

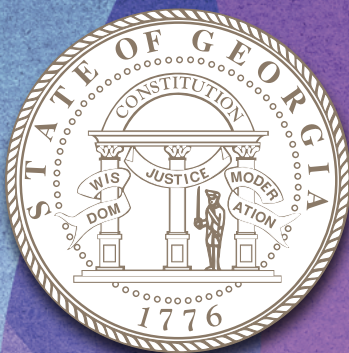
GOVERNOR'S  
AWARDS

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FOR THE ARTS  
HUMANITIES







# 2017 GOVERNOR'S AWARDS

## ► WELCOME

Karen Paty, Executive Director, Georgia Council for the Arts  
Jamil Zainaldin, President, Georgia Humanities

## ► ILLUSTRATIONS OF IMPACT

Testimonials honoring the work of Award Recipients

## ► REMARKS AND PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

Pat Wilson, Commissioner,  
Department of Economic Development

Governor Nathan Deal and First Lady Sandra Deal

## ► BENEDICTION

Judson Mitcham, Georgia Poet Laureate



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 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 our lives and strengthen our 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.

# 2017 AWARD RECIPIENTS



## **Karen Berman //** **Milledgeville**

### **Theatre and arts advocacy**

Since the 1960s, Dr. Karen Berman has been involved in the arts and humanities to educate, grow, and improve her community. Her pioneering work as an arts advocate, scholar, author, and proponent of theater for social change has strengthened the Milledgeville and Baldwin County community and will carry forward for generations to come. As chair of the Georgia College & State

University (GC) Department of Theatre and Dance in Milledgeville, Berman has worked to make the theater program one of the best in the nation, which has had notable impact on the larger community as well. She devised a plan for GC theatre students to work with the GC Early College, a 7th-12th grade alternative enrichment opportunity, to empower the students through plays with such themes as anti-bullying and substance abuse. Through Berman's leadership, the GC theatre and dance department instituted "Pathways for Engagement for All Theatre Majors," a program that allows college students to engage with youth in the schools of Washington County and Baldwin County. Berman's work with the GC history department resulted in a collection of oral histories of Milledgeville residents, which also became a play staged in New York. The vibrant play seasons at GC, which reach approximately 10,000 audience members per year from the campus to surrounding counties, provide some of the only cultural experiences for many. And through her own philanthropy at GC, Berman has made it possible for more than 40 Georgia students to study abroad in theatre.

*Honored by Candiss Hill*



## Valerie Boyd // Athens/Atlanta

### Literature and journalism

As the Charlayne Hunter-Gault Distinguished Writer in Residence at the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Georgia, Valerie Boyd co-directs the college's successful low-residency Master of Fine Arts in Narrative Media Writing. Her passion for story inspires emerging writers to find their voice and develop their craft. She

animates the writing life, rousing her students' creativity and zeal for truth by her own example. Boyd is an accomplished and gifted writer and journalist. Author of the critically acclaimed *Wrapped in Rainbows: The Life of Zora Neale Hurston*, published in 2003, she received the Georgia Author of the Year Award in nonfiction, an American Library Association Notable Book Award, and the Southern Book Award for best nonfiction book of the year. The Georgia Center for the Book listed *Wrapped in Rainbows* as one of "25 books that all Georgians should read." She spent nearly 20 years at the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, ending her tenure there as the Arts Editor. She has written about the intersection of race, arts, and culture, and her work has appeared in such publications as the *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Ms.*, *Essence*, and *Atlanta magazine*. Since joining the faculty of the Journalism Department at UGA in 2004, Boyd has taught narrative and critical writing for both graduate and undergraduate students. She designed UGA's MFA program in Narrative Media Writing to "bridge the false divide between journalism and literature."

