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2020 ST. LOUIS ARTS AWARDS HONOREES ANNOUNCED

Arts and Education Council to celebrate seven honorees at 29th annual event on January 27, 2020

ST. LOUIS – June 10, 2019 – The [Arts and Education Council](#) has announced seven honorees for the 2020 St. Louis Arts Awards. Now in its 29th year, the event honors individuals and organizations who have made significant contributions to the St. Louis region's arts community.

The 2020 honorees are: **Jack Lane and Michael Hamilton**, Lifetime Achievement in the Arts; **Solomon Thurman, Jr.**, Lifetime Achievement in the Arts; **Ambassadors of Harmony**, Excellence in the Arts; **Pulitzer Arts Foundation**, Excellence in the Arts; **Employees Community Fund of Boeing St. Louis**, Champion for the Arts; **Adam Maness**, Arts Collaborator; and **Dr. Nikki Spotts**, Shaw Visual and Performing Arts Elementary School, Art Educator of the Year.

"We look forward to celebrating these very deserving honorees at the 2020 St. Louis Arts Awards. Their contributions to the St. Louis arts and culture community are inspiring examples of the many ways we each can keep art happening," said Cynthia A. Prost, Arts and Education Council president and CEO.

The 2020 St. Louis Arts Awards, co-chaired by Edward Jones Managing Partner **Penny Pennington** and her husband, **Mike Fidler**, will be held Monday, January 27 at the Chase Park Plaza, a Royal Sonesta Hotel. Actor **Andréa Purnell** will emcee the fundraiser.

Nominations for the awards were submitted by the public in April and honorees were selected by a volunteer committee of previous honorees, arts patrons, artists, arts administrators and community volunteers.

Proceeds benefit the Arts and Education Council, which offers programs and services that support more than 70 arts and arts education organizations impacting 1.6 million people throughout the 16-county, bi-state region.

Tickets for the 2020 St. Louis Arts Awards will go on sale in fall 2019. For more information about the honorees, sponsorship opportunities and tickets, visit KeepArtHappening.org/2020ArtsAwards.

About the Honorees

Lifetime Achievement in the Arts – Jack Lane and Michael Hamilton, co-founders of STAGES St. Louis, mark 33 years of exceptional accomplishments in advancing the art of musical theatre in St. Louis. During that time, STAGES has grown to become one of the top regional musical theatres in the nation.

Lane is the multiple award-winning producer of “The Humans” (2016 Tony Award for Best Play), “Fun Home” (2015 Tony Award for Best Musical), “Peter and the Starcatcher” (2012 Tony Award Nominee for Best Play), the international hit Broadway comedy “The Play That Goes Wrong”, the Off-Broadway hit comedy “Shear Madness”, and the acclaimed Broadway musical, “The Prom”, nominated for seven Tony Awards. He is executive producer of STAGES St. Louis has also served on the Arts and Education Council board of directors and was a panelist for both the Regional Arts Commission and Missouri Arts Council. Currently, he serves on the MAC Awards Advisory Panel and the Educational Theatre Foundation’s National Board of Trustees.

Hamilton, a Kirkwood native, has directed or choreographed over 100 past STAGES productions and been honored with multiple Broadway World, St. Louis Theatre Circle and Kevin Kline award nominations for Outstanding Director of a Musical. He has won multiple Broadway World awards as Best Director of a Musical (including the 2019 award for his production of “Oklahoma!”) and has won Kevin Kline/St. Louis Theatre Circle awards for Outstanding Director of a Musical for STAGES’s 2005 production of “Footloose”, the 2007 production of “The Full Monty”, the 2010 production of “Promises, Promises”, the 2015 production of “Anything Goes”, and the 2016 production of “The Drowsy Chaperone”. Regionally, his work has been seen at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Mill Mountain Theatre, Cohoes Music Hall and Music Theatre North.

Lifetime Achievement in the Arts – Solomon Thurman, Jr. is an artist, researcher, teacher and co-owner of 10th Street Gallery. Painting for more than five decades, Thurman’s art focuses primarily on the American experience with an emphasis on the African Diaspora. He has been featured in numerous one-man and group exhibitions in the United States, Canada and Brazil.

