

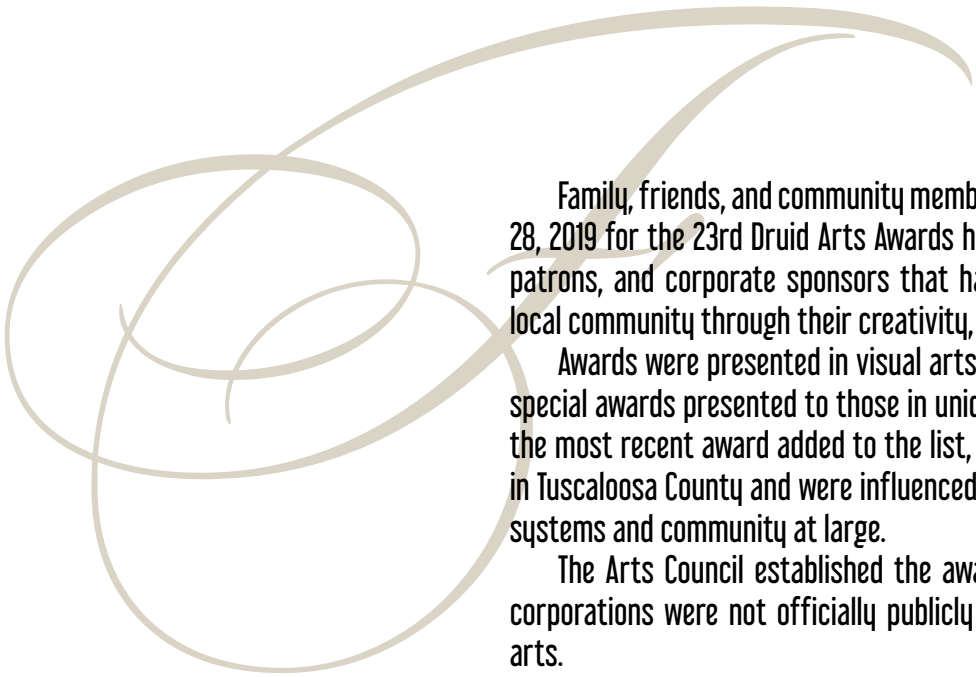


THE ARTS COUNCIL'S 23RD DRUID ARTS AWARDS

RECOGNITION OF LOCAL CITIZENS FOR THEIR
CONTRIBUTION TO THE ARTS IN TUSCALOOSA COUNTY



by Kevin Ledgewood
Winner Photos by Scottie Jones
Design by Colton Crowe



Family, friends, and community members gathered at the Bama Theatre on March 28, 2019 for the 23rd Druid Arts Awards honoring the artists, educators, volunteers, patrons, and corporate sponsors that have made significant contributions to the local community through their creativity, time, effort, and generosity.

Awards were presented in visual arts, theatre, music, dance, and literature with special awards presented to those in unique categories. Tuscaloosa's Home Grown is the most recent award added to the list, recognizing those individuals who grew up in Tuscaloosa County and were influenced from a young age by the local educational systems and community at large.

The Arts Council established the awards in 1989 because local individuals and corporations were not officially publicly recognized for their contributions to the arts.

Citizens of Tuscaloosa County are allowed to make nominations in all of the categories. Nomination forms are available on The Arts Council's website at tuscarts.org/druidartsawards with deadlines announced once the date of the biennial ceremony is set. A committee comprised of members from The Arts Council's Board of Directors reviews nominations then chooses the winners based on the established criteria.

