

GOVERNOR'S
AWARDS
FOR THE ARTS
HUMANITIES



- **Opening Performance:** Atlanta Ballet
South Wing
- **Welcome:** Karen Paty, Executive Director, Georgia Council for the Arts & Jamil Zainaldin, President, Georgia Humanities Council
North Wing
- **Opening Remarks:** Commissioner Chris Carr, Georgia Department of Economic Development
- **Remarks:** Governor Nathan Deal and First Lady Sandra Deal
- **Presentation of Awards:** Governor Deal and First Lady Sandra Deal
- **Benediction:** Georgia Poet Laureate Judson Mitcham
- **Closing Performance:** The Freedom Singers

Following the Ceremony please join us for a reception in the Rotunda and a performance by Meridian Chorale in the South Wing



2014 AWARD RECIPIENTS

SYD BLACKMARR, TIFTON

For almost 40 years, **Syd Blackmarr** has been a leader and pioneer in the development and expansion of cultural arts programs, networks, and infrastructure across South Georgia. Beginning in 1976 with her work at the Arts Experiment Station of Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, she fostered the creation of eight local arts councils, the first rural arts consortium in Georgia, and arts-in-education programs in six counties. Her work led to cities, counties, and private sources increasing their appreciation of the role of the arts in community building. She also promoted collaboration across the region, organizing the Performing Arts and Art & Entertainment Series, which attracted large audiences. In Tifton, she established the Arts in Black Festival, the Love Affair, and encouraged the development of La Fiesta Del Pueblo festivals, all of which affirmed cultural diversity. Syd has been a constant advocate for partnerships with educational, artistic, and funding agencies that have brought support for arts and humanities programs to rural counties all across South Georgia. As a result of her decades of work in this field, a legacy of strong arts organizations, museum exhibits, preservation projects, and public art continue to thrive in South Georgia.

LESLIE GORDON, ATLANTA

For over 30 years, **Leslie Gordon** has led organizations and planned programs that showcase how the arts and humanities are central to community building, education, and economic development. She directed the City of Savannah's Bureau of Cultural Affairs, working closely with city leaders and bringing national and international events to Georgia's Coast. She next came to Atlanta to work with the Cultural Olympiad, the Arts Festival of Atlanta, and the National Black Arts Festival, organizing multidisciplinary festivals that attracted tourists and served the host state. As director of the Rialto Center for the Arts at Georgia State University, she has established the vision of the venue as a place for cultural exchange, and she has formed meaningful partnerships with a variety of diplomats, business leaders, and community cultural groups that have ushered that vision into a reality. Rialto Center for the Arts programs innovative works from around the world, especially in the realms of jazz and dance, which have enriched the cultural landscape of Atlanta, and the state.

FRED AND DINAH GRETSCH, SAVANNAH

For more than 30 years, **Fred and Dinah Gretsch** have been central figures in the Georgia music scene. Their 130-year old family business has manufactured and marketed drums and guitars that are used by musicians around the world. Through the Gretsch Foundation they have significantly impacted the availability of music education in schools throughout the country, in addition to endowing scholarships and supporting museum outreach programs. Their work in Georgia ranges from local support for the Savannah Folk Music Festival and the Gretsch Institute, a music, art, and dance camp for elementary and middle school youth in their home city, to the establishment of a fund at Georgia Southern University to provide beginning-level folk guitars, drums, and teaching materials to students attending the after-school program at the Bulloch County Boys & Girls Club. The National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences has honored them, and the Georgia Music Hall of Fame inducted them in 2008. Their lives manifest the mission statement of the Gretsch Foundation “enriching lives through participation in music.”

PAUL HUDSON, CLARKSTON

Through teaching, publications, and public programs, **Paul Hudson** has engaged thousands of Georgians in history and the humanities for almost 30 years. An alumnus of Oglethorpe University, he organized innovative programs that highlighted Georgia’s Founder James Edward Oglethorpe for over a decade, while serving as the campus registrar. He also founded the International Time Capsule Society and reinstated a model of Thornwell Jacobs’ Crypt of Civilization at Oglethorpe. A prolific researcher, he has published two books, many articles in the Georgia Historical Quarterly and the New Georgia Encyclopedia, and over 300 “nearby history” columns for six community newspapers in DeKalb County. His teaching and public programs are models of interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation between faculty, students, and community members.

CARL PURDY, AUGUSTA

For almost three decades, **Carl Purdy** has been a major figure in music and the cultural environment of Augusta, as a performer, singer, teacher, festival organizer, and instrument builder. His life and work testify to the capacity of music to bring people together and to make a difference in the world. Carl's performance repertoire is broad—he has played with symphonies, string quartets, jazz combos, bluegrass groups, and rock bands. He is a master of many different instruments ranging from the viola to the guitar, from the French horn to bagpipes. He builds instruments by hand and sometimes creates them out of day to day household materials. An instructor of music and humanities at Georgia Regents University, he is beloved by students and also respected by colleagues and community members. In collaboration with colleagues in the medical school at GRU, he is researching how music heals. All of his efforts contribute to positive change and outcomes for his students and audiences.

