



17 July 2008 **GOVERNOR'S ARTS AWARDS**

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Doug Svetnicka, 827-4378
Department of Cultural Affairs

2008 Governor's Awards for Excellence in the Arts

**Eight artists and arts supporters will receive
New Mexico's highest artistic honor**

SANTA FE – Governor Bill Richardson and First Lady Barbara Richardson, along with the New Mexico Arts Commission, have announced seven individuals and a high-profile classical radio station as recipients of the 2008 Governor's Awards for Excellence in the Arts.

“This year's recipients of the Governor's Awards for Excellence in the Arts are artists and contributors who exemplify the energy and creativity of New Mexico,” said Governor Richardson. “I applaud their achievements and congratulate these outstanding artists.”

First Lady Barbara Richardson said, “The Governor and I celebrate this year's award winners with the same enthusiasm that they bring to their work each and every day. Without these people and organizations, our lives would be less full, our communities less vibrant.”

The 2008 Governor's Arts Awards recipients are:

Harry Benjamin of Silver City for Painting; **Tammy Garcia** of Santa Clara Pueblo for Visual Arts – Pottery, Sculpture and Glass; **Jack Loeffler** of Santa Fe for Ethnomusicology and Writing; **Noel Marquez** of Artesia for Painting and Mural Artistry; **Eugene Newmann** of Ribera for Painting; **Ali MacGraw** of Tesuque – Major

Contributor to the Arts; **Eileen A. Wells** of Santa Fe – Major Contributor to the Arts; and **KHFM Radio 95.5** of Albuquerque – Major Contributor to the Arts.

The 2008 Governor's Arts Awards ceremonies will be held on Friday evening, September 12, 5:15 to 7:00 pm at the St. Francis Auditorium, Museum of Fine Arts in Santa Fe. The ceremony is preceded by an afternoon reception and exhibition opening, 3:30 – 4:30 pm, in the Governor's Gallery, 4th Floor, State Capitol. Both the awards ceremony and gallery reception are free and open to the public.

The Governor's Arts Awards were established in 1974 by Governor Bruce King and First Lady Alice King to celebrate the enormous roles – both economic and cultural – that artists, craftspeople and arts supporters play in the life of New Mexico. During its 34-year existence, a diverse and prestigious list of painters, weavers, sculptors, dancers, musicians, storytellers, poets, actors, playwrights and potters have been honored. Past awardees include Georgia O'Keeffe, Laura Gilpin, Max Evans, Wilson Hurley, Joy Harjo, Bill Mauldin, John Nichols, Pablita Velarde and Cipriano Vigil.

Nominations for the awards are invited each year from arts groups and interested New Mexicans. All nominations are reviewed by a committee of the New Mexico Arts Commission, which sends its recommendations to the full Commission and to the Governor. The 2008 Awards Selection Committee consisted of Charmay Allred of Santa Fe as chairperson, Janice Spence of Hobbs, John Rohovec of Silver City, Glenn Cutter of Mesilla, Karen Cotter of Albuquerque and Chuck Zimmer, interim manager of the state public art program for New Mexico Arts. Loie Fecteau, executive director of New Mexico Arts, and media manager Virginia Castellano served on the committee in a nonvoting capacity.

The following are brief profiles of the 2008 Governor's Arts Awardees:

It has been said of **Harry Benjamin** that “Silver City would not be Silver City without him.” The renowned painter has a rich history of involvement with the Silver City Museum, Western New Mexico University, the Cobre Schools, the Mimbres Region Arts Council and numerous other arts organizations and individual artists. Benjamin is best known for his stunning depiction of the southwestern New Mexico landscape and his

wonderful eclectic spirit. A recent 40-year retrospective of his work at the Silver City Museum featured more than 80 paintings, drawings, sculptures, collages and ceramic works. In the 1980s, Benjamin's studio/gallery/residence was the only place of its kind in a downtown area that was run down and fading. Now "What's a Pot Shop" is the anchor of a vibrant creative arts district. Benjamin has helped many artists in Silver City to find gallery representation by taking them around to meet the owners and other artists. Cecil Howard, who received a Governor's Arts Award in 1999, said he has known Benjamin since he was an art student at Western New Mexico University. "As an artist, Harry has always been remarkably inventive, even idiosyncratic in response to subject matter and formal directives," said Howard in his letter of support. "His individual talent and eccentric tastes are reflected in his irrepressible aesthetic adventures, full of surprises and incongruities. His paintings are captivating not only for their beauty but also for the many varied ways in which they express his quest for self-knowledge and insight."

