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Contact: Rosanne Royer, Awards Chair  
 (503) 871-1023 cell  
 rosanneroyer@comcast.net

**Ethnic Heritage Council announces  
 Recipients of the 2020 Annual EHC Awards  
 to Ethnic Community Leaders and Artists**

The Ethnic Heritage Council (EHC) is proud to announce this year’s award recipients, to be honored at EHC’s 40th Anniversary celebration. The special event is rescheduled to Spring 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, date to be determined. The awards program with annual meeting is EHC’s major annual event. The award recipients represent extraordinary achievements and contributions to the region’s cultural and community life. We invite you to read their biographies below.

**The 2020 EHC Award Recipients**

**Rita Zawaideh**



*Spirit of Liberty Award*

**Bart Brashers**



*Aspasia Phoutrides  
 Pulakis Memorial Award*

**Randal Bays**



*Co-Recipient  
 Gordon Ekvall Tracie  
 Memorial Award*

**Emiko Nakamura**



*Co-Recipient  
 Gordon Ekvall Tracie  
 Memorial Award*

**Bud Bard**



*EHC Leadership  
 & Service Award*





## Rita Zawaideh

2020 "Spirit of Liberty" Award

*Established in 1986 and given to a naturalized citizen who has made a significant contribution to his or her ethnic community and ethnic heritage, as well as to the community at large.*

For decades Rita Zawaideh has been an advocate and change-maker on behalf of Middle Eastern and North African communities in the United States and around the world. She is a "one-person community information center for the Arab community," according to the thousands who have benefited from her activism and philanthropy. "The door to Rita's Fremont office is always open," says Huda Giddens of Seattle's Palestinian community, adding that Rita's strength is her ability to see a need and answer it. "She doesn't leave a stone unturned in search of a solution," says Giddens.

Rita was born in Jordan and grew up in Seattle. Through the years she has maintained close ties to the Arab world, as well as to the Arab-American communities throughout the U.S. She founded the Salaam Cultural Museum (SCM) to raise awareness of Arab American cultures and provide support to refugees and immigrants both locally and internationally. Rita is owner and founder of Caravan-Serai Tours, a Seattle travel agency specializing in the Middle East and North Africa. Through her travel agency network she has organized volunteer trips and donation drives for refugees in the Middle East and North Africa since the 1980s. She often labors into the wee hours of the night to solve a person's problem, putting that person in touch with a lawyer, a city council member, a school principal, a church contact, perhaps even someone who lives on the other side of the country. No one is turned away.

**Leader in Resettlement of Newcomers.** When the first influx of Iraqi refugees arrived in Seattle in the mid-2000s, Rita raised money to support them and helped them feel welcome. Since the beginning of the war in Syria in 2011, she has advocated for refugee resettlement in Washington State, succeeding in welcoming families as well as members of persecuted populations, such as the Middle Eastern LGBTQ community. Rita marshals the efforts of vast networks of resettlement agencies, community organizations, activists and volunteers, arranging donations or fundraisers to provide school supplies, winter clothing and furniture while also assisting them in learning English and finding jobs. In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, Rita anticipated backlash and led the formation of AACC, the Arab American Community Coalition. AACC was instrumental in preventing hate crime escalations, unnecessary profiling by police, and calming nerves in the community. The organization conducted cultural sensitivity training for local law enforcement personnel and helped police and the community better communicate and respect one another. She established a hotline, staffed with Arabic speakers to ensure protection of civil rights. As the tensions pointed to the possibility of war with Iraq, Rita helped the Arab community mobilize against the war and sponsored visits to Baghdad by members of Congress. During the war, she coordinated shipments of much-needed medical supplies into Baghdad, arranging for the Jordanian army to deliver them to families in parts of Iraq where other international organizations were unable to reach civilians.

