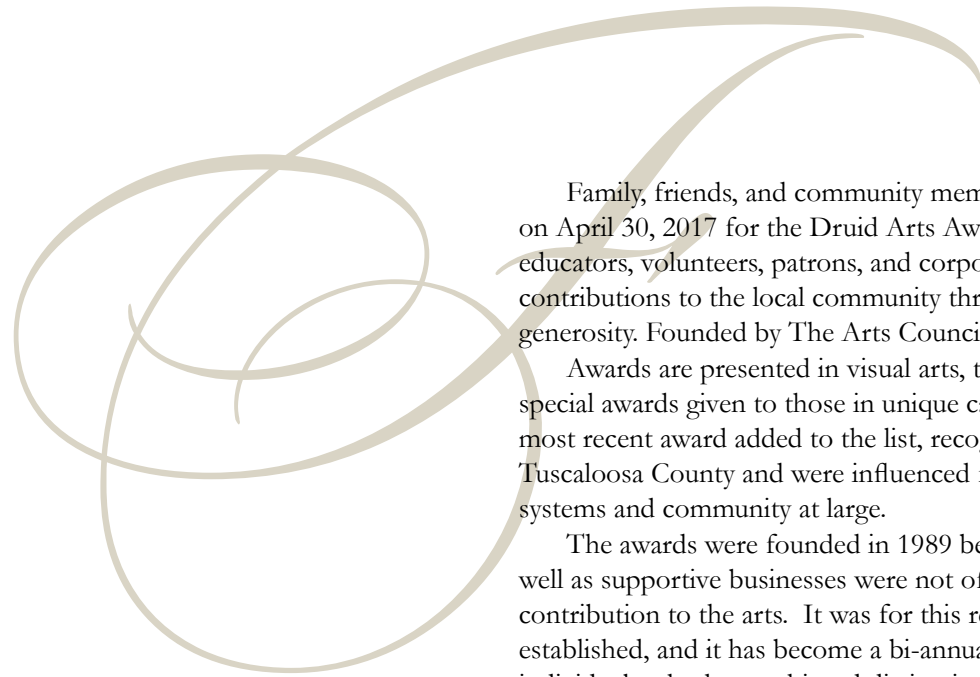




THE ARTS COUNCIL'S 22ND
Druid Arts Awards

*Recognition of local citizens for their contribution
to the arts in Tuscaloosa County*

by Kevin Ledgewood
Winner photos by Scottie Jones



Family, friends, and community members gathered at the Bama Theatre on April 30, 2017 for the Druid Arts Awards which honored the artists, educators, volunteers, patrons, and corporate sponsors that have made significant contributions to the local community through their creativity, time, effort, and generosity. Founded by The Arts Council, this was the 22nd ceremony.

Awards are presented in visual arts, theatre, music, dance, and literature with special awards given to those in unique categories. Tuscaloosa's Home Grown is the most recent award added to the list, recognizing those individuals who grew up in Tuscaloosa County and were influenced from a young age by the local educational systems and community at large.

The awards were founded in 1989 because the work of local individuals as well as supportive businesses were not officially publicly recognized for their contribution to the arts. It was for this reason that the Druid Arts Awards were established, and it has become a bi-annual presentation to honor these special individuals who have achieved distinction in the arts over a number of years in Tuscaloosa County.

Citizens of Tuscaloosa County are allowed to make nominations in all of the categories. Nomination forms are available on The Arts Council's website at tuscarts.org/druidartsawards with deadlines announced once the date of the ceremony is set. A committee comprised of members from The Arts Council's Board of Directors makes the final decisions.

OPENING ACT



Pictured l-r: Megan Hill, Carli Hardon, Terry Moore, Ally Bryant, Catherine Bradwell

Selections from *The Marvelous Wonderettes* by cast members of SummerTide Theatre and Theatre Tuscaloosa productions was presented prior to the awards ceremony. (Directed/Choreographed by Stacy Alley; Musical Direction by Terry Moore)

Theatre Tuscaloosa, one of the largest community theatres in the state of Alabama, works in partnership with Shelton State Community College to provide quality theatrical experiences to the citizens of West Alabama through performances, workshops and classroom instruction. By combining the talent and resources of the non-profit theatre company with the facilities and administrative support of "Alabama's Community College of the Fine Arts," Theatre Tuscaloosa and Shelton State Community College have created a partnership model that has enriched the lives of countless of Alabamians.

