

Fine Arts Signing Day Gold Award of Excellence recipient at 2022 League of American Orchestras (LAO) Conference

The LAO 77th Annual National Conference in Los Angeles June 1-3, 2022, brought 900 attendees together for the first time in 3 years. The Volunteer Council, under Julie Meredith, President, and Ginny Lundquist, Conference Chairman, planned and executed excellent volunteer sessions. For the first time, Simon Woods, LAO President and CEO, and Chad Smith, CEO of LA Phil, addressed the first volunteer session. Simon emphasized the importance of volunteers and the significance of assuring they feel needed and appreciated.

Recipients of the one Gold Classic Award of Excellence, six Gold Awards of Excellence (formerly known years ago as “Gold Book Awards”), and six Spotlight recognitions presented at 2 sessions. Impressive projects elicited vibrant table conversations in response to how replicable each is and the significance of the project to each volunteer attendee’s organization. I am proud to report that Fine Arts Signing Day garnered exuberant interest, many questions and suggestions, and an invitation for me to present FASD at the Texas Association of Symphony Orchestras (TASO) meeting in April 2023 (one of the 2 VC members who are members of TASO contacted its chairman after hearing the presentation.) A surprise was that “signing day” rang no bells with almost half the attendees!

Katherine Wight, 1999 Debutante and my daughter, came to my rescue to produce the required presentation handout with Canva while in Riga mothering my 4 grandchildren, pursuing a virtual MPH with UAB, and being the model of a perfect diplomat’s wife. Our always-has-our-backs Angi at C&A Printing made the necessary copies expeditiously!

BRAVA, Laura Malone for asking “why don’t we have a Fine Arts Signing Day?” at that HSOA Education Committee meeting and assuming the HSOA chairmanship for the pilot and 2021 FASD events; and **Amy Brooks**, co-chairman for the 2021 and 2022 events! The Dine Arounds the night prior to Conference opening session afforded opportunities to meet other attendees and VC members. One VC member sitting next to me mentioned she is retired; “from?” I asked; “I was an anesthesiologist.” That is only a hint of the diverse backgrounds of orchestra volunteers.

Walt Disney Concert Hall was the venue for the opening plenary; a spectacular evening featuring the Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles (“YOLA”) playing works by three young composers, who were introduced on stage! And . . . Highlight of Conference for me: JOHN WILLIAMS on stage in conversation with Gustavo Dudamel, Los Angeles Philharmonic (“LA Phil”) conductor, and Chad Smith, LA Phil CEO. Mr. Williams celebrated his 90th birthday in February 2022. His white hair and beard, which he “pulled” below its actual length in concert with mention of how long ago events in his life had occurred, presented quite the contrast between an obviously active, engaged composer and birthdays celebrated. John Williams was humble, self-effacing, courteous, and eminently likable.

It was a pleasure, joy, and honor to represent the stellar HSOA and to present at the LAO VC awards session. Added excitement was to reconnect with VC members whom I had met at previous Conferences, this being my third representing HSOA as award recipient plus one I attended on my own as an HSOA Trustee.

LAO 2023 National Conference will be in Pittsburgh, PA, June 14-16, 2023.

Deadline for submission of project for 2023 award consideration is August 31, 2022. Submit online at americanorchestras.org. Project must have been completed between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022.

Suggested inspiration site: Volunteer Project Database -

<https://americanorchestras.org/gold-award-of-excellence/> for searchable database of past winning entries.

Contact Charlotte Lewis, Projects Chairman, at cklewis524@gmail.com with any questions.

For specifics on other 2022 award presentations, contact Susan Anderson, chamaskas@comcast.net .

Susan Anderson
2022 Fine Arts Signing Day chairman





Six Gold Award of Excellence winners and one Classic Award winner at Reception honoring them.