**Partners in Excellence - 2008 and Earlier**

**2008**

**Louise Crowley** was nominated by Austin Lyric Opera Guild. She began her career as an elementary school teacher in Appalachia, went to D.C. and served as a ground liaison and protocol chief for Air Force One during the Johnson and Nixon administrations. When she retired from the Air Force as a Lt. Colonel, she was honored as one of the outstanding women pioneers in the Force. She has served the Austin Lyric Opera Guild as VP Membership, VP Volunteers, *Operafest*Chair and in many other roles. She twice received their highest honor, the "Bravo Award."

**Dr. Heather Clark** was nominated by the Vancouver Opera Guild for having provided extraordinary leadership to the Guild and the company in her many roles. Among her accomplishments, she developed a Policy and Procedures Manual, planned a strategic conference and procured two government grants for Arts Funding that were used to support winners of the Metropolitan Opera Auditions and students. Heather also serves on Vancouver Opera Association's Board of Directors.

**Mary Earl**, nominated by the Chattanooga Symphony and Opera Guild, has served tirelessly in many capacities that include an outstanding term as president. She was responsible for establishing their Vocal Competition which has given more than 200 young people the opportunity to perform in public.

**Kathe Underwood** was nominated by the Stockton Opera Guild. She was a charter member of the Guild as well as one of the founders of the Stockton Opera Association. She rarely missed a meeting and was always available for all of their fund-raising efforts. Kathe passed away this year, a loss to Stockton Opera, the Stockton Opera Guild and all the arts.

**Dr. Morton Creditor** was nominated by the Kansas City Lyric Opera Guild. He has performed outstanding service for both the Lyric Opera of Kansas City and the Guild. As a direct volunteer, he began by rescuing and archiving valuable historical information for the company. He has served in numerous capacities with the Guild up to and including president. He proudly co-authored "Fifty Years of the Lyric Opera: A Great First Act" which was published last year in honor of the company's 50th anniversary season.

**2006-07**

**Orpha Harnish** has served the Tulsa Opera Guild as President, Parliamentarian, patron and fund raiser. This year she produced a history of the guild for its 50th Anniversary. Orpha’s leadership skills are recognized by other arts organizations in Tulsa.

**Marjorie Hughes**, Pittsburgh Opera Association, has had a long commitment to her support group and to Pittsburgh Opera. She has served in many capacities and been instrumental in the growth of opera in that city.

**Elizabeth Lyle**, Opera Guild of San Antonio, is dedicated to success. Her mission to revitalize their Opera Study Series through an imaginative combination of new ideas has advanced interest, understanding and support of opera in the community.

**Helen Mott**, El Paso Opera Guild, has served the opera company and the guild in many ways. From providing hospitality and acting as a good-will ambassador to accepting administrative duties for the company during a crisis, she has been an inspiring and dedicated leader.

**Penny Powell**, Austin Lyric Opera Guild, has nurtured ALOG from its beginnings to the present. Over her 20 years of service, she has proven to be a dynamic, energetic leader with creative ideas in fundraising and problem-solving that have prepared the organization to meet the future.

**Lisa Sicola,** Kansas City Lyric Opera Guild, has lent her experience as a planner and negotiator to both the opera company and the guild. She has introduced ideas and instigated money saving strategies for both organizations in the many ways she has contributed her dedicated service.

**Canadian Opera Volunteer Committee**, celebrating their 60th Anniversary, they are specially honored for their continued, successful fundraising for opera in Toronto.

**Seattle Opera Company**, celebrating their 50th Anniversary, they are proud to have achieved their initial goal of establishing an opera company in Seattle. They continue to provide important support and funds for the company.

**Young Patronesses of The Opera**, celebrating their 50th Anniversary, the group is committed to various successful educational programs, trains volunteers to provide many kinds of service in South Florida and awards annual grants to Florida Grand Opera for its operations.

**2005**

**Helen Baxter** is president of the Board of Trustees of the Austin Lyric Opera Guild. She is a major fund raiser and steered the company through a difficult financial period. Helen has worked to make trustee/guild relationships run smoothly.