VISUAL ART



Dr. Bethany Windham Engle, Visual Artist

This individual has been an integral part of the Alabama art scene for over 60 years. A graduate of Stephens College, she also holds the Bachelor of Fine Art, Master, and Doctoral degrees from The University of Alabama. An accomplished artist in many areas including painting, drawing, and photography, her primary focus has been on nature and her favorite, most loving subject, the dog. In addition to her art being viewed in many exhibits, her work has appeared in publications such as "Art Galleries and Artists of the South," twice, "Best of Worldwide Artists: Charcoal, Pastel and Pencil," "Best of Worldwide Landscape Artists," "Best of America: Watermedia Artists," "Strokes of Genius" 1st and 7th Editions, and "Strokes of Genius: The Best of Drawing" - to name a few. She began her teaching career at the age of 22 at UA, but also shared her talent at the University of West Alabama, Beville State Community College, Stillman College, and Shelton State Community College, where she would retire. She and her husband, the late sculptor Frank Engle, often collaborated on art works and architectural designs. For her contribution to the visual arts in West Alabama, the 2017 Visual Artist Award was awarded to Dr. Bethany Windham Engle.



Trenton White, Visual Arts Educator

Serving as the Visual Arts and Design Teacher for Tuscaloosa Magnet Middle School, this teacher shares his love for art with the entire student body and is instrumental in promoting the school through community activities and volunteerism. He recently received a grant from UA's Paul R. Jones Collection of American Art for 8th graders to study art at the gallery and to receive art instruction from professors plus a second grant from The Arts Council to provide funds to develop a puppet program at TMS. Students will write scripts, design puppets, and study *The Hero's Journey* and *Grimms' Fairy Tales* to apply literature to today's issues. He has engaged students in interdisciplinary units that have a community service focus such as leading his 6th graders in a study of our city's recycling efforts and creating large-scale art installments using only repurposed items. His 7th graders have designed and built gardens for the McDowell Farm School for two consecutive years, integrating the students' painted totems and pottery pieces into the designs. For his representation of the teaching profession and his desire to see his students give back to their community through artful design, the 2017 Visual Arts Educator Award was presented to Trenton White.

MUSIC



Dr. Jed Smart, Music Educator

This educator is currently in his sixteenth year of teaching and his sixth year at Tuscaloosa County High School. In a short time under his leadership, the overall program has grown from 32 members at his arrival to include over 170 in the marching band. The ensemble has attended invitational festivals in Orlando, Washington, D.C., and San Antonio and has performed locally at The Alabama Honor Band Festival and The Alabama Music Educators Association State Conference. Under his direction, the TCHS band has also received invitations to the Kennedy Center Concert Festival, Carnegie Hall Concert Series, and the 2018 London New Year's Day Parade. He has designed comprehensive K - 12 arts curriculums for both public and private institutions as well as proposals for self-contained performing arts schools within larger systems. His dedication to music throughout the community is evidenced in his creation of the Black Warrior Winds, a community band based in West Alabama consisting of adults of all ages and playing abilities. For his efforts to expose his students to a broad spectrum of opportunities while placing his ensembles in positions where they are utilized as an arts ambassador for the school and community, the 2017 Music Educator Award was presented to Dr. Jed Smart.



Anne Moman, Music Volunteer

This outstanding music volunteer has worked tirelessly as a board member and as a volunteer for the Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestra for many years. Her love for orchestral music has heavily influenced her single-minded approach and pursuit of lifting and improving the orchestra. She has been a constant advisor, a sounding board for the community, and a champion of fundraising. Both she and her husband have been a fixture in the West Alabama volunteer community for many years. She has utilized her many skills crafted along the way to help with such endeavors as the annual fund drive for the orchestra as well as never ceasing to seek new opportunities for fundraising, an essential component for the non-profit TSO organization. She was also instrumental in the formation of the TSO Endowment Fund and the Tuscaloosa Symphony Society. All involved with the organization would agree the ensemble would not have reached its current level of stability and public exposure without her dedication and help. For her constant efforts towards making it possible for the citizens of West Alabama to hear outstanding music performed by a phenomenal professional orchestra, the 2017 Music Volunteer Award was presented to Anne Moman.

