For Immediate Release
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Link to Press Release: https://artsfairfax.org/2026-artsfairfax-awards-honorees/

2026 ArtsFairfax Awards to Honor Bruce Berlage, Karen and Jim Cleveland, Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation, and Thomas Beveridge on October 30

Fairfax, VA (May 8, 2026)—ArtsFairfax, the nonprofit designated as Fairfax County's local arts agency, announces the 2026 ArtsFairfax Awards recipients. Celebrated as the premier annual event to recognize visionary contributions to the arts countywide, the **2026 ArtsFairfax Awards** will take place at the Hyatt Regency Reston on October 30, 2026 to honor **Bruce Berlage** with the Jinx Hazel Award, **Karen and Jim Cleveland** with the Philanthropy Award, **Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation** with the Innovation Award, and **Thomas Beveridge** with the Achievement Award.

"The 2026 ArtsFairfax Award honorees are deeply committed to the local arts scene through their leadership and roles as civil servants, dedicating their time, talent, and expertise to the accessibility and creation of arts experiences that directly impact the daily lives of Fairfax residents," says **Stuart Holt**, ArtsFairfax President & CEO.

With a reception, luncheon, and awards ceremony, the **ArtsFairfax Awards** attract civic leaders, including appointed and elected officials at all levels of government, business professionals, private supporters, artists, and arts administrators.

The event's Visionary Sponsor is the **Reston Community Center** (RCC) with Lead Sponsorship by **McGuireWoods**. Says RCC Board Chair, **Bill Bouie**, "On behalf of RCC's Board of Governors, we are pleased to support the ArtsFairfax Awards and the extraordinary honorees being recognized this year. Their leadership reflects the power of the arts to inspire, connect and strengthen communities across Fairfax County."

Event Details:
Friday, October 30, 2026
11:15am – 2:00pm
Hyatt Regency Reston,1800 Presidents Street, Reston, VA 20190

Sponsorships and tickets are available at ArtsFairfax.org/Awards, or you can contact Debbie Mueller, Director of Development, dmueller@artsfairfax.org.

Proceeds from the Awards help sustain the programs and services ArtsFairfax provides at no cost to local artists and arts organizations across the County. ArtsFairfax offers $820,000 in grants to over 60 local arts nonprofits annually; networking and professional development opportunities; public art and creative placemaking projects; and access to an online arts directory, events calendar, job board, listing of regional artist calls, and a public art locator mapping tool.

According to the 2022 Arts & Economic Prosperity Study, conducted by ArtsFairfax in partnership with Americans for the Arts, the nonprofit arts sector in Fairfax County represents a $300M industry and generates $3M of in-kind support and over 130K volunteer hours, demonstrating the value of the arts to County residents.

2026 ArtsFairfax Awards Honorees

ArtsFairfax Jinx Hazel Award: Bruce L. Berlage

The Jinx Hazel Award is ArtsFairfax's premier award recognizing an individual or organization whose vision and commitment has helped shape the cultural life of Fairfax County.

Bruce Berlage has spent a lifetime building neighborhoods and institutions, and now, a new cultural home for the arts in the heart of McLean. For his longtime support of McLean Project for the Arts (MPA) and naming gift for the creation of the MPA Berlage Arts & Education Center, ArtsFairfax is proud to honor Bruce Berlage with the 2026 Jinx Hazel Award.

Born in Chicago and raised in Olney, Maryland, Berlage graduated from the University of Maryland, where he served as Vice President of the Student Government Association and established a legislative system still in use today. He was also active in campus radio, musical productions, and an a cappella group—formative experiences that led to a lifelong connection with the arts. Together with his beloved wife, Donna, Berlage established an endowed lecture fund at the University of Maryland supporting leadership programming.

Following graduate studies in business at George Washington University, Berlage served in the United States Army before starting a professional career in real estate development, homebuilding, and finance, serving as managing partner of Beck & Berlage Real Estate LLC. He also served as a director of NationsBank, as a life director of the Northern Virginia Building Industry Association, and as president and director of the Home Owners Warranty Corporation.

Berlage's artistic life and civic service have always been accompanied by a deep commitment to education and youth development. A lifelong connection to the 4-H program led him to chair the Maryland 4-H Foundation from 2004-2011 and to be inducted into the National 4-H Hall of Fame in 2022.

