

## 2019 Partners in Excellence

**Virginia "Ginny" Cover** has been named a Partner in Excellence by Opera Volunteers International. She was nominated for this award by Cincinnati Opera. Ginny has been an enthusiastic leader with the Cincinnati Opera Guild for more than 30 years. Besides being an inspiring Guild President 2016-2018, she has chaired fund raising events, served as program chair, as an advocate for the education department and participated fully in all Guild activities. Most of all Ginny has tirelessly provided leadership and volunteer devotion to increase membership diversity and promote the value of opera in the community. She assesses the need, rolls up her sleeves, goes to work, stays until the end, and never asks for recognition.



and overall success.

**Calien Lewis** has been named a Partner in Excellence by Opera Volunteers International. She was nominated by Opera Maine. Calien has been a volunteer extraordinaire for Opera Maine throughout the company's 25-year history. She has shared her invaluable legal expertise to ensure Opera Maine's policies and procedures are all inclusive and supportive of the company's best interest. Calien's willingness to take on tasks ranging from greeting and directing guests at events to researching and presenting historical pre-opera programs for 300 people show a dedication, selflessness and versatility that have been important to Opera Maine's community engagement

**Thomas Simpson** has been named a Partner in Excellence by Opera Volunteers International. She was nominated by The Glimmerglass Festival Guild. Tom has been active with the Glimmerglass Festival for the past 15 years, serving as Vice President, President, and Treasurer, as well as the Guild's Liaison to the Board of Trustees. He has had an impressive and inspirational impact on both the Festival and the Guild. Tom helped develop the Guild's "Talking Opera" series and spearheaded an initiative to present free preview talks before MET HD broadcasts. Tom has recorded more than 3000 volunteer hours over the past 10 years and he exemplifies an OVI Partner in Excellence.



## 2018 Partners in Excellence

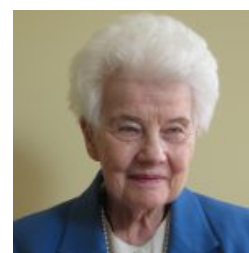
### **JULIE ALAMIN**



Julie has been a member of the Cincinnati Opera Guild for over 15 years, most recently serving as Membership Co-chair. She has actively recruited members to the guild, made new members feel welcome, and made certain that long-time members are recognized for their service. Julie is an enthusiastic participant of Meet and Greets, a program that welcomes cast members to Cincinnati.

### **AGNETA D. BORGSTEDT, MD**

Dr. Borgstedt has been instrumental in initiating many of the Opera Guild of Rochester's programs and events. In her long association with the guild, 17 years of which she served as its president, she coordinated the Annual Recital for Donors which presents up and coming young artists, began a program of lectures in local libraries, began the monthly newsletter and was an initiator of the Guild's donation of the use of a grand piano to the Lyric Theater. Now in her 86th year she is chair of the Traditional Events Committee.



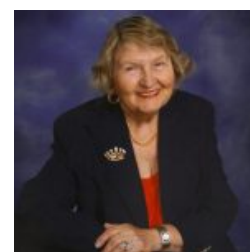
### **ABBY KREH GIBSON**



Abby Gibson has been a member of the Glimmerglass Opera Guild for over 20 years during which time she has served as chair of the Education Committee, has worked with company members to deliver in-school educational programs, and with a volunteer colleague presents lectures prior to the Metropolitan Opera Live HD programs. Abby has contributed more than 200 hours of volunteer work every year.

### **BEVERLY FITCH MCCARTHY**

In the California Central Valley city of Stockton, an economically challenged community with no permanent opera company, the opera spirit remains vital. This is due in large part to Beverly FitchMcCarthy who, along with eight other women, founded the fundraising arm of the Stockton Opera Association, the Opera Guild. Since 19775 Beverly has served several terms as president, chaired the guild's scholarship competition, written by-laws, created and chaired fundraisers and played a major part in raising close to



half a million dollars to present more than 50 operas. As with all her other community activities, Beverly continues to work tirelessly and enthusiastically to keep opera alive in Stockton.

