

*Note: This session was presented as part of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration at the annual Americans for the Arts conference in Baltimore in June, 2010, culminating a year-long research contract by Maryo Gard Ewell to create a chronology of the years that led to the founding of Americans for the Arts, and its earliest years as an organization. What follows is very close to, but not quite, a literal transcript as the panelists and moderator have been able to edit their remarks. We used the names of audience members if the recorder caught them; apologies to those who remain “audience members” in this transcript.*

**FOUNDERS OF THE FIELD**  
Americans for the Arts, June 2010

Jack Golodner, Lee Howard, Milton Rhodes, Skip Reiss  
Maryo Gard Ewell, Moderator

**Maryo:** Today’s panel includes four extraordinary leaders of our field. Each of them has been active in the field for years, and in many different capacities, but for today’s purposes, I’ve asked each of them to represent a different decade in the period between 1960, when we were founded, and 1996, when we became officially “Americans for the Arts.”

However – to give you context, and because each person may refer to this organization by a different name – I need to do a quick romp through our organizational history.

Much was going on in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There was a big push for social reform and part of that movement was the creation of Settlement Houses, like Hull House in Chicago, in many urban areas; their intent was to help immigrants become oriented to their new home. The Junior League was founded just after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to support the Settlement Houses, and soon their purpose expanded and they were helping communities address a number of issues important to them. One of these issues was the arts, and in 1939, the Junior League hired Virginia Lee Comer, whose title from 1939 to the mid-1960’s was “Senior Consultant for Community Arts.” The Junior League in Winston-Salem, NC, brought Miss Comer to town; she helped them do a major cultural inventory which ultimately led to the creation of the Winston-Salem Arts Council in the late 1940’s. Remember the name of Phil Hanes – he was one of the earliest board members of the Arts Council, and you will hear his name throughout this story.

Meanwhile, in Quincy, IL, a businessman, musician, and arts patron named George Irwin was convinced that the arts could, and should, flourish in small areas as well as in big cities. He established a chamber orchestra and other local arts organizations, and at about the same time that Miss Comer was working in Winston-Salem, Irwin created the Quincy Fine Arts Association to help coordinate the burgeoning arts movement in his town.

So it's 1949, and now there are two arts councils in America. The idea slowly began to catch on as Miss Comer worked with other leagues in other cities, and as people heard about the success of the councils in Winston-Salem and Quincy.

Irwin – because of his music background, and Hanes – because of his understanding that for Winston-Salem to get national attention he had to get involved in national organizations – both were on the board of the American Symphony Orchestra League and ASOL's Executive Secretary, Helen Thompson, became interested in arts councils in 1950. She thought that they made sense. If arts councils could help coordinate local arts activity, and help everyone's management improve, and start developing audiences with a yen for the arts, well, then, the symphony movement would also be affected for the better. Miss Thompson offered ASOL as a sort of incubator for the community arts councils, and the small but mighty group of local arts council folk met each year at the ASOL convention. They developed a track of their own at the ASOL annual conference to train arts council leaders and potential leaders, to share information, and in general to take the first steps to starting a movement. Miss Thompson, meanwhile, secured Rockefeller Foundation funding to study the arts council movement and its potential.

By the late 1950's, it was thought that about 50 community arts councils were in existence in the US and Canada, meeting together during the ASOL convention which was, by now, billed as a joint convention. The arts councils began to think about forming their own organization, and in 1960 they did that – Community Arts Councils, Inc., was incorporated in Winston-Salem. Phil Hanes and George Irwin were officers and were its two most active members, traveling thousands of miles on behalf of CACI, as volunteers, to help arts councils flourish in other cities. Indeed, there were two addresses on the letterhead –Winston-Salem and Quincy. In the early 1960's, CACI encountered the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Nancy Hanks, Secretary.

Now, the Rockefellers Brothers Fund was conducting a big study on the performing arts in America. As I was told the story by Phil Hanes, they were looking for some organization to partner with so that their findings could be distributed far and wide – and CACI seemed to be that potential partner. It was still an all-volunteer group, though, and in 1964, with Rockefeller Brothers Fund encouragement, coupled with their maturing as an organization, CACI decided that it was time to move to New York, and to acquire staff, and change its name. CACI changed its name to Arts Councils of America, to acknowledge the participation of the emerging state arts councils. Ralph Burgard was the first paid director – interestingly, he had also been the director of the arts council in Winston-Salem. At this time, of course, there was a growing movement to create what was to become the National Endowment for the Arts; and by now, Nancy Hanks was a board member, and later president, of ACA. ACA hired Jack Golodner, who's with us today, to train its membership in advocacy techniques on behalf, initially, of helping establish a federal arts presence.