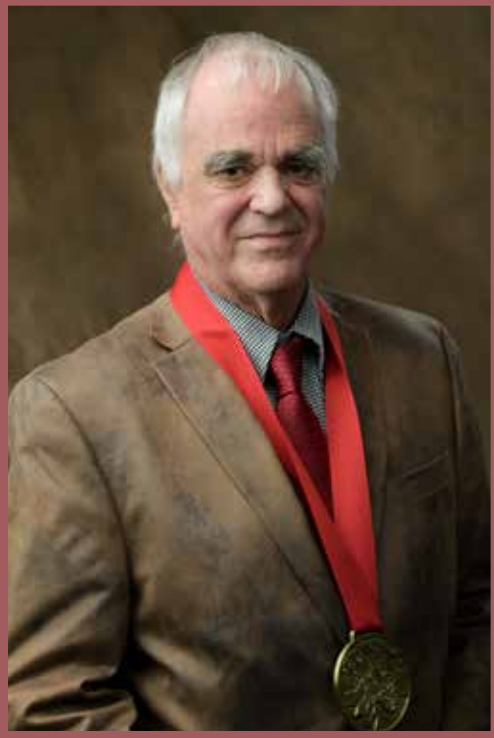
OPENING ACT

THEATRE TUSCALOOSA

Excerpts from Theatre Tuscaloosa's SecondStage Festival of One-Acts
celebrating the Alabama Bicentennial at the Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center.



VISUAL ART



MORTIMER JORDAN, VISUAL ARTIST

This individual began his higher education at The University of Alabama then attended Temple University for his MFA. While at Temple, his emphasis was film, specifically documentary formats. While there, he worked full time in production and educational TV. His dissertation project was the film "Time and Dreams," which was filmed from 1972-1974 in Eutaw, Alabama. The film was completed in 1975 and then published in 1976. His career began the same year at UA's University TV as Production Manager. As an entrepreneur he wrote grants, prepared independent film and video work, and developed advertising and promotional work. He also owned the only local music store in Tuscaloosa for a number of years, Oz Music. Each year, The Library of Congress selects 25 films that are entered into its National Film Registry selecting those that are "culturally, historically or aesthetically" significant, and are at least 10 years old. In 2017, the film "Time and Dreams" was selected. Other films selected that year included Spartacus, Field of Dreams, Jaws, and Guess Who's Coming to Dinner? For his contribution to filmmaking and the subsequent recognition brought to West Alabama, the Visual Arts Award was awarded to Mortimer Jordan.



ED ENOCH, VISUAL ARTS VOLUNTEER

This individual's involvement with the Monster Makeover project has been critical to the success of the program over the last several years. The significance of his leadership in managing the complexities of the Makeover - organizing the student artwork, recruiting artists from within the community, conducting , hanging, and exhibiting the students' and artists' work along with his focus on the long term sustainability of the event- cannot be overstated. From supervising volunteer staff and overseeing the book publication to managing operations on the day of the auction and festival, his contributions have covered the full range of duties required to make the project a success. With the evolution of Monster Makeover to the Monster Takeover, his efforts can be more fully appreciated as one of the community's public art initiatives, helping to bring visual art to people of all ages in the community in an accessible format. For his contribution of time and effort to the community, the Visual Arts Volunteer Award was awarded to Ed Enoch.

MUSIC



DR. KEVIN T. CHANCE, MUSIC EDUCATOR

Named Teacher of the Year by the Alabama Music Teachers Association, this pianist has been hailed as “a superlative musician.” He has performed throughout the United States and abroad as both soloist and collaborator including performances at Carnegie Hall and in Europe. Serving as Assistant Professor of Piano and Chair of the piano area at The University of Alabama, he holds the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Piano Performance and Literature from the Eastman School of Music where he was awarded the Jerald C. Graue Fellowship for academic excellence. A sought-after teacher, he maintains a prize-winning studio, and his students are frequently named winners and finalists in local, state, regional, and national competitions, including the 2009 MTNA National Competition Finals in Atlanta. As a teacher, he is described by his students as an amazing, positive, and informed role model who expects excellence in all areas of academics while providing an arsenal of problem solving strategies in lessons. Labeled as an educator who has transformed the standard of piano teaching in the state of Alabama, he also cares deeply for each of his students. For his ability to bring passion, profound artistry, and enthusiasm to teaching, the 2019 Music Educator award was awarded to Dr. Kevin T. Chance.