## **DAVID RYAN**



David Ryan is above all else an opera lover. He attends and supports every opera company in the Washington, DC, area. But it is with Opera NOVA that he has volunteered his time and prodigious computer and data analysis skills in countless ways. David created systems for managing and analyzing financial data, wrote and sent press releases, managed musical instrument donations, helped with grant applications and is Opera NOVA's tech specialist.

David has been a volunteer with OPERA America and with Washington National Opera. With Opera NOVA he has served as Chair of the Board, Treasurer and Admin Officer - he frequently volunteers up to 30 hours each week.

## **MUSKOKA OPERA FESTIVAL COMMITTEE**

The volunteers of the Muskoka Opera Festival Committee have, since 2010, brought the opera experience to the Town of Bracebridge in Ontario, Canada. The Opera Festival Committee has been committed to ensuring that anyone who attends one of the festival events has an outstanding experience. Volunteers have raised donations and sponsorships; sold advertising space in the program; hosted performers and organized other accommodations; distributed posters, flyers and road signs; organized the opening night cafe and music; ushered; arranged the opening night dinner for performers and assisted them on performance nights; and much more.



## 2017 Partners in Excellence

### Dr. Dennis Banks



Dr. Banks is on the board and has been in the Guild for over 20 years. Each year he gives over 100 hours of volunteer work to Glimmerglass and ushers for about 80 hours. Dr. Banks is active on the Hospitality and Education Committees and is a past President of the guild. Dr. Banks established the Gala and produces it each year. Last year it raised over \$23,000.

### Patricia and Jess Carnes

Pat and Jess have held a multitude of positions in the Guild, most notably being co-presidents twice. The spirit of volunteerism is always the focal point of everything they do.



Among their many endeavors, they have been chief hosts for the hospitality teams, coordinated transportation for artists to and from the airport, headed up cast parties, hosted visiting artists and played a major role in setting up and updating the guild website.

### Children's Traveling Opera Volunteer Team

The Children's Traveling Opera Volunteers of the Opera Guild of Dayton faced finding an alternative to their opera for students, *Carmen*. School educators objected to the violence



in the story, so the CTO volunteers researched, adapted, sewed costumes and arranged for sets. The volunteers wrote a grant proposal which the Rotary Club of Dayton funded. The eight members of the committee, working on their own, presented 14 performances of *Pirates of Penzance*, with more to come.

## **Beverly Plank**

Beverly is the President of the Board of Trustees of Amarillo Opera where her determination and optimism are serving the company in a challenging economy.



She has also served in many Guild offices. Her continuing work on Fol-de-Rol, which she started, has produced greater financial success than any other arts organization's events. She is characterized as a visionary with energy, enthusiasm and motivation.

## **Mary Poland**

Mary has served in leadership positions on the board of the San Francisco Opera Guild for over 30 years. Mary has been an outstanding fundraiser, not only for the guild but also assisting San Francisco Opera's development efforts with corporate partners on occasion. As a member of the guild she was Vice President of Development, Treasurer, Co-chair of the Wine and Travel Auction, Co-chair of the Opera Ball, and Vice-president of Administration.



Mary has been responsible for raising over 2 million dollars over the years

## **Mary Robbins**

Mary Robbins is the ultimate opera lover, supporter, and volunteer. Mary has served on the board of the Barrington Chapter of Lyric Opera of Chicago for over 20 years and as its president for six of those years. During her entire tenure, she has also served on the Program Committee working tirelessly to bring varied and interesting programs to those in the northwest suburbs of Chicago.



As volunteer leader of the Education Department of Lyric for over 20 years, Mary identified and recruited passionate opera lovers for the Lecture Corps, as docents for Opera in the Classroom and guides for Student Backstage Tours. She coached lecturers, scheduled their lectures and advocated for their training and recognition. The list of Mary's volunteer efforts is longer still and has earned admiration and gratitude of the Lyric family.