*Honored by Monica Pearson*





## **William Eiland // Athens**

### **Arts leadership and education**

William Eiland has been the director of the Georgia Museum of Art, the official state art museum, since 1992. Under his stewardship, the museum has grown its programming, staff, and permanent collection, as well as established a decorative arts program, the Henry D. Green Center for the Study of the Decorative Arts. Eiland has emphasized the museum's role as the official state art museum

of Georgia, maintaining a policy of free admission, considering that the collection belongs to the people of the state. He has made fundraising an integral part of the operations of the museum, enabling its growth during his tenure even during tough economic times. Eiland has been transformative in the museum field, mentoring countless interns and students, many of whom have gone on to work in the museum field, and providing guidance and counsel to countless galleries, historical societies, and museums throughout the state. He has fostered the professional development of his staff, and four former staff members have gone on to serve as museum directors; others have become curators or professionals at larger, more prestigious museums. Former students and interns pursue careers in the arts and humanities the world over. Eiland's devotion to his museum administration duties is matched by his enthusiasm as a humanities researcher and avid lecturer. He has major publications on topics as far ranging as Renaissance studies, country music, elite southern biography, women artists, and contemporary artists.

*Honored by Peggy Galis*



## **Gilmer Arts and Heritage Association // Ellijay**

### **Visual, literary, and performing arts**

The Gilmer Arts and Heritage Association has made an impact on the arts in Gilmer County for almost 40 years, with a mission of promoting passionate interest and active participation in the arts sector. Gilmer Arts provides more than 300 classes for adults and children in art, music, and dance, and brings cultural events to the people of Gilmer County and north Georgia in the visual, literary, and performing arts. To achieve its goals, Gilmer Arts partners with the Gilmer County Chamber of Commerce as well as the local school system and library to encourage art education and involvement. Annually, its George Link Jr. Scholarship program awards scholarships to outstanding high school seniors in Gilmer County to pursue careers in the visual, literary, and performing arts. For many years, Gilmer Arts has exhibited strong executive and volunteer leadership, a solid track record of sustainable operations, a broad base of financial support, and proven program effectiveness. The organization has more than 350 members, including individual, family, and business memberships. It is largely a volunteer-run operation with more than 75 active volunteers logging more than 16,000 volunteer hours in the last fiscal year. Gilmer Arts supports such events as Plein Air, Art in the Mountains, and the B.E.S.T. (Bringing Ellijay Sensational Talent) performing arts series, which includes four to five high-caliber performances a year. Gilmer Arts will continue to support the community with the fall 2017 opening of a contemporary performing arts center, the Georgia Link Jr. Arts Playhouse ("the Playhouse"), located in downtown Ellijay.

*Honored by Whit Davies, Joe Lowery, and Megan Williams  
leading the Gilmer Arts Dulcimers*



## Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport Art Program // Atlanta

### Visual and performing arts

The Atlanta Airport Art Program's unique location allows for the introduction of art to huge numbers of people from all over the world. Since 1997 the Airport Art Program has showcased approximately eight exhibits per year, of mostly Georgia artists, in its Atrium Gallery, and has purchased more than 150 pieces of artwork to add to the airport's collection. Through the commissioned art program, many Georgia artists have had the opportunity to create large-scale artwork and venture into the realm of public art. In 1980, the first Airport Art Program was implemented with the installation of fourteen site-specific artworks for the newly constructed terminal building. That public art program set the pace nationally and was a model for numerous other cities; however, the program was not staffed and went dormant until 1994. Under the leadership of David Vogt and Lamar Renford, a concept for an art program for the new International Concourse was developed. With a budget of approximately \$1.3 million, an art program was approved and implemented. Since then, the robust art program has grown to include commissioned art, rotating exhibitions, and performing art. Three Youth Art Galleries offer exhibitions that are changed every four months, with about 400 Georgia K-12 students each year having their art seen by travelers from all over the world. The program partners with the National Arts Program Foundation to offer airport employees and their immediate family members the chance to display their artwork in a professional setting. The Airport Art Program also schedules local musicians to perform in five annual music series, held in the airport atrium.





## **Virginia Hepner // Atlanta**

### **Arts leadership**

For more than a decade, Virginia Hepner has been an integral part of Georgia's arts community, serving as a strong business leader as well as a vocal champion for the importance of the arts and arts education throughout the state. In particular she has emphasized the economic impact of the arts, highlighting the role the arts play in helping Georgia recruit new businesses and recognizing the importance

of public funding support for the arts. After a 25-year career in banking, Hepner joined the Woodruff Arts Center, the state's largest arts institution and the third largest arts center in the United States, as president and CEO, a position she held from 2012 to 2017. As CEO, Hepner's accomplishments included increasing the Woodruff's endowments to \$439 million and reducing its debt by \$25 million. She also led the successful completion of the Arts Center's Transformation Campaign, a \$100 million fundraising initiative, which surpassed its goal two years ahead of schedule. Arts education and increasing access to the arts for families were also important aspects of Hepner's tenure at the Woodruff. More than 200,000 students take part in the Arts Center's education programs each year, while hundreds of educators from across the state participate in an arts educator conference each year. In addition, over a two-year period, more than 120,000 people have taken advantage of the Arts Center's Family Fun Series. Prior to her role at the Woodruff, she served as interim director for a variety of nonprofit arts organizations, including the Atlanta Ballet and Young Audiences at the Woodruff Arts Center.