While it might seem unusual to give a lifetime achievement award to a 38 year-old, Taos artist **Tammy Garcia's** accomplishments in introducing unique contemporary design to ceramics, jewelry, pottery and sculpture are unparalleled. Nominator Bob Nurock notes that the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art in Indianapolis has held a retrospective of Garcia's work and that the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington D.C. will have a major exhibition of Garcia's work this coming August. "She will be the youngest featured artist ever in its history," Nurock said. "Both of these bring wide recognition to the State of New Mexico." Garcia is a descendent of the renowned Tafoya family of distinguished potters, and she learned her art from her mother Linda Cain and her grandmother Mary Cain. Garcia is also known for being an artist who gives back to the community. She donates works of art to benefit numerous nonprofits in New Mexico including the Buckaroo Ball and the Santa Fe Indian Market. Through her Blue Rain Gallery in Santa Fe, she helps promote other Native American artists and organizes traveling shows in the major art markets in the United States, noted JoAnn Lynn Balzer in her letter of support. "I believe Tammy Garcia is one of the best artists working today – anywhere," Balzer said. "Although firmly grounded in and informed by her pueblo heritage and tradition she has taken the

art form into a new dimension. ...She creates pottery and sculpture that are simply breathtaking and her talent seems to have no limit in expression of artistic creativity.”

Jack Loeffler is a true Renaissance man. During the 1950s and early 1960s, Loeffler was a jazz trumpeter who performed throughout the United States. He has written numerous books, including “Adventures with Ed: A Portrait of Abbey,” which was published in 2002 and recounts his experiences with writer and pioneering environmentalist Ed Abbey. Loeffler moved to New Mexico in 1962 and has spent the last 40 years devoted to preserving and sharing the arts and stories of the people of his adopted state. He has interviewed and recorded writers, visual artists, traditional indigenous people, musicians and ordinary people who live in every region of the state. As a master artist in ethnomusicology, Loeffler has set extremely high standards for sound quality and editing. Through his artistic recordings, he has exposed the world to traditional Hispano and Native American music and culture. Loeffler’s personal archive of interviews, music and environmental sounds has been fully digitized onto archival gold CDs and hard drives to be saved for future generations. The collection is already being used in current exhibitions and programs at the Palace of the Governors which will share this outstanding ethnographic collection in the new State History Museum, which is set for a public opening on Memorial Day weekend 2009. Loeffler’s radio shows, which include the ongoing “Lore of the Land” and “Moving Waters – the Colorado River and the West,” are legendary, not only for the information they impart but for the inspiration they engender. “Loeffler is a National Treasure who is revered in his field from the Folklore Center at the Library of Congress to small villages in rural New Mexico,” said nominator Sue Sturtevant. “While very few people deserve the Governor’s Award for Excellence in the Arts, Jack Loeffler is one who does!”

Born and raised in Artesia, **Noel Marquez** has devoted his artistic career, since the early 1970s, to working with the community in which he has lived, “imaginatively enhancing the appearance of buildings and structures that people see every day,” said nominator William Goodman, who received the Governor’s Award in 2005. “In so doing, he has contributed to a sense of pride in the local people, and a particular identity

to the place. And he has given young people an example to which they can aspire.” Goodman said he was first introduced to Marquez and his work by the late Luis Jimenez, with whom Marquez was working. “Luis, not an easy man to please, thought very highly of his competence as a painter and a sculptor.” Marquez has received a number of commissions from the state public art program for murals in such communities as Hobbs, Lake Arthur, Artesia and Mesquite. Virginia Dodier, director of the Carlsbad Museum & Art Center, said she has long been impressed with Marquez’s ability in public art projects to connect with people from across the local community where he is doing his work. “A good example is the Eddy County mural,” Dodier said in her letter of support. “Noel talked with and listened to folks, gradually overcoming initial resistance to such a big change in this small town. By the time of the dedication (in October 2006) Carlsbad had taken the mural to its heart.” Dodier said she first met Marquez when she stopped by his studio on Highway 285 in Artesia. “Through the door I saw him working at a small fresco panel, surrounded by neighborhood kids,” Dodier said. “He is exceptionally good with children and teenagers. He makes it seem like being an artist is absolutely normal, an option open to all.”

