



News and Information

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2016 ANNUAL LEADERSHIP AWARD WINNERS HONORED BY AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS

President & CEO of United Arts of Central Florida Honored with Michael Newton Award

Washington, DC—Americans for the Arts, the nation’s leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts and arts education in America, announced the recipients of the 2016 Americans for the Arts Annual Leadership Awards. These awards recognize the achievements of individuals and organizations committed to enriching their communities through the arts.

Flora Maria Garcia, president and CEO of United Arts of Central Florida, has been honored with the Michael Newton Award. For the past 25 years, the Michael Newton Award has recognized exemplary leadership skills and extraordinary dedication to supporting the arts through a united arts fund, which is a combined effort to raise money on behalf of multiple arts institutions in the community, or through unique and powerful partnerships with the private sector. In 2012, Flora Maria Garcia became president and CEO of United Arts of Central Florida—a 501-C-3, \$5.8 million, local arts agency for the four-county region and the City of Orlando. Since its inception in 1989, United Arts has invested more than \$136 million in local cultural organizations and individual artists.

During her time in Central Florida Ms. Garcia has been listed as one of the “*15 People to Watch*”, Scott Maxwell, Orlando Sentinel, December 31, 2014; received the “Distinguished Women Award of Central Florida, Art & Culture, La Prensa Newspaper, 2014, Orlando, FL, and was listed as one of the “*50 Most Powerful People in Orlando*”, Orlando City Magazine, July 2013.

Prior taking her position in Orlando, Garcia was CEO of the Metro Atlanta Arts & Culture Coalition, a fourteen county agency focused on public policy and advocacy. During her tenure, statewide legislation that would significantly fund arts and culture throughout the state of Georgia was introduced and as result, received the Georgia Shakespeare, Spirit of Will Award for Arts Advocacy.

As Executive Director of two local arts agencies in Houston and Fort Worth, Texas, she increased annual public sector annual support for the arts by millions of dollars through dedicated funding.

As the Executive Director of the Missouri Arts Council in the late 90’s, Ms. Garcia was integral in building the Missouri Cultural Trust, a \$200 million public/private endowment for the arts. The Trust, built over a ten year time period, focused on building financial stability of nonprofit arts organizations. Trust programs addressed three areas of arts investment: building or growing endowments, seed funding for new cultural facilities, and capacity building for small and mid-sized arts organizations, especially focused on building cash reserves.

On the national level, Garcia has served on the boards of the National Assembly for Local Arts Agencies and Mid-America Arts Alliance, numerous committees for the National Association of State Arts Agencies, and on several grant panels for the National Endowment for the Arts and the Florida Council on the Arts. She served for two years as Vice President of Americans for the Arts' Urban Arts Federation, an association of the 60 largest arts councils in the country.

In addition to more than 30 years of experience in nonprofit arts management, Garcia has a Master's in Business Administration and Arts Administration from Southern Methodist University and a Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts and Modern Languages from Saint Mary's College. Garcia was born in Havana, Cuba and immigrated to the U.S. in the early '60s.

"Our Leadership Award honorees have distinguished themselves as tremendous leaders and passionate advocates for the arts and arts education," said Robert L. Lynch, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts. "These leaders have implemented innovative and transformative programs to strengthen the communities they serve, and their unwavering commitment to local, state, and national support for the arts is deserving of this recognition."

All of this year's honorees are members of Americans for the Arts. They were presented with their awards at the Americans for the Arts 2016 [Annual Convention](#) in Boston on Friday, June 17, 2016.

The five other national recipients are:

- Brad Erickson: Alene Valkanas State Arts Advocacy Award
- Barbara Goldstein: Public Art Network Award
- Laura Perille: Arts Education Award
- Michael Spring: Selina Roberts Ottum Award
- Octavia Yearwood: American Express Emerging Leaders Award

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Americans for the Arts is the leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts and arts education in America. With offices in Washington, D.C. and New York City, it has a record of more than 50 years of service. Americans for the Arts is dedicated to representing and serving local communities and creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts. Additional information is available at www.AmericansForTheArts.org.

United Arts of Central Florida is a collaboration of individuals, businesses, governments and school districts, foundations, arts and cultural organizations, and artists. Its mission is to unite, strengthen and inspire the Central Florida community through the arts and culture. United Arts serves residents and visitors in Lake, Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties through more than 50 local arts, sciences and history organizations. It raises and distributes funds for these cultural groups and provides management, administrative and advisory services. Since 1989, United Arts has invested over \$136 million in Central Florida's arts and culture.

More information is available at www.UnitedArts.cc or by calling 407-628-0333. Please email Erica@UnitedArts.cc for comments or inquiries.