

Lifetime Achievement Award
Arts Patrons Dr. Bruce & Lola Rothmann

For one-half century, Lola and Bruce Rothmann have been actively involved in bringing great music to the Akron area. They have generously given their time, talents and financial support to Tuesday Musical Association, Akron Symphony Orchestra, Children's Concert Society, Blossom Music Center, Cleveland Institute of Music and Music at Stan Hywet. Three years ago when the Stan Hywet series had to leave the historic mansion venue, Lola and Bruce created Music from The Western Reserve. This Sunday chamber music series, held in the chapel at Western Reserve Academy in Hudson, features outstanding artists from Northeast Ohio, including faculty members from Kent State University, The University of Akron, Oberlin College Conservatory of Music and The Cleveland Institute of Music. Lola serves as the group's concert manager and Bruce as board president.

From 1970 to 1989, Lola served as Tuesday Musical Association's concert manager and public relations coordinator, at the time an *unpaid* position. Over those years, the Rothmanns opened their Silver Lake home for receptions and overnight stays for visiting artists. In 1982, the couple was instrumental in founding Music at Stan Hywet, where Lola served as its concert chairman and Bruce on the board of trustees for 20 years.

In 1968, Lola helped establish The University of Akron Chamber Ballet, which later became our Ohio Ballet. Lola has organized in-school concerts for Children's Concert Society and, from 1964 to 1982, chaired Akron Symphony Orchestra's Concert Planning Committee. Bruce, a pediatric surgeon, has also dedicated his free time to serving on advisory boards, committees and fund drives, including Akron Symphony Orchestra, The University of Akron College of Fine & Applied Arts, Performing Arts Hall Association, Blossom Music Center, Kent State University College of Fine & Professional Arts, Organization of Ohio Orchestras, Children's Concert Society, Tuesday Musical Association, Music from Stan Hywet and Cleveland Institute of Music. He has served as touring physician for The Cleveland Orchestra and Cuyahoga Valley Youth Ballet, as well as director of medical services at Blossom for 20 years.

Born in Akron, Bruce is a graduate of Wesleyan University, New York University School of Medicine and University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Surgery. Lola was born in Jamestown, New York, graduated from Keuka College and earned a degree in piano at the Warren, Pennsylvania Conservatory of Music. The couple has three daughters and three grandchildren.

It is a great honor for the Akron Area Arts Alliance to have this opportunity to celebrate and thank these generous arts patrons for filling our lives with glorious music.

Lifetime Achievement Award Educator/Artist Mark Soppeland

Mark Soppeland's achievements are too vast to fit in one category, so he is being honored as both an inspiring educator and outstanding artist. A BFA graduate of the University of Colorado, Boulder in 1974, he was awarded a graduate fellowship at Ohio State University where he completed his MFA in 1976. This fall Mark began his 30th year of teaching art at The University of Akron. He has taught every level of drawing and painting, including specialized courses in landscape, portraiture and airbrush techniques. He has also taught graduate courses for arts educators. Last spring, Mark was presented by the university its highest academic honor – the title of Distinguished Professor.

An artist who actually wears a beret, Mark brings the sophistication and skills of a professional painter, sculptor, illustrator, craftsman and designer to his classroom. His students love him. Comments made after a 2004 class included: "Helped me love drawing even more!" "His course truly helped me think outside the box!" "One of the few classes where I learned something completely new each and every class period." "Such a wonderful source of knowledge and inspiration not only in art and the art world, but in everyday events and life."

Mark is inspiring in every day life. His work has been exhibited in over 350 exhibitions on four continents. He has created 45 public arts projects, including in 2003 *The Waters of Life* – a 37-foot high mural, using polymers as paint, for Summa Health System's Center of Excellence building on the Akron City Hospital campus. He has been awarded 15 grants and fellowships including four Ohio Arts Council Individual Artist Fellowships and an International Artist in Residence Fellowship to the Czech Republic. He was selected to design the 1998 FIRST NIGHT Akron button and poster. In 2002, Mark and his wife Dr. Barbara Tannenbaum, chief curator of the Akron Art Museum, represented the City of Akron to our sister city Chemnitz, Germany.

Mark believes two of his most important projects have been exhibitions he curated for the Myers School of Art Emily Davis Gallery. In 2002, *Private Figures: The Logic and Passion of Collecting Figurative Art* featured 460 objects on loan from 50 private collections exploring the use of the human image in art. The show included artworks by Picasso, Cezanne, Andy Warhol, Alex Katz, David Hockney and others. *Man and Beast* was presented last spring at Emily Davis Gallery in which Mark brought together 200 significant and compelling works addressing the relationship between humans and animals.

You may be asking yourself, as a reviewer once did, "does Soppeland ever rest?" Perhaps not. But what a benefit to Akron that he is so busy creating here.

