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Winthrop University

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Medal of Honor Recipients to Receive Recognition on Oct. 19

Quick Facts

- Five people will be honored during Winthrop's sixth Medal of Honor in the Arts ceremony.
- The ceremony will be held Oct. 19.



Mark Coplan

ROCK HILL, S.C. - During Winthrop's sixth anniversary of the **Medal of Honor in the Arts** on Oct. 19, the university will honor the contributions of an art collector, a journalist, a nationally renowned opera composer, an arts advocate and an internationally known choreographer.

The Medal of Honor in the Arts is the most prestigious award granted by the College of Visual and Performing Arts. The 8 p.m. event in Johnson Hall will raise money benefiting scholarships for visual and performing arts students.



Beryl Dakers

This year's recipients are: the late **Mark Coplan**, a private collector and advocate of S.C. fine and outsider art; **Beryl Dakers**, an Emmy-nominated filmmaker and journalist; **Carlisle Floyd**, nationally renowned composer of opera; **Betty Plumb** of Rock Hill, advocate for the arts and art education; and **Dan Wagoner**, internationally known choreographer and professor of modern dance.



Carlisle Floyd

Winthrop officials said the 2007 awardees have worked hard to bring art alive in their communities and often on a national or international stage. "This will be a magical evening to recognize our awardees and to provide much needed financial help for our students through scholarship support," said Elizabeth Patenaude, dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts.

Information on this year's recipients follows:



Betty Plumb

* Columbia, S.C., native **Mark Coplan's** greatest contribution was his extensive private collection and promotion of fine and outsider art of South Carolinians. A lawyer and real estate developer who restored many buildings on the National Register of Historic Places, **Coplan** helped change the way this state's residents look at art and architecture. He was passionate about artists who worked or were born in South Carolina, traveling extensively to visit studios, galleries, exhibitions and auctions. He particularly enjoyed discovering new and emerging artists or finding masters of bygone eras in order to reawaken interest in their work. Upon his death in 2002, he owned more than 450 works of art, much of which is now on exhibition in the State Museum of South Carolina.



Dan Wagoner

* As director of cultural programming at South Carolina Educational Television since 1982, **Beryl Dakers** has produced and hosted weekly art shows and served as producer/writer/director for documentaries. She currently works as host of ETV Forum and ETV Roadshow and as on-air talent for fundraising. She has won a National Black Journalists Association award for best documentary of "Sylvia Story," as well as an Emmy nomination for it and two other segments on public art. She is a 2002 inductee into the S.C. Black Hall of Fame and received the Elizabeth O'Neill Verner Governor's Award for the Arts in 2000.

Dakers is most proud that in many cases, she was the conduit for many artists to have their works first recognized by the media, or were presented on television and archived on tape. “That I also may have been able to help focus attention on artists who otherwise may not have been as visible or to serve as an advocate for the arts and arts education is a source of pride,” **Dakers** said. “What is indisputable is the fact that the myriad artists I have encountered during my career have enriched my life immeasurably.”

* **Carlisle Floyd** is one of the foremost composers and librettists of opera in the United States. His operas are regularly performed in the United States and in Europe; at least two of them – “Susannah” and “Of Mice and Men” – have entered the permanent operatic repertoire. He began his teaching career in 1947 at Florida State University, remaining there until 1976, when he accepted the prestigious M.D. Anderson Professorship in the University of Houston. He is co-founder of the Houston Opera Studio. The American Academy of Arts and Letters inducted **Floyd** into its ranks in 2001, and in 2004, President Bush awarded **Floyd** the National Medal of Arts.

Floyd has been asked why art is inseparable from human beings. “I feel the answer lies at least partially in the fact that human beings have from the beginning had a profound need to have their own uncomprehended, dimly preconceived selves and lives mirrored back to them in some ordered, illuminated form while they are living them.” He noted that our most intimate contact with early civilizations has been through the art that has survived them. “For what more immediate access do we have to the minds and hearts of those who have preceded us on this planet than what they have revealed of themselves and their lives in art, for art, finally, after all is said and done, is revelation.”

* Widely respected as a leader and arts advocate for South Carolina, **Betty Plumb** has been executive director of the S.C. Arts Alliance since 1994. The statewide nonprofit agency serves the arts through advocacy, technical assistance and leadership development. **Plumb** is past chair and current council member of the State Arts Action Network, a programmatic council of the Americans for the Arts, and past president of State Arts Advocacy League of America and the National Community Arts Network. In June, the Americans for the Arts, the nation’s leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts, presented **Plumb** its 2007 Alene Valkanas State Arts Advocacy Award.

She reported that the only way her life could have been more affected by the arts is if she had made her living as an artist. “As a professional advocate for the arts, I have the opportunity to have an impact on policy, funding and programs that can bring the arts to classrooms and communities throughout our state,” she said. **Plumb** credits her own mother for instilling in her the love of the arts, through exposure to piano, dance and art lessons and music of all types. “Even before my professional career, however, raising two daughters, who themselves were active in theater and in other arts-related endeavors, taught my husband and I to value what arts can do for a community.”

* **Dan Wagoner** made his mark in dance through a 25-year career as head of **Dan Wagoner and Dancers**. The company performed to critical acclaim in hundreds of U.S. cities and on four continents. The company performed to wide critical acclaim in hundreds of U.S. cities and on four continents, as **Wagoner’s** works became known for their speed and style shifts and an uncanny sense of weight and balance.

During a four-year period during the 1980s, the company maintained a second home in the Palmetto State, making it first such dual residency for a modern dance company. **Wagoner** danced with Martha Graham’s company, before eventually forming his own in 1969 and pursuing his emerging choreographic vision. The company disbanded in 1994, and **Wagoner** started a year later teaching dance at Connecticut College, while continuing to choreograph for companies around the world.

Organizers of the Medal of Honor in the Arts will present the recipients with a hand-crafted medal created by Alf Ward, professor emeritus of art. Students and faculty members will provide entertainment segments which pay tribute to a recipient and the recipient’s love of art.

Medal of Honor tickets are \$75 per person and will be available at the door. For ticket information, call 803/323-2399 or 323-2323.

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