DANCE



MIMS MCKEE, DANCE ARTIST

This dancer has dedicated 20-25 hours each week to her dance training in addition to a rigorous academic schedule. As a performer, she has held numerous leading roles such as Clara in *The Nutcracker*, Grace Ferrell in *Annie*, Kitri in *Don Quixote*, Tinkerbell in *Peter Pan* and most recently the Dew Drop Fairy in *The Nutcracker* in 2018. Her talent is recognized not only at the regional level but also nationally. In addition, she constantly seeks training from many different educators and influences. She has attended the American Ballet Theatre's Summer Program in California, The Alabama Ballet School, and has been selected for Stacey Tookey's Protege Program in Canada as well as The Generation IV Advanced/Pro-Class this summer. She has also had the opportunity to develop her teaching skills as an assistant and substitute teacher at The Dance Centre. One of her greatest qualities, as both a teacher and a peer, is her ability to point out the positive in others and give words of encouragement with ease. For her talent and presence on the dance floor, her determination, and tremendous work ethic, the 2019 Dance Artist was presented to Mims McKee.



MORGAN WILLIAMS, DANCE EDUCATOR

Described as energetic, disciplined, and focused, this educator is a tremendously hard worker and a champion for dancers of all levels of ability. She is a very ambitious individual with the talent and the desire to succeed on both a professional and a personal level in competitive environments. She is currently the Coach of the Alabama Dance Team as well as recently becoming co-owner & artistic director this past August of The Dance Centre in Tuscaloosa. She was the catalyst for the development of the Chance to Dance program with The Dance Initiative that has provided thousands of dollars in scholarship money as well as community outreach within local elementary schools. She has a tremendous future in Tuscaloosa as a dance educator, one who has no doubt made a great impact on the dancers of our community. For her commitment to dance education and to the lives of young dancers in our community, the Dance Educator Award was awarded to Morgan Williams.

THEATRE



GEORGE THAGARD, THEATRE ARTIST

A few years back, this actor was exceptionally mean and surly as Scrooge for both Theatre Tuscaloosa and Tuscaloosa Children's Theatre, playing the chain-clad miserable ghostly greenish-gray Marley for two years before he played Scrooge. He has been acting with Theatre Tuscaloosa since his debut in *Mame* in 1996. Besides his work in *A Christmas Carol*, he has also played memorable roles in musicals like *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *The Producers*, *Ragtime*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, and *Hands on a Hardbody*. His comedic talents were obvious in productions such as *You Can't Take it with You*, *Christmas Belles*, and *Second Samuel*. His moving performance in the critically acclaimed *A Lesson Before Dying* in 2007 and his Bob Luke in *To Kill a Mockingbird* were powerful dramatic performances. He has served as past treasurer for Theatre Tuscaloosa's Board of Directors, is a giving and selfless actor, kind-hearted, a real talent, and a treasure to this community. For his ability to charm audiences of all ages, the 2019 Theatre Artist Award was awarded to George Thagard.



SARA MARGARET CATES, THEATRE EDUCATOR

This person has worked as a student, performer, director, and educator in the Tuscaloosa area for more than 20 years. She has directed productions with Tuscaloosa Children's Theatre, Tuscaloosa County High School, Tuscaloosa Academy, and worked with Theatre Tuscaloosa, The Rude Mechanicals, and UA's Department of Telecommunication and Film on numerous acting projects. One of her most recent projects involved research that encompassed theatre-based intervention for students with autism spectrum disorder at The University of Alabama. She enthusiastically joined this endeavor, and was also able to secure permission to use the theatre space at Tuscaloosa Academy for this study. With all the students, including those with ASD who were quite anxious, she was able to set them at ease and involve all of the students in an easy-going, naturalistic way using her unlimited patience to keep the sessions running smoothly. Her skill as a director, her ability to reach students (regardless of background or challenges), and her collegiality all contribute to her natural engagement with students and their trust in her. For her skill, dedication, and years of experience, the Theatre Educator Award was awarded to Sara Margaret Cates.