**Leader in Cultural Affairs and International Service.** Upon founding the non-profit Salaam Cultural Museum (SCM) in 1990, Rita began to employ Middle East and North African (MENA) immigrants, refugees and members of the MENA community to carry out relief programs. SCM also promotes

local MENA artists and businesses, educating the wider Washington State community about the Middle East and North Africa through workshops and cultural events. Every year SCM organizes volunteer trips to the Middle East, sending shipping containers of medical supplies and clothing for distribution to refugee camps in Jordan. SCM was among the first organizations that went into Lesbos, Greece at the height of the refugee crisis in 2015. A new shelter and clinic for women and children on the island of Samos will be SCM's 2020 project in Greece.

In 1990 Rita also was a key organizer of the first Seattle Arab Festival that brought eight Middle Eastern film directors to Seattle to screen and discuss their work. This led to the creation of Arab Film Distribution (AFD), which Rita founded to provide an outlet for Middle Eastern and North African filmmakers to showcase their work in the U.S. and to raise awareness of Arab culture and history outside the politicized news cycle.

In early 2020, as the novel coronavirus began to spread around the world, Rita knew it would have dire consequences for recently resettled refugees in Washington State as well as overseas. She jumped into action and began raising funds to help the local refugees with needs, such as rent, utilities, tuition and food, knowing they would be the first to lose income but not qualifying for state unemployment or other assistance. She also raised funds to buy and distribute food to Syrian refugees in Jordan. So far, due to Rita's efforts, between the food drive and local refugee aid SCM has been able to disburse over \$50,000 in pandemic relief assistance .

Elizabeth Abu-Haydar of Seattle's Lebanese community said she arrived in Seattle with no contacts until she met Rita, who put her to work on various projects. In order to raise awareness of the plight of the Palestinian people like Elizabeth, she organized a support group and insisted that it include people from all faiths and beliefs and who shared a common passion for social justice for all people.

"Rita's success lies in her ability to mobilize a network of volunteers and community groups," says Owen Harris, volunteer and University of Washington graduate student, among those nominating Rita for the award. A project might include the Sikh Community, Arab-American community, local businesses such as Cost-less Furniture, Microsoft, Bridge Ministries, West Side Baby, BECU, Deseret Industries and Goodwill, refugee resettlement organizations such as the International Rescue Committee, nonprofits such as NW Immigrant Rights Project, religious organizations such as Jewish Family Services, Council on American-Islamic Relations, local churches and synagogues, students and professors from UW, law enforcement such as the Seattle Police department and private donors.

"Rita is trusted and held in high esteem by people of different walks of life all over the world," says Harris. "She is truly deserving of the 2020 Spirit of Liberty Award."

Rita can be reached at [rita@salaamculturalmuseum.org](mailto:rita@salaamculturalmuseum.org)



## **Bart Brashers**

**2020 Aspasia Phoutrides Pulakis Memorial Award**

*Established in 1983 for significant contributions to an ethnic community and to the community at large. The award is named for a revered founding member of EHC who exemplified the organization's mission*

The selection of Bart Brashers for the Aspasia Phoutrides Pulakis Memorial Award presented a fascinating opportunity to explore how a person's daytime occupation might seem unrelated to the avocation where they spend most of their time after work. Bart was brought to our attention because of his extraordinary achievements

in preserving Swedish traditional music and dance. However, an interview of Bart revealed that what he does as an atmospheric scientist touches all our lives every day and happens to have a Nordic connection, just as his commitment to cultural preservation does.