## **Dr. Robert Robinson**



Dr. Robinson has been instrumental in the success of the Shreveport Opera, serving in several capacities including president on its board of directors. He provides housing for singers in the Shreveport Opera Xpress program for young artists, making it possible for them to participate in the 9-month program that provides high quality programming for 40,000 youth in rural Louisiana.

Dr. Robinson's service was also pivotal to the company erasing years of accumulated debt and leading to a balanced budget.

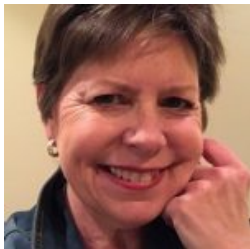
### **Dr. Esther Swink**

Esther Swink is a tireless volunteer for the Nashville Opera Guild, serving in many roles and now as its president. She has worked on many projects, most prominently co-chairing La Bella Notte, the guild's primary fundraiser. Her efforts succeeded in getting the auction part of the fundraiser on line and leading to the guild being able to make its largest contribution ever to the opera company.



### **Wendy Wustenberg**

In 2015, Wendy assumed the chairmanship of a committee of Twin Cities Opera Guild that in partnership with Angels & Demons Entertainment would produce The Marriage of Figaro in the historic James Hill House. Ultimately the guild was not only the educational partner but did all the ticketing, publicity, training of volunteers, and coordinating with the production company. Not only did Wendy arrange and oversee all this, but after 4 sold out performances produced a four-page insert about the project for the TCOG newsletter.



## 2016 Partners in Excellence

### Seattle Opera Guild

Seattle Opera Guild is celebrating their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. They have contributed over three million dollars to the Seattle opera. They were instrumental in the establishment of the Seattle Opera in 1964. The guild also helped establish OVI and hosted it's first conference in 1972. The Seattle Opera Guild provides grants and performance opportunities to young singers as well as giving countless hours to support and promote the opera.

### Young Patronesses of the Opera

YPO is celebrating its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. YPO was begun in 1956 by Arturo Di Filippi, the founder of the Greater Miami Opera, which is now the Florida Grand Opera. YPO brings opera education to the Miami-Dade County Schools. They produce the **Opera Funtimes** series of books for young people that tells the story of an opera by using illustrations, poetry, puzzles and a short musical score. They give an **Educator of Note Award** to outstanding teachers in the community. YPO has supported and worked closely with the Florida Grand Opera for 60 years.

### Julie Ann Benson



Julie was president of the Chicago Lyric Opera Chapters Executive Board (CEB) for four years and the Near North Chapter for 5. She was Co-chair of the Chicago Lyric's Operathon for four years and chaired the Backstage Tours for three. As president of CEB she established the \$1 million Chapter's Endowed Chair of Education in memory of Alfred Glasser. She has worked for years recruiting volunteers and growing chapter membership. She serves on the Guild Board of Lyric

Opera. Julie is past president of OVI.

### Jerry Bohannon

Jerry has been a member of the Houston Grand Opera Guild for more than twenty years. He

has been Guild president twice. Jerry managed the Boutique for several years and still volunteers to work in it. He has worked in various capacities with the volunteers. He researched an online tracking system for volunteers which has been very successful. Jerry worked at the OVI meeting in 2005 and the Opera America Meeting in 2009 in Houston.



### Una Creditor

Una is a member of the Lyric Opera Kansas City Board of Trustees and has served for six years. She is presently in her third term. She has been a member of the Lyric Opera Guild Board since 1995 while serving in almost all officer roles including president for two years. Una hosts events in her home, organizes parties, hosts visiting opera performers, and supports the Met auditions.



