

REMARKS
LEADERSHIP LUNCHEON
OCTOBER 15, 2010

Colleagues

I am honored and humbled that I am the recipient of NASAA's 2010 Distinguished Public Service Award. Since arriving in Virginia a little over two decades ago, I have had the wonderful opportunity of working with and getting to know many of you as we collaboratively sought to strengthen the arts in our communities, states, and nation. We have experienced the exhilaration of success, particularly through increased public funding of the arts, and the pain of setbacks. But, in retrospect, we have made much progress.

I especially want to express my appreciation to Peggy Baggett and her colleagues, including Cathy Welborn who is here today, both past and present, on the staff of the Virginia Commission who made serving on the

Commission both productive and enjoyable. During my nine years of service my fellow commissioners represented today by Nick Covatta, the current chair, also sought diligently and collaboratively to increase access for all residents of Virginia to high quality art. I also note the effective leadership and invaluable resources provided by Jonathan Katz and his colleagues at NASAA. All of you have made my public service both enriching and rewarding.

Although public support for the arts made significant progress during the last two decades, the immediate future is not so bright. The sluggish national economic recovery which many economists predict will continue at least through fiscal year 2013 has stagnated state and local tax revenues. Cuts in education funding, especially for art and music, deprive students of a vital well-rounded education. Persistent calls for less government spending at all levels particularly for “non-essential services” threaten the

already strained resources for art organizations. Uncertainty about the federal tax code and its impact on philanthropic giving diminishes another funding source for art organizations. All of these factors combine to present enormous challenges for art organizations, artists, and art educators.

Now, more than any time in the recent past, we must find ways to sustain the arts. We know that the arts foster creativity which is critical to economic competitiveness and economic growth. We see neighborhoods and communities being revitalized and transformed with vibrant, sustainable communities through the arts. We recognize the crucial economic impact of the arts through job creation, tourism, and improved quality of life. We also know that the arts can lift our spirits and touch us in so many positive ways.

Because all of us here today recognize the multi-faceted value of the arts, we must strengthen our resolve to keep them healthy. For me, it is simply a matter of the A, B,

C's. We must tirelessly advocate for the arts and public funding of the arts. We must search for bi-partisan political support for our cause. And we must collaborate or work jointly with other individuals and organizations both in the public and private sectors as we continue to do what we are already doing well, and craft strategical revised programs and develop new initiatives.

If the arts remain healthy and prosper, then we will have mastered the A B C's and been faithful public servants.

Thank you again for honoring me today with this award and the beautiful piece of art.