

2016  
GOVERNOR'S  
AWARDS  
FOR THE ARTS  
HUMANITIES



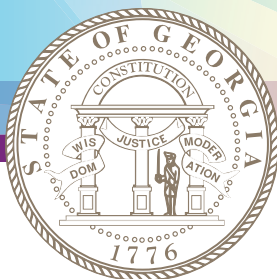
# 2016

## GOVERNOR'S AWARDS

- ▶ **Welcome:** Karen Paty, Executive Director, Georgia Council for the Arts, and Jamil Zainaldin, President, Georgia Humanities
- ▶ **Illustrations of Impact:** Testimonials honoring the work of Award Recipients
- ▶ **Remarks and Presentation of Awards:** Chris Carr, Commissioner, Department of Economic Development  
Governor Nathan Deal and First Lady Sandra Deal
- ▶ **Benediction:** Judson Mitcham, Georgia Poet Laureate
- ▶ **Closing Performance:** Joe Gransden

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**GEORGIA  
MUSIC**



# 2016 AWARD RECIPIENTS



## **Aurora Theatre // Lawrenceville**

Founded in 1996, Aurora Theatre is the only professional theater in Gwinnett County, and plays an integral role in local residents' lives, enhanced by collaborations with local government, businesses, and organizations. Since its founding by Anthony Rodriguez and Ann Carol Pence, the Aurora has become the largest arts organization in Gwinnett County and the fastest growing professional theater in the state of Georgia. Recognizing the Aurora's economic impact, the city of Lawrenceville identified the Aurora as the cornerstone for the city's revitalization plans. In a unique partnership between city government, private development, and a nonprofit charity, the city purchased a 100-year-old church and, together with the Aurora, transformed the space into a \$7.5 million theater complex, which opened in May 2007. Today, the Aurora Theatre houses two performance spaces, boasts 4,600 season ticket holders, produces more than 600 events annually, and entertains 70,000 visitors. Through its Apprentice Company—one of the few paid apprentice/internship programs in the Southeast—the theater trains a class of young and emerging college-graduate theater artists. Inclusivity is an integral part of the organization's culture. Teatro Aurora, a series of Spanish-language plays, artistic events, and community engagement programs, is the only program of its kind in Georgia. The more than 14,000 students Aurora Theatre serves every year are inspired and empowered by seeing actors who look like they do.

*Honored by Aurora Theatre Apprentice Corps, performing a piece from In the Heights.*



## Beach Institute // Savannah

First established in 1867 by the Freedmen's Bureau and the American Missionary Association, the Beach Institute has remained true to its roots. For nearly 150 years, it has educated the people of Savannah, first as a school for African Americans and then as an institute devoted to sharing the story of African Americans. The Beach Institute closed in 1919 when enrollment declined, and in 1989, in an effort reminiscent of the interracial cooperation that originally filled the Beach Institute's rooms and halls, the building was donated by the Savannah College of Art and Design to the King-Tisdell Cottage Foundation, which was founded by the civil rights leader and historian W. W. Law. Today, the institute serves as an African American cultural center. In collaboration with the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System, colleges and universities, and churches and civic organizations, it offers a full schedule of programs and exhibitions featuring arts and crafts with an African American influence, including a collection of wood carvings by the folk artist Ulysses Davis. For the past twenty-seven years the Beach Institute has been the city of Savannah's primary provider of traveling exhibitions, ongoing permanent collection exhibitions, performance series, and lecture series highlighting African Americans.

*Honored by Vaughnette Goode-Walker*



## Bowdon Area Historical Society // Bowdon

Founded in 1985 with a mission to preserve the heritage of the Bowdon area and to instill an appreciation of the past in both present and future generations, the Bowdon Area Historical Society has worked for decades to honor and celebrate its unique story of place. Bowdon is near the geographic center of the last land in Georgia held by the Creek Nation and ceded to the United States in 1827, and in 1856 Bowdon College was the fifth college chartered in Georgia and the state's first coeducational college. The historical society has initiated several important projects to lay claim to their local history, including: *Bowdon: The First Hundred Years*, an anthology of stories and images; *Bowdon College: A Glorious History*, featuring a history of the college; and *Portraits of Place*, a DVD of images from the historical society collections. The society recently embarked on perhaps its most transformative work, the documentation of African American education in Bowdon, which led to the exhibition *Education and Race: The Bowdon Experience*. The multimedia exhibition addressed a period of more than one hundred years, from the 1860 founding of the area's first school for African Americans to integration in the 1960s, and was built around photographs and oral histories collected from and recorded with community members who lived in Bowdon before, during, and after integration. This project has spurred an ongoing effort to collect, preserve and document local African American history.