**Suzanne Hasl** has been with the Cincinnati Opera Guild for over 20 years, volunteering in numerous capacities such as education/outreach, dress rehearsals and tours. She has served on the Board of OVI. Suzanne and her husband Bob are generous financial supporters of the company.

**Wendy Isbell** of the Anchorage Opera Guild has chaired successful fundraising events. Wendy also hosts singers in her home when they are in Anchorage for a production.

**Stuart Lewis** of the Kansas City Opera Guild prepares the informative opera booklets which attendees receive at performances. He gives preview lectures, writes articles, and participates in the “At Ease with Opera” program.

**Anne Matthew** of the Festival Opera Guild of Walnut Creek, volunteers throughout the year keeping membership and donor lists and training volunteers. As Archivist, she keeps an album of each season. At the grand age of 85, Anne continues her daily work for the guild.

**Shelley C. Page** has served the Nashville Opera Guild since it began in l987. Her offices have included hospitality chair, vice president of marketing, and President. She has been on the company’s Board and Advisory Board. Shelley is a former OVI Regional Director and Board member.

**Verna Parino** serves the San Francisco Opera Guild as Chairman of the Preview Committee. She recruits speakers worldwide, thus giving patrons one of the best lecture series in the US. Verna is a proud nonagenarian, and supports opera programs in Marin County.

**Judy Westacott** volunteers for the Vancouver Opera Guild as newsletter editor. She improved the newsletter’s format, content and distribution. It is sent electronically to recipients with e-mail addresses. Judy also edits VOG Notes.

**2004**

**Dana G. Anderson** of the Anchorage Opera Guild is a volunteer of many talents, but is

especially known for her computer skills.

**Ursula Apel** of the San Francisco Opera Guild raised more than $150,000 by arranging international packages for the Guild's annual auction sales.

**Betsy Bagby** of the Sarasota Opera Guild has served as President and member of many committees. She donated her phonograph collection to the Guild's archives.

**Robert Baughman** of the Lyric Opera Guild of Kansas City has served the local opera community for three decades. He has been supernumerary in the company's productions, portraying a wide variety of characters.

**Patte Comstock and Penny Parish** of the Houston Opera Guild have brought their merchandising, lighting display and sales techniques to Houston Opera's Boutique.

**Jane S. O'Connell** of the Milwaukee Florentine Opera Club has been President, served on numerous committees and chaired their Metropolitan Opera Auditions. Jane is active everywhere in the opera world.

**Katharine Shields** has served the Austin Lyric Opera Guild in every major capacity, including preparation of the By Laws early in the Guild's creation.

**Marilyn Strange** of the Guild of Tulsa Opera is a leader in promoting opera in her community. An accomplished public speaker, she has been active in the Guild's Speakers' Bureau.

**Maureen Szymanski** of Nevada Opera Guild spends many hours in the Guild's office, driving a distance to be there. She is a source of knowledge to the entire company on operatic history and lore.

**Central City Opera House Association** marks the 30th anniversary of its founding. The group maintains historic houses in the city, and has a well-known summer festival and students' training program.

**Pittsburgh Opera Association** marks the 50th anniversary of its Diamond Horseshoe Ball, a notable social event in the community and a fundraiser for the company.

**Vancouver Opera Guild** marks its 25th anniversary as an incorporated society.

**2003**

**Peter Schram and Harry Ulmann** of the Austin Lyric Opera Guild

**Susan Pennebaker and Ward Pennebaker** of the Houston Grand Opera Guild

**Richard W. Byrum** of the Kansas City Lyric Opera Guild

**Jaima Jackson** of the Guilds of The Santa Fe Opera, Inc.

**The Vancouver Opera Guild**

**2002**

**Barbara Copanos** of the Opera Society (Florida Grand Opera), founder and chair of the popular Diva-Impresario awards luncheon and a host of many other fundraising projects and artist support projects throughout the years.

**Don F. Dagenais** of the Kansas City Lyric Opera Guild, longtime publisher of the company newsletter (a service project of the guild), frequent opera lecturer and preview speaker, a teacher of opera classes and full-length courses for community groups, and a former president of both the guild board and the company board of directors.

