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Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 1189
Norris, TN 37828

Website:
museumofappalachia.org

Contact:
865-494-7680
[museum@
museumofappalachia.org](mailto:museum@museumofappalachia.org)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Museum of Appalachia to Honor Sam and Ann Furrow at
“Heroes of Southern Appalachia” Award Ceremony;
Lamar Alexander to Present**

NORRIS, Tenn. — The Museum of Appalachia will honor Sam and Ann Furrow at its fifth annual *Heroes of Southern Appalachia* award ceremony on Friday, February 27, 2026. Former Tennessee Governor and U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander will present the award.

Presented by Gary & Sandy Wade and Jenny & Randy Boyd, *Heroes of Southern Appalachia* recognizes individuals of Southern Appalachian heritage who exemplify perseverance, fortitude, self-reliance, and service.

“Sam and Ann Furrow built their lives through hard work, self-reliance, and a genuine commitment to others,” said Museum Board Chairman Gary Wade. “Their success was earned, and their generosity has always been intentional. They represent exactly the kind of character and service the Heroes of Southern Appalachia award was created to recognize.”

A Roane County native, Sam Furrow is widely recognized as one of East Tennessee’s most influential business and civic leaders. He founded and built Furrow Auction Company and went on to establish and lead business ventures in automotive dealerships, heavy equipment, and real estate development throughout the region. In addition to his business success, Furrow has held senior leadership roles with major community institutions, including serving as chair of the board of the United Way of Greater Knoxville and chair of the board of Zoo Knoxville, as well as president of the Tennessee Auctioneers Association and president of the Great Smoky Mountain Council of the Boy Scouts of America. He also played a key role in guiding the Museum of Appalachia’s transition to nonprofit status in 2003, strengthening the Museum’s long-term sustainability and ensuring its continued role as a public steward of Southern Appalachian history and culture.

Ann Furrow, a Maryville native, is recognized for a series of historic firsts at the University of Tennessee and for her lasting impact on women’s athletics and higher education. She became the University’s first female Vol golfer. She was also the only woman to compete on a men’s varsity athletic team and the first woman to receive an athletic scholarship at the University. Furrow later became the first woman and youngest person appointed to the University’s Board of Trustees, where she served for 18 years, including as vice chair and as chair of the Academic Affairs Committee. As an amateur golfer, she achieved national distinction, at one time ranking as the number one woman golfer and among the top ten



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golfers overall in the United States. She was also involved in the early development of the Lady Vol golf program alongside University leadership. In recognition of her contributions to the University, a main thoroughfare in Sorority Village was named in her honor. Furrow has been inducted into the Tennessee, Greater Knoxville, and Blount County Sports Halls of Fame. Beyond the University, she has served in leadership and advisory roles with a wide range of civic, educational, and community organizations, including Covenant Health, Fort Sanders Foundation, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and Spiritual Heritage Knoxville.

Hosted by John Tolsma, the evening's festivities will kick off at 7:00 p.m. in Heritage Hall at the Museum of Appalachia. A limited number of tickets are available for purchase at museumofappalachia.org.

Past recipients of the Heroes of Southern Appalachia award include Alex Haley, Dr. Joe Johnson, Jim Hart, Gen. Carl Stiner, Sen. Howard Baker, and Pete DeBusk.

Proceeds from the event benefit the Museum of Appalachia, a 501(c)3 organization, and are used in support of its mission to preserve Southern Appalachian history and culture. Please visit museumofappalachia.org or call 865-494-7680 for more information.