### **Danielle DiStefano**



Danielle is from Eden, New York, and has done exemplary volunteer work for the Johnson Fund in the areas of graphics and web outreach. She has developed an opera course which will be brought to the schools in the Buffalo Niagara area. She was vice-chair of the Celebrate National Opera Week in Western New York. Danielle is an advocate of classical and operatic music education. She created the EHJMF's outreach program, Singing it Forward. She has published articles in operaBuffs of WNY, Inc. and OVI 's newsletters.

### **Delton Harrison, Jr.**

Delton is a true philanthropist. He and his family have supported Shreveport Opera from its beginning 67 years ago. The major Shreveport-Bossier Opera Guild fundraiser, Les Boutiques de Noel, was Delton's idea: it contributes over \$100,000 a year to the Shreveport Opera. Delton has been a member of the Shreveport Opera Board for many years and is a contributing member of the Guild. Delton also supports Glimmerglass Opera and is on the board of the Metropolitan Opera.



### **Mark Maser**



Mark has promoted Opera Omaha for over twenty years. He has served on the Board of Directors for Opera Omaha and its advisory board, and was president of the Guild of Opera Omaha in 2014-2015. Mark has co-chaired the Snowflake Ball and the 50th Anniversary Gala. Mark hosts the Opera Omaha Study Group in his home and also has Guild meetings there. He hosts the holiday Victorian Tea in his home which honors past Guild Presidents.



## 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 50<sup>th</sup> 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*.

## 2014 Partners in Excellence

### **Nancy Ellen Coleman** Nashville Opera Guild

Nancy has been a tireless supporter of the Nashville Opera since its founding in 1997. She has a deep commitment to the Nashville Opera Guild, which provides invaluable support for the Nashville Opera Association. She has served the Guild not only as President for two years, but also in chairing the Guild's premier fundraiser, as well as willingly performing more mundane but essential tasks such as entering data and ensuring mailings go out. But Nancy's support of the Nashville Opera does not end with her work for the Guild. She has opened her hearth and home to the Opera for twenty years, from housing young artists to hosting auctioned dinners serving fresh produce from her farm, which are renowned for both the quality of the fare and the engaging hosts. A testament to her dedication was the comment, "Nancy Coleman is a professional who is cherished by the Nashville Opera Guild, who operates with diplomacy and sound response."



### **Paula Damore** Austin Lyric Opera Guild

Paula has been a member of the Austin Lyric Opera Guild since the late '90s. During that time, she was guild President and steered the Guild through a defining period, culminating in what now is a stronger organization with the ability to better nurture and promote Austin Lyric Opera. She volunteers for whatever tasks need to be done, from licking stamps for a membership mailing to manning a phone to encourage season ticket holders to renew their subscriptions.



For the past three years, Paula has spearheaded the Pre-Opera Gala Dinners and has been responsible for reviving the glamour and excitement of the evening, resulting in consistently sold out events as well as attracting a new opera audience. "Paula seeks no recognition for the time and effort she has devoted to the Guild. Her reward seems to be in experiencing the joy of opera and of seeing newcomers come to their own awareness of this wonderful art form."

### **Donald and Susan Drake** Glimmerglass Opera Guild

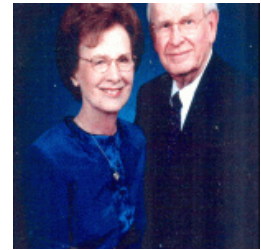
Don and Sue joined the Glimmerglass Opera Guild in 1993 and very soon after were elected to the Guild Board. During their years of service they have given more than 2,500 hours of service. They were at nearly every performance as volunteer ushers, with thousands of hours given above their Guild participation. They have been major participants in helping to host the cast parties, which are open to the public as well as the performers, resulting in a large attendance. In addition to these ongoing projects, Donald Drake served as Glimmerglass Opera Guild President for three



terms. Susan Drake served as Interim Guild Board Secretary and as a member of the Guild's Nominating Committee. Their participation in Guild activities does not reflect the entirety of their importance to the organization, however, for the impact of their dedication and leadership throughout the years cannot be measured simply in terms of hours or titles. In 2013, Don and Sue retired from the Board they served so well. "It is not an overstatement to say that during their years of volunteer service to Glimmerglass, the roles Don and Sue played have been crucial to the success of the Guild and contributed greatly to the company."

