be Executive Vice President of Manufacturing where one of his early projects was modernizing Blue Grass Cooperage. From there, he would be promoted to President of the Distilling Company. In this role, he was responsible for all production, engineering, and R&D for Jack Daniels, Early Times, Canadian Mist, Southern Comfort, California Cooler, and Thoroughbred Plastics. Of course, one of his most crowning achievements at Brown-Forman, was to acquire and lead the construction of the Labrot and Graham distillery, which is now formally known as Woodford Reserve.

After retiring from Brown-Forman, Steve found himself commuting back and forth to Hawaii to create Hawaii Island Spirits Inc. This company founded several micro distilleries that produced rums, pineapple and grain-based vodkas and Okolehao-Hawaiian whisky. Moreover, he helped Levecke Corporation complete many expansions to keep up with the growing demand of contract bottling and private labels.



KENTUCKY BOURBON HALL OF FAME® | 2022 CLASS

His final spirits adventure, Steve and his business partners opened Kentucky Artisan Distillery in Crestwood, Ky. KAD set out to offer contract distilling, processing, co-packing and barrel storage for many well-known and successful bourbon whiskey brands, including; Whiskey Row Bourbon, Billy Goat Strut Whiskey, Jeffersons, Barrell Bourbon, Cream of Kentucky, Corner Creek, Bib and Tucker and Mastersons, just to name a few. As the years went by, KAD would serve as the “homeplace” to Jefferson’s Bourbon, become the 18th member of the Kentucky Distillers’ Association, grow its co-packing capabilities to 100,000 cases a year, contract distill 5,800 barrels a year, warehouse upwards of 38,000 barrels, and employ 25-plus team members.

As you can tell, Stephen lived an adventurous life. Of course, he would be the first to tell you, he would not have been as successful without the love and support of his first wife, Vickie, his widow, Linda, his four children: Stephen, Paul, Sherri, and Katie and seven grandchildren.

Julian P. Van Winkle, III, President, Old Rip Van Winkle Distillery, heralded grandson of Bourbon legend Julian “Pappy” Van Winkle, creator of the ultra-aged premium Pappy Van Winkle brand and the very first James Beard winner from Kentucky, as well as numerous other accolades.

Julian P. Van Winkle, III is the third generation Van Winkle to produce bourbon whiskey in Kentucky. Julian started working for his dad, Julian Jr., in 1977.

After his Dad sold the Stitzel-Weller Distillery in 1972, Julian Jr. created the Old Rip Van Winkle brand. He arranged for the new owners of Stitzel Weller to bottle the Van Winkle’s brand, Old Rip Van Winkle bourbon using Old Boone and Stitzel-Weller distillation.

Bourbon was not an easy sell in those years. Many bottlers/distillers were putting really good whiskey in fanciful decanters to sell their whiskey. Soon after his Dad passed away in 1981, Julian was forced to purchase the Old Hoffman Distillery plant in Lawrenceburg, Ky. in 1983 to stay in business.

The new owners at Stitzel-Weller were not interested in continuing the Van Winkle bottling relationship. In Lawrenceburg, Julian aged his barrels and bottled all his brands along with a few other customers, including A.H. Hirsch, Michter’s and Black Maple Hill. After Julian found the now famous photo of his grandfather in a basement file cabinet in the mid-’90s, the Pappy Van Winkle brand was created. At that time, 10-year Old Rip Van Winkle and 12-year Van Winkle Special Reserve were the only two labels he sold of their wheated bourbon whiskey.



KENTUCKY BOURBON HALL OF FAME® | 2022 CLASS

The 20-year Pappy Van Winkle brand scored a 99, the highest rating ever given by the Chicago Beverage Tasting Institute. Eventually, the 15 and 23 year Pappy Van Winkle labels were added to the Van Winkle portfolio. Julian was the first to sell ultra-aged premium bourbon whiskeys. He also added a 13-year premium rye whiskey to the portfolio, the oldest premium rye on the market at the time. All of these whiskeys received ratings in the 90s from the Chicago BTI.