In McLean, Bruce and Donna Berlage shared a 43-year marriage and a deep love of art. Their homes were filled with artwork collected through sustained relationships with artists, and Donna was a much-loved presence at MPA until her passing in 2023.

When MPA set out to build a new, 6,100-square-foot space, Berlage helped move the project forward at every stage. In 2020, he was a positive force in the challenging months of COVID and served on the initial RFP evaluation and selection committees for architects and general contractors. For the last three years he has offered steady counsel and attended weekly Builder-Owner-Architect meetings, tracking the many moving parts of MPA's most significant capital project to date.

With a celebratory ribbon-cutting ceremony on April 30, the MPA Berlage Arts & Education Center is now open as a community resource, expanding access to contemporary art through new exhibition and arts education spaces, a professional ceramics studio, and an environment of hospitality with a café, adjacent patio, and nearby park. It also allows MPA to integrate visual art with music, film, artist talks, lectures, and public conversations. The newly opened facility, built with so much care and attention by its namesake, is a transformative new home for community gatherings in Fairfax.

ArtsFairfax Philanthropy Award: Karen and Jim Cleveland

The Philanthropy Award recognizes an individual, corporation, or foundation that has provided leadership funding or long-term monetary support to the arts.

Karen and Jim Cleveland have devoted their lives to strengthening the cultural landscape of Reston, carrying forward Robert E. Simon's founding vision of a community surrounded by nature, thoughtful design, and a shared sense of belonging. Guided by the belief that people of all backgrounds can live, work, and thrive together, 2026 Philanthropy Award recipients Karen and Jim Cleveland are steadfast champions of the arts' essential role in civic engagement.

Jim was a founding director of the Greater Reston Arts Center, now Tephra Institute of Contemporary Art (Tephra ICA). He served for more than two decades on their board, including roles as Board Chair and as a leader of several major fundraising efforts. Karen and Jim continue to support Tephra ICA. As lifelong art collectors, they have built personal relationships with the artists featured in their collection.

As President of the Reston Land Corporation, Jim guided the creation of the first phase of Reston Town Center in the early 1990s. Jim was also one of the founders and funders of the Reston Nature House and the Reston Historic Trust, which operates the Reston Museum. Jim also co-chaired the capital campaign to build the Reston YMCA and donated the land on which the YMCA now sits. Karen chaired the YMCA board and led the fundraising campaign to ensure that no one was ever turned away for an inability to pay.

Karen Cleveland's outstanding leadership is rooted in the principle that the business sector must give back to the broader community to thrive. She served as CEO of the Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce, Habitat for Humanity of Northern VA, and Leadership Fairfax. She was also the visionary behind the Best of Reston Awards for Community Service, a program that recognized and inspired local philanthropy for over 25 years. Both Karen and Jim were honored individually through this program, and together in 2011, they received the prestigious Robert E. Simon Award for Community Service Lifetime Achievement. Karen and Jim have each served as Board Chair of the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts Associates Board, and both have been involved with Public Art Reston since its founding with Karen currently serving as Board Chair.

Through their leadership, generosity, and unwavering commitment, Karen and Jim Cleveland have helped shape Reston into a community where the arts flourish, connections deepen, and Simon's vision continues to thrive.

ArtsFairfax Innovation Award: Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation

The Innovation Award recognizes an individual or organization that has implemented nontraditional or inventive approaches to their art form or has uniquely engaged audiences in the arts.

For their innovative approach to using public art as an economic development tool, Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation (SFDC) is the 2026 Innovation Award recipient.

Since the late 1990s, Fairfax County has identified the Richmond Highway (U.S. Route 1) corridor from the beltway to Fort Belvoir as a Community Revitalization District, or area poised for redevelopment. Enter SFDC, a nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening the economic vitality of Southeast Fairfax through community revitalization, business support, and strategic partnerships.

More specifically, SFDC's recent placemaking efforts have brought new energy to the corridor through beautification, public art, gateway features, and initiatives designed to create memorable spaces. SFDC implemented art along the corridor in two ways: first, they commissioned five murals, and second, they launched the "Faces of One" project, a proof of concept for the value of public art that has resulted in economic growth and a stronger sense of place.