Outstanding Visual Artist Joan Colbert

One of Akron's premier artists, Joan Colbert is also a premier citizen volunteering her time and talents to make our community a more exciting place to live. Selected as the 2001 FIRST NIGHT Akron button designer, Joan's award-winning art has been in hundreds of exhibits in Ohio, New York and Pennsylvania. She describes her artistic style as "abstract realism." Inspired by literature and influenced by the artist's environs, her works are mixed media with an emphasis on painting, printmaking and collage. She often includes blackbirds and bare trees, her favorite motifs.

A lifelong Akronite, Joan has devoted hundreds of hours volunteering her talents to Progress Through Preservation, Highland Square Neighborhood Association and the West Hill Neighborhood Organization. She is an organizer of the Art in the Square festivals, secretary of Artists of Rubber City, an Akron Area Arts Alliance member and Summit Artspace Gallery volunteer.

An art education graduate of The University of Akron, Joan is a former commercial artist, who began her career producing graphics for the City of Akron, Akron-Summit County Library and Rubber World Magazine. Since 1988 she has worked in her home studio in Highland Square.

Patron Award Fred and Laura Ruth Bidwell

Arts patrons are people with a passion. They are willing to dedicate significant financial resources and give freely of their valuable time to share that passion with us all. Fred and Laura Bidwell's dedication to the visual arts, and especially to photography, is legendary. Their generosity has significantly impacted organizations such as the Akron Art Museum, the Emily Davis Gallery at The University of Akron, the Cleveland Museum of Art, MOCA and Summit Artspace.

A graphic artist, Laura has donated her design talents to multiple arts organizations. For two years, she has done an exceptional job as gallery chair and exhibition curator of Summit Artspace.

A past president of the Akron Art Museum, Fred chaired the committee that selected the architect for the new building. This involved countless hours and personal expense interviewing architects around the world. He has helped raise over \$34 million for the new museum as co-chair of its *Create A Masterpiece* campaign. Because of a major personal contribution, the museum will name the new photography gallery in their honor.

Every year, the Bidwells sponsor a photography residency and lecture series at The University of Akron's Myers School of Art, which brings nationally known photographers to Akron. These generous patrons have opened their home on countless occasions for events and fundraisers to

benefit our arts community.

Government Leadership Award Congressman Tim Ryan

In the first Congressional Arts Report Card issued last year by Americans for the Arts Action Fund, Congressman Tim Ryan received a grade of A+. He voted and positively supported every one of the 11 arts-related legislative actions taken by the 108th Congress, including increasing funding for the National Endowment for the Arts and allowing tax deductions for artists' gifts. He was the only Ohio representative to receive this top rating and one of only 32 of the country's 235 congressional representatives.

As a first term congressman, Ryan also led efforts to establish Northeast Ohio's Western Reserve as a national heritage area to promote the natural, historical and cultural heritage of this multi-county region. His bill H.R. 412, authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to determine the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Western Reserve Heritage Area, passed the House in March 2005 and is currently in the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Representative for Ohio's 7th District, which includes portions of the Akron area, Ryan is a graduate of Bowling Green State University and the Franklin Pierce Law Center, Concord, NH. He and his wife Julie reside in Niles, Ohio.

Outstanding Artist in Dance Kathryn Mihelick

In 1992, after retiring as assistant professor and coordinator of the Kent State University Dance Division, Kathryn Mihelick founded Leaven Dance Company. Kathryn is director of this professional ensemble committed to using dance as a "vehicle for exploring and developing spirituality, wellness, healing, justice and peace." It performs in churches, institutions and conferences nationally and internationally.

An accomplished and talented artist, Kathryn has been a scholar and practitioner of sacred and liturgical dance for over 25 years. She was one of five American dancers awarded an Asian Arts Council grant to introduce western sacred dance at the 1991 International Dance Research Conference. Four years ago when she received a fax from the Vatican saying liturgical dance could not be performed in her church sanctuary, she took up the challenge to change a 1975 canon law. Her position paper on *Issues of Sacred/Liturgical Dance* was the basis of discussion at the 2005 U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. She is spearheading an advocacy effort to procure Rome's affirmation of the validity of liturgical dance as an appropriate form of worship.

Kathryn received a 1999 International Sacred Dance Guild Award and was honored in 2003 by the OhioDance organization for outstanding contributions to the advancement of the dance art form.

Outstanding Arts Volunteer
Mary Ann Jackson

The First Lady of Akron's arts, Mary Ann Jackson has dedicated over 35 years to helping our area's arts and cultural organizations grow and prosper. She has put boundless energy towards being a wise leader and board member, brilliant fundraiser, collaborator and innovator. In 1991 she co-founded the Akron Area Arts Alliance and in 2001 she co-founded the *Arts Alive!* Awards.

