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OPERA AMERICA ANNOUNCES RECIPIENTS OF ITS 2020 NATIONAL OPERA TRUSTEE RECOGNITION AWARDS

Robert Ellis, San Francisco Opera
H. Bernt von Ohlen, Minnesota Opera
Linda Koehn, Des Moines Metro Opera
Phil Meyer, Pacific Opera Project
Chris and Anita Murray, Opera Las Vegas

Opera.ca Presents Its 2020 National Opera Directors Recognition Award
to Elba Haid, Manitoba Opera

Bank of America Proudly Sponsors the National Opera Trustee Recognition Program
for the 13th Consecutive Year

January 21, 2020 (New York) — **OPERA America** is pleased to announce the recipients of its **2020 National Opera Trustee Recognition Awards**. Now in their 13th year, these awards honor outstanding trustees of U.S. opera companies for their exemplary leadership and generosity on behalf of their respective organizations. OPERA America's Professional Company Members are invited each year to nominate one of their trustees for this award.

The recipients of the 2020 National Opera Trustee Recognition Awards are **Robert Ellis**, San Francisco Opera; **H. Bernt von Ohlen**, Minnesota Opera; **Linda Koehn**, Des Moines Metro Opera; **Phil Meyer**, Pacific Opera Project (Los Angeles); and **Chris and Anita Murray**, Opera Las Vegas.

A selection committee chooses honorees through a competitive adjudication process from across OPERA America's five budget groups, classified according to their annual operating budgets, recognizing that devoted trustees are essential to the success of opera companies both large and small,

The selection committee was chaired this year by OPERA America Board Member **Carol Lazier** (chair, San Diego Opera). Other committee members were **Elizabeth Hernandez** (treasurer, Opera Cultura), **Holly Mayer** (immediate past chair, The Dallas Opera), **John Nesholm** (chair, Seattle Opera), **Ruth Orth**

(officer, Pensacola Opera) and **Stacey Hunt Spier** (president, El Paso Opera). Each member of the selection committee is a previous honoree of the National Opera Trustee Recognition Program.

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 **Elba Haid** of Manitoba Opera as the 2020 recipient of its **National Opera Directors Recognition Award**.

"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," stated **Marc A. Scorca**, president/CEO of OPERA America.

OPERA America will pay tribute to the 2020 honorees and celebrate their remarkable achievements at a dinner and reception on Friday, March 20, 2020, in Washington, D.C. The event, which normally takes place in New York City, is being held in the nation's capital as part of OPERA America's 50th anniversary celebration, to recognize Washington National Opera as one of its 16 founding companies and the city of Washington, D.C., as the home of OPERA America's headquarters from 1970 to 2005.

The Awards Dinner is part of OPERA America's National Trustee Weekend. Trustees from opera companies across the country and members of OPERA America's Board of Directors will have the opportunity to participate in an Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill, visit the National Museum of African American History and Culture, and attend performances of the recently premiered opera *Blue* (Tesori/Thompson), as well as *Don Giovanni* and *Samson and Delilah*, at Washington National Opera.

Since its inception 13 years ago, OPERA America's National Opera Trustee Recognition Program has been made possible by the generosity of **Bank of America**. "We are delighted to be joined by Bank of America in celebrating the significant and enduring contributions of these devoted trustees," stated Scorca. "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."

2020 National Opera Trustee Recognition Awardees

BUDGET 1 (ANNUAL BUDGET OVER \$15M)

Robert Ellis, San Francisco Opera



Robert Ellis is a longtime developer and investor in digital media companies and a former correspondent for *Time* magazine. For 20 years, he has been a respected member of San Francisco Opera's Board of Directors, providing transformative and innovative leadership.

