

March 27, 2015

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### **SAMA TO HOST 4<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL *NIGHT OF DISTINCTION* DINNER IN APRIL**

Loretto – The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art’s fourth annual *Night of Distinction* will return to the Loretto Museum this April for a special night that will honor five friends of the Museum. *Night of Distinction* is a dinner-and-awards event established to honor the Museum’s most dedicated and longest-serving benefactors.

At this year’s event, scheduled for April 25, SAMA will present its annual Service to the Arts Award to three well-deserving individuals: Jeanne Gleason, Shirley Hoyne and Chuck Olson. The Service to the Arts Award recognizes those who have devoted themselves to the enrichment of the cultural life and well-being of their community. Also being honored is Barbara Savino, who will receive the Volunteerism Award, which recognizes individuals who have dedicated themselves to museum excellence and have displayed a tireless commitment to bettering their community. Finally, SAMA will honor Joan McCreary with Trustee Emeritus distinction. Trustee Emeritus is an honorary title recognizing past trustees for their exemplary service to the Museum.

“Each of these individuals has advocated for the arts, demonstrated noteworthy support for the Museum, and helped to create a cultural legacy for the people of this region,” said Gary Moyer, Executive Director. “SAMA is a better museum, our communities are better and the arts are stronger because of what they have done over the years and what they will do in the years to come.”

*Night of Distinction* is scheduled for 6 to 9 p.m. on April 25. Cost is \$85 per person. Reservations are required by April 20. For reservations or more information, please call the Loretto Museum at (814) 472-3920.

Jeanne Gleason has made a lifelong commitment to the arts. A member of SAMA’s Board of Trustees from 1980 through 2011 and since appointed to Trustee Emeritus, Gleason’s commitment to supporting the arts has been felt throughout the region for more than 30 years. She has served as Executive Director of the Johnstown Symphony Orchestra and was the Founding Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Rural Arts Alliance. She serves as Chair of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts by appointment of former Governor Tom Corbett. Gleason is a recipient of Carlow

University's Legacy Award, YWCA Tribute to Women Award, WQED's Volunteer in the Arts Award, and the Greater Pittsburgh ATHENA Award, among many other honors.

Characterized by steadfast leadership and a zest for the arts, Shirley Hoyne has donated countless hours of her time to help shape the viability and vitality of many of the region's cultural resources. She has served as past chair of SAMA's Auxiliary and has chaired the Museum's Altoona Garden Party. For years she has worked on the Gala Committee and can often be found the day before Gala organizing and displaying the silent auction area. She is a longtime member of the board of the Blair County Arts Foundation and has actively participated in the Blair County Arts Festival since 2000. Hoyne has established and managed fundraisers for local hospitals and currently participates in the United Way Silver Sneakers program.

To say Joan McCreary has lived an exciting life would be an understatement. She has been a vocalist with a regional big band. She has been an undercover agent for an airline. She has a pilot's license and has traveled the world. But closer to home, she has made a major impact on SAMA and the communities it serves. Prior to stepping down in 2014, McCreary was a member of the Museum's Board of Trustees for nearly 30 years. In that time, she served as Secretary for several years and also participated in the Development, Executive and Finance committees. Upon her retirement as manager of the Aircraft Tire Division for McCreary Tire & Rubber Company, McCreary created her own company, Welch International, a consulting firm specializing in international high-level corporate meetings. She now spends her time in a third career as a travel writer, combining her interests in travel, aviation and writing. Since moving to St. Petersburg, Fla., McCreary has become involved with the city's museums, the St. Petersburg Opera Company, and the Florida Orchestra.

Chuck Olson is renowned worldwide for his artistic talent and creativity. His work has been featured in dozens of solo exhibitions throughout the United States and Europe, in addition to more than 100 group shows across the globe. His greatest impact, however, may come from the classroom. For nearly 40 years, Olson has been Professor of Art and Chairman of the Fine Arts Department at Saint Francis University. During his tenure he has earned all faculty awards offered by the University. Among his many awards and recognitions are Indiana University of Pennsylvania Distinguished Alumni status (2001) and Pittsburgh Magazine and WQED-TV's Harry Schwalb Award of Excellence in Visual Arts (2001-02). Most recently, he was awarded the status of Master Visual Artist for Pittsburgh in 2013 with an exhibition at the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts and an archive established at the Heinz Regional History Museum.

For more than 20 years, SAMA has been blessed to have a shining example of the volunteerism spirit in Barbara Savino. Since 1993, Savino has been an integral part of the Gala Committee, even serving as chair in 1997 and 1998 and on the leadership circle last year. She has been deeply involved with SAMA-Altoona's annual fashion

show fundraiser and was the Museum's nominee for the 2015 Wise Women of Blair County awards (Arts & Letters category). Savino's volunteerism also has benefitted a number of other non-profit organizations, such as the American Heart Association and the Allegheny Ballet Company. For all the effect she has made on the community, she also has impacted thousands of lives as a nurse. Certified through the American Association of Critical Care Nurses, Savino has been a staff nurse at Altoona Hospital since 1984. She has been an instructor of nursing for 27 years at Pennsylvania State University and formerly held the same position at Altoona Hospital's School of Nursing and Mount Aloysius College.

The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Loretto is located on the campus of Saint Francis University. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 1 to 5 p.m. Saturday. The Museum is a handicapped-accessible facility and is open to the public free of charge. For more information, call the Museum or visit [www.sama-art.org](http://www.sama-art.org).