Mary Ann's most legendary fundraiser was a black-tie dinner for 800 in the Goodyear blimp airdock for the National Inventor's Hall of Fame. Other "MAJ spectaculars" include the grand reopenings of the Civic and the Akron-Summit County Library, the Akron Symphony's 50th Anniversary Ball and Ohio Ballet's Red, White & Bravo 1985, which attracted 7,000 guests. For her "ability to bring in the bucks," she was honored with a 2000 Rainmaker Award. From 1994 to 1998, she chaired the Civic board, which saved the historic theatre by working out an agreement with The University of Akron. Mary Ann also led the daily operations of the Summit CARES tax initiative in 2000.

She has served on boards and committees for the Akron Symphony Orchestra, Akron Civic Theatre, Blossom Music Center, Greater Akron Musical Association, The University of Akron College of Fine & Applied Arts, Summit Historical Society, Akron Art Museum, Weathervane Playhouse and the Akron Area Arts Alliance. Her generosity and talents have truly made a lasting impact on the quality of life in our area.

Outreach Award
Cuyahoga Valley Youth Ballet
Reach Out and Dance (R.O.A.D.)

Founded in 2002 by Lori Klinger, R.O.A.D. provides free dance experiences for 650 fifth and fourth graders in Akron, Wooster and Cuyahoga Falls. The program successfully integrates dance into the general academic curriculum, providing at-risk children a different learning opportunity where they can savor success -- sometimes for the first time in their lives -- and discover new talents. R.O.A.D. organizers choose schools that need them the most, using information from the public school's free lunch program. Children attend weekly, 45 minute workshops taught by Cuyahoga Valley Youth Ballet's professional instructors. They learn the basic elements of dance, choreography,

performance and music. Their work leads up to a large, end of the year performance with students from all participating schools.

Studies have shown that participation in performing arts can curb violence, reduce drug abuse, solve behavior problems and improve academic performance. A survey of teachers taken by R.O.A.D. in the 2003-04 school year found that students gained confidence and discipline. Since all children do not learn in the same way, this successful educational outreach program is an exceptional example of the benefits of integrating the arts into core school curriculum.

Rising Young Star/Artist Elizabeth Rimmel

At 25-years-old, Elizabeth Rimmel has used her talents in graphic arts and design to become an Akron entrepreneur. She is the founder and creative director of IMMIX Studio, designing web sites for clients such as Weathervane Playhouse, Harris Stanton Gallery, Akron Area Arts Alliance and ArtCetera. She also recently partnered with five friends to found the Rubber City Clothing Company, an impressive new business making hand-screened t-shirts with original "Akron" designs. As the company's art director, it is Elizabeth's clever graphics that decorate this fun clothing for adults to toddlers. The company has been featured in the *Beacon Journal* and as a cover article in *Akron Life & Leisure*.

Elizabeth also works for Don Drumm Studios and Gallery, where she creates their outstanding advertising graphics and attractive, online shopping web site. Her graphics are sophisticated, eye-catching, innovative, effective and often witty. Her work garners complements from local and national magazines plus other galleries from around the country. No one can believe she is only three years out of Kent State University, where she earned a BA in Visual Communication Design.

Elizabeth is a shining example of the type of talented young professional we want to keep in Akron. Our Rising Young Star winners in 2003 and 2001 were artists who moved on to careers in other areas. AAAA is proud to be honoring a talented young person who is committed to living in Akron, working in Akron and helping make Akron a great place.

Outstanding Arts Educator Sally A. Schneider

Director of Choirs Sally Schneider has been making the halls of Firestone High School resound with beautiful music for years. During her 24 years with the Akron Public Schools, she has contributed to the musical life of this community by instilling in her students a love of choral music and respect for music as an artform.

There are several exceptional choral ensembles under Sally's direction including Madrigal Singers, Vocal Jazz Ensemble, Men's Choir,

Intermediate Choir, Women's Choir and the Firestone High School Symphonic Choir, which has achieved a NATIONAL reputation for excellence earning repeated invitations to perform at conventions of the American Choral Directors Association. In 2000, Sally won the Ohio Music Educators Association's Outstanding Music Educator Award.

Dr. Scott Dorsey, chairman of Mount Union College's Department of Music, states that Sally heads "the best high school choral program I have seen or heard." Through her leadership, her students have consistently achieved ratings of "Superior" at adjudicated events. According to Firestone principal Cynthia Wheeler, Sally Schneider's gifts as a teacher are proven by the fact that "so many of her students choose to emulate her and select teaching music as a career choice."

