

2012 GOVERNOR'S AWARDS WINNER BIOGRAPHIES

ARTS ADMINISTRATION

Ed Stern and Buzz Ward

Producing Artistic Director and Executive Director
Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park

Often referred to as the “Dynamic Duo,” Ed Stern and Buzz Ward have led the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park with a singularly steady hand for the past 20 years. Under their leadership, the once-struggling theater has been transformed into an innovative, thriving playhouse recognized across the nation for its artistic excellence.

The turnaround story helmed by Stern and Ward is remarkable. Upon joining the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park in 1992, the pair inherited a \$1.25 million accumulated deficit and facilities in disrepair. But Ward’s fiscal acumen combined with Stern’s unparalleled gift for producing extraordinary theater made for an unbeatable team. Under their leadership, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park has maintained a budget surplus for 19 consecutive years, successfully completed a \$7 million facilities renovation, and increased the theater’s current and expected endowment from \$1.7 million to an astounding \$13 million.

Today, the Playhouse offers productions 10 months out of the year, attracting more than 15,000 season subscribers and nearly 200,000 people annually to its two theaters. Over the theater’s past 20 seasons, Stern’s artistic vision has created more than 35 world premieres and has garnered the Playhouse significant recognition. In 2004, the Playhouse received the prestigious Regional Theatre Tony Award®, and in 2007, the Playhouse was honored with its second Tony Award® in three years when *Company* was named that year’s Best Revival of a Musical.

Recognized by award-winning actors and playwrights as a truly professional theater company, the environment fostered by Stern and Ward has catered to both audiences and theater artists alike. And their commitment doesn’t stop there—Stern and Ward are also dedicated to the arts beyond the theater doors. Both serve as leaders in the Cincinnati community, partnering with funders and organizations to implement such programs as the Rosenthal Next Generation Series, the Macy’s New Play Prize for Young Audiences, and the Off the Hill outreach tour. Through these programs, the Playhouse has been able to reach more than 55,000 young people in 20 neighborhoods across Cincinnati’s 15-county region.

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ARTS EDUCATION

Toledo School for the Arts

Since its founding in 1999, the Toledo School for the Arts (TSA) has become a national model for arts education and a perfect example of the transformative impact the arts have on students. A community public school located in downtown Toledo, TSA's college preparatory curriculum integrates the visual and performing arts and celebrates the unique spirit of every student. Less than a decade after opening, this tuition-free school began receiving accolades. In 2007, it was named a Charter School of the Year by the Center for Education Reform in Washington, D.C. One year later, TSA was designated a National Blue Ribbon School and became the first charter school to be named a National Title I Distinguished School by the U.S. Department of Education.

Operating on 40 percent less funding than traditional public schools, TSA's vision of using the arts in all facets of education is producing powerful results. The school boasts extremely high standardized test scores, a nearly perfect attendance rate and, since 2009, a 100 percent graduation rate. TSA was even recognized by *U.S. News & World Report* as an America's Best High Schools Bronze Medalist, placing it in the top 6 percent of schools nationally. The TSA class of 2010 earned \$2.4 million in college scholarships; in 2011, 100 percent of TSA graduates applied and were accepted to college, and 53 percent received scholarships.

TSA's record of excellence confirms the link between artistic practice and enhanced educational performance. By teaching traditional subjects through a creative lens, students make connections that improve their learning. This imaginative environment is fostered by a community of dedicated educators who simultaneously encourage innovative thinking and personal growth while supplying their pupils with opportunities to gain real-world experience. TSA has its own gallery of student work, which engages students in all aspects of gallery ownership and marketing. The school's performing arts students are also in high demand. In the summer of 2011, more than 50 students earned income as artists throughout Northwest Ohio.

Through "Artnerships" with a variety of organizations, such as the Arts Commission of Greater Toledo, Ballet Theatre of Toledo, Bowling Green State University, Masterworks Chorale, Scrap4Art, Toledo Botanical Gardens, Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo Repertoire Theatre, Toledo Symphony Orchestra, the Toledo Zoo and the Toledo-Lucas County Public Library, TSA is continually engaging Toledo's arts and cultural and educational institutions to expand the artistic experiences available to its students.

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ARTS PATRON

Louise D. Nippert

Louise D. Nippert has been a devoted fan, supporter and investor in the Cincinnati arts scene for the majority of her 100 years. Described as graceful, thoughtful and generous, she is known for her humble demeanor and charitable spirit. And without seeking praise or recognition for her tireless support, Nippert's name has become synonymous with cultural enrichment in Cincinnati as she has quietly underwritten countless major arts projects that would have been unattainable without her leadership.

