

THE NATIONAL OPERA CENTER AMERICA

Media Contact:

Patricia Kiernan Johnson
212.796.8628 (office) | 856.419.7083 (mobile) | PKJohnson@operaamerica.org

Media Note: Digital headshots are available.

OPERA AMERICA ANNOUNCES RECIPIENTS OF ITS 2017 NATIONAL OPERA TRUSTEE RECOGNITION AWARDS

Holly Mayer, The Dallas Opera
Carol Lazier, San Diego Opera
R. Marsh Gibson, Opera Memphis
Jerry Clack, Opera Theater of Pittsburgh

Opera.ca Presents Its 2017 National Opera Directors Recognition Award to
Evan Hazell, Calgary Opera

Bank of America proudly sponsors
the National Opera Trustee Recognition Program
for the 10th consecutive year

January 24, 2017 (New York) — OPERA America, the national service organization for opera and the nation's leading champion for American opera, is pleased to announce the recipients of its **2017 National Opera Trustee Recognition Awards**, selected from a record number of nominations. Now in their 10th year, these awards honor outstanding trustees of U.S. opera companies for their exemplary leadership, generosity and audience-building efforts on behalf of their respective organizations.

The recipients of the 2017 National Opera Trustee Recognition Awards are **Holly Mayer, The Dallas Opera; Carol Lazier, San Diego Opera; R. Marsh Gibson, Opera Memphis; and Jerry Clack, Opera Theater of Pittsburgh.**

OPERA America will pay tribute to the 2017 honorees and celebrate their remarkable achievements at a dinner and reception on Friday, February 24, in New York City. In tribute to Bank of America for its 10 years of program support, OPERA America has commissioned a song cycle titled *Fierce Grace: Jeannette Rankin*. The evening will feature a performance of one of the songs from the cycle, and a CD of the entire song cycle will be released at the event.

"We are delighted to be joined by **Bank of America** for the 10th consecutive year in celebrating the significant and enduring contributions of these devoted trustees," stated **Marc A. Scorca**, president/CEO of OPERA America. "Successful opera companies depend on effective boards. The National Opera Trustee Recognition Awards afford the entire opera community an opportunity to salute and learn from those who have been so generous in their passion for the art form, vision and support of their opera companies."

Each year, OPERA America's Professional Company Members are invited to nominate one of their trustees for this award. Through a competitive adjudication process, honorees are chosen by a National

Opera Trustee Recognition Program selection committee, chaired this year by OPERA America Board Member **Carol F. Henry** (chairman of the executive committee, Los Angeles Opera). The other committee members were **Elizabeth M. Eveillard** (managing director, the Metropolitan Opera, and life trustee, The Glimmerglass Festival), **Noémi Neidorff** (chairman, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis), **John F. Nesholm** (chairman, Seattle Opera) and **Ruth W. Orth** (immediate past chairman, Pensacola Opera).

Recognizing that devoted trustees are integral to opera companies both large and small, the selection committee chooses honorees from across OPERA America's budget groups. These groupings classify OPERA America's Professional Company Members according to their annual operating budgets.

"OPERA America's commitment to recognizing the multifaceted contributions of opera company trustees is inspiring," stated Ms. Henry. "As an opera company trustee, I understand the level of dedication the nominees make to the art form and to the opera companies they love. Therefore, I am deeply honored to commend their achievements on a national scale."

OPERA America's commitment to recognizing excellence in governance is shared by its sister organization, Opera.ca, the Canadian national association for opera. Opera.ca honors **Evan Hazell** of **Calgary Opera** as the 2017 recipient of its **National Opera Directors Recognition Award**. Hazell is the past board chair of Calgary Opera.

Since its inception 10 years ago, OPERA America's National Opera Trustee Recognition Program has been made possible by the generosity of **Bank of America**. "The Bank's long-term sponsorship of this program illustrates its commitment to supporting effective leadership across the opera community, for which we are profoundly grateful," stated Scorca.

The honorees display a significant range of accomplishments, profound generosity and a deep devotion to promoting opera in their communities. The following profiles illustrate just a few examples of their dedication.

2017 National Opera Trustee Recognition Awardees

BUDGET 1 (ANNUAL BUDGET OVER \$15M)

Holly Mayer, The Dallas Opera (Dallas, TX)



Holly Mayer has served on The Dallas Opera's board of directors for 27 years, holding the crucial leadership role of vice president of development from 2001 to 2014, before taking on her current role as board chairman. During Ms. Mayer's time as vice president of development, the company achieved a 50 percent increase in annual giving over a two-year period. She helped lead numerous multi-million-dollar fundraising campaigns, resulting in \$20 million for the company's endowment (more than doubling its size), \$5.1 million for the construction of the company's administrative offices and \$3.1 million in honor of the company's 50th anniversary, among other successes. Along with her husband, Tom, and daughter, Maile Shea, Ms. Mayer personally contributed significant underwriting support for last season's world premiere of Mark Adamo's *Becoming Santa Claus* and worked diligently to secure additional funding in order to simulcast a performance of the opera to four Texas

Children's Hospitals.