DOUGLAS SCOTT, ATLANTA

For 30 years, **Douglas Scott** has been a respected leader in modern dance. As the founder of Full Radius Dance Company, he has expanded the definition and reach of modern dance by creating opportunities for dancers with and without disabilities (integrated dance), not only in the local Atlanta community, but throughout the State of Georgia, the United States, and internationally. His dedication to the art form can be seen in not only his own work, but in the Modern Atlanta Dance Festival which he began, that has annually created the opportunity for modern dance companies and individual artists to present their work. Over 65 acclaimed companies and dancers have come to Georgia as a result of this festival. As an artist, and an arts administrator, Douglas strives to utilize every available opportunity in his efforts to raise awareness about inclusiveness of people with disabilities in the arts. He continues to teach, to offer workshops, and to choreograph works that are performed around the world. His works demonstrate the strength, power and trust that are at the heart of the human spirit.

THE ACTIVITIES COUNCIL OF THOMSON, THOMSON

Started by local residents who saw the need to foster education and appreciation of southern arts, the **Activities Council of Thomson** has been the central hub for arts and culture in McDuffie County and the surrounding rural counties in East Central Georgia for 40 years. They annually present the Blind Willie McTell Blues Festival, which honors a native son, celebrates the rich local roots music heritage and also attracts visitors to the community. With proceeds from the festival, they support artists in the schools, underwrite the Thomson High School band, and support additional arts programs for the community. The Activities Council of Thomson also hosts concerts at the newly renovated historic Depot in downtown Thomson and has supported exhibits and community events held there as well.

ATLANTA BALLET, ATLANTA

At 85 years old and the oldest continually-operating ballet company in the country, **Atlanta Ballet** has evolved from a regional dance troupe founded by an ambitious young dance teacher into one of the country's premier dance companies, presenting works by preeminent dance makers and pursuing stunning artistic collaborations. Designated the Official Ballet of the State of Georgia in 1973, Atlanta Ballet has earned recognition for its excellent management; its adaptability and relevance; and for producing dance of the highest caliber. This reputation has resulted in numerous international collaborations and international touring, allowing the Atlanta Ballet to serve as a cultural ambassador for the state of Georgia. The Ballet's dedication to empowering the next generation of dancers is evident not only in its Center for Dance Education, the sixth-largest in the nation, but through its Kids in Step program, which brings 10,000 school-aged youngsters to the theatre to see a Company performance annually and its community arts education partnerships with metro-Atlanta public schools and entities such as City of Refuge and the West End Performing Arts Center. Not afraid to take artistic risks, the Atlanta Ballet has helped reshape the Atlanta community's notions about the offerings of a classical ballet company and engaged new and diverse audiences in the world of dance.

BRENAU UNIVERSITY, GAINESVILLE

Since its founding 135 years ago, **Brenau University** has nurtured the belief in students and community members alike that the arts and humanities are an integral part of our daily lives. While educating students in the humanities and fine arts over the decades has been a focus for the university, so too has their commitment to bringing high quality art experiences to the citizens of Gainesville and Northeast Georgia. Their commitment to public art, readings, public lectures, book discussions, and initiatives such as the Northeast Georgia History Center and the Gainesville Theatre Alliance speak to the institution's deep community ties. Brenau's outstanding reputation ultimately led to the creation of the Brenau Collection, a permanent collection featuring the works of Renoir and Cezanne, among many others, including American artists from the 18th century to the present. Through a new downtown gallery space in the redeveloped Georgia Mountain Center, and a robust exhibition schedule, Brenau University has ensured that these works and open access to the arts and humanities are consistently available to the public.

CENTER FOR CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS, ATLANTA

The grand opening of the **Center for Civil and Human Rights** in 2014 marks a culmination of seven years of work in programming, visioning, planning, fundraising, and building a national resource for dialogue that brings visitors together to gain a deeper understanding of the parts they play in assuring the protection of human rights worldwide. The Center's collaborations with local and national partners throughout this time have inspired such projects as the Women's Solidarity Society (WSS), focusing on gender-based human rights issues; Freedom Mosaic, a state-of-the-art website which shared the stories of civil and human rights defenders; and I Was T(HERE) Exchange, a program in which 22 college students were sponsored to attend the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington to collect visual histories from those who had attended the 1963 march. The newly opened Center, now a national landmark, showcases Georgia legends and every day citizens as heroes of civil and human rights and it interprets the connections that exist between Georgia's story and the larger civil and human rights story. The exhibits use art, multimedia, and sensory technology to immerse visitors and learning and reflection. The Center as a whole, as well as its showcase exhibit (the Morehouse College Martin Luther King Jr. Papers) are the products of broad and diverse community partnerships among business, civic, educational, and philanthropic leaders.