*Honored by Pearl Cleage*



## Kenny Leon // Atlanta

### Theatre and Arts leadership

Kenny Leon is a Tony Award-winning Broadway and film director. A graduate of Clark Atlanta University, Leon served as artistic director of the Alliance Theatre for eleven years. There, he made transformative changes, diversifying Alliance staff, productions, and artists. As a result of his efforts, the African American audience at Alliance productions grew from less than 5 percent to 25 percent. Leon held several

world premieres by Georgia playwrights, including *Blues for an Alabama Sky* by Pearl Cleage and *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* by Alfred Uhry. Plays by African Americans featured on the Alliance stage during Leon's tenure include Joe Turner's *Come and Gone*, August Wilson's *Fences*, Cleage's *Flyin' West*, and James Baldwin's *The Amen Corner*. Multicultural musicals, such as *Hot Mikado*, adapted by David Bell from Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado*, were also part of Leon's legacy, as were dance productions like Debbie Allen's *Soul Possessed*. Leon's tenure helped to raise the Alliance's national profile, and significant funding from the Shubert Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Lila Wallace Reader's Digest Fund was awarded during this time. Leon left the Alliance and became a co-founder of True Colors Theatre Company, where he serves as artistic director. Located in the Southwest Arts Center, True Colors is an important voice in the American discussion of diversity, and the theatre hosts "Community Conversations" around important issues and themes explored in theatre productions. Through True Colors, Leon has extended the theatre's impact with the National August Wilson Monologue Competition for high school students. What began in 2007 in three high schools in Atlanta has now expanded to cover 18 counties in Georgia, and 12 cities across the country, and involves tens of thousands of young people. Leon has also conducted master classes at Kennesaw State University and Atlanta University Center.

*Honored by Lisa Cremin*



## **Lowndes-Valdosta Arts Commission, Inc., dba Turner Center for the Arts // Valdosta**

### **Arts, arts education, and humanities**

The admission-free Turner Center is a hub for the arts and humanities in south central Georgia. In 1962 the Lowndes-Valdosta Arts Commission was chartered as an outgrowth of Arts, Inc., established in 1903. In 2000, the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts was conceived through a successful capital campaign, catalyzed by a substantial monetary gift from former Georgia senator Loyce Turner in memory of his late wife, Annette Howell Turner. The Photography Contest exhibit, Youth Art Month exhibit—with more than 800 local works—and more than twenty other exhibitions each year increase foot traffic through the galleries, providing an opportunity for broader community outreach. Gallery-based and studio-based children's art classes are available, and school-group tours and art-talk events are supplemented by educational support materials, developed by the center's arts education administrator. The Turner Center seeks to reach underserved populations from the local community, and one noteworthy result of this effort is the Hal & Jill Project, which provides guitars and free instruction for students who cannot afford private lessons. In 2016, this program expanded to neighboring Echols County High School, where no art or music programs exist, and in 2017, the partnership expanded to include the visual arts. Students from Valdosta State University are also beneficiaries of the Turner Center through art scholarships financed by the annual auction of donated artworks. The center partners with community businesses and organizations to provide the annual Presenter Series, which features nationally renowned dance, musical, and Broadway performances; more than 100 underserved citizens attend each show free of charge. A free writers' workshop, conducted by a local publisher, is also hosted weekly at the center.