Julian had operated the company by himself since his father's death in 1981. However, he was joined by his son Preston in June of 2001, the fourth generation Van Winkle to venture into the whiskey business. In 2002, since he was having no whiskey being produced for the future, Julian joined forces with Buffalo Trace Distillery, which now owned the W.L. Weller brand. This joint venture would solve any future supply issues that may arise. Buffalo Trace continues to distill, age and bottle the Van Winkle's brands today.

In January 2009, Julian was honored to be nominated as a Fellow at the Southern Foodways Alliance annual fundraiser at Blackberry Farm in Walland, Tennessee. The next January, at the same fundraising event, he was inducted as a new member into the Fellowship of Southern Farmers, Artisans and Chefs. This is a tremendous honor as the group members are some of the most talented people around.

In 2009 and 2010, Julian was nominated for a James Beard award under the category of Outstanding Wine & Spirits Professional. The James Beard awards are the Oscars of the Food & Beverage world.

In May 2011, Julian won the prestigious Wine & Spirits Professional award and was at the Lincoln Center in New York City to receive his award. He was the first Kentuckian to receive a James Beard award.

Whisky Magazine has honored Julian Van Winkle III with its highest accolade, inducting him into its Hall of Fame. Julian was recognized at the 2017 Whisky Magazine Awards America presentation held in New York on Feb. 28. He was at the time one of only 39 to be awarded this honor.

In 2020, the book "Pappyland: A Story of Family, Fine Bourbon and the Things That Last," written by ESPN sportswriter Wright Thompson, was published by Penguin Press. The book tells of Julian's sometimes difficult relationship with his father and his struggle in the early years to keep his family's bourbon heritage alive.



KENTUCKY BOURBON HALL OF FAME® | 2022 CLASS

Andrea Marie Wilson, distinguished industry veteran, Executive Vice President, General Manager and Master of Maturation at Michter's Distillery, and in 2009, the first woman to chair the KDA Board of Directors (2009).

Andrea was born in Louisville, Ky., and as a child she would listen attentively to her grandfather recount stories about his moonshining days.

She graduated from the University of Louisville with a Bachelor of Science, Chemical Engineering, and she went on to earn a Master of Engineering, Chemical Engineering there as well. In fact, in 2018, The JB Speed School of Engineering honored Andrea with its Professional Award in Chemical Engineering.

Andrea had a distinguished career at Diageo, where she rose to Director of Distillation and Maturation, North America. She played a critical role in managing the production of Bulleit Bourbon during a period of tremendous growth, and she worked to secure the approval and planning of the Bulleit Distillery in Shelby County, Ky. Additionally, she worked to share the rich history that would ultimately support the redesign of Stitzel Weller into the showpiece that it is today. In 2010, Andrea received the Diageo President's Spirit of Supply Hero Award for Brilliant Execution.

Upon joining Michter's in 2014, Andrea embarked on a series of roles at the company. Having done work essential to the growth at Michter's Shively Distillery, Andrea took on key roles in establishing Michter's Fort Nelson Distillery and the company's Farm and Operations in Springfield. Currently Andrea does outstanding work as Michter's Master of Maturation and Chief Operating Officer as well. Incidentally, we are unaware of any Master of Maturation in Kentucky prior to Andrea being named one.

Since 2005, Andrea has served as either a board member or an alternate board member of the KDA. In 2009 Andrea broke the glass ceiling when she became the first woman to chair the KDA.

Different organizations have called upon Andrea to help them, and she has been recognized for her service. Andrea worked as a member of the Frazier Museum Task Force for the development of the new Kentucky Bourbon Trail Welcome Center and the Spirit of Kentucky Exhibition. In 2004 Andrea was nominated for The Business and Professional Women Young Careerist Award. The KET documentary Kentucky Bourbon Tales: Distilling the Family Business highlighted Andrea, and in 2018 the Bourbon Women Association honored her with its Lois Mateus Networking Award.

Andrea resides in Fisherville, Kentucky with her wonderful husband Randy Wilson and three cats.



KENTUCKY BOURBON HALL OF FAME® | 2022 CLASS

Retiring U.S. Rep. John Yarmuth, D-Louisville, Co-Founder of the Congressional Bourbon Caucus and Chair of the House Budget Committee who helped lead a permanent reduction on the federal excise tax on distillers among other key measures.