Among his body of work are “Black Americans in Flight”, a 51-foot-long mural located at St. Louis Lambert International Airport depicting the Tuskegee Airmen, and “Celia”, a larger-than-life-size portrait of a slave from Fulton, Mo. In a salute to his ancestry, Thurman created a 33-piece exhibit, depicting the hardships of post-slavery life in southern Mississippi and the Great Migration north. The paintings retraced the area and experiences of Thurman’s third cousin Emmett Till, lynched in 1955.

He has received numerous recognitions and indirect grants for his artistic projects, including from the Regional Arts Commission, Missouri Arts Council and Black World History Museum. He was featured in Who’s Who in Black St. Louis. Thurman was named Individual Artist of the Year by the Missouri Arts Council in 2018 and received the Dred Scott Foundation Award for his artistic contribution to the community. He is a founding member and executive board member of Creative Company (1982 – 2001), a St. Louis-based visual artist collective.

When not painting, researching or lecturing, he is a community outreach instructor at the Saint Louis Art Museum. Thurman and his wife, Pat Thurman, co-chaired the Arts and Education Council’s 2019 St. Louis Arts Awards. Thurman earned a liberal arts degree from Forest Park College in 1978 and graduated from Graphique Commercial Art Institute in 1980. He is a 2002 graduate of the Regional Arts Commission’s Community Arts Training Institute.

Excellence in the Arts – Ambassadors of Harmony is the St. Louis area's premier men's a cappella chorus of more than 130 voices known for powerful and musically masterful performances. Its repertoire includes Broadway classics, barbershop, jazz, pop and a wide selection of holiday favorites. The chorus represents the St. Charles, Mo., chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society. It was founded in 1963 in St. Charles as the Daniel Boone Chorus.

AOH earned its fourth gold medal at Barbershop Harmony Society's July 2016 international contest in Nashville. AOH has sung for audiences across the United States and has also performed in England, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and Sweden.

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Excellence in the Arts – Pulitzer Arts Foundation is a museum that provides dynamic experiences with contemporary and historic art presented in dialogue with its celebrated Tadao Ando building. Since its founding in 2001, the museum has organized a range of exhibitions featuring art from around the world, exploring a diverse array of ideas and inspiring new perspectives. Highlights have included the exhibitions “Ruth Asawa: Life’s Work” (2018-19); “Blue Black”, curated by artist Glenn Ligon (2017); “Medardo Rosso: Experiments in Light and Form” (2016-17); “raumlaborberlin: 4562 Enright Avenue” (2016); “Reflections of the Buddha” (2011-12); “Urban Alchemy / Gordon Matta-Clark” (2009-10); and “Brancusi and Serra in Dialogue” (2005). These exhibitions are complemented by programs that bring together leading figures from the fields of art, architecture, design, urban planning, and others. The Pulitzer is a place for contemplation and exchange that brings art and people together.

Champion for the Arts – Employees Community Fund of Boeing St. Louis is a Boeing employee-owned and managed giving program that enables employees to combine their contributions to help people in need. The funds that Boeing employees donate to the ECF are distributed through grants by members of the ECF board of directors, who are Boeing employees and ECF donors. The ECF has made and is making a positive difference in the St. Louis and Illinois communities through these donations.

ECF makes grants to local health and human service, civic, environmental, educational and arts and culture organizations. Every year the ECF invests over \$1 million of employee raised funds in our region. One hundred percent of every employee dollar helps strengthen local communities.

Arts Collaborator – Adam Maness is a versatile pianist, arranger, composer and producer whose performances, original compositions and arrangements have been featured on numerous recordings and on national and international radio and television broadcasts. He is best known as co-founder and composer for the genre bending chamber ensemble, The 442s. He is the leader of his own jazz piano trio, featuring Bob DeBoo on bass and Montez Coleman on drums.

