

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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El Pomar Foundation's Elevating Leadership Development program honors Charles W. McCulley as the 2026 Milton E. Proby Cultural Heritage Room Inductee

Colorado Springs, CO – August 24, 2026 – El Pomar Foundation's Elevating Leadership Development (ELD) program annually recognizes diverse individuals from Southern Colorado for their leadership and legacy through the Milton E. Proby Cultural Heritage Room Induction Ceremony. This year, El Pomar honored Charles W. McCulley (1939-2017), who served Southern Colorado as a dedicated leader, public servant, and advocate.

On Friday, August 14, El Pomar hosted 356 attendees for a ceremony to celebrate the civic contributions of Charles W. McCulley at Penrose House Conference Center in Colorado Springs. Attendees included El Pomar Trustees and staff, Elevating Leadership Development members, and family and friends of Charles and former inductees. The late Charles W. McCulley's family, including his children, grandchildren, and extended family, accepted the honor on his behalf.

The ceremony included remarks from Kyle H. Hybl, President and CEO of El Pomar Foundation; Stella Hodgkins, SVP & Elevating Leadership Development Program Officer; ELD Advisory Board members; and Charles' granddaughter, Zolanye McCulley Bachicha. Attendees also enjoyed cultural salute performances by Caleb Sutton and the Sankey Sisters. The event concluded with the unveiling of Charles' memorial plaque in the Milton E. Proby Cultural Heritage Room at Penrose House.

A tribute video shown at the ceremony, honoring Charles W. McCulley, can be found [here](#). Photos taken at the ceremony can be found [here](#).

After dedicating his life to civic engagement and representation, Charles W. McCulley emerged as a pioneering leader, devoted public servant, and compassionate community advocate. He served two terms as president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Pueblo Branch and co-founded the Pueblo Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Commission, helping to advance civil rights and community unity. Charles also chaired the Mount Carmel Credit Union Board, served as the first chair of the Pueblo Human Resources Commission, and contributed his leadership to the Pueblo Community Action Agency board. In addition, he remained actively involved with Disabled American Veterans, the American GI Forum, and the Masonic and Elk Lodges. His enduring legacy reflects a steadfast commitment to service, leadership, and the betterment of his community.

El Pomar established the Milton E. Proby Cultural Heritage Room in 2006 as an extension of the ELD program, which advances the skills, knowledge, and network of leaders of color in Southern Colorado. The room is dedicated to preserving and documenting the contributions of Black, Asian (inclusive of Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Middle Easterners), Hispanic/Latino, and Native American individuals from Southern

Colorado. Through the Milton E. Proby Cultural Heritage Room Induction Ceremony, ELD celebrates and honors the legacy left behind by those who embodied the ideals of civic involvement and leadership.

About Elevating Leadership Development

Launched in 2001, Elevating Leadership Development (ELD) promotes access to a variety of community leadership development opportunities for leaders of color from Colorado Springs to Pueblo, opening doors to professional development and community leadership roles. The program also hosts the Milton E. Proby Cultural Heritage Room Induction Ceremony, dedicated to preserving, documenting, and honoring the contributions of African American/Black, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, and Native American individuals from Southern Colorado. Each year a member of one of these communities is inducted into the Milton E. Proby group of honorees and is celebrated at the annual Milton E. Proby Induction Ceremony at Penrose House.

About El Pomar Foundation

El Pomar Foundation is one of the largest and oldest private foundations in Colorado. El Pomar contributes approximately \$30 million annually through grants in the areas of arts and culture, civic and community initiatives, education, health, and human services, as well as community engagement and leadership development programs to support Colorado nonprofit organizations. In addition, the Foundation owns and operates three historic properties: Penrose Heritage Museum, Penrose House Conference Center, and Will Rogers Shrine of the Sun. Spencer and Julie Penrose founded El Pomar in 1937 with the mission to enhance, encourage, and promote the current and future well-being of the people of Colorado.

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