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PLANNING DEPARTMENT



**NOMINATION FORM  
HALF MILE OF HISTORY**

**Section A: Nomination Information**

Name of Nominated person, place or event: Arthur "Dooley" Wilson

The nominee is being honored for outstanding contributions in the area(s) of (please check all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entertainment/Media	<input type="checkbox"/> Philanthropy
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Government/Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Arts and Culture	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science
<input type="checkbox"/> Aviation	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention/Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/> Sports
<input type="checkbox"/> Business/Corporate Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/> Law	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Service	<input type="checkbox"/> Medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Oil/Gas	

**Section B: Nominator's Information**

Name of person making nomination: Stanley Cofer / Empowerment Community Development Corporation

Address: 2408 Riviera Dr

City: Tyler State: TX Zip: 75707

Daytime telephone: 903-714-9127 Email: scofer@ymail.com

Relationship to nominated individual: None

Nominated Individual's year of birth: 1886 Nominated Individual's year of death: 1953

**Section C: Narrative**

The narrative section of the application is the most important. It is the primary source of information judges use to make their selection of new inductees. The two-page narrative submittal must utilize size 12 Times New Roman font and be double spaced. Please include a recommended 25-30 word marker caption at the end of the narrative. Any additional material will be referred to only for verification of accuracy of the nomination. No submitted materials will be returned.

The narrative section must contain an explanation of the nominee's enduring contribution that make this person/place/event worthy of the honor. Please describe the impact the nominee has had on the community, county, region, nation and/or world. For Individuals, please include any honors earned by the nominee as well as a list of organizations in which the nominee has been involved. Also, please indicate their educational background as well as the length of time the individual has lived in Smith County. Inclusion of photos is preferred but optional. Do not send original photos. All submitted materials will become property of the City of Tyler and its Historical Preservation Board.

**Please submit nominations to:**  
City of Tyler Historical Preservation Board  
Attention: Half Mile of History  
P.O. Box 2039  
Tyler, Texas 75710

## Arthur "Dooley" Wilson

Arthur "Dooley" Wilson was an American actor and singer born in April 3, 1886 in Tyler, Texas and broke into show business at the age of 12, playing in a vaudeville minstrel show. He sang and played the drums in black clubs in the Tyler area before he moved to Chicago. He received the nickname "Dooley" while working in the Pekin Theatre in Chicago, circa 1908, because of his then-signature Irish song "Mr. Dooley", which he performed in whiteface. He worked in black theatre in Chicago and New York for most of the period from 1908 to the 1930s, although in the 1920s he toured Europe as a drummer and singer in his own band, the Red Devils.

From the 1930s to the 1950s Wilson worked in motion pictures and Broadway, including with Orson Welles and John Houseman at the Federal Theatre. His breakthrough Broadway appearance came in the role of Little Joe in the musical *Cabin in the Sky* (1940–1941). This led to his signing with the Paramount studio in Hollywood. He is best remembered as the piano-player and singer Sam who sings "As Time Goes By" at the request of Ilsa Lund (Ingrid Bergman) in *Casablanca* (1942). His role in *Casablanca* was by far his most prominent, but his other films included *My Favorite Blonde* (1942) with Bob Hope, *Stormy Weather* (1943) with Lena Horne and the Nicholas Brothers, and the western *Passage West* (1951).

Sam, Dooley Wilson's role in *Casablanca*, was a singer and pianist employed by nightclub owner Rick (Humphrey Bogart). The Herman Hupfeld song "As Time Goes By" appears as a continuing musical and emotional motif throughout the film. Rick and Ilsa (Ingrid Bergman) regard it as "their song" and associate it with the days of their love affair in Paris. According to Aljean Harmetz, *Variety* singled him out for the effectiveness of the song, and *The Hollywood Reporter* said he created "something joyous". The phrase "Play it again, Sam", commonly believed to be a quote from the film, is never used. In the film, Wilson as Sam performs several other songs for the cafe audience: "It Had To Be You", "Shine (1910 song)", "Knock On Wood (1942 song)", "Avalon" and "Parlez-moi d'amour (song)".

Wilson was a singer and drummer, but not a pianist. Sam's piano playing in the film was performed by Elliot Carpenter, who was placed where Wilson could see and imitate his hand movements. Carpenter was the

only other black person on the Casablanca set, and the two remained friends for the rest of Wilson's life. For his role as Sam in Casablanca, Wilson was paid \$350 a week for seven weeks, although other reports say that he was paid \$500 a week. Wilson reunited with Bogart, portraying another piano player in Knock on Any Door in 1949 and though his piano playing was dubbed, it still reached #15 on the UK charts in 1977.

By the time Paramount lent him to Warner Bros. for his role as Sam in Casablanca, he had already appeared in over 20 films. He was later in the cast for the film version of Stormy Weather (1943), an all-black musical, as Gabe, the best friend of Bill "Bojangles" Robinson's character. Back in New York, Wilson played Pompey, an escaped slave, in the musical Bloomer Girl (1946–1948). His performance of the song "The Eagle and Me" in this show was selected by Dwight Blocker Bowers for inclusion in a Smithsonian recordings compilation, American Musical Theatre. Later, he played the role of Bill Jackson on the television situation comedy Beulah during its final 1952–1953 season. Dooley, who was on the board of the Negro Actors Guild of America was married to Estelle Wilson died on May 30, 1953, shortly after he retired from show business. He is buried at the Rosedale Cemetery in Los Angeles.

### **Filmography**

- On Our Selection (1920)
- Keep Punching (1939)
- My Favorite Blonde (1942)
- Take a Letter, Darling (1942)
- Night in New Orleans (1942)
- Cairo (1942)
- Casablanca (1942)
- Two Tickets to London (1943)
- Stormy Weather (1943)
- Higher and Higher (1943)
- Seven Days Ashore (1944)
- Triple Threat (1948)
- Racing Luck (1948)
- Knock on Any Door (1949)
- Come to the Stable (1949)
- Tell It to the Judge (1949)
- Free for All (1949)
- No Man of Her Own (1950)
- Father Is a Bachelor (1950)
- Passage West (1951)
- The Beulah Show (1950) TV Series

### **Marker Caption**

**Arthur "Dooley" Wilson born April 3, 1886 in Tyler, TX was a black American actor that appeared in over 20 films such as with Bob Hope & Lena Horn.**