With a vision to transform Route 1 into a nine-mile-long gallery of public art, but without the necessary budget to purchase or commission sculptures, SFDC partnered with artist Michael Alfano to dream up "Faces of One." Together, they identified 10 sculptures and a one-year lease agreement (which has since been renewed) to publicly exhibit the artwork in key locations along Richmond Highway. Through collaboration and creative problem-solving, SFDC successfully employed public art to engage local businesses, residents, and visitors.

"The 'Faces of One' project seeks to spark conversation, pride, and a sense of shared history. The sculptures are strategically placed along the corridor, transforming familiar spaces into engaging destinations that encourage exploration and interaction," says Evan Kaufman, SFDC Executive Director. He continues, "It is a celebration of the stories and people that shape our community. The sculptures embody themes of connection, transformation, and identity, inviting people to reflect on the shared experiences that define Richmond Highway."

Each sculpture represents someone who lived in or built the area and includes interpretive signs with QR codes, offering viewers deeper insights into each piece, its story, and the broader vision for the project. At the end of the lease term, local businesses will have the option to retain the sculptures on their property. Additionally, the nearby Nepenthe Gallery has sold small replicas of the sculptures, and the American Horticultural Society has featured some of the sculptures in their gardens.

By focusing their attention and investment in public art, SFDC has demonstrated arts' ability to invigorate placemaking, create local identity, and boost economic activity.

ArtsFairfax Achievement Award: Thomas Beveridge
The Achievement Award recognizes the outstanding career of an artist in any discipline who has made a lasting contribution to their discipline and/or community.

For his distinguished career as a soloist, composer, and conductor, and for his contributions to the Washington music community, Thomas Beveridge is the 2026 Achievement Award honoree.

After studying composition, conducting, and voice at Harvard College and Fontainebleau Schools of Music and Fine Arts, Beveridge's career as a professional singer took him across the country and around the world. He performed solo recitals at Carnegie Hall and Symphony Space in New York, and at the Phillips Collection, Corcoran Gallery, Library of Congress, and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC.

In 1991, Beveridge founded New Dominion Chorale as the first major non-audition community chorus in the area. By continuing this tradition, the Chorale has established itself as a professional chorus that is welcoming to all. In addition to performing concerts of choral masterworks, operetta, and show tunes, the Chorale upholds an active outreach program, having presented many free programs for children in Fairfax Hospital, at nursing homes, assisted living, and other residential facilities. Beveridge has been a long-time supporter of the Washington International Competition for Voice triennial competition, crafting entire Chorale programs to showcase young soloists. In 2016, he was named an honorary member of the Friday Morning Music Club for his service to the greater Washington music community.

Beveridge's accomplishments include over 700 compositions and arrangements. He has received commissions from Harvard University, Harvard Divinity School, Union Theological Seminary, the Choral Arts Society of Washington, and the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation at the Library of Congress. His papers and manuscripts have been accepted by George Mason University for inclusion in their special collections library. In 2023, Beveridge's *ONCE: In Memoriam Martin Luther King, Jr.,* commissioned by the Choral Arts Society, was performed with the Heritage Signature Chorale on the 60th anniversary of Dr. King's March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

Most notably, Beveridge's *Yizkor Requiem*, which premiered in 1994, was hailed as "a major American work" in national press and was singled out by Joseph McLellan, chief music critic of *The Washington Post*, as "one of the music season's most memorable events." Written in honor of his parents following the death of his father, *Yizkor Requiem* combines Jewish and Christian liturgies into a single work that demonstrates the connections between faiths and the importance of remembering those loved and lost. The Chorale has performed the *Yizkor Requiem* at Washington Hebrew Congregation, Georgetown University, Washington National Cathedral, and most recently in 2025 at the National Presbyterian Church as a free concert to the public.

Beveridge was formerly the Director of Choral Activities at George Mason University and Chorus Master of the Washington National Opera. He has also appeared at the Kennedy Center as guest conductor of the Washington Chamber Symphony for their *Messiah* sing-along. Beveridge was guest assistant conductor for the Choral Arts Society's performance of Knaifel's *Chapter Eight* at the Washington National Cathedral with cellist Mstislav Rostropovich, as well as a guest conductor of the National Gallery Orchestra.

Thomas Beveridge has built a legacy that embraces new audiences, mentors young talent, and grows the canon of choral works in America.