THEATRE



BETTY MEADOWS, THEATRE VOLUNTEER

This dedicated volunteer has served the Tuscaloosa Children's Theatre and the community for over 20 years. She works tirelessly for TCT and accepts any job asked of her. A few of the roles she takes on include, but are not limited to, serving the children lunch, helping with mailings and donor lists, assisting with the audition process, proofing programs, submitting grants for the organization, and any number of activities that contribute to the group's success. For her efforts behind the scenes that go above and beyond for TCT and its members, the Theatre Volunteer Award was awarded to Betty Meadows.

TUSCALOOSA'S HOME GROWN



BIRCH "CRIMSON SLIDE" JOHNSON

This musician is a first call studio trombonist and a five time Emmy nominated composer based in New York City. After graduating from Tuscaloosa High School and The University of Alabama, he toured for several months with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra then earned a Master's Degree from the Eastman School of Music. For the next three years, he was lead trombonist and a featured soloist with Woody Herman's Young Thundering Herd. Upon his move to New York, he worked as a studio musician and performed regularly with Gerry Mulligan, Gil Evans, Tito Puente, Lionel Hampton, and his own post-punk power trio band "Wired." In the 1990s, he was asked to join the Original Blues Brothers Band, was immediately dubbed the "Crimson Slide" by Alan Rubin, and eventually appeared as an actor in the Blues Brothers 2000 film. He has recorded with Paul McCartney, Aretha Franklin, Sting, Michael Jackson, Beyoncé, Tony Bennett, Elton John, Eric Clapton, Bon Jovi, Rod Stewart, Jimmy Buffet, Garth Brooks, K. D. Lang, Harry Connick, Jr., Diana Krall, and many others. Credits include performing on hundreds of commercial recordings and television shows, many dozens of feature film soundtracks including The Pink Panther [2006], Aladdin, the Untouchables, Shaft [2000], the Mambo Kings, the Manchurian Candidate [2004], Hercules [Disney], Beauty and the Beast [Disney], Cotton Club, Sleepless in Seattle, the Alamo [Disney], Pocahontas [Disney], and many Broadway shows. As a composer, he has written extensively for CBS Sports, CNN, and daytime dramas. For his musical accomplishments that are rooted in his early years as a student in Tuscaloosa and at The University of Alabama, the 2019 Home Grown Award was awarded to Birch "Crimson Slide" Johnson.

LITERATURE



AILEEN KILGORE HENDERSON, LITERARY ARTIST

This individual is an award-winning author who produced all of her major works late in life. Her rich and varied career has contributed to her literary output, growing up in Tuscaloosa County during the Great Depression, serving in the Women's Army Corp, teaching in the public schools, and moving around the U.S. with her husband and daughter. In addition to teaching, she was also employed as a museum docent, a freelance writer, and a photographer. She began writing short stories and magazine articles in the 1960s, but her first novel, *The Summer of the Bonepile Monster*, was not published until 1995 when she was 74 years old. It earned both the Milkweed Prize for Children's Literature and the Alabama Author Award. *The Monkey Thief*, her second novel, earned a nomination for the American Library Association Notable Children's Book Award with both books chosen by the New York Public Library for their list of Best Books for Teens. The novel *Hard Times for Jake Smith* won the Alabama Library Association Award in 2006, and *The Horses of Lost Valley*, published in 2016, was awarded two Purple Dragonfly Awards. Her writing has also been featured in *New Letters*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, *Chicago Tribune*, *The Southern Review*, *Sierra*, *Children's Digest*, *Equus*, *Odyssey*, and *Alabama Heritage Magazine*. For her contribution to children's literature and the recognition she has brought to Tuscaloosa through her writing, the 2019 Literary Artist Award was awarded to Aileen Kilgore Henderson.