Congressman John Yarmuth has represented Kentucky's Third Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives since 2007. Now in his eighth term, he has served as Chairman of the House Budget Committee since 2019. Yarmuth has been recognized for his work to improve education, expand access to affordable health care, and for his leadership in enacting the American Rescue Plan, landmark legislation to defeat the pandemic and rebuild our economy.

Yarmuth founded the Congressional Bourbon Caucus in 2009 and has served as its Co-Chair ever since. The caucus is made up of a bipartisan group of members dedicated to strengthening the Bourbon industry in the United States and educating other members on legislative and regulatory issues impacting the industry. Yarmuth has led the fight to make excise tax relief permanent for distilled spirits, protect distillers from unfair tariffs amidst ongoing trade disputes, and helped cut red tape for distillers who stepped up to produce hand sanitizer and other needed products at the start of the pandemic.

Through his founding of the Congressional Bourbon Caucus and his nearly two decades of work as Louisville's Congressman, Yarmuth has continually advocated on behalf of America's native spirit and the individuals and industries that support it.

Born and raised in Louisville, Yarmuth graduated from Atherton High School and Yale University. He and his wife, Cathy, have one son, Aaron, daughter-in-law, Sarah, and grandsons, J.D. and Rory.

Kaveh Zamanian, Founder, Whiskey Maker and CEO, Rabbit Hole Distillery, left Iran in 1979 during the revolution and founded Rabbit Hole in 2012. He blends the immigrant whiskey maker tradition with time-honored methods, diverse perspectives and modernist aesthetics.

There is a simple Latin phrase emblazoned on every bottle of Rabbit Hole Whiskey – Amare et Opus. It translates to "love and work." It's Kaveh Zamanian's family motto and his north star. In his own words, it means "Find what you love, go all in, and never look back." Ultimately, it's the spirit that led him to Kentucky and the reason he's a whiskey maker.

The Bluegrass has a long tradition of immigrant whiskey makers who collectively shaped the foundation of bourbon. Kaveh's proud to call himself one of them. Kaveh arrived in America in 1979 when he and his family fled their homeland during the Iranian revolution. With little more than



KENTUCKY BOURBON HALL OF FAME® | 2022 CLASS

determination for a better life, they relocated to California. In Iran, Kaveh’s father had been a physician, yet he could only qualify as a nurse’s aid in America. Humbled, but undeterred, he reclaimed his professional status through singular focus and an unrelenting work ethic. That lesson was not lost on Kaveh.

He earned a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology followed by a post-graduate fellowship at Northwestern University Medical School and training at the Chicago Center for Psychoanalysis. After graduation, Kaveh taught as an associate professor and operated a successful practice as a clinical psychologist in Chicago for nearly 20 years.

To put himself through school, Kaveh worked in the hospitality industry. That’s where his passion for spirits took hold. He found the warm-hearted, social nature of spirits enthralling — the way they were shared in moments of joy, love, laughter and friendship. Initially, he was drawn to Scotch because of the reverence and mystique that surrounded it. But then fate intervened when he met his wife, who happens to be from Kentucky.

Throughout the early 2000s, Kaveh and his family made frequent trips to the Bluegrass state, where Bourbon’s vibrant traditions and nuanced flavors captivated him. Bourbon seemed like a sleeping giant to Kaveh. He felt Bourbon could do for Kentucky what wine did for California. And he wanted to be a part of it. His passion for bourbon soon grew to an outright obsession.

In 2008, Kaveh and his family moved to Louisville so he could pursue his passion unabated. He created an informal Bourbon master’s program, reading everything about it that he could get his hands on. He trained with some of the most renowned master distillers on the art and science of whiskey making, and he learned everything from design and marketing to logistics and distribution.

Then, after years of rigorous research and planning, Kaveh founded Rabbit Hole in 2012 with a clear vision to honor the pioneers and rebels who laid the foundation for America’s native spirit by constantly pushing past the status quo. He feels a sense of duty to maintain the integrity and deep traditions they established for bourbon. For Kaveh believes bourbon deserves reverence on par with the world’s finest spirits, and he’s determined to help make that happen.

So here’s to finding what you love, going all in and never, ever looking back!

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