

WAYNE P. LAWSON, Ph.D.

Biography

Wayne P. Lawson served as the fourth executive director of the Ohio Arts Council from May 1978 until March 2006. Under his direction the OAC became one of the foremost state arts agencies in the nation in terms of funding, both public and private, long-range planning and evaluation, support for individual artists and innovative services to constituents in all arts disciplines.

Lawson helped stimulate an arts climate in Ohio that gives artists, arts administrators and the public access to the Ohio Arts Council. By encouraging people in the arts to become involved with the distribution of Ohio tax dollars for the arts, to voice their opinions on arts policy and programming during public meetings held around the state, and by limiting the bureaucratic red tape of the agency, Lawson kept the door to the OAC wide open to all interested individuals and groups. The keys to his administration were accessibility and accountability. Lawson capped his career at the OAC by overseeing the agency's strategic shift away from discipline-based funding toward programs and activities that build public value and encourage wide-spread arts participation.

Lawson, who was born in Cleveland, received a BA in Romance languages, an MA in European literature and earned his doctorate in theatre and comparative literature from The Ohio State University in Columbus. He holds a certificate in Spanish literature from the University of Madrid and an honorary doctorate from Rio Grande College in Ohio.

Lawson spent several years traveling through Europe, working on a kibbutz in Israel, directing OSU's Study Abroad Program in comparative literature, teaching English to businessmen in European corporations and completing two U.S. Department of Education fellowships in England and Scandinavia.

He served as the first chairman of the Comparative Literature Department/College of Humanities at The Ohio State University until 1976. Lawson is an adjunct professor of art education at OSU where he teaches graduate courses in public policy and the arts. From November 2003-January 2004 Lawson co-hosted Ohio Arts Alive, a new WOSU public radio series that recognizes the diverse arts offerings in Ohio.

He is a board member of the Alliance of Artists Communities and the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, Massachusetts. He serves on the evaluation team of Young Audiences, New York City, and was a member of the National Advisory Committee for the Mandel Center, a collaborative program for nonprofit organizations sponsored by the Schools of Applied Social Science, Law and Management at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. He served a three-year term as chairman of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies and completed three terms as chairman of Arts Midwest.

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Lawson has served on many program panels for the National Endowment for the Arts and has been chairman of the NEA State Programs Advisory Panel. He served as chair of the Arts in Underserved Communities Panel of the NEA's State and Regional Programs and coordinated private fundraising efforts for the NEA's Challenge III program, which provided funding to individual artists in seven states. He is a member of the board of trustees of the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, Massachusetts and the Music-Theatre Group in New York. He also sits on the board of the Ohio Arts and Sports Facilities Commission.

Lawson began the OAC's International Program with a cultural exchange between Ohio and India in 1988. Since then he has raised more than \$3 million in private funds to support international exchanges of visual and performing arts. The OAC's International Program has promoted exchanges between Ohio and Japan, China, Russia, Germany, Spain, Argentina, Chile and Easter Island. With assistance from private funders and the National Endowment for the Arts, the OAC's ArtsLink program helps Ohio arts organizations develop residencies with arts managers and artists from Central Europe and the former Soviet Union. Lawson has led numerous arts delegations to Russia, Japan, Mexico, Czech Republic, Hungary, Israel, Cuba, Chile and Argentina.

Lawson has been a guest scholar at San Angelo State University in Texas and sat on the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation Selection Committee for three years. He has been a speaker at a variety of colleges, universities and state agencies throughout the country and abroad.

In 1991 and 1992 Lawson was honorary chair for the Democracy in Action Awards sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Metropolitan Columbus. He has lectured on public policy in the arts at a variety of academic institutions and has acted as a facilitator for strategic planning at arts organizations around the country.

Lawson received the Gary Young Award for outstanding leadership in arts administration from the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies in 1994. That same year he was honored by The Association of American Cultures for leadership and commitment to the development of cultural diversity in the arts. He has served on committees seeking new directors for the Columbus Museum of Art, Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus College of Art & Design, Thurber House and BalletMet Columbus. In 1995 Lawson was awarded a medal for lifetime achievement in the arts by the Butler Institute of American Art in Youngstown. In 1997 he received an Excellence in Crafts award from Kent State University for statewide leadership in the arts. In 2002 he was awarded the Ohioana Career Award for his meritorious career in the arts which has added luster and distinction to the heritage of our state and nation. In 2003 he received the Alumni Award of Distinction from the College of Humanities at The Ohio State University, as well as the Julian Sinclair Smith Celebration of Learning Award from the Columbus Metropolitan Library for his commitment to lifelong learning and literacy.