



**2021
INDUCTEE**



OLLIE GATES

Restaurateur, Humanitarian, Celebrity

“Hi, may I help you?” is the greeting every customer at a Gates Bar-B-Q location in Kansas City hears as they walk through the door. The experience is required to get a true sense of Kansas City barbecue culture.

Mr Ollie W Gates graduated from Lincoln High School in 1949. Having excelled in masonry and physical education, a football scholarship was awarded to attend Maryland State College at Princess Anne, Maryland. Summer vacations from college were spent working in the family restaurant, opened in 1946 by parents George and Arzelia Gates.

Following (2) two years of academic work at Maryland State College, a move was made to matriculate at Lincoln University, Jefferson City MO in order to commute on weekends to work and grow with the business. This transfer negated the scholarship and increased personal responsibilities for meeting the tuition, room, and board. In addition to spending weekends in Kansas City working in the family business, waiting tables at night, joining the “ROTC” and working as a brick laying student on campus, boosted the income to complete an education at Lincoln University in 1954.

Mr Gates entered the army as 2nd Lieutenant and completed the U.S. Army, School of Engineering, Fort Belvoir, Virginia in 1955. He was discharged as 1st Lieutenant from active duty after serving two years in the U.S. Corps of Engineers, and entered inactive duty with the 242nd Transportation Battalion National Guard in Kansas City MO.

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The decision, in 1956, to build the first “ground up” restaurant, Gates and Sons’s BBQ, heralded the beginning of the Gates’ Barbeque Industry” which exists today. George passed away in 1960, and Arzelia in 2005, but Ollie expanded the reach and influence of Gates by opening additional locations around the city. Ollie grew Gates into a successful barbecue chain before that business model was commonplace, and they now run five locations across Kansas City. Ollie also started a barbecue university for Gates employees that they call Rib Tech.

The Gates barbecue sauce has been on grocery store shelves locally since 1975, and nationally since 1983, making Gates a nationally recognized barbecue brand. None other than Kansas City barbecue historian Doug Worgul said Ollie Gates is the one who drove the expansion of the business, and created what is now a Kansas City icon. Along with Arthur Bryant’s Barbeque, Gates is a symbol of Kansas City’s enduring barbecue history, and Ollie Gates, who will turn 90 years old this summer, deserves much of the credit.

Building and living in the heart of the city has sparked an interest in the native Kansas Citizen for community activities: Former President Kansas City Board of Parks and Recreation; Board Chairman Bruce R. Watkins Foundation, Inc; Board of Directors US Bank, Former member of Nelson Atkins Gallery Trustees, City of Fountain Foundation, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity and Shriners Allah No 6. Gates is also a member of the UMKC Entrepreneur Hall of Fame. Ollie is Married to Maureen Shepherd Gates. Together, they are proud parents of five children and eight grandchildren.

Mr. Gates has had tremendous impact on the Bar-B-Q Community, staying true to the process of authentic barbecuing and being able to serve people who love the bones of bar-b-que.