



2023 GOVERNOR'S ARTS & HERITAGE AWARDS

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Urban ArtWorks is one of the Organization Award honorees at the 2023 Governor's Arts & Heritage Awards. Photo courtesy of Urban ArtWorks.

ARTSWA ANNOUNCES 2023 GOVERNOR'S ARTS & HERITAGE AWARDS HONOREES

NINE HONOREES TO RECEIVE WASHINGTON'S HIGHEST RECOGNITION FOR ARTS AND HERITAGE

OLYMPIA, WA – The Washington State Arts Commission today announced the honorees of the 2023 Governor's Arts & Heritage Awards. The nine honorees' work spans glasswork, music education, community murals, and more. Established in 1966, the Governor's Arts & Heritage Awards are the highest honor bestowed by the Governor's office for accomplishments in arts and culture.

"These awards are a true community celebration," said Karen Hanan, Executive Director of ArtsWA. "Nominations poured in from across the state with a clear message: Washington is home to outstanding artists, organizations, and culture bearers that deserve to stand up and be recognized. Their work enriches our communities and enlivens the entire state."

The Governor's Arts & Heritage Awards will be presented on November 15, 2023. Explore the full list of honorees below.



Jen Elek, Nancy Callan, and Lino Tagliapietra on the Museum of Glass Hot Shop Floor. Photo by Kristin Elliot. Courtesy of Museum of Glass.

Lino Tagliapietra (Individual Award) is a world-renowned glass artist originally from Murano, Italy. His arrival at Pilchuck Glass School in 1979 at the invitation of Dale Chihuly changed the trajectory of glass art in the Pacific Northwest. His work and mentorship of glass artists shaped the American Studio Glass movement and established Washington State as one of the most critical hubs of this international renaissance in glass art.

Ginny Ruffner (Individual Award) is a pioneering American glass artist based in Seattle, Washington. She is known for her use of the lampworking technique and for her use of borosilicate glass in her painted glass sculptures. Her works also include pop-up books, large-scale public art, and augmented reality. Ruffner has public art installations across the Pacific NW including a 30-foot tall kinetic water feature—and potted plant—in Seattle and a permanent bronze and steel installation in the Seattle Art Museum's Olympic Sculpture Park. Ruffner also founded SOLA, a nonprofit to recognize and reward mature women artists. She received The Glass Art Society's Lifetime Award in 2019.

Urban ArtWorks (Organization Award) engage youth, artists, and communities in the creation of public art murals. Founded in 1995, Urban

ArtWorks has facilitated thousands of public art projects across Seattle and the surrounding region. Urban ArtWorks' core youth programs have mentored thousands of young people to strengthen their art and employment skills, deepen their support networks, and expand their self-efficacy.

Sequim City Band (Organization Award) was established in 1992 as the only community band on the North Olympic Peninsula. Sequim City Band performs up to 10 free concerts each year, promoting musical expression opportunities to students and senior citizens alike and enriching the lives of attendees. The Band attracts members ranging from high-school aged members to octogenarians and demonstrates exceptional commitment to and engagement with their local community.

Collin J. Pittmann (Young Leader Award), age 23, is a jack-of-all-trades for Spokane Valley Summer Theatre, where he also directs the Conservatory Program for students in grades 2-12. As a rural student himself, Collin has effectively marketed the Conservatory to a large region, drawing 1/3 of registrants from outside the cities of Spokane and Spokane Valley, and 15% from out of state. His work includes coordinating and providing scholarships where necessary to eliminate all barriers from children's love of the performing arts. Collin was the founder of the Inland Empire Theatre Company in his hometown of Rosalia, WA, where his family are wheat farmers.

Dr. Ashley DeMoville (Educator Award) is the Director of the Drama Program at Spokane Falls Community College (SFCC). She is known for her deep commitment to her students and for her ability to connect live theatre and performance to the time and place of the community. She has been the recipient of The Kennedy Center Citizen Artist Awards which “recognizes programs in higher education using theatrical production to advocate for justice on campus and throughout the world.” She has received Kennedy Center Citizen Artist Awards twice (in 2022, and 2023) for productions she has directed or produced.

Formed in 1979 by a small group of artists, **Allied Arts of Whatcom County** (Community Impact Award) is the leading arts agency in Bellingham and Whatcom County. Allied Arts staff and volunteers empower artists through events and gallery space, enrich school children through educational outreach, and work as liaisons to art enthusiasts of all ages. Their initiatives make the region a creative, vibrant place to live.

Dr. Paul-Elliott Cobbs (Legacy Award) is an avid music educator and world-renowned maestro. He has impacted tens of thousands of youth in Pierce County over the last 27 years as the Music Director of the Tacoma Youth Symphony Association. Educated in Michigan, Vienna, Austria and the University of Washington his unique combination of high expectations and a genuinely caring approach has developed his groups into award winning orchestras. Dr. Cobbs currently is the Music Director and Conductor for the Tacoma Youth Symphony Association, the Evergreen Music Festival, and the Everett Philharmonic Orchestra.

Mimi Gardner Gates (Arts & Heritage Champion Award) is a renowned figure in the Washington arts world. With a career that spans decades, she has made significant contributions as a curator, art historian, and museum director. Gates served as the Director of the Seattle Art Museum (SAM) for over a decade, overseeing critical expansions and acquisitions. Under her leadership, the Olympic Sculpture Park was created and the downtown museum was expanded. Gates is a former fellow of the Yale Corporation and the founder of the Gardner Center for Asian Art and Ideas at the Seattle Art Museum.

ABOUT ARTSWA

ArtsWA is the Washington State Arts Commission, a state government agency established in 1961. ArtsWA works to be a catalyst for the arts, advancing the role of the arts in the lives of individuals and communities throughout the state. Programs include Art in Public Places, Arts in Education, Grants to Organizations, and other special projects. For more information, visit arts.wa.gov.

ABOUT THE AWARDS

The Governor’s Arts Awards, established in 1966, recognize outstanding individuals and organizations for their significant contributions to the arts and cultural development of Washington State. The Governor’s Heritage Awards, established in 1989, honor outstanding individuals and organizations whose dedication to preserving and promoting traditions and cultural heritage are worthy of state recognition.

