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Story last updated at 8:50 a.m. Tuesday, May 27, 2003

## Dennis Weaver inducted into Trail of Fame

By Rebecca Aistrup Gerber  
*Dodge City Daily Globe*

Known as "Chester" in the longest running television series "Gunsmoke," Dennis Weaver made his mark in Dodge City Sunday -- literally.

Weaver, who played the definitive character with a handicap and heavy accent and won an Emmy in 1959 for his performance, was the guest of the first induction ceremony for the Trail of Fame.

Weaver spoke to a group gathered around the "El Capitan" statute about his life and career as a television and movie star. Following the speech he placed his hands in cement and signed his name under a 24 inch sidewalk medallion designed in his honor.

"I feel like I am coming home again," Weaver said at the induction ceremony. "I feel like the luckiest guy on the planet.

"This is something that goes beyond the Hollywood Walk of Fame, because you only have one first (inductee) and this is very special."

During the induction Weaver thanked all of his loyal fans who watched him through the years. He even brought Chester back to life with a little acting.

"This is such a great idea (Trail of Fame) and is important from a historical perspective and Dodge City as well because there is so much historical facts about Dodge City and this is a way to keep it all alive, Weaver said in an interview earlier in the day. "Dodge City is one of the most publicized cities in the world and even in foreign countries people are very curious about Dodge City. I believe this Trail of Fame will bring people to Dodge City."

Weaver knew he wanted to be an actor at the age of four when he participated in a Christmas play.



Michael Schweitzer/Daily Globe

Dennis Weaver makes impressions of his hands in fresh concrete below his plaque on the Trail of fame Sunday afternoon in Downtown Dodge City. Weaver starred as "Chester" in the television series "Gunsmoke," is the first person to be inducted into Dodge City's Trail of Fame.

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USA Weekly

"It has been a very successful career," Weaver said. "And one of my most memorable moments was playing the part of Chester in the 'Gunsmoke' series. That is what kick-started my career."

Although acting in "Gunsmoke" started Weaver's career it was "McCloud" that helped make his dream come true.

"After 'Gunsmoke' it was hard for people to think of me as something other than a second banana," Weaver said. "Then McCloud filled my dream as a leading man. 'McCloud' was very important because it opened a lot of doors for me such as Duel."

Other television shows and even movies also gave him recognition. Other shows he starred or acted in include "Gentle Ben," "Kentucky Jones," "Emerald Point N.A.S.," "Stone and Buck James." Weaver also starred in some television movies as "Amber Waves" and "Ishi: The Last of his Tribe."

Other television movies include "Cocaine: One Man's Seduction," "The Ordeal of Dr. Mudd," "Intimate Strangers," "The Ordeal of Patty Hearst," "A Winner Never Quits," "The Day the Loving Stopped," "The Forgotten Man," "Rolling Man," "Female Artillery" and "Bluffing It."

Weaver also acted on some television mini-series including "Pearl," "Centennial" and "Lonesome Dove."

And on the silver screen Weaver appeared in "Touch of Evil," "Ten Wanted Men," "Seven Angry Men," "Dragnet," "Way, Way Out," "The Bridges at Toko-Ri," "A Man Called Sledge" and "Duel at Diablo."

In recent years Weaver has become an environmentalist and has spoke to many groups across the country about the importance of renewable energy.

He said he believes the future of the world depends on what we do today. He also believes the fuel of the future will be hydrogen.

Recently Weaver took a cross country tour in a hybrid automobile speaking to groups in 21 cities. He drove 3,878 miles from the Santa Monica, Calif., pier to Washington, D.C. with a gas mileage of 46 miles per gallon.

"I would just like people to understand that we are the creative species on the planet," Weaver said. "We have great power and great responsibility because we are the care takers of the planet with our thoughts and ideas. We have to create our actions today we live with tomorrow."

The Trail of Fame will extend from the Santa Fe Depot to Boot Hill Museum. While Weaver was the first to be inducted others to follow include Henry Fonda and Errol Flynn, who are both deceased. Other famous historical figures to be inducted include Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday, Bat Masterson and Brig. Gen. George Armstrong Custer.

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