

## **2013 Partners in Excellence**

### **Lynn Guggolz, Houston Grand Opera Guild**

Lynn Guggolz has been working for the Houston Grand Opera and the HGO Guild as a volunteer for over 30 years, her involvement beginning in the early 1980s when she successfully co-chaired a men's and women's fashion show. She was an active volunteer in the Guild's Hospitality program hosting numerous artists and serving on the Board to plan the Guild's Annual Meeting. She is currently serving as Special Events VP and co-chairing the Spring Event, "Riverboat Revelry." Her involvement with the opera company has been equally extensive, beginning with service on the Annual Fund Committee for many years. She has continued with other significant fundraising and volunteer activities, including responsibilities with the Opera Ball for over 20 years. She is currently a Houston Grand Opera Trustee. In 2010 Lynn was the Honoree at the Guild's Spring Event "The Winning Hand" and named a Volunteer of Distinction. I particularly loved the comment that, "...HGO Guild is pleased to nominate Lynn as a true Partner in Excellence."

### **Marion Pickering, Nashville Opera Guild**

Marion Pickering has been a member of the Nashville Opera Guild since its inception in 1987 and has held numerous positions on its board, including the presidency, and has also served as the Guild's liaison for Opera Volunteers International. She has been elected as one of the two Life Members of the Opera Guild and now entertains the Guild members at each Board meeting with a delightful "Opera Minute." She also initiated the Opera Study Club at the Centennial Club, where the General and Artistic Director of the Nashville Opera gives informative talks before each opera of the season. In 2009, The Nashville Opera Guild Marion was given the Robinson Award, awarded annually by The Nashville Opera Guild to honor individuals that have made tireless and significant contribution to the Nashville Opera Association. As eloquently stated, "To honor Marion Pickering Couch with Opera Volunteers International's 2013 Partners in Excellence Award is to honor the best of the best."

### **Leatrice "Lee" Taylor Damus, Young Patronesses of the Opera**

Leatrice "Lee" Taylor Damus has been an admirable supporter of opera in south Florida since 1979 and has been an exuberant member of all three of the Florida Grand Opera's support groups since 1980. For over 19 years in Young Patronesses of the Opera, Lee has served as a Ball chair and new member liaison, as well as on all their Education Committees. She has been honored with the Gold Star, an award acknowledging a member who has gone beyond the call of duty for the organization. Lee also served a three-year term as a member of the Board for Florida Grand Opera and is a supporter of the University of Miami's Frost School of Miami and their Young Musician's Camp, and is a founding member of Funding Arts Network which gives grants to local arts organizations, including the Florida Grand Opera. A testament to her hard work and dedication was the comment, "This is just a small taste of all that she has done in our community."

**Dianne Rubin**, OperaBuffs of Western New York

Dianne Rubin joined the Board of OperaBuffs of Western New York, Inc. and served in several different officer positions. She then became Co-Director of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Four City District of the Great Lakes Region and has served many years. The District Auditions take place every year, and the Regional Auditions every two years. This important function requires not only an individual with the organizational skills to manage fundraising, but the skills to cope with singers, volunteers, judges, travel arrangements, securing venue location, publication experience and experience in press relations with the print and electronic media. While working with a co-chair, Dianne "...has continued to fill all of these requirements with polite fortitude, keeping a cheery disposition while she copes with everything that arises." Dianne was recommended "...absolutely without qualification, as someone deserving of the highest recognition for her volunteer service."

**Lore Hoffman**, Vancouver Opera Guild

Lore Hoffman has been a member of the Vancouver Opera Guild since 1974 and has long been a part of the Rehearsal Refreshment Committee, which is responsible for providing catering for the Monday and Tuesday dress rehearsals during Tech Week. In the past nine years she has served six as Chair and three as Co-Chair of this committee, and will shortly become Chair again. Lore is also part of the Transportation Committee and has been known to be there extremely early in the morning for pickup duties. As with letter carriers, neither rain, nor snow, nor hail nor other weather-related situations prevent Lore from fulfilling her duties. Perhaps her many qualifications are best summed up by one of the comments, "If you were to ask someone to describe the ideal volunteer, you would be describing Lore. She is dedicated, hard-working and a fervent supporter of the Vancouver Opera Guild."