Eugene Newmann has long been regarded as one of the pioneering artists in the Santa Fe art scene. Born in Czechoslovakia, raised in Colombia and schooled in Brooklyn and Chicago, he has made New Mexico his home since the 1970s. “In addition to the sheer accomplishment of his work, Newmann has been an exceptionally generous presence in New Mexico’s community, curious about the work of others in whatever medium; always eager to talk painting and esthetics; pleased to share his insights into the creative process; willing to serve as an informal tutor to those coming up,” said nominator Frederick Turner. “In all this it helps that he is as brilliant verbally as he is with a brush in hand.” Artist Sam Scott said in his supporting letter: “Gene Newmann is the real deal, a very special person who has brought laughter, intelligence and grace, the higher standard, the greater light to the art community of Santa Fe and New Mexico for more than 35 years.” Linda Durham said: “Of all the artists I know and have known – in New Mexico and beyond – none impresses me more than Eugene Newmann. And, in my opinion, none is a more worthy recipient of this award.”

Since moving to New Mexico more than a decade ago, Santa Fe resident **Ali MacGraw** has given generously of her time as an activist in the arts community. “As an artist, she has donated much of her own work to auctions and exhibits for nonprofit New Mexico organizations, many of which support the arts community,” said nominator Pat French. “Ali never hesitates to lend a hand and is an inspiration to the vast community of aspiring artists.” Among the organizations to benefit from MacGraw’s efforts are Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, Santa Fe Film Festival and the Short Story Festival. MacGraw was born in Westchester County, New York, the daughter of commercial artists. She is a graduate of Wellesley College and began working in 1960 as a photographic assistant at *Harper’s Bazaar* and at *Vogue* as a photographer’s stylist and fashion model. Her film credits include *Goodbye, Columbus*; *Love Story*; *The Getaway*; *Convoy* and the 1985 ABC prime time soap opera, *Dynasty*. In 2006 she made her New York Broadway theater debut in the drama *Festen*.

Eileen Wells has been an energetic and tireless supporter of the arts in New Mexico since she moved to Santa Fe in 1989. She has served as a board member and volunteer of the Museum of New Mexico Foundation in support of the four Santa Fe-based state museums. Wells has been a leader in generating private funding for everything from exhibitions to capital projects and more. In 1999 she co-chaired a \$7 million capital campaign, “Making Hispanic History,” to create the Museum of Spanish Colonial Art, which opened on Museum Hill in 2002. Since late 2005 Wells has chaired the Museum of New Mexico Foundation’s “Shape the Future” campaign, which has raised \$18 million to date. As Marian Silver notes in nominating Wells, “Eileen not only asks others to give, she makes countless financial contributions to the causes she supports. One spectacular example of her generosity is her recent \$5.5 million planned gift for the Museum of New Mexico Foundation that will provide endowment funds to help support foundation-affiliated institutions far into the future. It is the largest gift ever received by the foundation.” Other organizations that have benefitted from Wells’ contributions to the arts include the Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian, Institute of American Indian Arts, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, National Dance

Institute of New Mexico and the New Mexico Committee of the National Museum of Women in the Arts. Silver said Wells “not only has made our cultural institutions better places to visit, she has made New Mexico a better place to live.”

Since its founding in November 1954, **KHFM Radio 95.5** has been broadcasting classical music and promoting and showcasing the arts in New Mexico. This unique radio station, one of the longest running classical music stations in the United States, provides an up-to-the-minute Arts Calendar for a number of New Mexico communities, including Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Los Alamos, Roswell, Ruidoso and Rio Rancho. The station serves as the official radio outlet and broadcasts performances for the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra, as well as promoting upcoming concerts. The station has never been driven by profits or ratings, but rather a commitment to classical music. The station helps support the Santa Fe Opera by previewing all of the summer season’s operas, including informative discussions of upcoming performances, as well as supporting other New Mexico summer festivals such as Music at Angel Fire and the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival. KHFM has long had a commitment to encourage the participation of young people in the arts by producing a weekly children’s program, “Classics for Kids,” which introduces children to music they most likely would not hear anywhere else on the radio. KHFM also conducts musical instrument drives in Albuquerque and Santa Fe in which instruments are collected from listeners, repaired and then given to middle school students who are interested in music but cannot afford to buy or rent instruments. In his letter of support, Most Rev. Michael J. Sheehan of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe called the radio station “a great blessing to our community.” Sheehan said: “I am a great fan of classical music as I think it is uplifting to the soul. I wake up every morning with the KHFM music, and KHFM is the last thing I hear before drifting off to sleep every night.”

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