### **Annette and Garry Nall** Amarillo Opera Bravo

Garry and Annette Nall are a dynamic duo committed to furthering the mission of Amarillo Opera through their presence at each performance and any activity related to the opera. They support Amarillo Opera with their time, talents and funds. Annette and Garry serve as hospitality co-chairs of Bravo and hospitality is the primary mission of Bravo. They are at the heart of this mission with their organization of all hospitality activities for the twenty-member Bravo support group. They also coordinate other Bravo activities, including providing food for cast welcome parties and cookies for receptions for off main stage performances. Garry and Annette usher for the student performances and volunteer to cover any other jobs that need to be done for the operas. Annette has been on the working committee for the fundraising ball since its inception three years ago. "Their generosity and unfailing kindness is a symbol of what Bravo is about."



### **Donna White Angel** Capitol City Opera Company Volunteers

Donna Angel and her late husband Henry founded Capitol City Opera Company in 1983; because of her relentless dedication, they are celebrating their 31<sup>st</sup> year. Donna never received a salary from Capitol City Opera Company and she continues today in a "volunteer" role as Artistic Director Emeritus and consultant. She is a working board member in every sense of the word, lending her time and talent to every aspect of the company. From helping with auditions to selling company paraphernalia at shows to cooking her world famous Swedish meatballs for sponsor parties, no job is too small for Donna. Especially moving was the comment, "...no one can touch the heart and soul of a singer like Donna Angel. Because of her ability to cast the right singer in the right role and help them make it their own, audiences come away with their own hearts and souls touched. With her continuing volunteer, selfless spirit, she not only brings opera to a city and opportunity to singers, she changes lives."



## **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."

## **2012 Partners in Excellence**

**Adelma Graham**- Houston Grand Opera Guild

**Jackie Wilson**- Knoxville Opera Guild

## **2011 Partners in Excellence**

**Patricia Bettis**- Shreveport-Bossier Opera Guild

**Jane Hartley**- San Francisco Opera Guild

**Jackie Wilson**- Knoxville Opera Guild

**Sheila McNeill**- Opera Omaha

**Riverside Chapter of Lyric Opera of Chicago**- Celebrating its 50th Anniversary

**Kansas City Lyric Opera Guild**- Celebrating its 50th Anniversary



## 2010 Partners in Excellence

**Sandi Simmons** has been a member of the Kansas City Lyric Opera Guild for 37 years, having joined in 1973. She has been a member of the Board for 34 years and this year was re-elected to her 12<sup>th</sup> three-year term. She served as president of the board from 1982 to 1984 and has held numerous committee memberships and chairs. Her most onerous current responsibility is organizing the Cast Rehearsal Suppers which take place on weekend rehearsal days when the cast is called all day and few restaurants are open during the dinner break. Not only does Sandi organize and coordinate the pot-luck items, she leads the set-up, clean-up, and frequently provides the main course, often cooking it herself. Sandi never misses an opera, is always in the Guild Room recruiting new members, and attends all Guild functions. She is an unflagging participant and always willing to take on any extra task she is asked to do.

**Julie Todaro** is the Young Patronesses of the Opera immediate past president ( finishing her term in May 2010) and is an exceptional leader, contributor, and volunteer for opera. As president, she has been responsible for almost every phase of the organization.

She has been an exemplary member of YPO for five years and has been honored with the Gold Star, an award acknowledging a member who has gone beyond the call of duty for the organization. Her most important contribution is considered by many to be her leadership and expansion of the In-School Opera Program for the past several years. She took over the production of this program from her mother, Louise Todaro, who produced it for 35 years. This program brings opera to more than 40 schools for approximately 30,000 students in South Florida annually.