## Pearl McHaney // Decatur

### Literature and arts education

Dr. Pearl McHaney is the current Kenneth M. England Professor of Southern Literature at Georgia State University (GSU) and the former director of GSU's Center for Collaborative and International Arts (CENCIA). It is the support and encouragement that McHaney has provided to numerous artists, writers, actors, educators, colleagues, and students that forms the core of her legacy and its impact on the arts and

humanities in our state. A world-renowned scholar, McHaney has authored or edited seven books; edited numerous journal issues; and published scores of book chapters, essays, interviews, and works of public scholarship. McHaney's work expands educational opportunities between town and gown, and she strives to increase public understanding of the role that the humanities play in everyday life. She opened Atlanta's arts community to GSU students through her championing of reduced-fee access to arts events and increased art and music events on campus. Under her direction, CENCIA has expanded its reach to include all creative types—filmmakers, sound artists, critics, novelists, and more. The collaborations across disciplines and fields that she readily facilitated and supported in her role with CENCIA—all of which lead to free public events and performances—is both noteworthy and inspiring. Other initiatives she supported or developed include university exchange programs in France and Italy for undergraduate and graduate students; innovative training, teaching, and mentoring of secondary school teachers in the Atlanta metro area; and such public programming as "Southern Writers on Stage," in collaboration with the Theatrical Outfit at the Balzer Theater, through which she continues a longstanding commitment to the public presentation and study of southern literary icons.

*Honored by Thomas L. McHaney*



## **National Infantry Museum Foundation // Columbus**

### **Humanities education and history**

Chronicling the history of the U.S. Army infantryman from the American Revolution to Afghanistan, the National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center exhibits artifacts from all eras of American history and contains interactive multimedia exhibits. With the mission to honor soldiers—past, present, and future—education is a vital part of the museum’s work. The \$110 million, admission-free facility, located in Columbus just outside the Maneuver Center of Excellence at Fort Benning, opened in June of 2009 and has seen more than 2.5 million visitors. Previously, the museum was housed in an old army hospital in Fort Benning, where space and conditions for the museum’s exhibitions were inadequate. In 1998 the National Infantry Foundation was formed to plan, fundraise, and operate a new museum, and later the foundation entered into a partnership with the army to manage the facility and its collections. A team of historians and educators has created fun, informative, and interactive museum tours along with a variety of special programs focusing on specific areas of study. Educational tours and programs are designed around Georgia and Alabama curriculum standards, and outreach to Title 1 schools is a special focus. Within such close proximity to Fort Benning’s main gate, the museum reaches out to active duty soldiers and their families, and soldiers undergoing basic training tour the museum as part of their education. The museum has nine galleries, and the complex includes a theater, simulators, a primitive campground, a WWII Company Street, a replica of the Vietnam Wall, and a new Global War on Terrorism Memorial, where the centerpiece of the memorial is a beam from the 2001 World Trade Center.

*Honored by Robert Poydasheff*



## Janisse Ray // Reidsville

### Literature

Janisse Ray is a writer, naturalist, and activist from south Georgia. She was inducted into the Georgia Writers Hall of Fame in 2015. The Appling County native has written six books, including *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood*, *Wild Card Quilt*, and *Drifting into Darien*, which have won many awards and much acclaim. It is difficult to separate her work as an author from her tireless advocacy on behalf of the

history and ecology of rural Georgia. Ray frequently shares her experiences with students and library groups, and she volunteers as chair of the Tattnall County Archives to ensure that local history is preserved. In this capacity, and as an author, Ray has sponsored and cosponsored multiple events and programs held at the Tattnall County Public Library. She has spoken about rural churches and Franklin D. Roosevelt and his time in Georgia. Her best-known book, *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood*—which won the Southern Book Critics Circle Award, American Book Award, and the Southern Environmental Law Center Award, among other awards—is a work of literary nonfiction that examines the vanishing “cracker culture” in relation to its diminishing longleaf pine forest. She practices sustainability on her Reidsville farm, and brings her experiences and expertise to bear in speaking engagements focused on nature, agriculture, wildness, and sustainability. Her lectures appeal to local farmers and agriculture enthusiasts as well as those interested in writing and local history.