**Mary Dunkle** of the Glimmerglass Opera Guild, a former guild president, a volunteer in the opera guild's gift shop, a frequent chair of fundraising projects, the inspiration for the welcoming tent on the opera house grounds, and the leader for innumerable other guild projects.

**J. Warren Perry** of the Opera Foundation of Buffalo, the first education director of the Lyric Opera of Chicago, who as a volunteer has spearheaded community outreach programs and who has also inspired the creation of a community-wide cooperative venture between various musical organizations in the city.

**Dorothy "Dotty" Rutishauser** of the Austin Lyric Opera Guild, its vice president of merchandising and the leader behind its extraordinarily successful opera boutique and gift shop, as well as a charter member of the guild and a former president.

**Carolyn Sergeant** of the Knoxville Opera Guild, a charter member of the guild, chair of its annual ball, chair of the Victorian Teas, and a tireless proponent of opera in the community.

**The Camerata**, the educational affiliate of Florida Grand Opera, upon the occasion of its tenth anniversary.

**The Opera League of Los Angeles** upon achieving its twentieth anniversary. The organization is three years older than the Los Angeles Opera, the company which it supports.

**2000**

**Nicholas Benton** of the New York City Opera Volunteers Corps, a backstage tour guide, newsletter editor, strategic planner and presenter of a slide and narration show for opera outreach.

**Amie J. Dexter** of the Friends of the Opera/Fargo-Moorhead, North Dakota, a savior of the opera when the company was unable to pay its bills.

**Patricia Hancock** of the Vancouver Opera Guild, whose volunteer energies span almost all of the guild's activities, from fundraising events to providing refreshments during rehearsals to working at backstage parties to working as a receptionist in the opera company office.

**Richard and Harriet Johnson** of the Glimmerglass Opera Guild, leaders of its hospitality committee, editors of its newsletter, and supernumeraries for the company.

**Helen Jones** of the Arizona Opera League of Tucson, an organizer of major fundraising events.

**Evelyn Lewis and Carole Simpson** of the Opera Guild of Dayton, organizers of opera study clubs.

**Fran Peters** of the Austin Lyric Opera Guild, a charter member of the guild, organizer of its visitor hospitality program.

**Joan Wells** of the Kansas City Lyric Opera Guild, who has greatly expanded the opera boutique and its profits during her tenure as its chair.

**Dr. William O. Whetsell, Jr.** of the Nashville Opera Guild, an opera producer, singer and volunteer, in addition to being a major fund-raiser for his company.

**Houston Grand Opera Archangels**, a group of archivists who preserve the historical records of the Houston Grand Opera.

**Lyric Opera of Chicago Lecture Corps**, a group of 140 volunteers who give over 400 opera presentations per year to a variety of community and civic groups.

**Summer Opera Guild of Washington, D.C**., in honor of its 10th anniversary.

**Twin Cities Opera Guild, Inc.**, in honor of its 50th anniversary.

**1999**

**Audrey Baird** of the Milwaukee Florentine Opera Guild, a frequent educational speaker

and inspirational lecturer.

**Happy Booker** of the East Tennessee Opera Guild, a force behind the founding of the company and the guild.

**Carole Butler** of the Summer Opera Guild, a founder of the organization and manager of all guild communications.

**Ann Craft** of the Houston Grand Opera Guild, a longtime and frequent supporter of many guild activities and initiatives.

**Roy Fisher** of the Lyric Opera of Chicago, a leader of its volunteer lecture corps and a worker on many guild projects, including its radio marathon.

**Elizabeth Flavin** of the Glimmerglass Opera Guild, a tireless volunteer worker at many jobs including ushering and box office help.

**Lee Goodman** of the Kansas City Lyric Opera Guild, leader of its profitable trips program, the guild's major fund raiser.

**Patricia Worthington-Haworth** of the Orlando Opera Guild, who reorganized the guild and increased its membership, doubling its contribution to the company.