Maness attended the Jazz and Contemporary Music program of the New School University in New York City. While in New York, he began collaborating with internationally renowned vocalist Erin Bode and became her longtime arranger and band leader. In addition to his own projects and work as a pianist for countless jazz groups, Maness works frequently as an arranger and performer with other ensembles including classical/tango/jazz sextet, Cortango, and the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. Since 2017, he has been the creative director for Open Studio, an industry-leading jazz education platform created by famed jazz pianist Peter Martin, where he has produced jazz education courses by greats such as Dianne Reeves and Christian McBride.

Art Educator of the Year – Dr. Nikki Spotts is a product of the St. Louis Public Schools (Shaw Visual & Performing Arts Elementary School, Marquette Visual & Performing Arts Middle School and Central Visual & Performing Arts High School). Spotts currently teaches at Shaw VPA Elementary School as the dance director and arts department chairperson.

She has taught dance at a variety of community centers and dance studios, as well as afterschool programs, master classes and colleges and universities, including Fontbonne University, Lindenwood University, Florissant Valley Community College and Southern Illinois University of Edwardsville. She also teaches in her own dance company, The Nikki Bradford Dance Ensemble. Spotts has danced with Joseph Holmes Dance Company; Kariam & Company Traditions, Philadelphia, Pa.; Nommo African American Dance, New York, N.Y.; and Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble, Denver, Colo. Additionally, she has choreographed on stages around the world, including performances at The Fox Theatre, Stellar Gospel Music Awards presented by BET in Los Angeles and Club Med Resorts.

She is an alumnus of the Community Arts Training Institute at the Regional Arts Commission and a former grant panelist. She holds a Bachelor’s of Fine Arts in dance education from The University of the Arts in Philadelphia and a Master’s in

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Education (MAT) from Lindenwood University as well as a Master's in Administration, Educational Specialist in Superintendent, and Doctorate of Education in Advanced Superintendent from Lindenwood University.

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About the St. Louis Arts Awards - Since 1992, the Arts and Education Council's St. Louis Arts Awards has honored more than 180 artists, educators, philanthropists, corporate citizens and arts organizations that make the St. Louis region so vibrant. It is an elegant evening of cocktails and dinner, an awards presentation and awe-inspiring performances - all packed into just four hours. Proceeds benefit the Arts and Education Council, which offers programs and services that support more than 70 arts and arts education organizations impacting 1.6 million people throughout the 16-county, bi-state region. KeepArtHappening.org/ArtsAwards.

About the Arts and Education Council: *Keep Art Happening*. – The Arts and Education Council builds appreciation, participation and support for the arts and arts education throughout the St. Louis region, shaping a more vibrant arts community for all. The Arts and Education Council ensures the 16-county, bi-state region is rich with arts and cultural experiences through programs and services that support more than 70 organizations each year, including: operating support grants; arts incubation at the Centene Center for the Arts; PNC Program Grants; the Creative Impact Fund with lead support from the Bayer Fund; the Maritz Arts and Education Fund for Teachers; Bayer Fund Rural Community Arts and Education grants; the Art Education Fund, underwritten by Wells Fargo Advisors; the Catalyst Innovation Lab; the Katherine Dunham Fellowship; Catalyst Conversations; the stARTup Creative Competition; Leadership Roundtables; Arts Marketers; the St. Louis Suburban Music Educators Association; the Keep Art Happening Scholarship; and the St. Louis Arts Awards.

The Arts and Education Council is entirely funded by individual donors, corporations and foundations in the St. Louis region. Since its inception in 1963 as the region's only privately-supported united arts fund, the Arts and Education Council has raised and distributed more than \$100 million in private funding for the arts – a significant contribution that directly impacts the quality of life in our region. The Arts and Education Council meets all 20 Better Business Bureau Charity Standards and has earned the Wise Giving Seal of Approval, a three-star rating from Charity Navigator and a Guidestar Exchange Gold Participant rating.

Connect with us – **Website:** KeepArtHappening.org **Phone:** 314.289.4000. **Facebook:** [ArtsandEducation](https://www.facebook.com/ArtsandEducation) **Twitter:** [@ArtEdSTL](https://twitter.com/ArtEdSTL) **Instagram:** [Arts_Education_Council](https://www.instagram.com/Arts_Education_Council)

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