Outstanding Artist in Theatre Jim Fippin

Jim Fippin began his sixth season as resident director of Coach House Theatre this fall. "Talented" and "tireless" were the descriptive words used over and over again in the stack of support letters that arrived with Jim's nomination. He masterly oversees all aspects of the productions in this intimate, 93-seat theatre, located on the grounds of the Akron Woman's City Club. When selecting a season, he has the uncanny ability to choose plays that both pay respect to the tradition of Coach House and its patrons yet moves them forward in their experiences with fresh, vibrant entertainment. He selects the cast, directs, oversees lighting plus develops scenery, props and costumes. He is responsible for publicity and marketing and acts in one or two productions per season.

Jim earned a BFA in theatre from Otterbein College in 1985 and has done post-graduate work at The University of Akron. He has appeared on-stage at Porthouse Theatre, Weathervane Playhouse, University of Akron and Canton Players Guild.

Jim is passionate about his work and his actors say his enthusiasm is infectious. His peers describe Jim as an adventurous actor and a joy to watch on stage.

Business Support Award OMNOVA Solutions Foundation

OMNOVA Solutions Foundation received multiple nominations for this 2005 *Arts Alive!* award. That's because it has been a quiet force in the cultural life of Akron for years, providing funds for concerts, museum exhibitions, dance performances, theatre productions and arts education. Under the strong leadership of foundation director Theresa Carter, OMNOVA has been a consistent partner and provider of much-

needed support. Last year, 24 arts and culture programs in the Akron area were benefited by its generosity.

Headquartered in Fairlawn, OMNOVA Solutions is a major innovator of decorative and functional surfaces, emulsion polymers and specialty chemicals. Among OMNOVA products are commercial wallcoverings, swimming pool liners, roofing materials, upholstery fabrics and laminates for furniture and cupboards. In 1999, the company was spun off from GenCorp Inc., a major technology-based manufacturer that first began operations in 1915 as The General Tire and Rubber Company. Today OMNOVA employs 1,850 people across America, Europe and Asia.

In 2004, OMNOVA Solutions Foundation contributed \$1,714,302 to 523 quality of life programs in 12 communities. The heading on its most recent annual report stated "Together We Are Making A Difference," and they truly are.

Outstanding Artist in Music Tucker Jolly

On Sunday, December 18, Tucker Jolly will conduct his 26th TubaChristmas, a holiday tradition he started in 1980, when he first came to The University of Akron to teach. The first year he managed to gather 55 fellow tuba players to perform favorite carols in Cascade Plaza. Today this rousing, free event is held indoors at the Akron Civic Theatre and features over 600 tubas – many festively adorned with tinsel, garland and lights. He coordinates, rehearses and conducts the concert every year for no pay. The event is considered a gift to the community from the Civic and the university. In July, Tucker organizes TubaSummer, another free event in Cascade Plaza.

A professor of tuba and euphonium, Tucker is also a tubist with the Akron Symphony Orchestra. He has a Bachelor of Music from the University of North Texas and a Master of Arts in Music Performance from the University of Connecticut. He has been principal tubist with the Fort Worth Symphony, United States Coast Guard Band, New Haven Symphony, and Ohio Chamber Orchestra. He has performed on many recordings and with the Blossom Festival Concert Band, Cleveland Orchestra, and Canton Symphony Orchestra.

Rising Young Star/Leadership Elizabeth Quirk Sheeler

As founder of ArtCetera, a membership organization that supports the local arts community, Elizabeth Sheeler has brought together growing numbers of young professionals for a chance to experience arts and

culture in Greater Akron. She and ArtCetera have been at the forefront of the City of Akron's promotional efforts to keep and attract talented young people in our area. With her leadership skills and enthusiasm, Elizabeth has helped establish a program that builds interest, appreciation and participation in the arts and rallies future leaders for our community. Elizabeth served as ArtCetera's president during its first two years and is now membership chairman. She has also served on the AAAA executive committee for two years and was recently named vice president for the 2005-06 fiscal year.

Collaborative Project Award

ArtsLIFT & Mary Schiller Myers School of Art, The University of Akron

Arts LIFT, which stands for Lola Isroff Fund for Teens, aims to lift the lives of young people through artistic exploration. In 2001, a generous bequest from the late Lola Isroff to the Myers School of Art created this urban art education program that also provides scholarship monies for underprivileged and artistically gifted high school students in the Akron Public Schools. Each year, Arts LIFT collaborates with an organizational partner that has a conservation-based mission and a professional artist to create a lasting work of public art. As a result of the 2004 project, five gorgeous stained glass butterflies now grace the ceiling of the Corbin Conservatory at Stan Hywet. Under the direction of local glass artist Marianne Hite, twelve high school students worked over a period of four weeks to create the massive winged creatures that hover over the live butterflies and exotic plants in the two-story conservatory. In 2002, students painted a themed animal and habitat mural on the Akron Zoo's educational outreach van and in 2003, they created approximately 40 ceramic sculpture pieces for Crown Point Ecology Center's perennial garden.