

## Marshal Allen Bailey

This is Kansas Profile. I'm Ron Wilson, director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University.

Illesheim, Germany. This audience is excited because authentic cowboys from Kansas are performing cowboy music. One of them is even the official Marshal of Dodge City. He's a man of many talents who comes from rural Kansas. It's today's Kansas Profile.

Allen Bailey is the western performer who carries the title of Dodge City Marshal. Allen grew up at Cimarron, Kansas and went on to a varied career, working for the gas company, building saddles and cleaning hats, working for a hospital and senior citizens home and then in education.

Several key interests surfaced early in his life. First of all, his dad had a cow-calf operation. Allen loved horses and the cowboy life. Second, he enjoyed history – especially Kansas history. Third, he liked to draw and create art. Fourth, he enjoyed music.

“One guy called me a Renaissance man but I told him I'm just a nut who likes to do lots of things,” Allen said. “I do love Kansas,” he said.

“I was fortunate to grow up in a musical family,” Allen said. “When I was 10 or 11, I found a book in the local store which said ‘You Too Can Play the Guitar.’ It cost 50 cents. I borrowed the money from my mother and she spent the rest of her life trying to get it back,” he said with a smile.

Allen learned to play on an old Roy Rogers guitar, not much bigger than a ukulele. “What was really neat is that, years later, I was able to interview Roy Rogers himself and tell him that story,” Allen said.

Allen loved the guitar and found that he could play and sing. Soon he was playing dances professionally. Today Allen plays the guitar, bass guitar, pedal steel guitar, fiddle, tenor banjo, and piano. He continues to write, compose and perform music.

Allen started listening to High Plains Public Radio, the station based in western Kansas. He volunteered to help with some of the early fund drives. When the station manager suggested that they needed some live music, Allen offered to bring in his band.

“The program director noticed that I had a gift of gab,” Allen said. “She asked me if I wanted to host a program. They were looking for a program on celtic music. I told her I didn't know anything about celtic music. She said, ‘So what do you know about?’ I said, ‘Western swing.’”

That was the beginning of a program called Western Swing and Other Things hosted by Allen Bailey. “I didn't think it would last six weeks,” Allen said. Today, Western Swing and Other Things continues to air weekly on High Plains Public Radio as it has done for 28 years. “We have lots of great listeners and nice folks,” Allen said.

He also continued his pursuit in artwork. “I was a freelance artist. Now I paint mostly western scenes, wildlife and equestrian.” His art has appeared in wildlife magazines which have gone coast to coast.

In 2000, he was approached about another opportunity. The town of Dodge City was looking for an official Marshal to serve as an ambassador for the community. With

his trademark handlebar mustache, musical talent, and knowledge of western history – not to mention his engaging personality – Allen was a natural choice.

Since 2000, Marshal Allen Bailey has proudly carried the title of Dodge City’s official Marshal. He has represented the community far and wide – even as far away as Germany.

“They put on a Civil War reenactment for us,” Allen said. “I was struck by the fact that they were walking on cobblestone streets built by the Romans next to houses that were thousands of years old, yet they were so interested in American history. They are fascinated by our old west,” he said.

Allen and his wife Janey recently moved to a place near the rural community of Windom, population 137 people. Now, that’s rural.

For more information, go to [www.angelfire.com/ks2/dcmarshal](http://www.angelfire.com/ks2/dcmarshal).

It’s time to leave Illesheim, Germany and our performers from rural Kansas. We commend Marshal Allen Bailey for making a difference for representing Dodge City and the state of Kansas so well.

For the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development, this is Ron Wilson with Kansas Profile.