In 1966, Arts Councils of America became the Associated Councils of the Arts, in response to shenanigans by a disgruntled arts patron in New York (an interesting story in itself!). With leadership from ACA's Associate Director W. Howard Adams, the young state arts agencies

began to meet and in 1968, ACA begat the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, an increasingly active interest group. NASAA broke off from ACA to become an independent organization in 1974. By 1971, the community arts councils were feeling that the ACA mission was becoming so broad that they were increasingly forgotten (Partners for the Arts, for instance, had merged with ACA as its mission broadened). Some key figures met – in Winston-Salem, at Phil Hanes' home – to talk about that. The result was a group called the National Assembly of Community Arts Agencies – NACAA – which was a committee of ACA until 1978 when they, too, broke away under the leadership of NACAA's president, John Blaine. There was only one dissenting vote when the NACAA members voted to break away; that was from Chic Dambach, representing his arts council in North Carolina – and, interestingly, Chic was soon hired to be the first Executive Director of NACAA perhaps, as he was told, that his board could count on him to speak his mind.

The first president of NACAA, independent of ACA, was Lee Howard, who is with us today. As ACA broadened, it changed its name again – this time to the American Council for the Arts (1977). And with another merger – this time, with Arts, Education and Americans in 1982 – ACA's mission grew broader still.

The NEA was, by now, in existence, and was considering a federal-state-local system of partnerships. Because it was thought that congruency of vocabulary might help pave the way for federal money to come directly to communities, NACAA changed its name to NALAA (National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies) in 1982.

Finally, in 1996, NALAA merged with its former parent, ACA, becoming a single organization again. The name of the new organization was Americans for the Arts. Since then, the Arts and Business Council has merged in (2005) as has the Business Committee for the Arts (2008).

So you can see that the path from 1960 to 2010 has been multifaceted! With this as context – and so that you'll understand why each of our panelists might call this organization by a different name, let me introduce the panelists.

First, representing the 1960's, when ACA was getting involved in serious advocacy for a national arts presence, is Jack Golodner. He was a congressional aide, he was a political consultant, and he pulled together vastly different constituents to lobby on behalf of the NEA. Indeed, the AFL-CIO even loaned its lobbyists to help him in this endeavor.

Next, Lee Howard, NACAA's first president, representing the 1970's. In our audience today is Chic Dambach – NACAA's first executive director. Chic is now using the skills he learned, in part, at NALAA and in working locally on behalf of better communities, to literally help build world peace through his current organization, the Alliance for Peacebuilding.

Then, Milton Rhodes. Milton may have played more roles with ACA than anyone else! He was the director of the Winston-Salem Arts Council which hosted an ACA convention; then he went on the ACA board, then he was its CEO, and now – completing his career circle! – he is the

director of the arts council in Winston-Salem. For all his many years and many capacities, though, today he'll be representing the 1980's.

Finally, Skip Reiss, a cultural journalist who founded Arts Management in the 1960's, and who has taught arts administration for 20 years at Marymount Manhattan College. Skip will represent the '90's for this panel, but, like everyone, his experience spans many decades.

Each person will talk for a few minutes, and then we'll throw it open to you as we ask, does this history matter? Why?

### **Jack Golodner: 1960's**

Thank you very much, Maryo, for dragging me out of my cozy retirement cave and inviting me to participate. It's so marvelous for me to see what this organization has developed into thanks to Bob, Milton, and all who are much younger than I, and who came after, and really made this organization into something.

When I came on the scene, fifty- some years ago, it was nothing like what you're experiencing today. In the beginning, in Washington, there was darkness and a void spread over the land, insofar as the arts/government relationship was concerned. At that time, I was working on the House side of Congress, as chief of staff to a Representative from Connecticut. And he was a member of the Education and Labor Committee. In our view, the leadership of ASOL, which Maryo mentioned, was either indifferent or indecisive regarding government involvement in supporting the arts. It depended on what day you talked to them. In this, they were not much different from other "arts supporters." The Junior League, back in the 30's, was pushing for the so-called "Coffey-Pepper" bill, authored by John Coffey of the State of Washington and Claude Pepper of Florida, which called for creating a ministry of the arts, equivalent to a Department in the Federal establishment – a proposal which clearly was bound to fail. But I don't want to disparage them because at least they were doing something. Most groups concerned with the state of the arts then shied away from any talk of government involvement. And the arts council movement was still very weak. There were probably fewer than 100 councils in the country at that time and maybe a half dozen state councils.

None of these organizations had a presence in Washington. None of them had paid representatives. In fact, most opposed any activity that smacked of lobbying for the arts. There was no effective constituency for the arts. This was the void to which I referred. And whatever message that was delivered in support of the arts was weak and vague – "arts for arts sake." It had no resonance with Congress. This then contributed to the darkness.

Senator Javits was pushing ANTA, the American National Theater and Academy, as a federal program, and there were other proposals – Eisenhower, in 1955 in his State of the Union Address, recommended creation of an advisory council on the arts, and there was legislation introduced to do this. Some of it got pretty far on the Senate side, but the House became a graveyard for such ideas. Voices in opposition would raise the "specter of socialism." Remember, we had just passed through the McCarthy period. Others thought public aid for the

arts was a bailout to support failing playgrounds for the rich, or a bottomless pit of money to pay for amateur hobbyists in the arts.