THEATRE



Joey Lay, Theatre Artist

Along with his wife, this artist established The Actor's Charitable Theatre in 2010. From the beginning, The ACT has taken on large shows with huge risks but equally huge rewards. From Shrek and Hairspray to A Midsummer Night's Dream and A Christmas Story, he not only served as artistic director, but also set and costume designer, technical director and at times, show director. During Shrek and Beauty and the Beast, he began forming silicone molds for his prosthetics, and won an award at Dragon-Con in Atlanta. He created spring and summer camps that include a full production at the Bama, giving children who may have never considered stage performance the chance to participate in a show from audition to curtain call. With the main focus of The ACT centered on giving back to the community, one-third of the proceeds from each mainstage production are donated to a charity partnered with the show. Tuscaloosa's One Place, Secret Meals for Kids, and Eagle's Wings are just three charities that have benefitted from the group. For his contribution to theatre in West Alabama and his unique approach to sets, costumes, and lighting, the 2017 Theatre Artist Award was presented to Joey Lay.



Stacy Alley, Theatre Educator

This educator and choreographer is Assistant Professor of Musical Theatre and Dance at The University of Alabama. Her recent credits include the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland, the Forestburgh Playhouse in New York, the Oklahoma Shakespearean Festival, Theatre Tuscaloosa, and SummerTide Theatre. She recently presented a Master Class titled "Integrating Breath for the Singing Dancer" at the Musical Theatre Educators Alliance Conference in Norway and taught in Sweden at the Ballet Academy of Gothenburg and the University of Gothenburg's Academy of Music and Drama. UA directing and/or choreography credits include 42nd Street, Urinetown, Merrily We Roll Along, Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson, Show Boat, Side Man, Chicago, Flora the Red Menace, and Big River as well as several pieces in Alabama Repertory Dance Theatre concerts. Directing/and or Choreography credits for Theatre Tuscaloosa include How to Succeed in Business, Bye, Bye, Birdie, The Drowsy Chaperone, The 25th Annual Putnam Country Spelling Bee, and most recently, The Marvelous Wonderettes. A former student describes her as "taking teaching to a whole new level" and one who will "push you to your ultimate potential." For her contribution to the lives of students and performers both here and abroad, the 2017 Theatre Educator Award was presented to Stacy Alley.

THEATRE



Ryan Rainwater, Theatre Volunteer

This individual is involved with many productions at the Bama Theatre, both local and traveling, and his dedication is never ending. From repairing and hanging lighting to backstage cleanup and prep for upcoming shows, he is always available wherever needed. He has taken it upon himself to maintain the work lights over the stage that seem to continually need some attention. He is constantly thinking of ways to improve the Bama's production setup, just another example of his dedication for the building we love. Anytime there is a work day at the theatre, you can count on his presence. Always available to help during a tech week, he will be prepping lines, running cables, and focusing lights. He has spent countless nights helping to hang the PA, the new truss, or new lighting fixtures, and he is single handedly responsible for installing the new LED uplights on top of the marquee. Whatever is needed, he is present to lend a hand, making the show a success and presenting the Bama in its most positive light. For his contribution to the Bama Theatre and to the many community organizations for which he contributes his time and expertise, the 2017 Theatre Volunteer Award was presented to Ryan Rainwater.

DANCE



Fiona Dorr, Dance Artist

This accomplished dancer found her love for dance at the Academy of Ballet & Jazz at the age of four where she would eventually both assist and serve as demonstrator for classes. She has performed for the last four summers at prestigious dance programs such as American Ballet Theatre, Alonzo King's Lines in LA, Interlochen Center for Performing Arts, and Complexions Contemporary Ballet in Detroit. She has studied with some of the best teachers in the dance industry including Judy Rice, Francisco Gella, and Wes Chapman in Ballet; Bree Hafen, Melissa Jackson, and Desmond Richardson in Contemporary; Gregg Russell in tap; and Randi Kemper, Hefa Tuita and Taja Riley in hip hop. She excels in many dance styles and has been selected to perform principal roles in the professional Choreography for the Academy of Ballet and Jazz Company and ABJ performances. Her many successful and numerous roles with Tuscaloosa Community Dancers include Dew Drop, Snow Queen, Marzipan, and Soldier Doll. She currently attends Bryant High School and plans to pursue an education and career in dance. For her contribution to dance in Tuscaloosa and her expertise in all areas of the art, the 2017 Dance Artist award was presented to Fiona Dorr.



