

Special Recognition

David Shaw is multi-faceted when it comes to the arts. For 38 years, he was an arts educator teaching in the Rochester School System. He is himself an accomplished artist, working in many mediums which added to his effectiveness in the classroom. David also has been generous with his time and talent as a volunteer.

As an arts educator, Dave was a motivator respected by his students as he encouraged them to produce their best works. And produce they did as many received gold keys in the Scholastic Art and nominations for American Visions National Scholastic Competition.

After retirement, Dave continued his teaching by volunteering with "Open Minds Through Art," a program of the Springfield Art Association and SIU School of Medicine, which partners an individual with Alzheimer's Disease with a volunteer guide. He also created many of the projects used in that program. In addition, he has taught young students with disabilities ways to reach their creative potential.

Theatre has been a passion of Dave's life, too. Although his time onstage has been limited, his concept and execution of set designs, costuming, and make up are legendary. From producing and directing Rochester High School productions to directing or designing numerous shows for The Muni, Springfield Theatre Centre, and The Legacy, Dave's involvement has affected thousands of people both as participants and as audience members.

Creator Artist

Michelle Smith was commissioned to create this year's distinct awards in pencil. Each is based upon a photograph she took in Springfield's Washington Park.

From Michelle: "I've always known drawing would be my niche, from the age of five as a matter of fact, when my teacher chastised me for coloring outside the lines. I am self-taught and the need to do it my way is still important to how I do what I do."

Mayor's Awards for the Arts

Selection Committee

Becky Collins, actress and theatre arts volunteer

John T. Crisp, Jr., visual and performing artist and previous Mayor's Award winner

Jim Huston, previous Mayor's Award winner and an arts volunteer

Alexandria Rockford, photojournalist and assistant to Springfield's Chief of Police

Janet Seitz, visual artist and previous Mayor's Awards selection committee member

Mayor's Awards for the Arts

Coordinator

Penny Wollan-Kriel

Springfield Area Arts Council

Interim Executive Director

Sheila Walk

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City of Springfield,
Illinois Arts Council Agency,
and Springfield Area Arts Council.



20th Mayor's Awards for the Arts

James O. Langfelder, Mayor



Honoring the Recipients

Individual Visual Artist

William Crook, Jr.

Arts Organization

DSI Design Committee

Arts Educator

Elizabeth Marcy

Arts Volunteer

Théa Chesley

Special Recognition

David Shaw

Individual Visual Artist

William Crook, Jr., has been a working artist for over forty years. His pen and ink drawings are legendary in the Springfield area. The fine details found in his architectural drawings range from the State Capitol dome to homes to street scenes. He has preserved the memory of many “lost” architectural gems through his drawings. Trees and landscapes are also some of Bill’s finest works. Many of his pieces have been replicated as prints through Prairie Press, which he founded in 1990.

Bill taught art at MacMurray College, Jacksonville Correctional Center, and Lincoln Land Community College’s Regional Centers, as well as classes at Springfield Art Association and The Pharmacy Gallery and Art Space.

As an exhibitor at the Old State Capitol Art Fair since 1978, Bill’s works have been seen by thousands and purchased by hundreds. He has exhibited in shows at The Pharmacy, Springfield Art Association, and Strawn Gallery in Jacksonville.

In 1994, Bill was the “creator artist” for the Mayor’s Awards for the Arts, now one of twenty such honored artists.

Arts Organization

Mostly doing their work behind the scenes, Downtown Springfield, Incorporated’s Design Committee has brought creativity and the arts to the public’s attention in the downtown Springfield area. This committee consists of about ten volunteers from a number of organizations and has worked to improve the downtown district through public art, beautification, and the promotion of the City’s historic architecture. Art Alley has turned a drab space into a gallery of murals while a vibrant “opening

night” social benefits future public art projects.

Collaborating with the City of Springfield and Springfield Art Association’s High School Mosaic Camp, five grate areas that formerly held trees were repurposed into nature-themed public art spaces.

Architectural Walks take groups through the downtown area highlighting the artistic skill and design that went into the buildings.

With Illinois Native Plant Society, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and City of Springfield, the Committee created and executed a new plan for planters to not only beautify downtown but also to become part of the ecosystem with native pollinating plants.

The recently added Downtown Open Streets events feature family-friendly activities using the arts to promote health and wellness.

Arts Educator

About Elizabeth Marcy, it can be said that life is art and art is life. A District 186 elementary arts educator, she advocates for art as a vital part of the school curriculum. Her passion for art goes beyond the teaching of the visual art fundamentals (line, color, texture, form, etc.). Her students find that art is a voice, a vehicle, and a means of understanding the world around them as well as a way to interact with it.

Elizabeth has a profound interest in the special needs learner and the inclusion of those students within the district’s arts program. She curates the “Art is Exceptional” exhibit celebrating the diverse learners in the school community and their remarkable artwork. The individual attention Elizabeth has given her students over more

than a decade benefits the community as these students become patrons of the arts.

In addition, Elizabeth has coordinated a Sangamon County Art Exhibition at SIU’s School of Medicine, produced the “Art Speaks” video, collaborated on the Bobcat Peace Book, and does the makeup for Springfield Ballet Company’s [The Nutcracker](#).

Arts Volunteer

For Théa Chesley, volunteer is a word in all caps. For nearly forty years, her volunteerism has touched many segments of our community.

As a writer herself, Théa currently serves as president of Springfield Poets and Writers, an organization she has been involved with for 25 years. Her own work in poetry includes the Gwendolyn Brooks Emerging Author first-place award in 2008, two books of poetry, and serving as a judge for “Poetry Out Loud” competitions hosted by the Arts Council.

Théa also is involved with the Route 66 Film Festival, having served as a board member and as a judge of films. She currently manages the Festival’s publication and publicity efforts.

A jazz and blues aficionado, Théa has been involved with both the Springfield Jazz Society and the Illinois Central Blues Clubs. In the 1980s, she even hosted a jazz program on WSSR (now WUIS/nprllinois).

Added to all that, Théa was an office volunteer for the Arts Council, managing the membership databases and other tasks. Her technology skill also brought her to chair TechTalk for LLCC’s Academy of Lifelong Learning.