As a musician Bart Brashers is renowned in traditional music communities, both here in the U.S. and in Sweden, for leadership in preserving the nyckelharpa, Sweden's revered folk instrument. During the day he is a consultant in air quality in the Lynnwood offices of Ramboll, one of the world's most respected research and development companies. It was founded in Denmark in 1945 by Børge Rambøll and Johan Hannemann who went out on the rooftop of their university building, looked out at the destruction to their beloved city of Copenhagen during WWII, and decided they wanted to start a company to help rebuild and protect society. They first did business in the Nordic countries, where their work is still concentrated, but today have over 300 offices in 35 countries and 16,500 employees. Their goal is to solve problems but always with a long-term, sustainable future in mind. It is no surprise that Ramboll has offered their environmental health and safety teams to address the hazards of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In his specialty of air quality, Bart is one of those experts who impact the quality of our environment. He considers himself an independent scientist, and works equally for governments and businesses. He has run photochemical grid models that identified the primary cause of Puget Sound's regional ozone problem (traffic in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties) to help decision-makers address the problem. He has helped local businesses address complex environmental rules and requirements to expand, with a long-term and sustainable viewpoint.

Bart's dedication to traditional music is also an expression of sustainability. Preserving the beauty and wisdom found in traditions offers us the cultural experiences that sustained our ancestors. Their music, dance, and traditions enrich our lives with lasting truths. Bart's passion to preserve every aspect of the nyckelharpa has brought together enthusiasts from all over the world, just as Ramboll, the company he works for has done. "He has his hands in the whole life cycle of the instrument," says Anna Abraham. There are converts of non-Nordic heritage who love the total experience of his teaching and performances. One of them, Leslie Foley says, "Bart not only gave me free lessons but taught me how to maintain my instrument, and now I perform with him in a trio." Bart's connection with the nyckelharpa began with his Swedish-American parents. His mother was a public schoolteacher and his father a professor at SDSU. On a sabbatical in Sweden, Bart's father took a class on how to build a nyckelharpa and Bart started lessons, keeping that passion to this day. Because of his efforts there is an American Nyckelharpa Association, which he helped found and get established by being the initial President, Treasurer, webmaster, and newsletter editor. People from all over the world who have an interest in Swedish music are connected and can buy instruments through the website.

Bart chose to study for a PhD in Atmospheric Sciences at the University of Washington because of the large Scandinavian community in the Northwest. He has been the music director of Springdans Northwest at Seabeck WA, a four-day event where he organizes the visiting instructors and manages the children's group. He often leads the song dances at the Skandia Midsommarfest. He plays for practices and performances of Barneleikarringen, a pan-Nordic children's dance group. Janet Gabites, an Australian American student of Bart's says he is a model of how to keep children involved. She says he is inclusive, has a great sense of humor. She believes that music and dance are one of the best ways for cultures to communicate with each other.

Bart writes music and currently performs in the SN3 – the Seattle Nyckelharpa Trio. In addition to the nyckelharpa he performs on fiddle, the birch bark trumpet (näverlur), cow horn, and various flutes. He is well versed in the making of traditional costumes. In nominating Bart for Ethnic Heritage Council award, Vicki Nelson, Business Manager of Nordiska Folkdancers, said, "Bart is an educator and advocate for the nyckelharpa and his heritage at every opportunity. His head may be in the clouds in his work as an atmospheric scientist, but his heart is certainly in his love of his Swedish heritage and his music."

Bart can be reached at [bart.brashers@nyckelharpa.org](mailto:bart.brashers@nyckelharpa.org)



## Randal Bays

Co-Recipient - Gordon Ekvall Tracie Memorial Award

*Established in 1990 for excellence in ethnic performance and leadership in the community in the traditional cultural arts. It is named for a musician and documentarian, who devoted four decades to the study, performance and promotion of Nordic traditional music and dance. The Gordon Ekvall Tracie Music Library is located in the National Nordic Museum.*

Living among us in Olympia, Washington is a self-taught, Irish style fiddler and guitarist, born in Indiana, who is considered among the best Irish style fiddlers of his generation. His discography is vast, including recordings with Ireland's top traditional musicians. He has performed throughout Europe, Canada and the U.S. and played for the President of Ireland. This international treasure is Randal Bays, who enriches our lives all year with performances and who provides classes and opportunities for youth to assure that this fine art form will live on.