Then, in 1961, there came a glimmer of light, and the beginnings of an arts-government relationship as we now know it began to take form. Kennedy had been elected. In New York, the Metropolitan Opera was threatened with a musicians strike. Up until then, the Metropolitan Opera had a recording contract with RCA, which was suddenly cancelled, and the musicians saw that they were going to lose a sizeable part of their income. As it was, they only had about a 25-week season. And they said “we can’t live on the income that generates.” And yet they comprised one of the finest orchestras in the world. So they were up in arms. The Met could not make up the loss. At that point Kennedy asked his new Secretary of Labor Arthur Goldberg, who later became a justice of the Supreme Court, to go to New York and settle this thing. The story goes that Jackie went into Kennedy’s office and said, “They’re going to cancel my opera season. Do something!” But I don’t know if that’s true or not. I do know that Arthur was not too pleased. As a new Secretary, he had a lot already on his desk. Through his staff, I appealed to Secretary Goldberg’s labor instincts; he had, after all, been General Counsel for the auto workers. And I said, “You know, we’ve got to get the parties together. You believe in collective bargaining, so make it work.” I’m exaggerating my role of course. Since the President said he had to go, then he was going to go. It wasn’t me who convinced him. He went; he arbitrated the dispute; and he wrote an opinion. The opinion in effect said: “Look, they’re both right. Professional musicians can’t live at this income level.” He cited statistics on what professional musicians were being paid. “But on the other hand,” he pointed out, “the Met had no money. Its contributors were being bled dry. What’s missing from the bargaining table,” he said, “is the public, the government – and they’re going to have to kick in; they’re going to have to support this institution.” And then he went on to point out the economic contributions that the Met made to New York City: its hotels, its restaurants – the multiplier effect if you will. Well, when he did this, key members of Congress took notice and the labor committees perked up, realizing the dispute had economic consequences.

Because the Congressman I worked for was a member of one of those committees, I was asked to draft a committee resolution, which mandated an investigation into the economics of the performing arts. The committee went on to conduct extensive hearings in four cities: New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and Washington, DC. It attracted tremendous press, not only in the trades, like Variety and Showbiz, but in the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, because the people who testified were from all elements of the performing arts, not just non-profits. They were from the Motion Picture Association, the recording companies, Broadway, and the unions. The unions turned out the glitterati, the stars. I didn’t realize until afterwards, when I happened to look at some of their files, that the musicians union had hired a PR firm in New York just to drum up publicity for these hearings around the country. Well, this got attention from members of Congress who wanted to do something but were intimidated by the opposition and felt there was no real support or valid argument. As I pointed out, organizational support for the arts was non-existent in Washington. But during the hearings and after, the legislators began to say, “Hey, there’s a constituency here,” because of the people who came out and testified, and they weren’t talking just about the arts. They were talking about economics, “We’re dying and if we

die, city downtowns, big and small will suffer. The tourist business, the hotels are going to suffer just as much.” So suddenly the dialogue changed. Congress was no longer talking about the arts as fine arts, low arts, high arts. The talk was about jobs, about businesses that depended upon this creative core, and Congress’s perception of the constituency for the arts support changed.

Suddenly there were unions—and not just the artists unions – talking to Congress. The arts unions lengthened their shadow by going to the AFL-CIO, and auto workers, garment workers, steel workers unions were saying, “We’re interested in this too.” This was no longer a vague, elitist thing. There was a major change in the conversation. More hearings were held. These groups began lobbying, and legislation to create a national advisory council on the arts was enacted in 1964.

This was a crucial period. Arts support was growing. A new constituency was evolving, and then Nancy Hanks and the ACA entered this scene. She was involved with the Rockefeller Brothers Fund study of the arts when she and I started talking, and I was retained as consultant for the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. Nancy understood that there was a new constituency for arts activity and arts and government programs, and it needed to be cultivated. Later, when she was Chairman of the Endowment, she encouraged me to arrange a series of breakfast meetings, to which I invited executives of national membership organizations, such as the National Council of Senior Citizens, the Chamber of Commerce, the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, Campfire Girls, the AFL-CIO, so that she could meet them. She didn’t tell them what they could do for the arts, she told them what the arts could do for them, for their memberships, and to enrich their own activities. All she asked for was that they give me the names of their chief lobbyists or representatives in Washington and make them available to help the Endowment when asked. So when we had problems on the Hill, Nancy would call me. Was it a Senator from Colorado? Ok, I’d call the Boy Scouts, and ask, “can you do anything?” You know six out of ten families in Colorado have a scout in the family. And they’d say, “Sure, we’ll do something.” They would make a call. And maybe we wouldn’t get a positive vote, but often a negative suddenly became a neutral. Anyway that was the beginning. A new constituency developed. New coalitions of groups to support the arts were formed. But today darkness is again descending. Budgets are being cut; government aid to the arts is again being portrayed as wasteful. Is the grand coalition Nancy sought in tact? If not, we have much more work to do.