EASTY LAMBERT-BROWN, LITERARY EDUCATOR

With a background in archaeology, this artist, graphic designer, and business owner has used all of her talents to spread the joy of learning through the written word. After a position at Harvard University, she moved to Tuscaloosa with her family in 1991. She then focused her creative energies on her own graphic design studio, Borgo Design, where she was a book designer. Borgo Publishing was founded in 2011, expanding her offerings from graphic design to an array of publishing services. Probably the most ambitious business venture for her was the opening of Ernest & Hadley Booksellers in downtown Tuscaloosa in 2016. The quaint bookstore provides Tuscaloosa with something that has been missing for several decades: a warm, inviting, and inclusive place to find interesting books and meet regional authors. Her inclusiveness not only extends to her clientele, but also to the authors and publishers that she carries—whether they are famous authors with a high-rent publishing house or a work from an indie publisher by a local author. The books are carefully curated, chosen specifically for the Tuscaloosa community. For her brilliant use of her skills and passions combined with a desire to educate and share using a “village approach,” the 2019 Literary Educator Award was awarded to Easty Lambert-Brown.

SPECIAL AWARDS



JANELLE HEINRICH & VANESSA JONES

This duo functions as a great team and beautifully costumes the children of Tuscaloosa Children's Theatre. Their collective creative abilities are evident when productions take place that require the costuming of huge casts of 70 - 80 children with the possibility of two or more costume changes. Show after show they give numerous hours of their time making each child feel their best when they portray their character. One even carries her devotion a little further to create costumes for dolls for the children to purchase at the gift table. For their commitment to TCT and the many children who make up the casts of productions year after year, a Special Award was presented to Janelle Heinrich and Vanessa Jones.



DR. JEFFREY R. SCHULTZ

In his role as Arts in Education Coordinator for the Tuscaloosa City Schools, this individual serves as curriculum specialist, lead teacher, advocate, and administrator. From the design of the building and hiring of teachers to the development of the curriculum, he was instrumental in the establishment of the Alberta School of Performing Arts, and he continues to administer the arts plans at both Alberta and Paul W. Bryant High School. He implemented the Tuscaloosa Can! program in the City Schools and continues to organize and manage the project each year. Collaborating actively within the state of Alabama, he helped develop the Arts Curriculum for the Alabama Course of Study. He is respected for many reasons, two being his character and his approach to leadership. Even in his supervisory role, he believes that administrators and teachers are equal contributors to the team. Teachers are encouraged to take risks, from creating new system events to travel and performance opportunities for students. He is always present to offer support for teachers and students. For his creative contribution to the arts in the Tuscaloosa City Schools and West Alabama, a Special Award was presented to Dr. Jeffrey R. Schultz.

SPECIAL AWARDS



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF WEST ALABAMA

From Richards Florida's book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, the author delivers important commentary on the cultural sector. "Civic Leaders around the country are rushing to develop new economic development strategies to build creative capital, and many are taking a fresh look at how cultural development contributes to authentic, vibrant, creative, and economically successful communities." Through the leadership efforts of a local organization, West Alabama is taking a fresh look at economic development with an emphasis on creativity and the arts. Organizing a team of business and civic leaders from West Alabama, the first "benchmarking trip" to Greenville, South Carolina took place in 2017. In 2018 another trip took place, this time to Lexington, Kentucky. Both of these mid-sized cities have exhibited proven success in the sectors of tourism and economic development with a common factor—an emphasis on creativity, especially public art. The recent trips have brought the non-profit arts and for profit business communities together as true partners in economic development and to enhance the quality of life for West Alabama. Through its Next Level Initiative, this organization is helping to create an environment that inspires this region to become more innovative, smart and forward thinking. The group works to promote diversity and inclusiveness and recognizes the value that the arts community brings to our region. For its commitment to a better Tuscaloosa, we recognized the West Alabama Chamber of Commerce with a Special Award.