Being a talented soprano, she even occasionally fills one of the singing roles. She has also been actively involved with a number of additional educational programs and the fundraising gala where they raise over \$200,000 each year (which funds the educational programs as well as donating \$50-\$100K annually to the Florida Grand Opera). Working well into the night to achieve what she does, she almost seems super-human at times.

**Helen Brown** is a past president of the Nashville Opera Guild, having graciously taken the helm after the sudden passing of the standing guild president. During her three year tenure as president, the Nashville Opera Guild set a new record for contributions to the Nashville Opera, presenting a check for \$145,000. Under her leadership, Helen oversaw the successful opening of the new home of the Nashville Opera, the Noah Liff Opera Center, with a community festival where more than 500 attended. Recently, she was a hands-on leader and volunteer for the Guild's newest fundraising event, a children's fashion show highlighting children's clothes and the Nashville Opera Association's education program where portions of the children's opera *The Three Little Pigs* were performed. Even though her term as president has been completed, she has remained an active and vital volunteer, and her dedication, determination and leadership are inspiring.

**The Opera League of Los Angeles** will celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2011. Since its founding in 1981, predating the formation of LA Opera in 1986, members of the League have worked tirelessly to support opera in Los Angeles. Currently the largest volunteer support group of LA Opera, the League has over 1,000 members, many of whom volunteer for various activities that support LA Opera. In 2008-2009, the Opera League provided 28,481 hours of volunteer service: over 21,000 were in direct service to the opera and visiting artists, and the remainder for League operations and events. The Opera League of Los Angeles donates at least \$75,000 annually to LA Opera from their boutique, member dues and other fundraising activities. In addition, the Opera League donated \$100,000 to the Ring Cycle Friends of the Ring campaign, as well as an additional \$50,000 to assist the LA Opera with other projects.

## 2009 Partners in Excellence

**Nancie Dominic** was a grass roots organizer of the Santa Fe Opera Guild in Roswell, NM, where she used to live. She was its first president. After moving to Santa Fe, she became President of the Guilds of Santa Fe Opera. Nancie's Passion as a Guild leader is rooted in her desire to expose children to meaningful lasting experiences with music. She is chaired the Santa Fe OVI Conference and is a member of OVI Board.

**John H. Holland and Konrad Kuchenbach** of the The Milwaukee Florentine Opera Club are strong advocates of opera. John began attending in the 1940's; Konrad followed suit. Together they have encyclopedic knowledge of operas performed by Florentine. With this knowledge and their special education and librarian skills, they have developed presentations on various opera themes. They are on the Florentine Opera Club's board and also produce the annual membership directory and post a blog about each of Florentine Opera's productions.

**Patrick M. Korb** has given over 25 years of service to Cincinnati Opera, serving as Guild President and chair, Honorary Member and volunteer event coordinator. In 1990, he revived the Cincinnati Opera Ball, created designer houses and laid the foundation for a strong and enduring Cincinnati Opera Guild.

**Elizabeth Geer** has given her time, talents and passion for opera to the Guild of Tulsa Opera, to the Tulsa Opera and to the community for several decades. She took the Junior Opera Guild and the Tulsa Opera Guild through a difficult passage that ended in strength and consolidation. She is currently President of the Board of Tulsa Opera (No, she did not write a letter recommending herself! Other board members and past presidents did this). As a past vocal music teacher, her passion has been education, and she has given support to children's programs over the years. Her ability to hear many sides of any issue gives her extraordinary leadership abilities. Her reputation is not only as a leader, but as one who volunteers for whatever task needs to be done.

## 2008 Partners in Excellence

**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 Partners in Excellence

**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 Partners in Excellence

**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 1987. 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 Partners in Excellence

**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 Partners in Excellence

**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 Partners in Excellence

**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 Partners in Excellence

**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 Partners in Excellence

**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 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 Partners in Excellence**

**Sandra 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 Partners in Excellence**

**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 Partners in Excellence

**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.