FREEDOM SINGERS, ALBANY

For more than 50 years, the **Freedom Singers** have demonstrated the power of music as a force for positive social change. Founded by four college student activists who were part of the Albany Movement and members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the singers formed to educate communities about Civil Rights issues through song. Using tunes and traditions with deep roots in the African American churches of Southwest Georgia, they established a repertoire that has been acknowledged nationally and internationally. While the original quartet disbanded in 1963, each of the original singers continued to carry forth the traditions and to share the history of the Civil Rights Movement through song. In 1998, under the leadership of original member Rutha Harris, they established a new ensemble, based out of the Albany Civil Rights Institute, which enabled visitors to hear this music live and to get a deeper sense of its enduring power. The contemporary group continues to strengthen and educate the residents of Albany and southwest Georgia, using the power of song to share important and enduring messages about a pivotal moment in our shared history. Through monthly performances at the museum, as well as performances at schools, colleges and universities and national touring, the Freedom Singers continue to bring new singers into their effort, and to serve as ambassadors for Georgia.

MERIDIAN HERALD, ATLANTA

For the last 17 years, **Meridian Herald** has brought together music, literary, and storytelling traditions from Georgia's past to share them with contemporary audiences, thus strengthening public appreciation for the wisdom of previous eras. Meridian Herald discovers unique and lesser known Georgia traditions such as camp meeting preaching or shape note singing and uses them in public programs and for recordings. They annually stage the Atlanta Music Festival at First Congregational Church, which has its roots in the early 20th Century, as a showcase of fine concert music and a venue for cultural exchange. Drawing on authentic Georgia traditions and presenting them in compelling ways, Meridian Herald shares history with large audiences, making contributions for Georgia's future cultural legacy.

RICHARD B. RUSSELL LIBRARY FOR POLITICAL RESEARCH AND STUDIES, ATHENS

For 40 years, the **Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies** at the University of Georgia has documented the story of Georgia's modern politics and policy development, the first institution of its kind in the Southeast. Internationally known for its collections, which are visited by hundreds of scholars annually, the Russell Library also sponsors a wide range of programs including lectures, exhibits, symposia and exhibits, which attract thousands. Over the past four decades, the Russell Library has acquired over 350 collections that comprehensively document the evolution and the objectives of state and national policy positions. They focus not only on those who have represented Georgia in the arenas of politics and public policy; but the Library's collections also provide insights into the activities of many grassroots and civic groups that have nurtured new policy directions for the state and nation. As it shares Georgia's past through its vast documentary holdings, the Russell Library enables Georgians' ability to make decisions for the future.

ABOUT THE PRESENTING ORGANIZATIONS

GEORGIA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS

Georgia Council for the Arts is a division of the Georgia Department of Economic Development and its mission is to cultivate the growth of vibrant, thriving Georgia communities through the arts. Funding for GCA is provided by appropriations from the Georgia General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts.

GEORGIA HUMANITIES COUNCIL

The Georgia Humanities Council promotes and preserves the stories and cultural legacies of the state's people—from the past to the present and into the future—to enrich their lives and strengthen their communities. Funding for the Georgia Humanities Council is provided by the state of Georgia, the National Endowment for the Humanities, foundations, donors and our partners.

2014 GOVERNOR'S AWARD, ABOUT THE AWARD

Each 2014 Governor's Award for the Arts & Humanities was hand crafted by Whelchel Meaders, a distinguished member of a famous family of Georgia folk potters. His father was L.Q. Meaders, one of six potter sons of John Milton Meaders, who founded Meaders Pottery in 1892 in the Mossy Creek community of southern White County. There were potters at Mossy Creek as early as the 1820s, producing functional farm wares coated with woodash- and lime-based alkaline glazes. These high-firing, green or brown glazes are unique to the lower South, and Whelchel's runny-textured ash glaze exemplifies this distinctive Southern stoneware tradition.

In the 1930s Meaders Pottery was discovered by the world beyond north Georgia, with L.Q.'s youngest brother Cheever, Cheever's wife Arie, and their son Lanier carrying on at the original workshop and, with an emerging collectors market, elevating this utilitarian craft to the status of fine art, with Meaders pottery now owned by museums throughout the United States. Lanier's specialty was the sculpted face jug, but Whelchel prefers to make more useful vessels such as pitchers for iced tea, water, or milk, their classic, wheel-thrown shapes enhanced by his tactile glaze. Represented in the Folk Pottery Museum of Northeast Georgia at Sautee Nacoochee, Whelchel joins some 30 potters of the state who maintain a craft tradition continuous since the early 19th century.

Biographical Statement by Dr. John Burrison, Regents Professor of Folklore, Georgia State University

PARTNERS





Photo Credit: Emory Jones. Image provided courtesy of the Folk Pottery Museum of Northeast Georgia at Sautee Nacoochee



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