AL HEAD

This individual has had the title of Executive Director of the Alabama State Council on the Arts for the past 33 years, the longest sitting state arts agency director in the country. After announcing his retirement in 2018, he took the opportunity to recognize those who comprise the efforts behind the scenes in the life of Alabama arts from educators and artists to patrons and volunteers. His desire to improve the quality of life of all citizens began in Florida and Louisiana before he was appointed council director in Alabama in 1985. His tenure in arts leadership spans over 46 years, during which he has witnessed significant change in the arts and government, adapting to these changes for the benefit of our citizens. In 2012, The National Endowment for the Arts awarded him the National Heritage Fellowship, the nation's highest honor in the folk and traditional arts, and the Bess Lomax Hawes Award which recognizes an individual who has made a significant contribution to the preservation and awareness of cultural heritage. He is the only state arts director to start folk arts programs in three states: Florida, Louisiana, and Alabama. His tenure in Alabama has been filled with accomplishments such as the development of a nationally recognized state folklife program, the creation of the Alabama Writers Forum, Design Alabama, Alabama Dance Council, and the Alabama Arts Alliance. He is also known for his work expanding arts education partnerships and the cultivation of a cultural exchange with Pietrasanta, Italy. Labeled "a rock star in the world of state arts councils," his leadership and dedication have benefitted The Arts Council of Tuscaloosa, its member organizations, and the quality of life of the citizens of Tuscaloosa County and West Alabama. For his years of dedication to the arts throughout our state, a Special Award was presented to Al Head.

CORPORATE SPONSOR



HUDSON POOLE FINE JEWELERS

This local business is a valuable community partner, opening doors for organizations such as Theatre Tuscaloosa, Arts 'N Autism, and the Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestra through their contributions. He served two terms on the board of Arts 'n Autism, and her support for the organization did not begin or end with her term on the board. Extremely supportive of the arts, they have donated amazing items for fundraisers, auctions, and special events throughout the years. The owners are exemplary citizens serving as role models for young adults developing their own path in life. They give from the heart, and their ongoing, generous support for local events and non-profits demonstrates their loyalty to the West Alabama community. Tuscaloosa is fortunate to have this business and its dedicated owners as passionate supporters of local arts organizations. For its contribution to the arts in Tuscaloosa, the award for Corporate Sponsor of the Year was awarded to Hudson Poole Fine Jewelers represented this evening by its owner, Gene Poole.

PATRON OF THE ARTS



DR. ROBERT F. OLIN

This person serves as dean of The University of Alabama's College of Arts and Sciences, UA's largest division with more than 450 faculty, 9,000 students, and an annual budget of over \$100 million. Nationally known for his innovations in educational technology, he was the recipient of the 2002 Virginia B. Smith Innovative Leadership Award given to individuals who demonstrate their ability to foster changes in higher education that result in substantial improvements. He began the Alabama-Cuba Initiative, that, to date, has partnered more than 150 University of Alabama faculty members with counterparts at the University of Havana in research and creative collaborations. A goal of his administration has been to elevate the regional and national profile of the College's humanities and fine arts programs. Most recently, he was successful in obtaining the gift of the \$10 million dollar Paul R. Jones Collection of American Art for the University, and, in 2011, opening the Paul R. Jones Museum in downtown Tuscaloosa. He also has provided immense support for The University of Alabama Gallery located in the Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center. He is a strong proponent of the humanities and fine arts and has served on the board of the Alabama Humanities Foundation. The SummerTide Theatre in Gulf Shores, Alabama and the annual UA New York Showcase were established as a result of his work to obtain private support. He has also been instrumental in bringing the new Performing Arts Academic Center to UA which will become one of the most iconic buildings on campus and an integral part of the performing arts community. For his contribution to the arts not only at The University of Alabama but also on the local, state, and regional level, the 2019 Patron of the Arts Award was awarded to Dr. Robert F. Olin.