Mr. Ellis and his late wife, Jane Bernstein, championed bold, innovative works that are now synonymous with San Francisco Opera (SFO), particularly the world premiere of John Adams' *Doctor Atomic* and Francesca Zambello's American *Ring* cycle. Other SFO works supported include *Girls of the Golden West*, *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, *Die Tote Stadt*, *Moby-Dick* and *The Secret Garden*. Mr. Ellis has also been a tireless champion of using new technologies to increase accessibility to opera. He supported the creation of an in-house media suite at SFO, led by

David Gockley, and a nine-city simulcasted performance of *Death and the Powers*, originated by The Dallas Opera.

Mr. Ellis' interest in bringing to life new, innovative productions led him to serve as a founding trustee for Opera Parallèle for 10 years and as an advisory board member with Central City Opera. He has served on OPERA America's board since 2014, sharing his passion for a national vision for the opera industry.

BUDGET 2 (ANNUAL BUDGET \$3M – \$14.9M)

H. Bernt von Ohlen, Minnesota Opera



H. Bernt von Ohlen is a retired corporate and securities attorney for Allianz Life Insurance Company of North America and the board chair of the Minnesota Opera. He has been a dedicated board member of Minnesota Opera for 14 years, helping lead the company to the position of strength it occupies today.

Mr. von Ohlen challenged Minnesota Opera's incoming president and general director to launch an initiative to build a more diverse and inclusive art form and opera company, through efforts such as introducing changes to hiring and casting practices, and implementing training to build intercultural capacity. He has created initiatives to stimulate improvements throughout Minnesota Opera, as seen through the purchase of the LAB Theater and creation of the Impact and Sustainability campaign, meant to preserve and amplify the organization's impact for generations to come.

Mr. von Ohlen's philanthropic efforts are not confined to the opera community. The Arts Partnership — comprising Minnesota Opera, Schubert Club, The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts — recently launched a new annual fund to strengthen their collaboration and preserve the Ordway as a world-class facility. When approached, Mr. von Ohlen added this campaign to his annual giving without question.

BUDGET 3 (ANNUAL BUDGET \$1M – \$2.9M)

Linda Koehn, Des Moines Metro Opera



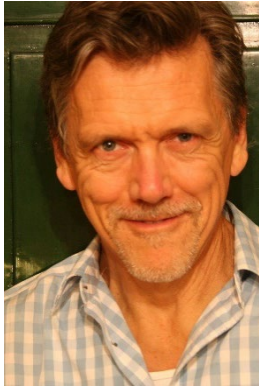
Linda Koehn is a board member of the Waldinger Corporation and retired teacher with 20 years of experience. She has been a dedicated honorary board member of Des Moines Metro Opera (DMMO) for 15 years.

Mrs. Koehn has responded to many of DMMO's needs through leadership and financial support, such as providing the funding to build a new addition of the Blank Performing Arts Center in Indianola and committing to a three-year pledge of \$150,000 to support one new production each season for the next three seasons. Mrs. Koehn has also increased board participation and promoted DMMO's greater involvement with OPERA America. In addition, she has consistently supported DMMO's education programs and 2nd Stages Series, a program designed to take opera out of the opera house and into unlikely places in Des Moines. Mrs. Koehn and her husband, Tom, will serve as honorary chairs of DMMO's 50 Next Campaign, which will fund new artistic initiatives and grow the company's endowment for its 50th anniversary in 2022.

Mrs. Koehn has also served in leadership capacities with many of the city's civic and cultural organizations, such as the Des Moines Symphony, the Community Foundation and the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden.

BUDGET 4 (ANNUAL BUDGET \$250K – \$1M)

Phil Meyer, Pacific Opera Project



Phil Meyer is a licensed clinical social worker and associate professor at the University of Southern California and has served as associate director of the Pacific AIDS Education and Training Center at Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science. Mr. Meyer has been the backbone of Pacific Opera Project (POP) for the past eight years, acting as a constant source of support for the staff and organization, and leading the way in governance, giving and recruiting.