### **Lee Howard: 1970’s**

Now, I was new to the game. In fact, I was the very new kid on the block, in the 70’s; I didn’t know anything about this at the time. I came out of the Junior League, and got talked into becoming a board member of something called an arts council, that involved volunteer work with arts groups, because I had done some children’s theater. I had also set up a communication system about all the arts on Long Island, for a Junior League project. When you come off being President of a Junior League and you’ve done a lot of stuff for the League, everybody wants you on their board. I ended up being on the board of the Huntington Arts Council. The then director, Winnie Scott, resigned because she was getting married, and she

was moving over to Connecticut. She took me out to lunch. As I have often said: "There is no such thing as a free lunch;" I bit because I needed a job for a number of personal reasons; and she told me what a good job it would be, and that it would be a part time job - I had 4 small children, I could surely get home by the time they got out of school. So I took it. And then I find out she lied! A lot! I indeed learned by the school of hard knocks, because that's what it was in 1971 and 72, you were learning as you went along.

There weren't any arts administration courses, but when I came into the office the first day, there was an article about a committee that had been formed. Winnie was on it. It was a newspaper article about a sub-committee of ACA, which I found out, was the Associated Council of the Arts. The sub-committee was called NACAA. It was a committee that dealt with local arts councils. I also found out that there were about 100 of them. I knew I was running one of them in Huntington, and I didn't know a great deal about it, but I had to run a festival that was going to have 70 events in three public parks. I had a park worker who was going to help me out. I had to go down to the park and set up the little stage with him. We were going to decide how many lights and stuff to use. The place was covered with wires. As we were talking, he said to me "Hey Mrs. H". ( this was in the early 70's, and he had a big afro haircut and red bandana around his head how many lekos?)" and I tell you this is the truth. I looked up at the ceiling to see if there were any leaks - that's how much I knew about lighting. He looked at me and said "No prob Mrs. Howard, I'll take care of it." We had a wonderful day.

NACAA was my lifeline. In the fall, Winnie called me up and said "I'm going to a regional meeting at ACA, down in Philadelphia, wouldn't you like to come?" I said "What's ACA?" to which she replied "It's the National Organization for Arts Councils. I could come and that there would be some seminars, where I'd probably meet some people and pick up some information. So off I went. Well I came back feeling like the dumbest person in the world, I didn't know anything, how could I do this job? But I had gotten some information and I had met one Michael Newton. Michael gave a talk and he gave some information that I have never forgotten.

It was the truth in the 70's and it is the truth today. He said there were three essential things to make an organization work; number one it has to have a good cause, with a viable purpose/mission, number two it has to have a passionate leader, who believes in that, and that leader has to have the ability to gather the people and the resources to make it work. It was true then and it's true today. And as we are here today, we're talking about the history of ACA, and we're talking about what happened, it's interesting to know what happened. But it's also what holds true now, because we're in sort of a period of cultural upheaval in our organizational history, just as we did in the 70's. So what I'm trying to do is show you it was like riding a roller coaster then, and we're kind of riding a roller coaster now. If you flash forward very fast, in 1974 there was that wonderful conference in Winston-Salem, I was just blown away, particularly by spending time with that amazing woman you spoke of earlier, Virginia Lee Comer.

I'll never forget: Ralph introduced me to her. We had the best time. Now this is kind of funny because I think she was about my age-that I am now-and somebody talked in awe about this

“old woman” and wasn’t it wonderful that she could still come, but she was lots of fun, interesting, with timely advice and I had a good time with her.

Anyway, things were just barreling along in the arts council world. They were going fast, and it was the same year that in New York State a big amount of money had been allocated by the State Legislature along with a history-making piece of legislation. Along with that large amount of money that was allocated to the New York State Council on the Arts, 75 cents was to be allocated per capita, per county out of that big hunk. The legislation said that every county would get 75 cents per capita. Why? New York is the fourth largest rural state in this country and none of the money up until then was going to the rural [counties]. The legislators wouldn’t have approved that kind of money unless some of it went to their counties. So that’s how it went through. Not long after that, ACA pulled all the local arts councils and arts commissions together because how to divide that money was the beginning of de-centralization in this country. The burning question was of all those arts councils/commissions, who was going to get to distribute it? Everyone looked at everybody else. Were the big commissions going to do it, or the small ones, was it going to be done by the local government, or was it going to be done by the 501c3? I remember looking at this guy with smudgy glasses, from upstate, his name was Joe Golden. We became great friends and colleagues as you all know. We were just eyeing one another and wondering what next? Shortly thereafter John Wessel, then with the State Council instigated the effort to form the Alliance of the Alliance of New York State Arts Councils, which we did in that year.

The reason for that story is that when ACA had its meeting in 1975, we sent a delegation of 20 representative councils from New York State. We worked in an organized fashion as a bloc. There was another alliance in California and another one in Kansas. What happened was that the very kind of opportunity that ACA was giving for the training for people was giving councils more ability, but they were asking more of ACA. So we actually asked that NACAA committee: “What are you doing?” I was the one that had to ask the hard questions. “What is your purpose?” “What are you going to be doing for local arts councils?” and “How are you going to do it?” Michael [Newton, now CEO of ACA] had to step in because the committee couldn’t answer that. The long and short of it was the next day I was asked to come to a breakfast and two months later I was asked to be on the Executive Committee of NACAA. The following year we found that there was a lot more growth and things were happening by then, there were more alliances trying to get help. Local arts councils were asking for more help from their state councils, from ACA, and they were knocking on the door of the National Endowment for the Arts.