Randal began playing music at the age of eight, including serious study of the classical guitar, prior to taking up Irish fiddling in the 1970s. He has devoted many years to learning traditional tunes and more importantly the feeling of Irish traditional music as handed down by the many great fiddlers and music lovers past and present. He is revered as a master of the traditional styles of County Clare and County Galway on the west coast of Ireland.

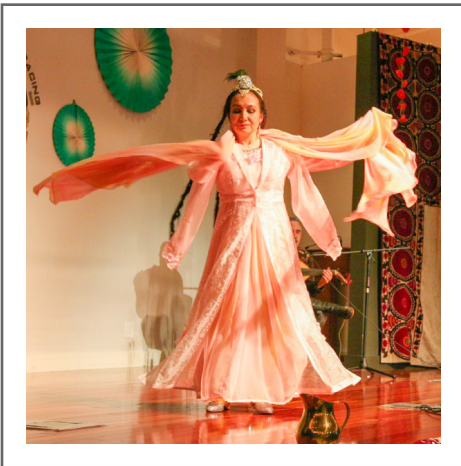
Randal first gained international recognition through his recordings and performances with well-known Irish fiddler Martin Hayes in the early 1990s. Since then he has recorded and performed with Daithi Sproule, James Kelly and other renowned Irish musicians.

In his *A Pocket History of Irish Traditional Music*, Gearoid O hAllmhurain wrote, "Randal Bays is one of the few Americans to have mastered the complex art of traditional Irish fiddling." Bays also is a well-known finger-style guitarist.

Bays was a founder in 2002 and until 2011, a member and music director for the Friday Harbor Irish Music Camp. In 2012, he founded Ceol Cascadia Traditional Irish Music Organization as a program of the Irish Heritage Club of Seattle. Since 2012 Ceol Cascadia, with Randal directing, has operated a very successful annual week-long summer music camp where highly respected music teachers and performers from Ireland and the US come to the Pacific Northwest to share and preserve this cultural art. Every summer more than a hundred students come from around the US and Canada to attend Cascadia Irish Music Week. Each year Randal makes sure to arrange for several full youth scholarships of tuition with room and board in an effort to pass on his art and techniques to a younger generation. Information on the music camp can be found at [www.cascadiairish.org](http://www.cascadiairish.org). In addition to directing the music camp, Randal also teaches Irish music year-round in Seattle and Olympia. Information on those classes can be found at [www.randalbays.com](http://www.randalbays.com).

John Keane, founder of the Irish Heritage Club of Seattle and Advisory Committee member of the Ethnic Heritage Council is pleased that Randal has collaborated with Michael Chang, distinguished musician in the Seattle Chinese community and with others in Seattle's diverse communities. David Jacobsen of the Irish Heritage Club, the nominator of Bays, considers Randal "a unique artist and a real treasure to the Irish community of the Pacific Northwest. His music is powered by a deep love of the culture and a heartfelt wish to share this magnificent tradition with audiences."

Randal can be reached at [rsb@randalbays.com](mailto:rsb@randalbays.com)



## Emiko Nakamura

Co-Recipient - Gordon Ekvall Tracie Memorial Award

Every year in March the Seattle-Tashkent Sister City Association fills the Event Center of Vasa Park in Bellevue with over 600 guests for Navruz, the Central Asian celebration of the spring equinox. The event is indescribably joyful, with most of the guests newcomers from the diverse nations of Central Asia who have settled in the Northwest since 1990. A huge feast awaits, as the Uzbek Ambassador or another representative from Uzbekistan arrives, along with Seattle public officials. Children are everywhere, intoxicated by music from the loudspeakers. But the highlight is the dance performance program of

Emiko Nakamura and her students in stunning multi-colored costumes, most of them created by Emiko, and featuring dances from a part of the world we hardly knew when the Seattle-Tashkent Sister City Association was established as the first US/USSR sister city in 1973.