Mr. Meyer helped grow POP from a small opera company with a budget under \$50,000 to a fully professional organization with a budget of over \$500,000 in 2020. Under his steadfast leadership, POP has launched a live-stream program that has brought free productions to over 155,000 viewers over the past two seasons. This has allowed people of any means to see quality opera while taking the POP brand around the world.

One of Mr. Meyer's objectives is to make opera accessible throughout the community. After years of his encouragement, POP will launch an ongoing education program in 2020 to bring opera into schools and allow for children to attend POP performances and rehearsals. This has been a longtime goal of Mr. Meyer's, and will help fulfill his aim of expanding the influence of POP and opera in general.

BUDGET 5 (ANNUAL BUDGET UNDER 250K)

Chris and Anita Murray, Opera Las Vegas



Chris and Anita Murray joined Opera Las Vegas (OLV) as sustaining trustees in 2009 and have been active supporters ever since, contributing more to OLV than any other donors. They have been instrumental in stabilizing the company, growing its scope and solidifying its staffing. The Murrays have used their extensive social and professional networks to lead by example, promoting their own dedication to OLV's organizational goals to inspire others to join the cause. For the past five years, they have played a crucial role in organizing the company's annual gala fundraiser, and have encouraged friends to attend the event and become donors.

The Murrays have championed marketing strategies and education programming that directly engage diverse communities. They backed the company's new Opera on Wheels initiative that brings staged concerts, family-friendly operas and new works to a variety of venues, such as churches, libraries, art galleries and shopping malls. They were also firm supporters of the Opera with Class program, developed to bring operatic singing into Clark County schools and familiarize young people with the art form.

Mr. Murray served as CEO of ABT Computer Software Corporation from 1981 to 2000 and holds a degree from Stanford University Graduate School of Business.

PREVIOUS NATIONAL OPERA TRUSTEE RECOGNITION AWARDS

2019

Elizabeth Hernandez, Opera Cultura
Charlie Schaffler, Opera Memphis
Stacey Hunt Spier, El Paso Opera
Maryanne Tagney, Seattle Opera
Robert Tancer, Arizona Opera

2018

Carol F. Henry, Los Angeles Opera
R. Jamison Williams, Michigan Opera Theatre
Henry Fogel, Chicago Opera Theater
John Serrage, Opera Maine

2017

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

2016

Michele S. Fabrizi, Pittsburgh Opera
Martha Rivers Ingram, Nashville Opera
Jeanette Lerman-Neubauer, The Metropolitan Opera
Jacqueline Badger Mars, Washington National 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 Noëmi 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.

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About OPERA America

OPERA America (operaamerica.org) leads and serves the entire opera community, supporting the creation, presentation and enjoyment of opera. The organization is committed to:

- Delivering professional development to artists, administrators and trustees.
- Increasing appreciation of opera through educational and audience development resources.
- Offering support and services that foster the creation and presentation of new works.
- Fostering equity, diversity and inclusion across all aspects of the opera industry.
- Undertaking national research and representing the field to policymakers and the media.

- Managing the National Opera Center, a custom-built facility that provides a centralized space for collaboration, rehearsal and performance.

Founded in 1970, OPERA America fulfills its mission through public programs, an annual conference, regional workshops, consultations, granting programs, publications and online resources. It is the only organization serving all constituents of opera: artists, administrators, trustees, educators and audience members. Membership includes 160 professional opera companies; 350 associate, business and education members; and 1,700 individuals. OPERA America extends its reach to 80,000 annual visitors to its National Opera Center and over 50,000 subscribers and followers on digital and social media. Representing over 90 percent of eligible professional companies, OPERA America is empowered to lead field-wide change.

OPERA America's long tradition of supporting and nurturing the creation and development of new works led to the formation of the Opera Fund, a growing endowment that allows OPERA America to make a direct impact on the ongoing creation and presentation of new opera and music-theater works. Currently, OPERA America awards more than \$2 million each year through its range of grant initiatives.