

FOR RELEASE: January 22, 2010

## 2010 Arts Inductees Announced

Eight outstanding individuals from the Fox Valley area have been selected for induction into the Fox Valley Arts Hall of Fame. In alphabetical order, the Class of 2010 is composed of the following: J. Allison "Al" Binford, Jr., Floyd Brown, Huntley Brown, Edward C. Cook, Wallace E. Cunningham, Herbert and Martha Schingoethe, and Susan Kay Weiler.

These artists/benefactors will be officially honored at an awards banquet scheduled for Thursday evening, April 22, 2010, at Villa Olivia Country Club in Bartlett. The banquet will also celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Fox Valley Arts Hall Fame.

Nominees were sought for the Fox Valley Arts Hall of Fame from 4 different categories of expertise: visual arts, performing arts, literary/media arts, and "other," a category reserved for educators, directors, curators, or benefactors. This is the first class to have inductees representing the category of art and culture patrons: Herb and Martha Schingoethe. Three artists in the Class of 2010 represent the visual arts: Edward Cook, a miniatures painter, Susan Weiler, a landscape architect, and Wallace Cunningham, architect. Representing the performing arts is Huntley Brown, a concert pianist. Al Binford and Floyd Brown, who have long histories as radio and television producers and hosts represent the literary/media field.

Al Binford and Huntley Brown are residents of Aurora, and Floyd Brown lives in Elgin. The Schingoethes, both deceased, also called Aurora home. Ed Cook currently resides in Batavia. Wally Cunningham once lived in Batavia and worked in Aurora, and Susan Weiler grew up in Aurora.

According to Susan Starrett, president of the Fox Valley Arts Hall of Fame Board of Directors, "Historically, we are always surprised and greatly pleased with both the quantity and quality of the nominations we receive. This current selection period was no exception, since we have a unique and impressive Class of 2010." Since the founding of the Arts Hall of Fame, the names of nearly 100 artists from the region have been submitted for consideration.

**J. Allison Binford, Jr.** got his start in television when he joined WTTW during its startup years at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago. For the next 28 years – in Chicago, Milwaukee, Connecticut, and Indiana – he wrote, produced, directed, and appeared on programs that led to the development of the present day public broadcasting system, earning an Emmy.

**Floyd Brown** achieved national recognition in the mid-1960s when he became the first African-American hired by a major network and was chosen to be featured with Bill Cosby on the cover of NBC's company magazine. His career at WGN Radio and TV spanned the years between 1971 and 1999.

**Huntley Brown** grew up in a Christian home on the island of Jamaica and was educated at Judson University and NIU. His electrifying playing earned him the Top Caribbean Gospel Instrumentalist Award in 2005 and 2006. He has recorded 13 CDs covering a wide range of styles and shared his music ministry around the world.

**Edward C. Cook** began painting in 1980 after a successful corporate career and concentrated on the precise art of miniature painting. In 1995, Mr. Cook was one of 38 American miniaturists invited to London to participate in the celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's Royal Miniature Society.

**Wallace E. Cunningham** of San Diego once served as curator for Blackberry Farm's (then Pioneer Park) Americana Collection and attended N.I.U., the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts, and the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture. The International Academy of Architecture named him an Honorary Professor in 2009. Twice his name has appeared on *Architectural Digest's* list of the top 100 designers.

**Herbert and Martha Schingoethe** were long-time collectors of art and cultural artifacts who generously endowed Aurora University with a museum of Native American art, an art gallery, and a curriculum of museum studies complete with faculty and professional staff.

**Susan Kay Weiler** received her B.S. from the University of Wisconsin in 1979. She began her career in 1983 when she joined Hanna/Olin upon completion of her Master of Landscape Architecture degree from the University of Pennsylvania. In 1996, she was named Partner of OLIN, and in 2007 she was named a Fellow in the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA). She has won numerous design awards since 1988.

The Selection Committee, chaired this past year by President Susan Starrett, studies all nominations and recommends finalists for board approval. The committee is made up of board members as well as representatives from the community with expertise and knowledge in the arts. To be considered, a candidate must be associated with the Fox Valley through birth, education, residence, or service. They must also have completed at least 20 years in their professional field and received national or international recognition.

The 8 new members of the Class of 2010 will join previous inductees in the Fox Valley Arts Hall of Fame. Those honored in 2008 included: composer Martin Brody; architect John Cordogan; cartoonist Dick Locher; soprano Anne McKnight; Mike Venezia, artist/author of children's books and videos; choreographer Kenneth Von Heidecke; and Ingrid Wendt, poet. Honored in 2006 were composer Daniel Brewbaker; sculptor Ray Kobald; musician/pedagogue Bill Robinson; musician/pedagogue Douglas Steensland; painter Mary Hackney Wicker; and media artist Paula Zahn. The artists recognized in 2004 were composer/educator Jan Morris Bach; broadcast journalist John Drury; music conductor and educator Robert Hanson; film actor William S. Hart; author Marguerite Henry; photographer Stan Jorstad; television producers, writers, and performers Bruce and Claire Newton; and sculptor, designer, and painter Trygve Rovelstad. The Charter Class from 2002 consisted of ballerina and choreographer Elisabeth Spalinger Boehm; painter Ruth Van Sickle Ford; opera singer Eric Halfvarson; author and artist Wendell Minor; instrumentalist Robert Olah; violinist Maud Powell; and symphony musician Grover Schiltz.

The banquet planned for April 22, 2010, to celebrate the accomplishments of this most recent group of inductees is open to the public. Area residents and arts fans interested in attending this event, which will be held at the Villa Olivia Country Club, may call 630-605-4000 to request an invitation.

Murna Hansemann, Vice President of Events for the Fox Valley Arts Hall of Fame, is coordinating the banquet.

During banquet ceremonies, each inductee is presented with an inscribed medallion and a certificate noting their achievement. A personalized Arts Hall of Fame plaque is then added to the permanent exhibit of the Fox Valley Arts Hall of Fame at the Paramount Theatre in downtown Aurora.

The Fox Valley Arts Hall of Fame was first organized in March of 2000 under the name Aurora Fine Arts Recognition Committee as an independent citizens group. Its central purpose then, as well as now, is to give public recognition to artists associated with the Fox Valley area.

The Fox Valley Arts Hall of Fame is a registered not-for-profit, 501c.3. organization, and all donations are utilized to help fund current and future projects. In the odd-numbered years, the Arts Hall of Fame offers its Founders Series, which features either a performance or an exhibit related to its purposes and/or its inductees.

More information and news about the Fox Valley Arts Hall of Fame is available by visiting the group's website at [www.foxvalleyarts.org](http://www.foxvalleyarts.org).