Crosby Thomley, Dance Volunteer

A professional photographer since 1979, this individual lends his valuable talent to Tuscaloosa dance schools and organizations, but also contributes to the local dance scene through his roles on stage. Around his time at the Crimson White and University Relations in the 1970s, he developed an interest in the UA dance program, recognized the artistry and physicality of the dancers as they performed, and then strived to learn more about capturing images that displayed those traits. After establishing his private studio near the Bama Theatre in 1985, he was immersed even deeper into the art form through his photography of dancers enrolled at The Academy of Ballet and Jazz and later with The Dance Centre. From photography, he moved to actual stage roles himself. In 2012 he began with Mr. Banks in Mary Poppins then on to Cinderella, Peter Pan, Beauty and The Beast, Sleeping Beauty, Frozen, Aladdin, and The Nutcracker. He volunteers many hours rehearsing the various roles he is chosen to portray with TCD, ABJ, and TDC and always serves as an incredible mentor to the children he is around. For his tireless energy, positive attitude, and willingness to always lend a helping hand, the 2017 Dance Volunteer Award was presented to Crosby Thomley.

LITERATURE



Carolyn Ezell, Literary Artist

Prior to a career in social work, this author won a spot in the all-creative issue of Alabama Alumni Magazine with her short story, “The Starling,” and published an historical novel, *The Marble Tear*. Since her retirement, the first two novels in her Addie Bramson mystery series, *Tuscaloosa Moon* (2013) and *Tuscaloosa Boneyard* (2016), were authored under the pen name Carolyn Breckinridge. Both showcase many of the unique aspects of the Druid City, The University of Alabama, and the West Alabama region, and she is currently beginning the third of this series. She has also authored a number of pieces for children with several reprinted from *Highlights for Children* in textbooks in the U.S. and Canada that have also been used in standardized testing programs. She partnered with a Tuscaloosa business, Bama Bino Pizza, to produce children’s reading and coloring books. One of these, *Give Yourself a Hug*, was distributed statewide through the Alabama Department of Transportation to help educate public school second grade students on the importance of seat belt safety. Her article, “The Anything Art of Jimmie Lee Sudduth,” won the *Highlights for Children* Award for Arts Feature of the Year. For her contribution to literature for all ages, the 2017 Literary Award was presented to Carolyn Ezell.



Dr. Don Noble, Literary Educator

This individual is a major force within the literary community in the State of Alabama. He has reviewed Alabama-centered books through his weekly segment with Alabama Public Radio that is aired during the “Morning Edition” program, and his weekly reviews are printed each Sunday in *The Tuscaloosa News*. For 29 years, he has shared his seemingly endless literary knowledge through his hosting of “Bookmark” on Alabama Public Television, where he interviews a wide variety of fascinating native authors. He has edited and published works focusing on American and Southern literature including *Critical Insights: To Kill a Mockingbird*, *A State of Laughter: Comic Fiction from Alabama*, and *The Rising South*. He has received the Eugene Current-Garcia Award as Alabama’s distinguished literary scholar for the year 2000, the Wayne Greenhaw Service Award given by the Alabama Humanities Foundation in 2013, and was nominated for a Regional Emmy Award in 2006 and 2011. In addition he is on the planning committee of several literary conferences and serves on the board of directors for several literary organizations in Alabama. For his contribution to the literary field and the education of citizens through his willingness to share his knowledge, the 2017 Literary Educator Award was presented to Dr. Don Noble.

SPECIAL AWARDS



Dr. Anne C. Witt

In 2005, this music educator led a grass roots effort to bring string instrument education and performance experiences to the students of the Tuscaloosa City Schools. “Strings in Schools” was launched with 18 students and one teacher the first year, and now over 300 students are participating with five teachers. This comprehensive program makes it possible for all TCS students in grades 6-12 to access daily instruction with school instruments available if needed. The ensembles perform locally, statewide, and at regional festivals. Rock Quarry Middle School was the first school orchestra invited to perform at the Alabama Music Educators Association conference, and the same ensemble, along with the high school orchestra, received honors at the annual competition at Disney World. An All-City Middle School Orchestra was established, and the UA Strings in Schools Scholarship in Music Education was fully funded. The program continues to influence the lives of its students, with many continuing to play or pursue a career in music education. Students credit the program with its role in shaping them as individuals and providing valuable life lessons. For her efforts to bring music into the lives of our local students and its positive impact, a 2017 Special Award was presented to Dr. Anne C. Witt.