So after that year the NEA began to have study after study after study, the Mary Reagan study, the Jim Baccas study, and all those studies. Hank Putsch had gone to the Partnership Office in the Endowment. They were finding there weren’t 300 arts councils, there weren’t 500 arts councils, there weren’t 1,000 arts councils, there were about 2,000 arts councils. ACA then began examining what its role was, and what was their constituency. By 1977, in Atlanta, ACA was continuing to examine and it was considering, just as you had said, changing its’ name to the American Council for the Arts.



The time was coming to ask, should NACAA be a subcommittee of ACA or should it become an independent committee working solely to do the training and be an advocacy and provide services for local arts councils. During that year 1977-78, with the support of ACA and the NEA, NACAA went through a process - process was really big at that time - and we went through a process with John Blaine, as the chair of the executive council. What happened-very quickly- was we went through that process with June Spencer as consultant, and planning in which at the end of several months after two weekend sessions plus a special meeting, we came into the Annual Meeting in 1978, in which it was presented to the constituency that NACAA become a separate organization.

It was a very hard decision to make, but they voted to do that. There was one negative vote; I would like to ask you does anybody know who made that negative vote? Chic Dambach! Chic Dambach, whom we hired. Until the year 78, NACAA was led by the executive committee chair John Blaine, and the committee hired Chic Dambach as our first director. He did a good job; he had an awful job to do that year. He had to take us through the whole 501c3 process, setting up the office, hiring an assistant, whose name has not been mentioned, and should be - Gretchen Weist, who was a remarkable lobbyist and legislative assistant, who helped set up the first conference. We had our first conference in Denver, to which I brought Harry Chapin, who gave us the famous keynote speech. I will end this quickly with another reminder that Harry did not give us that day, but it is as true today as it was true back then, and it's something we all need to keep in mind. Because all of us need to remember it: "Good dreams don't come cheap. You've got to pay for them, if you just dream when you are asleep; there is no way for them to come alive, or for them to survive. It's not enough to listen, it's not enough to see, when the hurricanes a-comin' it's not enough to flee." Those were words he wrote in '77 and I believe they apply today.

**Maryo Gard Ewell:** Are there themes that you picked up on that might be things to think about? Or other things to mention?

**Audience member:** I think one is the involvement of Congress in the '70's around Fed/State Partnership, which Jack mentioned earlier; City Spirit, Expansion Arts, and other programs that the federal government was involved in, which really influenced a lot of what we were trying to do, in our communities. Chic came out of Greensboro, in 1978.

**Lee Howard:** I don't know what the number of arts councils was, when Chic took the job: some say 1,000. An NEA study by Jim Baccus suggested it was closer to 2,000.

**Maryo:** So, we've got a theme of the power of a federal experimental program to let us see what was possible.

**Audience member:** And then in the '60's after the Endowment was founded, the emergence of neighborhood arts, which had never been recognized, and had ethnic communities working together, which gave a big reason for a large number of people to become involved who had never been involved before.

**Maryo:** That's another theme. And, that also brings up the theme of the changing/evolving definition of community.

**Audience member:** And the Bicentennial gave a big push to the arts council movement, too, when many local celebration committees converted into arts councils afterwards...there's a theme of local celebration.

**Audience member :** And, cultural planning was born.

**Jack:** And yet another important theme is advocacy and politics. I want to go back to where I left off in my earlier remarks: to Washington and Nancy Hanks who was with the ACA when I became a consultant to ACA. To do what? Well, ACA and the arts councils were not going to be lobbying, but Nancy insisted that a train was leaving, a new constituency was developing which was potentially huge, and if ACA and the arts councils didn't get on board and lead this constituency, she thought, they could just become irrelevant.

We started a monthly ACA newsletter, *The Word from Washington*. We conducted workshops: "How to lobby your state legislature;" "How to expand your base of support in the community, and politically." We ran these workshops all over the country. ACA's role then, in Nancy's mind, was to train and develop new leadership who could work with the new arts constituency. I think her vision for the ACA was that it would be a clearinghouse or meeting ground for all of the elements of arts support: the arts councils, artists' organizations, membership groups outside the arts like business organizations and unions that were taking an interest in the arts for whatever their reasons.

**Audience member:** There was the key person, we had one in each state; when there was legislation ACA would call these key people and they had what was like a phone tree, and they would call other people and we could generate quite a bit of mail.

**Maryo:** So another theme is new and constantly evolving leadership – new people, new types of people, new actions that they took.

