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ALAN ALYAS, ALLENA BRAZIER, ANITA HANSEN AND TERRY HARRIS TO CO-HOST THE ARTS AND EDUCATION COUNCIL'S ST. LOUIS ARTS AWARDS

Co-hosts join Honorary Chair Pat Rich for the 30th annual event

ST. LOUIS, August 27, 2021 – The Arts and Education Council announced today that **Alan Alyas, Allena Marie Brazier, Anita Hansen and Terry Harris, Ed.D.** will co-host the 2021 St. Louis Arts Awards. They join Honorary Chair **Pat Rich**, who founded the St. Louis Arts Awards in 1992. Actor and arts administrator **Andréa Purnell** will emcee the fundraiser. Now in its 30th year, the event honors individuals and organizations who have made significant contributions to the St. Louis region's arts community.

"I am excited that these four dynamic individuals will serve as the 2021 St. Louis Arts Awards co-hosts. They represent the next generation of artists and leaders who are so important to the future of our St. Louis arts community. They will carry on the spirit of generosity created by Pat Rich when she founded the St. Louis Arts Awards 30 years ago," said Cynthia A. Prost, Arts and Education Council president and CEO.

Alan Alyas, a native of the Kurdish region of Iraq, is program manager at American Voices. Alyas arrived in St. Louis in August of 2008 on a scholarship from American Voices, Saint Louis University and Saint Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra. Since then, Alyas has finished his bachelor's degree in violin performance, studying with Arianna String Quartet at the University of Missouri – Saint Louis (UMSL), and Master of Science in Information Systems and Technology at UMSL focusing on Systems and Cybersecurity Analysis.

Through American Voices, he works closely with the State Department's Education and Cultural Affairs to implement cultural programming around the world in an effort to create peace, harmony and understanding through the arts. Alyas recently finished organizing and managing a three-month virtual education program in Iraq which included violin, viola, cello, composition, music production and Bboy dance classes and competition.

Allena Marie Brazier is a sculptor from East St. Louis, Illinois. She has exhibited her artwork in galleries such as: Soulard Art Gallery, Flood Plain, Site Art and Design Gallery Group Competition at the annual Sculpture Objects Functional Art and Design Fair in Chicago and her public sculpture "Katherine Dunham: Perpetual Motion" is on display at the Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville (SIUE) campus. In the Spring of 2021, she will receive a Bachelor of Fine Arts with an emphasis in Sculpture and a minor in Art History from SIUE.

Brazier embodies why East St. Louis is called the City of Champions. In 2018, she served as the Katherine Dunham Fellow with the Arts and Education Council. In 2019, her outdoor public sculpture "Katherine Dunham: Perpetual Motion" was awarded the First Place Luis Jiménez Award during the SIUE Sculpture on Campus annual event. In Spring 2020, Allena was honored for exemplary academic achievement by the College of Arts and Sciences and received the Elevate East St. Louis Scholarship for the Department of Art and Design.

Anita Hansen is the Relationship Team Administrator who is responsible for leading, developing and coaching the Commercial Support team at Regions Bank in the St. Louis area, where she started her career 2002 in retail banking. Hansen graduated from Lindenwood University in 2005, where she received her Bachelor of Arts in International Business. Daughter to an immigrant mother from Mexico and an immigrant father from Sweden, Hansen is the first of her family to be born in the United States. Having a diverse

cultural background has allowed Anita to have a strong appreciation for diversity and inclusion which she promotes within Regions Bank. She is a member of Regions Diversity and Inclusion committee in St. Louis and serves as the chair for the Diverse Talent Management subcommittee.

Hansen volunteers her time to a variety of local organizations including Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Regional Business Council, United Way, Junior Achievement, Heroes Care and she has served on the Young Friends board for the Arts and Education Council of Missouri since 2017. She also mentors students at Jennings High School and Marian Middle School. She enjoys traveling, cooking and attending all types of music concerts with her family.

Terry Harris, Ed.D., Executive Director of Student Services in the Rockwood School District, is one of the region's most innovative educators working to build equity and well-being among students and the African American community. To help address health disparities, Harris co-founded The Collective STL, a nonprofit dedicated to bringing free yoga and wellness programs to African American communities in St. Louis. He has also created child-centered spaces for yoga through a Yoga for the Youth program. Harris also serves on the Arts and Education Council's advisory panel providing critical guidance and support in the implementation of the Arts and Healing Initiative.

Harris has been honored as Outstanding Educator of the Year by the St. Louis Association of Secondary Principals. He established the St. Louis Restorative Practices Academy for Educators and is an EdHub STL Fellow for Education "Intrapreneurship". A graduate of Lafayette High School, Harris holds degrees from Missouri State, Lindenwood and Maryville University where he earned a Doctorate of Education in Educational Administration.

Since 1992, the Arts and Education Council has recognized nearly 190 honorees at the St. Louis Arts Awards. The 2021 honorees are: **Amy Kaiser**, Lifetime Achievement in the Arts; **Kirven and Antonio Douthit-Boyd**, Excellence in the Arts; **Brian Owens**, Excellence in the Arts; **Lynne and Jim Turley**, Excellence in Philanthropy; **Antionette Carroll**, Arts Innovator; **"Such Sweet Thunder"** presented by Shakespeare Festival St. Louis, Nine Network of Public Media, Jazz St. Louis and The Big Muddy Dance Company, Arts Collaboration; **James McKay Jr.**, Jennings School District, Art Educator of the Year; and **John Nickel**, 30th Anniversary Chairperson's Award.

Tickets for the 2021 St. Louis Arts Awards on January 25, 2021 are on sale now. If ongoing circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic prevent the Arts and Education Council from hosting the event in person in January, the event will take place on Monday, May 24, 2021. The Arts and Education Council is committed to honoring these outstanding honorees and their accomplishments and celebrating with the St. Louis arts community in person. If the event is postponed, tickets purchased for the January date will be honored at the May date.

For more information about the honorees, sponsorship opportunities and tickets, visit KeepArtHappening.org/2021ArtsAwards.

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About the St. Louis Arts Awards – Since 1992, the Arts and Education Council's St. Louis Arts Awards has honored nearly 190 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 ensures the 16-county, bi-state region is rich with arts and cultural experiences for all through programs and services that support more than 70 organizations each year, including: general operating grants; arts incubation at the Centene Center for the Arts; PNC Program Grants; the Creative Impact Fund, with lead support from Bayer Fund; the Maritz Arts and Education Fund for Teachers; Bayer Fund Rural Community Arts Program grants; Arts and Healing Initiative, with lead funding from Missouri Foundation for Health and additional funding from the Crawford Taylor Foundation; the Art Education Fund, underwritten by Wells Fargo Advisors; the Catalyst Innovation Lab; the Katherine Dunham Fellowship; 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.

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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.

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