*Honored by Valdena Deas*



### **Lisa Cremin // Atlanta**

For nearly three decades, Lisa Cremin has served as a leader and advocate in sustaining the metro Atlanta arts community. She founded the Metropolitan Atlanta Arts Fund in 1993 to provide access to unrestricted operating support to metro-area small and mid-sized arts organizations. Since that time she has grown the Arts Fund to its current size of \$9 million in assets and has awarded more than \$12 million in grants over the fund's lifetime, which has been transformative for Atlanta-area arts organizations. Cremin is known too for her responsiveness to the changing needs of the arts sector and innovation in programing. In response to the 2008 recession, she launched the Recovery Initiative, which provided \$2.5 million in unrestricted operating grants for organizations in peril. Cremin also founded the Nonprofit Bridge Loan Fund, which not only provided loans, but emphasized the need for financial literacy for arts organizations. More recently, Cremin has convened and educated the philanthropic community about the idea of capitalization through the Arts Capitalization program. Cremin has served her community as a strategic planner, leader, mentor, and advocate.

*Honored by Alicia Philipp*



## Lee Harper // Atlanta

For more than three decades, Lee Harper, founding director of Lee Harper & Dancers, has inspired and taught thousands of children, choreographed productions for some of the premier arts organizations in the Southeast, directed her talented group of professional dancers, and dazzled audiences with her one-woman shows. A graduate of the North Carolina School of the Arts, she performed professionally in New York City with the Pearl Lang Dance Company, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, and All Nations Dance Company as well as in Atlanta with the Atlanta Contemporary Dance Company before founding her school and dance company, Lee Harper & Dancers, in 1980. She has choreographed more than thirty works for her professional company, and received choreography fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Mayor's Fellowship in the Arts for Choreography. Her company performed at the opening and closing ceremonies of the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta. In 2002, she was named Lexus Leader in the Arts by Public Broadcasting System (PBS) of Atlanta. Alumni of Lee Harper & Dancers have gone on to perform with other companies, start their own companies and schools, choreograph, and teach dance.

*Honored by Westminster High School Students: Christina Luo, Angela Zhang, Josh van der Eerden, Caroline Loud and Julianna Puett, performing a piece from Bye Bye Birdie choreographed by Lee Harper.*



### **Alvin D. Jackson, M.D. // Savannah**

Alvin D. Jackson can be called the griot of the Willow Hill community in Bulloch County. When the Bulloch County Board of Education put the historic Willow Hill School up for auction in 2005, Jackson led the effort to save the school, which had been established by his ancestors in a community founded by freed slaves after the Civil War. He organized twelve descendants of the original school founders and incorporated the Willow Hill Heritage and Renaissance Center, with a focus on preserving the heritage of the ancestors and the rebirth of ideas through the arts, culture, and education. The Willow Hill Heritage and Renaissance Center (WHHRC), through Jackson's efforts and determination, is currently working to save the Bennett Grove School, the last standing one-room African American school in Bulloch County, founded by former slave Benjamin Bennett. Other efforts include preserving, restoring, and saving the Van Buren Sanitarium, an African American hospital, founded by Howard University graduate Dr. Harvey Van Buren, the first African American physician in Bulloch County. Under Jackson's direction, the WHHRC has fostered meaningful collaborations and partnerships with the community, churches, and in particular, Georgia Southern University (GSU). Through such collaboration, Jackson has extended the reach of public history into public health; collaborative work with the GSU Jiann Ping Hsu College of Public Health has produced a "Health Needs Assessment" on youth in the Willow Hill/Portal communities.

*Honored by Ray Mosley*





## **Macon Arts Alliance // Macon**

For thirty-two years, Macon Arts Alliance has sustained local arts and used the arts as a tool to address acute community needs in Macon-Bibb County. Founded in 1984 by a Chamber of Commerce task force, Macon Arts Alliance has grown from coordinating the local culture calendar to providing critical financial and programmatic support services to mentor, strengthen, advocate for, and sustain area artists and arts organizations. Such programs as the Arts Round Table, which facilitates collaboration among more than sixty local arts entities; the annual Macon-Bibb County Arts Advocacy Breakfast; the Gallery at Macon Arts, which sells the work of more than 200 Georgia artists, the Fired Works Regional Ceramics Exhibition and Sale, the largest exhibition of functional and sculptural pottery in Georgia; and Amplify, a professional development workshop series for artists and creative entrepreneurs, have grown the arts ecosystem in middle Georgia and solidified the role of the arts in community and economic development. The agency's most significant and innovative work to date is the creation of Mill Hill: East Macon Art Village, which has put the group at the national forefront of creative place making. In partnership with other local entities, Macon Arts Alliance is striving to increase economic opportunity and reduce blight while protecting against gentrification in East Macon's Fort Hawkins neighborhood, giving a mostly forgotten neighborhood an emboldened identity.