In addition to the generous philanthropic support shown by her family, Ms. Mayer has devoted countless volunteer hours to ensure the success of The Dallas Opera and has inspired many others to lend their support. "Perhaps most impressive is Holly's willingness to take on leadership roles during challenging times — evidence of her blend of optimism and tenacity," stated fellow board member John T. Cody Jr. "She is well-known for her ability to listen and to offer valuable insight, and can be counted on to apply the highest professional standards to all she endeavors. The trust she instills in others is evident in the number of times her colleagues are willing to say 'yes' when Holly asks them to join her."

Ms. Mayer also serves as executive director and president of Productive Rehabilitation Institute of Dallas for Ergonomics (PRIDE), a medical rehabilitation center she co-founded with her husband in 1983. She is a nationally recognized expert in her field.

BUDGET 2 (ANNUAL BUDGET \$3M–\$14.9M)

Carol Lazier, San Diego Opera (San Diego, CA)



Carol Lazier was instrumental in reviving San Diego Opera after its near-closure in 2014. As board secretary and the only officer remaining after the vote to close the company, Ms. Lazier assumed the role of board president and encouraged fellow board members to reverse their decision to shut SDO's doors. Since that time, she has consistently sought information on best practices, has provided adaptive, transparent leadership for the company internally and externally, and has worked with General Director David Bennett to develop a healthy model of partnership between governance and management.

Ms. Lazier's significant philanthropic support has been key to ensuring a healthy financial future for SDO. As a challenge to inspire others, she increased her giving to \$1 million in 2014, creating the basis for a crowdfunding campaign that raised another \$2.23 million, allowing the company to continue to operate. She followed that gift with another \$1 million in 2015. Ms. Lazier is also a very active participant in the work of the nominating committee, encouraging her personal contacts to consider board membership or financial support.

“Carol's decision to personally take a stand against the decision to close in 2014 — by both stepping into the role of board president and by her incredibly generous financial support — served as a tangible example of selflessness that has encouraged others to rally behind the company,” stated David Bennett. “Since then, she has been a tireless volunteer and has regularly accepted speaking opportunities to continue to build the community's excitement about the future of San Diego Opera.”

In addition to serving as SDO's board president, Ms. Lazier is the co-founder, lead underwriter and board president of Explore Solutions, an organization that helps students determine successful post-high-school plans. She has also given her time and resources to such nonprofit organizations as the Palomar Health Foundation, San Diego Symphony, UC San Diego, Palomar Family YMCA, San Diego Museum of Art and Rancho Bernardo Community Presbyterian Church.

BUDGET 3 (ANNUAL BUDGET \$1M–\$2.9M)

R. Marsh Gibson, Opera Memphis (Memphis, TN)



Since his first term on Opera Memphis' board of trustees in 1982, R. Marsh Gibson has been the public face of the company. During his tenure, he has served the company in many roles, including chairman, and for the past decade he has served as sergeant-at-arms, a position created specifically for him. He is also an active member of the finance committee.

In the late 1990s, Mr. Gibson spearheaded the campaign to build the Clark Opera Memphis Center, the company's current office and rehearsal facility. Nearly two decades later, the scope of his support is still unparalleled. During the years of the Great Recession, he increased his annual giving, ensuring the lights would stay on and salaries would be met. The rest of the board soon followed in his footsteps. Most recently, he provided a generous gift to kick off a capital campaign that will allow Opera Memphis to expand its services to the community.

His financial support is only one way Mr. Gibson gives to Opera Memphis. He is quick to open his home for Opera Memphis events, and he regularly provides housing to guest artists. Through frequent office visits, he makes himself available to the entire staff, offering perspective on projects and an almost encyclopedic knowledge of Memphis history and philanthropy. In the first year of General Director Ned Canty's tenure, Mr. Gibson spent an average of 10 to 15 hours per week arranging meetings and helping

introduce Canty to Memphis' tightly knit social network. He has also been an active part of every study, committee, retreat and workshop Opera Memphis has organized — recognizing the need for agility and encouraging flexibility and change for the company.

“Marsh’s embrace of opera has opened the doors to hundreds of his peers, and his willingness to be a vocal advocate for the art form has never waned,” stated Ned Canty. “It is difficult to imagine any trustee being more generous with both his time and his treasure than Marsh Gibson.”