A classically trained singer, Nippert has a passion for music. A Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra subscriber for more than 70 years, Nippert's love and dedication to the musical arts made a historical impact in 2009 when she established the Louise Dieterle Nippert Musical Arts Fund at the Greenacres Foundation, an \$85 million fund to sustain classical music of the highest quality for the entire Greater Cincinnati community. The fund ensures a lasting legacy of classical music in Cincinnati by helping maintain the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra as a full-time orchestra, and supporting the orchestra's services as the resident orchestra for the Cincinnati Opera and the Cincinnati Ballet. At the time of her gift, Nippert said, "All my life I've loved music. I want to see the orchestra healthy for its next century. This is something I do gladly."

Nippert also encourages the education of young musicians by acting as a devoted sponsor for the University of Cincinnati's Conservatory of Music. Through her support, the Dieterle Vocal Arts Center opened in 1995, housing the voice, opera, choral and accompanying departments, and the Nippert Rehearsal Studio. And in 1988 Nippert, with her husband, formed the Greenacres Foundation to reflect their interests in sustainable agriculture, the environment and cultural arts by providing educational opportunities for children of all ages.

The epitome of an arts patron, Nippert has been selected to join a small group of individuals who have received more than one Governor's Awards for the Arts in Ohio. In 1998, Nippert was honored with the Governor's Award for Arts Patron, yet her work over the past decade to ensure that the arts in Cincinnati will thrive for generations to come is more than worthy of additional recognition.

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BUSINESS SUPPORT OF THE ARTS

Vectren Energy Delivery of Ohio

Vectren Energy Delivery of Ohio takes pride in its reputation for being an active leader in the communities it serves. Delivering natural gas to more than 315,000 customers in Ohio's Miami Valley, Vectren is committed to creating a sustainable future by improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of its communities. In order to actively pursue these goals, the utility's parent company, Vectren Corporation, established the Vectren Foundation in 2000. Vectren and its Foundation contribute approximately \$2 million and more than 20,000 hours of employee volunteer time every year to nonprofit organizations within Vectren communities.

In Ohio, Vectren has served as a benefactor and an advisor to arts organizations in 17 counties, including the Dayton area. Vectren believes the arts play a crucial role in revitalizing cities and neighborhoods, and in developing Ohio's creative workforce. Vectren has donated almost \$700,000 to a broad range of arts groups, including the Darke County Center for the Arts, Dayton Art Institute, Dayton Ballet, Dayton Visual Arts Center, Victoria Theatre Association and We Care Arts, and encourages employee giving through its successful Workplace Giving Campaign. As the main sponsor of the Vectren Dayton Air Show, Vectren has provided opportunities for arts groups to participate in the popular event by creating table decorations and limited edition promotional posters. Additionally, the company has awarded energy conservation grants to smaller arts organizations, helping them save more of their operating funds for outreach efforts.

Vectren also places great emphasis on providing support for educational benefits, especially for children who have not been exposed to the arts. During the 2008-09 school year, the company was a partner in the development of an outreach program for the Dayton Visual Arts Center's Dayton Early College Academy, which provides arts experiences to at-risk, inner-city middle school students. Vectren also partnered with the Darke County Center for the Arts to bring high-quality performing artists into every classroom of every public school in the rural community at no cost to students.

Truly, it is hard to find an arts organization in the Dayton area that has not been impacted by the support of Vectren. The company's vision of becoming a community catalyst by using everyday opportunities to achieve extraordinary outcomes is certainly coming true in Ohio as Vectren remains a steadfast supporter of the arts community.

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & PARTICIPATION

ArtsinStark

The organization now called ArtsinStark was formed in 1968 to build the Cultural Center for the Arts in Canton. More than 40 years later, ArtsinStark has become the county arts council for Stark County, serving its nearly 300,000 residents with a commitment to creating smarter kids, new jobs and healthier communities.

While ArtsinStark continues to manage the 330,000-square-foot Cultural Arts Center, this nonprofit organization also distributes more than \$1.2 million in operating, special projects and community arts grants to hundreds of organizations and individuals each year. The first \$1 million in operating support goes to the seven largest arts organizations in Stark County: the Canton Ballet, Canton Museum of Art, Canton Palace Theatre, Canton Symphony Orchestra, Massillon Museum, Players Guild Theater and Voices of Canton. In addition, ArtsinStark also awards \$200,000 in smaller grants annually to 100 county nonprofits and artists.

Nearly 99 percent of ArtsinStark's \$2.6 million annual budget comes from the private sector. What the organization doesn't earn, it raises from generous individuals, companies and foundations during its Annual Arts Campaign. Since 2005, ArtsinStark has seen a 60 percent increase in giving. In 2011, the campaign raised a record high of more than \$1.5 million, with 91 cents of every dollar raised going directly back to the community. This funding helps to support the burgeoning cultural industry in Stark County, which represents more than 500 jobs and \$18 million in economic impact. In fact, using the creative sector for economic development is a key strategy for ArtsinStark, from partnering with the Canton Chamber to create the Canton Arts District to co-hosting a blockbuster exhibit with the Canton Museum of Art that generated \$6 million in economic impact. In 2012, ArtsinStark will unveil 20/20 Vision—a 10-year plan for arts and economic development in Stark County.