Emiko was born in Japan, the daughter of a dance teacher who started her in dance when she was three years old. After continuous instruction in ballet and other dance forms, Emiko was drawn to Central Asian dances when a dance group visited Osaka. "My great-great-grandfather was in a delegation from the Ottoman Empire that came to visit the emperor of Japan," says Emiko. "Being partly Turkic in heritage, and ever since I was a very young child, I was always looking for a dance style that would suit my feelings and features and that I

might pursue for the rest of my life.” She headed to Uzbekistan for a year to study dance at top Uzbek schools.

“Emiko became a cultural sensation on Uzbek television,” says Shakhida Ismailova, Co-President of the Seattle-Tashkent Sister City Association. “From farmers to taxi drivers, they knew her because she was on TV, on the radio, and in the newspapers.”

The passion continued after Emiko came to Seattle. She credits her success here to two extraordinary “Classic Teachers” with whom she worked: Ivan Novikoff, a Russian Ballet Master who was an Artistic Treasure of Washington State, and with whom she studied classical ballet and folk dances at Shoreline Community College; and Professor Ilse Cirtautas of the Near Eastern Languages and Civilization Department of the University of Washington, who was a founder of the Seattle-Tashkent Sister City Association. These teachers worked with Emiko for over 20 years and made her into one of the top protégés of their fields. They did not teach her how to be a successful person, but instead demonstrated the lifestyle and mental attitudes of success through their own extreme dedication and keen focus on their fields. Novikoff was her Father of Performing Arts, and Cirtautas was her Mother of Central Asian Languages and culture.

Through her work with Professor Cirtautas, Emiko gained the cultural insights that have allowed her to demonstrate the highest standards of artistry in her teaching and performances. Professor Cirtautas facilitated a scholarship that allowed Emiko to study at Bakhor State Ensemble in Tashkent, take language classes at Tashkent State University, and practice in the evenings with famous Uzbek dancers who taught her the authentic styling and expressions of dance. She performed at the Navoi Ballet Theater and People’s Friendship Theater, two of the largest performance halls in Tashkent.

In the late 1980s Emiko established the Eurasia Academy Ensemble, teaching children and adults the traditional dances of the Uzbek and Tajik people. Currently she is organizing a Eurasia Virtual Academy with two Tashkent schools of dance whose master teachers are instructing students in Seattle, in other states, and throughout Europe. Emiko’s goal is to raise funds to bring several artists from Tashkent to perform at the next Navruz and to prepare teens from Seattle and Tashkent to dance together at the 50th anniversary celebration of the Seattle-Tashkent Sister City Association in 2023. She is tireless in gathering volunteers to create traditional Central Asian clothing for families in these communities who do not have native costumes for their children. To Uzbeks, dance is a supreme artistic form. “Emiko has helped us all sustain a relationship with Central Asian cultures by taking us deep into their traditions,” says Dan Peterson, former President of the Seattle-Tashkent Sister City Association. Her repertoire and costuming expertise is known in other states with sister cities in Central Asia and in cities with Middle East and Eastern arts festivals, including Boulder, Colorado, Salt Lake City, and Los Angeles. In Seattle she has performed at Turkish and Iranian festivals.

By day Emiko is a licensed massage therapist, in practice for over 30 years. Currently she serves as one of the Board members of the Seattle-Tashkent Sister City Association. “Emiko has singlehandedly been the driving force for teaching Uzbek and Central Asian dance in the Seattle area for over 30 years,” says Shoshana Billik, Co-President with Ismailova of the Seattle-Tashkent Sister City Association. “Emiko is a passionate cultural ambassador who shares her love of Uzbek culture and dance with children and adults from many different backgrounds. She has the unique ability to bring together different groups of people, united by a common enthusiasm for dance.”