*Honored by Gwendolyn Phillips*



## **Museum School of Avondale Estates // Avondale Estates**

The Museum School of Avondale Estates is the product of a grassroots effort by parents to bring an innovative educational opportunity to DeKalb County. A public charter elementary and middle school, it opened its doors in 2010, and since that time has been offering project-based learning and real-world exploration through a robust curriculum, developed by teachers and partners and empowered by arts- and humanities-centered practices. With museum-style learning, classroom discussions are reinforced and enhanced through interactive personal experiences at such partner institutions as the Atlanta History Center, Fernbank Museum of Natural History, Georgia Aquarium, High Museum of Art, Michael C. Carlos Museum, ArtsNow, and Zoo Atlanta. These partners also host interactive learning expeditions and provide guest speakers to reinforce classroom lessons. The Museum School has built a reputation for academic excellence and shares its proven education model with other public schools across the state and nation. For example, their Museum in a Box program places hands-on teaching tools directly in elementary school classrooms across Georgia. Interactive learning trunks, available for rental, include hundreds of museum-quality artifacts, maps, costumes, books, scientific tools, and historical documents. The trunks make classroom lessons tangible and boost comprehension and vocabulary with real-world materials. This innovative approach to education with proven success has resulted in a federal grant award of \$150,000 to create the National Association of Museum Schools, which is working to unite more than forty-five museum schools from at least ten states.

*Honored by Museum School students, performing original pieces from their recent Exhibit Night.*



## Paula Peace // Atlanta

Paula Peace is a pianist and a pioneer of professional chamber music in Atlanta, having cofounded the Atlanta Chamber Players (ACP), notable as the oldest chamber ensemble in Georgia, in 1976. Her impact on the metro Atlanta music community has been immense. Under Peace's leadership as artistic director for its first thirty-eight seasons, the group (an ensemble of piano, strings, and winds) came to be one of the most respected in Georgia, and is highly regarded throughout the Southeast. During her tenure at ACP, Peace produced concerts and performed in more than 250 cities; produced, edited, and performed on six recordings and CDs; and designed and performed hundreds of concert programs, educational lectures, and master classes throughout the South. Through Peace's leadership, ACP has had a commitment to performing the music of living American composers, premiering nearly 125 works to Atlanta audiences, and became one of the first members of the Artist Roster for the Young Audiences organization (later known as Arts for Learning) that brought music into local public schools. Peace helped put Georgia on the national map for chamber music by cofounding the Rapido! 14-Day Composition Contest, in which composers compete nationally for a chance to win a commission from the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. A former professor at Georgia State University and artist in residence at Kennesaw State University, Peace has also taught and mentored hundreds of local musicians. She was selected as a Lexus Leader of the Arts by Public Broadcasting Atlanta, and received a Phoenix Award from Atlanta mayor Kasim Reed for promoting music in the community.

*Honored by ACP Members Elizabeth Pridgen and Helen Hwaya Kim, performing an excerpt from César Franck's Violin Sonata in A Major.*



## **Steve Quesinberry // Newnan**

An educator for thirty-one years, Steve Quesinberry has taught courses on world history, U.S. history, World War II, and the Vietnam War, and since 1990 he has served as the chair of the history and social studies department at Newnan High School. His philosophy of teaching uses the lessons of history to create good citizens, and interacting with the community is essential to his students' experience. Through his Student-Vet-Connect program, Quesinberry invites local veterans into the classroom to "teach" through their own stories of service, which helps students make connections between history and their own lives. Under Quesinberry's leadership, Newnan High School is the first school in the nation to partner with the United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration, and he and his students continually work to identify and honor local veterans. Community service is further encouraged through the Newnan High School History Club, founded by Quesinberry, which is the largest history club in the country and was the 2015-16 National History Club chapter of the year. Quesinberry was instrumental in obtaining a "Purple Heart School" designation for Newnan High, and he inaugurated a 5K run at the school, raising thousands of dollars for local veterans. As a master teacher, Quesinberry is generous with his talents, serving as a consultant to the Atlanta History Center and helping to develop educational materials to accompany filmmaker Ken Burns's Vietnam War documentary (scheduled for release in 2017), which will benefit teachers across the nation. He is truly a role model for his students, encouraging them to make their communities a better place.