### **Milton Rhodes: 1980's**

In the fall of 1967, I entered NYU's school of theatre management and began to work as an intern at the New York Philharmonic at Lincoln Center. In the second semester, Dr. Perry Norton introduced the public administration class to a new book, *Arts in the City*, by Ralph Burgard. [Maryo's note: This book paralleled *The Arts in the Small Community*, written at almost the same time, by Robert Gard of Wisconsin, as a result of the NEA's first community arts development grant.] This book was about developing arts programs in education, recreation, center cities and many more subjects of interest to Professor Norton. My wife had entered the North Carolina School of the Arts in Winston-Salem in 1965 and later I realized that Ralph Burgard had been Executive Director of the Arts Council in Winston-Salem in the 1950's.

In the Spring of 1968, after Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy were assassinated, the administrator of our program at NYU, told us we should get internships for the next year to

complete our degree requirements for this first masters in Theatre Management degree. Friends of mine called and advised me that there was a need for a general manager of the Winston-Salem Symphony, starting in the summer of 1968. I took the job. This was my first full time position. This town, blessed with the pivotal leadership role in the Arts Council movement, was going through great changes. I wrote my thesis on cultural facilities in cities. I graduated from NYU in June 1969, finished my job after the Music at Sunset series was completed and went into the army as a finance officer.

While I was serving a short stint as a finance officer in the army, I discovered that the Arts Council in Winston-Salem was in a search for an Executive Director to replace Jesse Reese who had taken the job of setting up the Hartford Arts Council. During my interview the first meetings to form NACAA (1971) were taking place at Phil Hanes' home in Winston-Salem with Winnie Scott, Ron Caya from Walnut Creek, Mark Ross, and Michael Newman (from Winston-Salem). This was in the Spring of 1971. I was offered the job of Executive Director of the Arts Council to start in September 1971. I was 26. My first campaign was for \$126,000 and the campaign chair died three weeks into the campaign. Other leaders in the community stepped in to teach me the ropes of united arts fund raising. Phil Hanes sent me to, in the summer of 1972, the second year of the Harvard program in Arts Management. In 1973, he sent me off to Aspen, Colorado to bring back the ACA convention to Winston-Salem. The first time I knew anything about the rumblings of ACA splitting from NALAA or NACAA was at that meeting. We sat on bean bags and were in a large conference center conference room. It seemed so strange to me, even after my classes were at NYU in Greenwich Village at Astor Place during the '67-'68 period.

In 1974 we brought the ACA convention to Winston-Salem for The Arts Council's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and Nancy Hanks, David Rockefeller III, Michael Tilson Thomas and over 40 national foundation executives came to see our community and we started Carolina Streetscene. (The Festival ran for 14 years and eventually drew 250,000 people per day.) John Blaine chaired NACAA for 2 years, then John Everett. I think I was the third chairman in 1976. In 1976, I was also added to the ACA Board and in 1981, at a retreat at Montauk, I was asked by Homer Wadsworth from Cleveland and Lou Harris, the pollster, to start thinking about becoming president of ACA.

In 1982 Lou Harris, Ed Bloch (AT&T), Steve Stamas (EXXON), Don Conrad (Aetna) and Marshall Cogan (Knoll International) asked me to step in as part-time President of ACA (5 days per month commuting from Winston-Salem). In 1985, they convinced me to leave Winston-Salem and move to New York to become full-time President and CEO.

The late '70's brought a flurry of NEA programs targeted at communities: City Spirit, Expansion Arts, Urban Walls, Federal State Partnerships. Many community arts council leaders received grants and served on various panels.

ACA linked up with Jack Duncan, John Brademus' former chief of staff, and with the help of Louis Harris and Jack Golodner and others, conducted seven Regional hearings. At each hearing we asked arts leaders to express issues that a national effort should focus on.

These hearings were held in New Orleans, San Francisco, Chicago, New York and other cities. Out of these hearings, four issues emerged:

- Arts education
- National Planning Committee on the Originating Artists
- International Cultural Exchange
- Private Initiatives Development

Through the efforts of a large board and a growing list of national patrons, ACA was able to address these issues in its publications, magazine, newsletters and conferences.

In 1986, ACA, at David Rockefeller's direction, took over the Arts Education and Americans collection. AEA had completed their work on *Coming to Our Senses* a few years before.

In 1982, John Kitchen, on letterhead from his Indianapolis law firm, wrote a two sentence letter of inquiry: "What does ACA do?" Within a month I discovered that he was the attorney for Ruth Lilly, granddaughter of Eli Lilly; and I flew out to Indianapolis to visit with Mr. Kitchen. His first question was, "Does the organization you represent include poetry?" I said "yes" and we (Sarah Havens, Sandra Foote and I) conducted the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize for at least 12 years. We saw Mr. Kitchen and Mr. Eubanks, her banker, two or three times a year.

The prize announcements were made at the Newberry Library and were a collaboration with the Modern Poetry Association, led by Joe Parisi.