**Susan Le Page** of the Vancouver Opera Guild, a volunteer and donor.

**Donni Nowasell** of the Des Moines Opera Guild, creator of the guild's largest fundraisers in

including "Peanut Butter and Puccini" and "Threads and Trills."

**Joan O'Brien** of the Opera Omaha Guild, a volunteer of countless hours on behalf of Opera Omaha.

**Gwen Springett** of the St. Louis Opera Guild, a jewelry maker who creates original pins and earrings for the opera boutique.

**San Francisco Opera Guild**, in honor of its 60th anniversary.

**The Opera Society of Fort Lauderdale**, in recognition of its 20th anniversary.

**1998**

S**andra B. Dunn** of the Seattle Opera Guild.

**Ellen King and Jeanette Nassour** of the Austin Lyric Opera Guild.

**George P. Lucas** of the San Francisco Opera Guild.

**Pamela Myers** of the Opera Colorado Guild.

**Loretta Ver Valen** of the Baltimore Opera Guild.

**San Jose Opera Guild**, in honor of its 50th anniversary.

**Des Moines Metro Opera Guild**, in honor of its 25th anniversary.

**The Friends of the State Opera of South Australia**, in honor of their 21st anniversary.

**1996**

**Marian Billstein** of the Toledo Opera Guild.

**Marjorie Craig** of the San Diego Opera Council.

**Maxine Davis** of the Mobile Opera Guild.

**Thelma Dry** of the West Bay Opera Guild.

**Ann and Ellen Fusz** of the St. Louis Opera Guild.

**Jeanne Rape** of the Cincinnati Opera Guild.

**Dixie Reppe** of the Tulsa Opera Guild.

**Patricia Scarlett** of the Eugene Opera Guild.

**James Schwabacher** of the San Francisco Opera Guild.

**Rose Betty Williams** of the Austin Lyric Opera Guild.

**1995**

**Irma Cooper** of the Opera Columbus Guild, who initiated a vocal competition and

organized two support groups for the company.

**Gina Ducloux** of the Austin Lyric Opera Guild, an energetic supporter of guild activities and liaison with the company staff.

**Nellie Mae Duman** of the Opera Colorado Guild, a founding member of the guild who was involved in volunteer programs and educational initiatives.

**Katherine Hopkins** of the Dallas Opera Guild, the founder of three guild fund raising projects and chair of numerous guild events.

**Mary Ann Horner** of Opera Worcester, Inc., the company's founder and also a volunteer for the Salisbury Lyric Opera company, with a focus on educational programs.

**Beth Ingram** of the Kansas City Lyric Opera Guild, founder and longtime leader of its profitable opera trips program, and also the first president of another of the company's volunteer organizations.

**Susan Jay** of the San Diego Opera Advisory Board, who chaired and restructured the company's docent program and volunteer training sessions.

**Mary Anne Jones** of the New York City Opera Guild, chair of the volunteers who produce the annual opera auction.

**Virginia Miller** of the San Francisco Opera Guild, manager of the guild's annual rummage sale and coordinator of backstage opera tours.

**Carla and Paul Peperzak** of the Colorado Opera Festival, organizers of many volunteer projects and the founder of an antique show, the guild's largest fundraising event.

**Barbara Russell** of the Opera Guild of Fort Worth, director of style shows which raise substantial funds for the company.

**Bruni Thylin** of the Opera Omaha Guild, a chair of many guild projects.

**Patricia Wilson** of the Baltimore Opera Guild, chair of many guild events including a spring

gala, the company's major fund raiser.

**Central City Opera House Association Guild**, a 500-member support organization observing its 20th anniversary.

**Women's Guild of Opera Columbus**, one of Opera Columbus' five support organizations.

**OperaDelaware Guild**, celebrating its 25th anniversary, whose major project is a designer's show house fundraiser.

**Houston Grand Opera Guild**, a support group supporting the company in many educational and outreach activities.

**Shreveport Opera Guild**, supporting the Shreveport Opera.

**The Craftsman's Guild**, a volunteer backstage work force that supports Opera Omaha.