

2015 Partners in Excellence

Kathleen Moore, Houston Grand Opera Guild

Kathy's involvement with Houston Grand Opera and the HGO Guild began in the 1990s and since that time, she has held several board positions and chaired multiple fundraising events. Kathy's true love with the opera has been the Houston Grand Opera Studio, the world-renowned program for young opera singers, and one of the cornerstones of Houston Grand Opera. For nearly 20 years, Kathy has been a subscriber and has provided support for the HGO Annual Fund drive, to the Studio as a Studio Committee member, and as a member of the Laureate Society. Kathy's commitment to excellence in volunteering and leadership has also been recognized by her peers on numerous occasions. This includes the HGO Guild Award of Distinction in 2002, which salutes Guild members who direct behind-the-scenes efforts to originate or sustain programs that meet specific Guild goals, and the Volunteer of the Year Award in 2004, which is given to the HGO Guild volunteer who best exemplifies a spirit of volunteerism and the volunteer's efforts in a number of initiatives.

Art Axelrod, Opera Guild of Rochester, Inc.

Art's love of opera, nurtured by his grandfather, became a life-long passion. In 2002 he developed a newsletter for the Rochester Opera Theater Guild, and this led to an invitation from the Brighton Memorial Library to give a series of lectures about opera. Due to his incredible background and knowledge of opera, he was a great spokesperson in the community. Starting in 2004, he organized and led these opera chats in local libraries and community centers aimed at raising the level of appreciation and understanding of opera. Art helped to plan the formation of Mercury Opera of Rochester and served as a member of the Board. When MOR's treasurer died suddenly, Art volunteered to take over the treasurer duties and did yeoman's work on that front. Since the demise of Mercury Opera Rochester in 2011, Art has been a strong advocate for the Opera Guild of Rochester, serving as Vice-President of the organization. He is invaluable in providing graphic design, management of the newsletter subscriber data base, technical assistance with mailings, servicing of the Guild's computer, and planning with the Development Committee.

Jeannie Butler, The Palmetto Opera

Jeannie is a leader among leaders, always ready to step in and do what is needed, from positions of responsibility to tasks as menial as cleanup after donor receptions. She has served three terms as board vice-president and two years as treasurer. Not only has she demonstrated her excellent leadership skills, she is equally enthusiastic about helping plan events, keeping a mailing list, fundraising, searching for volunteers and advocating opera to anyone who will listen. Financial sustainability of The Palmetto Opera is a major goal, and Jeannie, a seasoned and careful numbers specialist among artsy entertainment types, has been indispensable to the effort. She keeps the books and keeps everyone on track. She is passionate about establishing a regular grand opera season in Columbia, South Carolina

and also about offering full productions that combine rich international, national and South Carolina opera talent, musicians and dancers

Opera Guild of Dayton

In 1963, two years after the Dayton Opera Company was formed, a group of opera lovers organized The Opera Guild of Dayton. It handled the increasing demands of a growing opera audience: asked for funding, publicized, sold tickets, and entertained singers, members and supporters in grand style. Support for Dayton Opera has grown with cash donations of almost \$1.5 million since 1999. Celebrating its 50th year in 2013, the Guild hosted four major events to remember and recognize its history. Events covered the entire year with variety in ticket prices, allowing Guild members in all financial circumstances to participate. A banner was designed and displayed at all anniversary events; a bookmark listing anniversary events was distributed at all Guild and Opera functions; *Opera Notes* included articles about the Guild's history in each of its 2013 issues. A handsome remembrance book was published and given to Guild members and used as a development tool to attract new support. A large committee of Guild members planned the successful year of events on a very slim budget. A grant covered the costs of printing the memory book, *Opera Guild of Dayton, 1963-2013*.