During the '80's, ACA started the National Arts Advocacy Days with NALAA, AAA, NASAA and later dozens of national service organizations. Later, Leonard Garment, Fred Lazarus and I were able to add the Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy to the visits on the hill. Gene Dorsey, President of the Gannett Foundation and Chairman of ACA, sponsored the lecture later. Philip Morris, under the leadership of Stephanie French, sponsored the lecture.

One of my former board members suggested to me a statement that has proven true over 40 years in this field, "Policy divides, but projects unite." I try to find projects that we can work on together combining projects that can define policy and that drives us to get things done. My experience with the Interlocken Conference on Arts Education was an interesting experience trying to get 31 agencies from the unions to the states to the communities to the art educators to the music educators all on the same page, about arts education. The Interlochen Arts Education conference was a project about developing a policy statement. Over two hundred individuals convened at the Interlochen Music Center in Michigan for a three day session to get agreement on unifying words that we all could use to promote the arts in public schools. MENC (Music Educators National Conference) lead by John Mahlmann and I collaborated on this important initiative. It was a bear to try and get that together, but it did come together. The reason I remembered it was because the last of the books was sold for \$5 today.

**Audience member:** There was a resolution that was adopted by those groups and I don't know that a whole lot has happened nationally since then, although it has in our state, North Carolina,

which passed legislation this week to include an arts education requirement to graduate from high school.

### **Skip Reiss: 1990's**

I wonder if I'm doing the '90's because it reflects my age! I just want to go back, to one name that was omitted in early arts development, who I think was extremely important. That was W. McNeil Lowry, of the Ford Foundation. Under the leadership of Lowry the Foundation gave the performing arts national recognition and many millions of dollars. It was a precedent to a lot of other things that happened in the '60's and a very important one.

I love the '60's because during that time I had a very early involvement with Americans for the Arts predecessor organizations. Since I've not been identified in any way, I'd like to be considered part of the arts council movement from the beginning, I'll mention four ways that I became involved .

The very first issue of *Arts Management*, which I co-founded, featured a 1962 story titled "Community Arts Councils: A Growing Movement" and indicated that there were 50 arts councils in America; WOW. Look where we are now. Can you imagine, only 50 of them?

Secondly I wrote the "Bill of Rights for the Arts in our Cities," which was presented by Mayor Wes Uhlman to the US Conference of Mayors, who adopted it. The arts then became a major part of the mayors' program; I'm so delighted that the Americans for the Arts has continued and upgraded this relationship with the mayors.

Next, I was a founder and first Vice President of the Arts and Business Council, which is now part of AFTA.

Also, I introduced a *New York Times* writer to the beginning arts council organization in the 1960's, which resulted in the first *New York Times* article on community arts councils. So anyway, I do have a relationship.

Though I'd rather talk about the '60's because I'm a history buff, let's move to my decade (because I am decadent!) and let's talk about the '90's. I went back and started looking at some of the things I had written about and I looked at some of the headlines to see how this may have been identified. I kept on reading and I became fascinated with some of the things that happened.

At the beginning of the '90's one of my titles of an article was "Arts Censorship Issues Still Very Much Alive" which indicated that then President Bush said he was deeply offended by some of the things the arts were doing which he felt did not reflect the arts. From that same year, "Political Involvement in Arts Increasing" showed how increasingly the arts became politicized and anti-arts-factions started springing up.

However, I do want to get to some positive things about the '90's because I think ultimately it was very positive period, and as I go through some of these factors that were happening, I think you'll see where we were going.

In 1991 my article was titled "The Arts Face a Bleak Economic Picture." The United States faced a bleak economic picture in the '90's; and yet we're looking at the current picture and saying "WOW this is bad" but it happened before and we emerged from it. History repeats itself. Another article was titled, "Arts Beset by Legal and Legislative Issues."

The '90's have often been identified as the decade of the culture wars, actually the precedents go back to 1987 when an artist named Serrano had a work in an exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, called "Piss Christ" which showed a crucifix in a glass immersed in the artist's own urine. That brought the then-New York Mayor Giuliani against the artist and the Brooklyn Museum. Things really accelerated early in the '90's when Robert Mapplethorpe's exhibition at the Cincinnati Museum of Fine Art had what was called "homo-erotic photographs" and this brought about the ant-arts wrath of certain Congressmen, Jesse Helms among them. In 1992 such headlines as "The Arts are Beset by Legal and Legislative Issues", then "The Arts Trying to Cope in Hard Times" reflected the period.

As all this was happening, what were some of the positive developments during this period? Cultural Tourism was emerging as a major force. The first White House Conference on Tourism included the arts as an area, and as a delegate I was able to shake the hand of the President and Vice president, two days in a row. (My wife asked me why I didn't wash my hands for a week afterwards - it's not often that you get to do that two days in a row!) Cultural tourism was very important because it presented the arts as a factor in and of itself which was very much a part of what became one of the world's fastest growing industries, tourism. And the arts are a natural part of that field.

We also saw partnerships developing to a degree that had not happened before. I think that was a very, very key development because it continues today, including partnerships between disciplines as well. We also saw internationalization of the arts to a degree that we had never witnessed before. I did some lecture tours to Australia and New Zealand during those years and I was meeting Americans who were running arts organizations in those countries. And increasingly today we see now total internationalization, of the arts which had its real beginnings during the '90's.