*Honored by Steve Barker*



## **Betty Foy Sanders // Statesboro**

A native of Statesboro, Betty Foy Sanders served in the 1960s as Georgia's 74th First Lady, making the arts and arts education a priority. As First Lady, Sanders convinced her husband, Governor Carl E. Sanders, to officiate into law the first Georgia Council for the Arts and Humanities, which was headed by artist Lamar Dodd. When her husband's administration decided to construct four new fine arts buildings on college campuses in Georgia, she advocated for the placement of one at Georgia Southern University in Statesboro. The Fine Arts Building at Georgia Southern now boasts the Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art. Since the 1960s, Sanders has worked tirelessly to support Georgia Southern students by funding major annual scholarships, student travel, and guest art lecturers. In 1967, she established the Betty Foy Sanders Georgia Artists Collection, which is on permanent display at Georgia Southern University, and she continues to curate the collection. She worked with experts around the state to build, design, and decorate the new Governor's Mansion on West Paces Ferry Road, and to help raise funds to pay for a fountain made of Georgia marble, Sanders exhibited her artwork in ten Georgia cities. In addition to art, Sanders is passionate about the beauty of the outdoors, and she spoke at garden clubs around the state about the Wildflower Project of Lady Bird Johnson, First Lady of the United States, which aimed to plant flowers on Georgia highway medians for beautification. Scenes of Georgia's natural beauty are depicted in the paintings of Sanders, many of which have been donated to hospitals, courthouses, and schools around the state. Recently, Sanders was honored by the mayor of Statesboro, who proclaimed September 15 "Betty Foy Sanders Day," and she received a 2015 Legend in the Arts award.

*Honored by Patricia Carter*



## **Larry Walker // Atlanta**

A native of Franklin, Georgia, Larry Walker has pursued the visual arts with a passion from a young age. His forty-two-year career as an educator has taken him from Detroit public schools to the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California, to Georgia State University in Atlanta, where he was director of the School of Art and Design. As an artist, Walker uses found posters, newspapers, and objects as brushstrokes to create paintings that address social change. Throughout the course of his career, Walker has been the subject of more than forty solo exhibitions and has participated in more than 200 group exhibitions. He has been awarded a Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia Working Artist Project Fellowship, the Artadia Award, and a Nexus Award, and his artwork has been acquired by major museums across the country, such as the Los Angeles County Museum, the Studio Museum in Harlem, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and locally, by the High Museum, the Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia, and the Spelman College Museum of Fine Art.

*Honored by Greg Head*

# 2016 GOVERNOR'S AWARD

The Governor's Awards honor outstanding individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to Georgia's civic and cultural vitality through excellence and service to the arts and humanities. Presented by the Office of the Governor in partnership with Georgia Council for the Arts and Georgia Humanities, the Governor's Awards recognize the value of the arts and humanities in the creation of a thriving economy and their contributions to education, innovation, growth, and quality of life. The Governor's Awards pay tribute to the most distinguished citizens and organizations that have demonstrated a lifetime commitment to work in these fields.

## About the Award

Each 2016 Governor's Award for the Arts & Humanities was designed by jewelry and small metals artist **Shaunté Francois**, and was handcrafted with assistance from the Georgia Southern University Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art faculty and students. Francois collaborated with jewelry and small metals professor Christina Lemon, art facilities technician Jason McCoy, art student Madeline Shelor, and other advanced small metals students to produce these beautiful awards.

The lotus flower, representing the power and beauty of nature, symbolically rises above the stylized city silhouette. It represents both the natural world and expanding cities and development. The sculptures were crafted using copper and bronze metal, and are mounted on mahogany wood bases.

Francois is from Stone Mountain, Georgia. Her interest in jewelry began when she enrolled in a beading class in her hometown at the age of ten. In 2015 she received her B.F.A. in 3D Studio Art at Georgia Southern University and currently works as a production assistant for jewelry designs at Mickey Lynn, Inc., in Atlanta. Her metalwork has been featured in Georgia Southern's literary magazine *Miscellany*, the Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art's Undergraduate Juried Exhibition, and the Averitt Center for the Arts in Statesboro.

The Betty Foy Sanders Department of Art (BFSDoArt) offers quality undergraduate and graduate degree programs that prepare students to become professional artists, designers, art historians, and industry leaders. The BFSDoArt is recognized as an accredited member of the National Association of Schools of Art and Design.

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/Research University founded in 1906, offers more than 125 degree programs serving approximately 20,500 students. The university offers bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement.

For more information, visit [GeorgiaSouthern.edu/Art](http://GeorgiaSouthern.edu/Art).







## **Georgia Council for the Arts**

Georgia Council for the Arts (GCA) is a division of the Georgia Department of Economic Development whose mission is to cultivate the growth of vibrant, thriving Georgia communities through the arts. GCA provides grant funding, programs and services statewide that support the vital arts industry, preserve the state's cultural heritage, increase tourism and nurture strong communities. Funding for Georgia Council for the Arts is provided by appropriations from the Georgia General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts.

## **Georgia Humanities**

Georgia Humanities 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. An informed and educated Georgia understands historical and cultural trends, respects the life of the mind, utilizes critical thinking in decision-making, and promotes mutual respect and civility. Funding for Georgia Humanities is provided by the Georgia General Assembly, the National Endowment for the Humanities, foundations, donors, and partners.