Dr. Pamela Penick

This performer, educator, and arts administrator has made a major impact on the Tuscaloosa Arts Community for many years through her direction and service to several significant artistic support organizations. She served as General Manager of the Tuscaloosa Symphony from 1992-1998, Executive Director of the Gloria Narramore Moody Foundation from 1996-2010, and Executive Director of The Arts Council of Tuscaloosa from 1998-2010, expanding the scope and reach of the organization during her tenure. Her experience led to the teaching and coordination of The University of Alabama’s Arts Administration degree emphasis. Her impact as a local educator and performer has included a private piano studio, class piano instruction at The University of Alabama, and collaboration as an accompanist with students, faculty, and guest artists. She has performed solo and duo recitals throughout the Southeast, having appeared with international soloists, in a duo with fellow pianist Pamela Gordon, and with the Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestra. She continues to make a contribution to the arts in West Alabama through her service on various boards of directors. For her contribution to the arts and impact on students of all ages in West Alabama, a 2017 Special Award was presented to Dr. Pamela Penick.

TUSCALOOSA'S HOME GROWN



Dr. Demondrae Thurman

This accomplished musician attended public schools in the Tuscaloosa County System and graduated from Tuscaloosa County High School prior to receiving degrees at both The University of Alabama and the University of Wisconsin. He returned to UA to complete his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Trombone and Euphonium, then joined the UA faculty where he turned the euphonium and tuba studio into one of the highest profile teaching studios in the School of Music. He was later recruited by Samford University where he presently maintains an international studio of graduate and undergraduate students. He is a founding member of the world's premier Tuba Quartet, Soto Vocci and has co-led that group to an international reputation as premier performers and educators. Individually, he is one of the very best euphonium players in the world, regularly presenting chamber music recitals on the instrument as well as conducting master classes for students. He performs regularly with top orchestras including the New York Philharmonic and the Philadelphia Orchestra, is a primary member of The Tuscaloosa Horns, and also plays trombone professionally in commercial and jazz music. For his accomplishments as an artist that have extensive roots in Tuscaloosa County, the 2017 Home Grown Award was presented to Dr. Demondrae Thurman.

CORPORATE SPONSOR



Ameriprise Financial

This corporation has been one of the arts community's strongest sponsors for the last six years, especially Theatre Tuscaloosa. Prior to joining their family of corporate sponsors in 2011, the company was a consistent playbill advertiser and purchaser of group tickets. Since 2011, they have gone far above and beyond the call of duty as enhanced "Partner in the Spotlight" sponsors. In addition to their financial support, they have regularly planned special receptions for their clients at Theatre Tuscaloosa's productions. In the process, they have invested additional funds in purchasing dozens of tickets above and beyond their initial sponsorship investment and catering these events. These receptions bring new people into the theatre, many of whom have grown from first-time visitors to subscribers, and even to individual donors. One of the advisors in their group is serving on the board of directors, increasing the amount of time and money that he invests in the organization. Several other advisors and their entire support team pulls together each time they host a special client reception. For their impact on Theatre Tuscaloosa and the West Alabama community, the 2017 Corporate Sponsor Award goes to Ameriprise Financial. Accepting the award on behalf of the company was Ted Jackson.



PATRON OF THE ARTS



Peggy Collins

This individual has been a leading educational administrator in our community and has also worked for numerous corporations in major leadership roles. She has attended and supported countless arts related events in Tuscaloosa for many years, and, as a world traveler, has patronized cultural events at every destination. She has been a member of the Theatre Tuscaloosa Board of Directors for many years, serving as President for two of those years. She helped initiate a corporate sponsorship project that increased opportunities for low income children to attend theatre performances for free. She also provided dinner prior to the performances, often completing much of the footwork herself to transport food to the theatre. As chairwoman of the fundraising committee for Theatre Tuscaloosa, she has increased corporate giving by 25%. She raises money, advocates for the arts regularly with community leaders, hosts events in her home, and supports many organizations monetarily. She is one of the kindest people you will ever meet and proves tireless in her efforts in supporting the arts. For her dedication and generosity, the 2017 Patron of the Arts Award was presented to Peggy Collins.