Emiko can be reached at [karunamrita@gmail.com](mailto:karunamrita@gmail.com)



## **Bud Bard**

### **2020 Ethnic Heritage Council Leadership and Service Award**

***Established in 2018 to honor those who have made extraordinary contributions to the development of the Ethnic Heritage Council.***

On May 21, 2019 the Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle announced that Burton Bard, Jr. of Seattle would receive the 2019 Spring Decoration from the Government of Japan. The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays was awarded Bud in a ceremony at the Japanese Consulate, "in recognition of his contributions in promoting friendly relations and mutual understanding through facilitating sister city relationships between Japan and the United States." This coveted recognition by the Japanese nation spoke to the breadth of Bud's decades-long dedication to the development of intercultural organizations and their important role in our society. There is probably not an international or multi-ethnic organization that Bud has not reached out to over the years. In 1978 he made a commitment to what was to become the Ethnic Heritage Council, a commitment that remains to this day, as EHC celebrates its 40th anniversary. We are deeply grateful and proud to present Bud with the 2020 Ethnic Heritage Council Leadership and Service Award.

When Bud joined the grass roots cohort of ethnic community representatives that became the Ethnic Heritage Council, he was well armed with experience and contacts. He had served as Acting Executive Director, World Affairs Council; Director, International and Visitor Programs, Seattle/King County Convention and Visitors Bureau; Foreign Student Advisor, University of Washington; and Executive Director, Foundation for International Understanding Through Students, (FIUTS) University of Washington. He was founding president and CEO of the American Cultural Exchange, established in 1973. The soon-to-be Ethnic Heritage Council cohort Bud joined in 1978 was hard at work creating a three-day conference/festival at Seattle Center to demonstrate their mutual interests and what such a coalition could achieve. The great success of this event led to the formation in 1980 of the Ethnic Heritage Council of the Pacific Northwest. Bud not only took on the responsibility as founding president, his organization, the American Cultural Exchange, provided pro bono office space and the clerical support of his revered assistant Nancy Stone. A member of the founding group, Rosanne Royer, believes this generous offering at the outset is the reason for EHC's longevity. "Every new organization should be so fortunate as to receive this kind of fundamental support that allows programming to begin immediately."

After presidency of EHC Bud served as executive director until 1988. The initiatives during that period were rich and plentiful. A directory of ethnic organizations was published and reissued twice; the *Northwest Ethnic News* was launched; there was a "Let's Eat Ethnic" coupon book to raise funds. Three awards were created to honor the achievements of leaders in the ethnic communities. EHC took ethnic festivals into shopping malls, to Northgate, then South Center, and later to Cultural Crossroads Festival in Bellevue, "Bud knew who to contact to make things happen and introduced me to new people who are still my friends," says JoAnne Rudo, decades-long supporter of EHC. "I even agreed to dance with an Ivar's "Clam" wearing my Norwegian bunad at one of our Northgate Mall EthnicFests". In 1985 EHC's "Liberty Fair" at Seattle Center included production of the first July 4 Naturalization Ceremony at Seattle Center, which EHC continued to produce for 30 years.

Another major achievement was the "Spirit of '86" fundraiser at the Westin Hotel for the restoration of the Statue of Liberty, with national chairman of the campaign, Lee Iacocca, as special guest.



In the years following his service as executive director, Bud has served as an EHC officer or board member or advisory committee member, giving unfailing support to all of EHC's programs thereafter. "Bud is a model for any organization or individual working in the ethnic and international communities," says David Serra, EHC Vice President, who worked with Bud in the earlier years and has recently returned to the board. He is joined by the scores of EHC alumni who consider Bud Bard the thread that has connected all of us at EHC through the challenges and achievements of the past 40 years. Congratulations and thank you, Bud.

Bud can be reached at [paljoeybard@comcast.net](mailto:paljoeybard@comcast.net)



Ethnic Heritage Council | 305 Harrison Street, Room 312 | Seattle, WA 98109  
[info@ethnicheritagecouncil.org](mailto:info@ethnicheritagecouncil.org) | 206.443.1410 | [www.ethnicheritagecouncil.org](http://www.ethnicheritagecouncil.org)