

Emmet Evan “Van” Heflin



Birth and Death Year

1910-1971

Induction Year

1964

Profession

Actor

Oklahoma Connection

Heflin was born in Walters, Oklahoma.

Fun Fact

After completing his sophomore year at OU, Mr. Heflin decided to abandon his studies for the open sea and signed aboard an inter-coastal freighter for New York where he accidentally met Richard Boleslawski, who was intrigued by Mr. Heflin's odd mixture of rough seaman and college gentleman. Boleslawski persuaded him to give up the sea and study drama and cast Mr. Heflin in his first play, *Mr. Moneybags*. Mr. Heflin spent the next three years at sea before returning to OU to complete his degree, at which time he returned to the stage in college drama courses and productions.

Quote

"I've never played the same part twice. I'm a character actor – always have been."
-Van Heflin

Bio

Emmet Evan Heflin was a year old when he moved with his family from Walters, Oklahoma to Oklahoma City, where he attended school through the seventh grade. The Heflins then moved to Long Beach, California, where he completed school and spent time sailing through the Orient, to South America and Alaska and eventually became a third mate. He became involved in dramatics his last year at the University of Oklahoma and decided upon the stage as a career. He chose Philadelphia's famed Hedgerow Theatre as an excellent place to learn his trade. After remaining there six months, he enrolled in Baker Workshop at Yale to get his master's degree. Mr. Heflin spent a year at New Haven, and then became an understudy in the Broadway production of *Sailor Beware*. He also played in such stellar dramas as *End of Summer* with Ina Claire and Osgood Perkins and *Philadelphia Story* with Katherine Hepburn, which eventually led to his motion picture career. In 1942 he won the Academy Award for his portrayal of a newspaper man in *Johnny Eager*. His career on stage and screen spanned 40 years with his final box-office smash, *Airport*.