



**Wisconsin Foundation for the Arts**

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**2005 Governor's Awards Recipients Named**

Madison, WI. Governor Jim and First Lady Jessica Doyle will again host a ceremony honoring the state's outstanding arts supporters at the Executive Residence in Madison on Thursday, November 3 at 5:30 P.M.

Receiving the 2005 Governor's Awards in Support of the Arts are: in the "Individual Leadership" category, **Chris Abele** of Milwaukee and **Diane Ballweg** of Middleton; in the "Arts Organization" category, **Friends of Gibraltar**, board president Sheila Petroni, Fish Creek; and **Johnson Financial Group**, Dick Hansen, president and chief executive officer, Racine in the "Corporate/Business" category.

Honorary Co-Chairs of this year's Governor's Awards in Support of the Arts are **Sheldon and Marianne Lubar** of Milwaukee. In 2002, the Lubars received a Governor's Award in Support of the Arts recognizing several decades of generous arts support and volunteer leadership in the Milwaukee area.

**We Energies**, through the Wisconsin Energy Corporation Foundation of Milwaukee, is partnering with Wisconsin Foundation for the Arts in sponsoring the annual event.

**Chris Abele**, President and Chief Executive Officer of Argosy Foundation, is honored for his energetic, hands-on leadership and support of Milwaukee arts organizations. A devoted lover of the arts, Mr. Abele chairs the Board of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts and Milwaukee Shakespeare, a theater company he co-founded six years ago that already enjoys a national reputation. Additional arts-related board memberships include the

2005 Governor's Awards Recipients Named  
For Immediate Release  
September 8, 2005  
Page 2

Milwaukee Art Museum, Bialystock and Bloom, Pabst Theater, United Performing Arts Fund (UPAF) and the Royal Shakespeare Company.

**Diane Ballweg** is recognized for philanthropy supporting the arts in Madison. Her generous lead gift of \$3 million to the Great Performance Campaign, of which she was the honorary chair, inspired the community-wide effort raising \$23 million in endowments for nine local arts organizations that are presenters in the Overture Center. Her gift endows programming and maintenance of the Overture Concert Organ, the symphony's stunning new instrument in Overture Hall. A member of the Madison Symphony Orchestra board, Diane and her family-owned business, Endres Manufacturing Company, are annual symphony concert sponsors.

**Friends of Gibraltar (FOG)** have enriched the educational experience for a generation of children in their northeastern Wisconsin community. Since 1982, FOG has supported more than 40 art and science residencies enhancing the Gibraltar School District's public education for Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. Funded through arts-based grant writing and numerous fund raising events, annual projects give a special illumination to arts education. Sheila Petroni, as President of FOG Board of Directors, works with volunteers committed to providing an integrated, hands-on arts education for the intellectual and aesthetic development of all children.

**Johnson Financial Group** of Racine, Dick Hansen President and Chief Executive Officer, is recognized for 19 years of arts support statewide, giving more than \$200,000 annually from its banks in more than 10 communities. Johnson Financial Group, headquartered in Racine, is part of the Wisconsin-based Johnson family of companies known for their vision of making the communities they serve better places to live and work. The arts have been a long-time passion of the Johnson family. Johnson Bank Madison arts gifts now exceed \$100,000, benefiting Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, Madison Ballet, Madison Opera, Madison Repertory Theatre and the Museum of Contemporary Art; Johnson Bank Milwaukee supports the Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Milwaukee Ballet and Milwaukee Institute of Art/Design programs at the Milwaukee Art Museum; Johnson Bank in Kenosha sponsors the Kenosha Symphony Orchestra, while the Janesville bank is committed to the Beloit/Janesville Symphony Orchestra. Johnson Banks in other Wisconsin communities have a similar record of support for local arts groups.

2005 Governor's Awards Recipients Named  
For Immediate Release  
September 8, 2005  
Page 3

Each recipient of the 2005 Governor's Awards will receive a personal gubernatorial citation, along with a gift of original artwork.

This year, the WFA commissioned Eau Claire surgeon and glass artist **Steve Immerman, MD**. His eye-catching, colorful glass sculptures are made using a process called *glass fusing or kilnforming*. Colored glass pieces are slowly heated to specific temperatures, midway between glass blowing (hot) and stained glass (cold), to achieve desired effects, and then slowly cooled in a computer controlled kiln to complete the handmade artwork. Further information and photos of the stunning art are available on his Website: [www.clearwaterglass.com](http://www.clearwaterglass.com).

The Governor's Awards in Support of the Arts began in 1980 to encourage support of the arts throughout Wisconsin. In 25 years, the Wisconsin Foundation for the Arts has honored more than 130 businesses, individuals and organizations whose extraordinary contributions to the vitality of the arts in local communities or statewide deserves recognition. Four previous governors have hosted the ceremony and personally presented the awards.

The Wisconsin Foundation for the Arts is a nonprofit public organization supported solely by membership dues and contributions. For more information visit the Website: [www.wisfoundationforthearts.org](http://www.wisfoundationforthearts.org) or contact: Jeffrey Bartell, Chair of the Wisconsin Foundation for the Arts (608/283-2432) or Kristi Williams, Executive Director (608/839-4758).

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