*Honored by Craig Barrow*





## Lois Reitzes // Atlanta

### Music and arts advocacy

No other individual in Atlanta radio has done more to promote classical music, the arts, and culture in the city than Lois Reitzes. Since 1979, Reitzes's distinctive voice has been imparting her extensive knowledge and love of classical music on Atlanta's National Public Radio station, WABE (90.1 FM). As host of the weekday morning program "Second Cup Concert" from 1982 to 2015,

Reitzes was invaluable in exploring the myriad of ways that classical music can inspire and influence us as we progress through life. Reitzes also served Public Broadcasting Atlanta as program director from 1992 to 2007, and became director of arts and cultural programming in 2007. Since 2015, she has hosted "City Lights with Lois Reitzes," a groundbreaking weekday arts and culture program with a specific mission of elevating Atlanta's arts scene. "City Lights" has increased WABE's listening audience during the 11 a.m.- 12 noon time slot by 72%, with 86,000 listeners each week. Individuals, stories, organizations, and events featured on "City Lights" have reported increased attendance, ticket sales, community involvement, and greater philanthropic support. In addition, Reitzes produces and hosts WABE's Atlanta Symphony Orchestra broadcasts and "Spivey Soiree" series. For her work in metro Atlanta and in Georgia, Reitzes has received several honorable distinctions, including the inaugural Arts Advocate Award (Emory University, 2015); a Special Recognition of Service to the Arts (Atlanta Shakespeare Company, 2017); and a "National Influencer" recognition (Musical America, 2015). In 2014, the Georgia House of Representatives recognized her 35th year of service to Atlanta with House Resolution 1924.

*Honored by an audio montage including Scott Adsit, Gad Elmaleh, Caroline Rhea, Terry Burrell, Tom Jones, Kim Severson, Omar Dorsey, Amy Sweeney, Emily Saliers, and Norman Lear*

# 2017 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 ARTWORK

The 2017 Awards for the Arts and Humanities were hand crafted by twelve Georgia potters, and acquired through Perspectives: Georgia Pottery Invitational at the Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation.

The Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation (OCAF) promotes cultural arts and artists and provides art education to the citizens of Oconee County and the northeast Georgia area. Since 1994, OCAF has hosted exhibitions and educational offerings that enrich the quality of life for those in our region, generate tourism for the county and state, and have a strong economic impact. For the last fifteen years OCAF has presented Perspectives: Georgia Pottery Invitational, the longest running all-pottery event in the state. Each year the award-winning event showcases the works of 50 respected Georgia potters, exemplifies the finest pottery being produced in the state today, and is the largest show of its kind in the South, featuring approximately 7,500 pieces of contemporary, functional, and decorative pottery for sale. It has earned the distinction as a "Top 20 Event" by the Southeast Tourism Society for three consecutive years.

# ARTISTS AND AWARDS

**Laura B. Cooper** works with hand-built structures, patterns, and texture. She lives and works in Athens, Georgia.



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**Glenn Dair** (MFA, UGA, 1975) completed his graduate studies under Ron Meyers and Jerry Chappelle, and served as the pottery program director at the Callanwolde Fine Arts Center in Atlanta from 1980 to 2017.



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**Kathryne Gould** explores balanced asymmetry. She grew up in Central Africa and Decatur, Georgia, and has been involved in the pottery program at Callanwolde Fine Arts Center in Atlanta for most of her adult life.



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**Matthew Henderson** has been working with clay for forty-one years, with the last twenty-five years working as the head resident potter at Mark of the Potter in Clarkesville, Georgia.





# ARTISTS AND AWARDS

**Sheryl Holstein** has set up her studio on her porch overlooking the very mountains that are her artistic inspiration.

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**Chris Kelly** teaches at Piedmont College, where he makes wood-fired vessels inspired by Japanese Echizen ceramics.

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**Adrina Richard**, daughter of survivors of the Armenian Genocide, began her career as a potter after more than thirty years as an administrator at Oglethorpe University.

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**John Roberts** has been a ceramics artist and educator since 1999. He is the ceramics program director at Callanwolde Fine Arts Center.



# ARTISTS AND AWARDS

**DeWitt Smith** was trained as an artist and potter at Valdosta State College. His pottery is propelled by the handmade quality and shapes inspired from many cultures.



**Curtis Stewardson** has exhibited his work and given workshops nationally. He moved to Georgia in 2006 and currently shares a studio with his wife, Sandra.



**Rebekah Strickland**, inspired by a childhood in north Florida and a love of drawings and medieval art, makes pottery for use in the home. Her work is characterized by generous forms and colorful drawings of birds, plants, landscapes, and patterns.



**Alice Woodruff** has been making pottery professionally since 1972 and has been recognized nationally in her long career.





A division of the Georgia Department of Economic Development