Equally important is the nonprofit's focus on improving learning. In 2006, ArtsinStark launched the SmArts Program to help "supercharge learning" by integrating arts and academics. In the last five years, the SmArts Program has invested \$200,000 to host 77 SmArts projects for 10,000 kids.

In what has been called an "arts explosion," the directors, staff and volunteers that make up ArtsinStark are successfully incorporating art into every part of the community, reshaping the face of Stark County and changing the lives of those who live there.

2012 GOVERNOR'S AWARDS WINNER BIOGRAPHIES

INDIVIDUAL ARTIST

Michael Jerome Bashaw

Not only is Michael Jerome Bashaw one of Ohio's most versatile artists, he is considered by many to be one of the true inventive musical geniuses of our time. A sculptor and a musician, Bashaw is well known for his Sound Sculpture concerts, installations and collaborations that appear in a variety of venues. From private collections around the world to neighborhood parks to art galleries, Bashaw's installations have the capacity to transform any space into a vibrant work of art.

Bashaw began his career in 1972, teaching at the Living Arts Center in Dayton, where even then he incorporated a variety of media into his work, including poetry, film, bamboo, cloth, spoken word, musical instruments, and the list goes on and on. His creations range from monumental to diminutive sculptures, including the well-known awards for the Dayton Literary Peace Prize—an abstract quill and paper, engraved with the word “peace” in hundreds of languages. Much of his work, however, is a seamless fusion of music and visual art. A prodigious musician, Bashaw's career highlights include the composition (with his wife/partner, Sandy) of soundtracks for film, television and radio, as well as orchestral performances that employ his unique, massive, hand-built Sound Sculptures. He has performed on his large-scale, welded steel instruments with his ensemble, Theatre of Sound, in numerous performing arts venues across the United States and in Europe. Performances have included the Dayton Philharmonic and the Sarajevo Philharmonic orchestras. His smaller group, Puzzle of Light, has performed in venues throughout the U.S.

Bashaw also uses his artistic talent to spark the creativity of students in classrooms across the country. As an artist in residence for organizations such as the Dayton Art Institute and Dayton's Muse Machine, Bashaw has conducted multimedia workshops and arts-integration residencies in hundreds of schools and art centers. His workshops focus on the communal aspects of making visual art and music, and he often facilitates the creation of art installations in order to engage students in hands-on activities. His work with students has resulted in many temporary and permanent structures, including the creation of a 22-foot hanging vessel at the Stivers School for the Arts in Dayton, which simultaneously taught students about iconography and ancient boat-building techniques.

Bashaw's natural ability to engage people through music and visual art is universal. Whether it is a preschool student in Ohio or an audience member in the Balkans, people are transformed by his work.

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IRMA LAZARUS AWARD

Barbara S. Robinson

Many Ohioans are wonderful proponents of the arts, but only a handful have dedicated their lives to promoting and supporting the arts and culture of this great state. Barbara S. Robinson of Cleveland is one of the devoted few, possessing an extraordinary record of leadership in the arts on the local, state, national and even international levels.

Robinson's list of accomplishments in the arts seems nearly endless. During her unprecedented four terms as chair of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, Robinson coordinated the nationwide lobbying campaign that ultimately helped to save the National Endowment for the Arts from elimination, as proposed in the U.S. Senate. Her impressive arts advocacy work led to her being named to the advisory council for the U.S. Department of Education and elected to the board of the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts.

Robinson served for 12 years as chair (and continues to serve as chair emeritus) of the Arts Midwest board, a nonprofit organization that serves audiences, arts organizations and artists throughout the nine-state Midwest region. She also serves as chair emeritus of the Ohio Arts Council (OAC). From August 1983 through February 2001, Robinson served a record 13 years as chair of the OAC board. Under her leadership, the OAC flourished, regularly ranking among the top 10 state arts agencies in funding for the arts and among the top three in fellowship grants to individual artists. As chair, she helped establish programs that brought the arts to rural areas and developed relationships with other countries, using the arts to foster international understanding and cultural exchange. In Cleveland, Robinson's advocacy leadership as co-chair of a ballot issue to create local public funds to support the arts resulted in funding to create Cuyahoga Arts and Culture, which has supported 117 organizations and distributed more than \$65 million since it began in 2007. Additionally, as a trustee of the College of Wooster, she chaired the committee that raised \$5.1 million for the Scheide Music Center. And, under her chairmanship, the Cleveland Institute of Music completed a \$43 million campaign.

Known for her thoughtful dedication to her work, Robinson has applied her keen understanding of the arts to her service on a variety of boards, including: Americans for the Arts, Musical Arts Association (governing board of the Cleveland Orchestra), Cleveland Museum of Art, Board of Overseers of Harvard University, National Board of Young Audiences and Cleveland Ballet. In 2001, Robinson received the Cleveland Arts Prize Special Citation for Distinguished Service to the Arts.