BUDGET 4/5 (ANNUAL BUDGET UNDER \$1M)

Jerry Clack, Opera Theater of Pittsburgh



Jerry Clack has been on the board of Opera Theater of Pittsburgh for 15 years and has served as board chairman for the past three. During his tenure, Dr. Clack has tirelessly worked to expand the company’s repertoire. As a champion of this cause for 12 years on the board’s programming committee, he has encouraged the company to perform at least one American work each year, as well as to commission new works. In addition, he has single-handedly led and fully funded an ongoing series of productions of lesser-known operas by Richard Strauss, now in its fourth year. His ongoing support of these new endeavors has allowed Opera Theater of Pittsburgh to undertake adventurous programming without incurring financial risk.

Dr. Clack has also supported a multiyear initiative to produce works centered on Pittsburgh’s African-American communities. Most recently, he championed the company’s commissioning of a social justice opera, *A Gathering of Sons*, about a police officer’s shooting of a young black man, and he was instrumental in garnering board support for this potentially controversial work. “Dr. Clack has encouraged us to become a leading force regionally in embracing cultural diversity,” stated Jonathan Eaton, artistic and general director of the company. “His unstinting support of these initiatives has allowed us to transform our casting, our programming and our audiences.”

Dr. Clack’s annual gifts make him the company’s biggest donor. To ensure the company’s financial stability, he recently initiated a campaign to create an endowment, pledging \$2 million, and has since encouraged fellow trustees to contribute.

Dr. Clack was a professor of classics at Pittsburgh’s Duquesne University from 1968 until his retirement in 2011, during which time he published widely on Hellenistic poetry. He is currently an officer of Citizens for Global Solutions, a worldwide organization that seeks to strengthen the influence and effectiveness of the United Nations.

Previous National Opera Trustee Recognition Awardees

2016

Jeanette Lerman-Neubauer, The Metropolitan Opera
Jacqueline Badger Mars, Washington National Opera
Michele S. Fabrizi, Pittsburgh Opera
Martha Rivers Ingram, Nashville Opera
Cynthia du Pont Tobias, OperaDelaware

2015

Sue Bienkowski, Long Beach Opera
Frank “Woody” Kuehn, Opera Southwest
James H. McCoy, Hawaii Opera Theatre
John Nesholm, Seattle Opera

2014

Michael and Noémi Neidorff, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis
Ruth W. Orth, M.D., Pensacola Opera
Kenneth G. Pigott, Lyric Opera of Chicago
Robert L. Roschel, M.D., Opera Lancaster

2013

Lisa Erdberg, San Francisco Opera
Patricia A. Richards, Utah Symphony | Utah Opera
Cherie Shreck, Des Moines Metro Opera
Timothy J. Wagg, Opera North

2012

Elizabeth Eveillard, The Glimmerglass Festival
Joseph Barker and Judy Liff-Barker, Nashville Opera
Susan F. Morris, The Santa Fe Opera
William C. Morris, The Metropolitan Opera
Dr. George R. White, Opera Theater of Pittsburgh

2011

Eleanor "Ellie" Caulkins, Opera Colorado
Jackie Lockwood, Dayton Opera
John I. (Jack) Riddle, PORTopera
Lynn Wyatt, Houston Grand Opera

2010

Jeffrey A. Evershed, Portland Opera
Benjamin Keaton, Long Leaf Opera Company
Fred and Eve Simon, Opera Omaha
Marc I. Stern, Los Angeles Opera

2009

John T. Cody Jr., The Dallas Opera
Richard Holland, Opera Omaha
Beth Ingram, Lyric Opera of Kansas City
C. Guy Rudisill III, Piedmont Opera

2008

Betty W. Healey, Opera Birmingham
Sally S. Levy, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis
Jane A. Robinson, Florida Grand Opera
G. Whitney Smith, Fort Worth Opera

For more information about OPERA America, its many programs and the National Opera Center, visit operaamerica.org.



@OPERAAmerica

About OPERA America

OPERA America (operaamerica.org) leads and serves the entire opera community, supporting the creation, presentation and enjoyment of opera.

- Artistic services help opera companies and creative and performing artists to improve the quality of productions and increase the creation and presentation of North American works.
- Information, technical and administrative services to opera companies reflect the need for strengthened leadership among staff, trustees and volunteers.
- Education, audience development and community services are designed to enhance all forms of opera appreciation.

Founded in 1970, OPERA America's worldwide membership network includes 150 Company Members, 250 Associate, Business and Educational Members, 1,200 Individual Members, and 16,000 subscribers to the association's electronic news service. In response to the critical need for suitable audition, rehearsal and recording facilities, OPERA America opened the first-ever **NATIONAL OPERA CENTER** (operaamerica.org/OperaCenter) in September 2012 in New York City. With a wide range of artistic and administrative services in a purpose-built facility, OPERA America is dedicated to increasing the level of excellence, creativity and effectiveness across the field.