



Nominate local people of note as future hall of fame inductees

None of the most recent honorees had any direct connections to our region.


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We like the idea of having a California Hall of Fame, and the honorees just announced are excellent choices to represent the Golden State.

But the selection committee doesn't seem to be looking much beyond the state's largest population centers for Californians who "embody the state's spirit of inspiration and innovation." None of the 12 honorees announced this week had direct connections to our region.

This is a Hall of Fame and its honorees should not meet a regional quota. But neither should the selection committee ignore parts of the state where Californians have made significant contributions. There are several Valley people who we think should be in the California Hall of Fame.



They include author William Saroyan, Olympic champions Bob Mathias and Rafer Johnson, Hall of Fame pitcher Tom Seaver and astronaut Barbara Morgan, the first teacher in space.

The Web site San Joaquin Valleyfornia pointed out that "since the California Hall of Fame started three years ago, Valleyfornians have been noticeably left out. Of the 38 total inductees, three -- Ansel Adams, Cesar Chavez and John Muir -- have had recognizable personal or professional connections to the Valley."

Sponsors of the Hall of Fame told us that they aren't overlooking the Valley, and explained how the selection system works: The California Museum selects the California Hall of Fame inductees. A list of possible inductees is compiled in the early part of the year and nominated from several sources, including various cultural and historical organizations, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and first lady Maria Shriver, The California Museum and the public.

Representatives of the museum and the Hall of Fame Committee look at news coverage, read comments posted online and consider every nomination form received through the Web site, californiamuseum.org.

If you think people from the Valley should be in the Hall of Fame, nominate them and give reasons they should be honored. The list is eventually narrowed to the final 12 or 13. The governor and first lady read over the list and approve it.

Here's our call to action: Go to the Web site and fill out a nomination form telling the selection committee which Californians should be honored and why. Let's not let the committee overlook Hall of Famers from the Valley.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK. COMMENT ON THIS EDITORIAL BY GOING TO FRESNOBEE.COM/OPINION, THEN CLICK ON THE EDITORIAL.