



Hall of Fame Inductee

Name: WILLIE THOMAS

Instrument: Trumpet and Educator

Year Inducted: 2011

In 1988, trumpeter and educator Willie Thomas found himself teaching in Des Moines. He gathered a handful of local musicians and students together and helped establish the foundation for the Community Jazz Center of Greater Des Moines. Willie's professional career spanned fifty of performing with such jazz greats as the Woody Herman Orchestra, the Slide Hampton Octet, MJT+3, singer Peggy Lee and many more. He brought those experiences to Des Moines when he was doing outreach work for the International Association of Jazz Educators (IAJE). Willie adds the CJC recognition to his long list of other honors, including his 1994 induction into the IAJE Hall of Fame. Willie passed away in 2019 at the age of 88.