I think the nature of business support was beginning to change also. Business support, which began as donations largely, turned to sponsorship with a vengeance; it kept moving in that direction even when business grants to the arts were not easily coming. And there were partnerships. But partnerships also meant that the arts were beholden in some way to business. And it became a very interesting and curious relationship with some success and with some problems. The Phillip Morris relationship with the arts, if we delved into it, would show us a very interesting and complex story.

And I think we also saw another factor during that decade which I think was very important. That was a new wave of the so-called cultural building boom. The '60's were really the beginning of that. I remember I wrote a satire for *Esquire* called "The Lincoln Center Syndrome" where every community wanted an arts center, whether it had the arts or not. But we started seeing, in the '90's, additions and renovations. Now we have the third stage of that cultural building boom, and millions and millions of dollars are being raised in this economy for facility additions, renovations, and new buildings. (Lincoln Center, by the way, has by now in 2010 raised close to \$950 million for \$1.2 billion of renovation projects.)

So all of these were factors that were happening, and, as Maryo said, we also saw mergers within this organization, here.

And the last thing I wanted to mention was that in '97, the NEA survived what were restrictions. . You have to remember that Congress kept moving in on the NEA, and restricted individual grants. This was a very, very important factor in the development of the cultural industry.

So what happened when all of this is put together? I think it gave the arts an identity that it had not had, by becoming an issue. The arts achieved an identity in the national consciousness, and people who had never thought about the arts before suddenly knew about the arts, it also brought about a cohesion within the field that I think was necessary, not just in community arts, but in all of the arts, because the arts were fighting a common cause. and disciplines were working together, So as an industry I think the arts achieved something that they had not had before and that was unity and coming of age as an industry. I've got a lot more to talk about but I think I'll end now and open it up to discussion.

## Discussion

**Maryo:** I want to throw this open to you, the audience: why does any of this matter?

**Ed Garcia:** I'm Ed Garcia from New Jersey. It changed my life and my career. In terms of an arts education, in terms of my friends and colleagues who just made a tremendous difference in my life, learning things from them. All the things I was able to do in my little community, in all of the crazy ways, and wonderful ways, it is the result of- understand, when was Atlanta? 75? That was my first ACA conference; it just made a tremendous difference because of the people that are sitting up there. I tell a joke about Skip, in 73 I didn't even know what I was doing, I was business managing a theater program at a college, and I found out by going to one of Skip's workshops that I was an arts administrator.

**Maryo:** I want to put Joanna Chin on the spot: why did you come to this session? You're someone who would be categorized as an "emerging leader" and you've had family influences in this field – your mother is also in this room today - but why are you at this session, what's the use of this stuff? Does it matter? Is it more than just good stories?

**Joanna Chin:** Well, I think as an emerging leader, I feel like even though we've made such an effort in the past few years to really make that connection between those that are considered emerging and those that are considered knowledgeable or experienced in the field, there's still a

real disconnect. And there's not a whole lot of conversation that happens in this manner, where you get a real sense of the scope of it. Also real issues that have come up again and again. As emerging leaders, we see all these issues affecting us now, we think that this is something new and revolutionary happening now, and we don't connect it to the fact that these have existed before. So this has been really good for me, seeing where certain things come from, and how they've evolved. I think that's really helpful for me.\_\_\_\_\_ When I walked into the luncheon yesterday, it was just amazing: I looked around and there were so many people from everywhere, and it was jso impressive, and I thought: wow, we are really a major industry. And I think knowing where this has come from, and seeing where we have grown, largely through efforts of people like you who are sitting at the table, who have really worked hard to bring us to this point. It didn't just magically happen - we didn't wake up one day as the industry that we see now, it really has grown to be this. It'ss a source of pride, I think, to be a part of this. Emerging leaders or others who are looking at us can say: "This is a force to be reckoned with." We really have developed some skills and abilities that have served not just us well, but serve the country well, and serve our individual communities well and serve us well internationally. This is a major accomplishment to have made in a relatively short period of 50 years, an accomplishment to have been here to experience it and to have been a part of it. For me that's why it's important.

**Maryo:** How long have you been part of this history?

**Leanne:** I started in 1980 in Winston-Salem, at the Winston-Salem Arts Council, then I went to American Council for the Arts, and then I've been at the New York State Arts Council for the past 12 years. I guess I'm a mid-termer here in this context.

**Maryo:** Thank you.

**Audience Member:** My first job out of college was at ACA in 1979. It's just so inspiring to remember all the challenges we've faced, and here we are again: it's good to see the cycles, we've been through it, we survived it, we came out stronger. I think it's uplifting going through another challenge, knowing that we can do it.

**Jack Golodner:** Can I ask a question? What do we know now, that we didn't know during the dark ages I was talking about? What did we learn?

**Audience Member:** That we do have power.

**Audience member:** My first meeting was in Denver in 1979, I was really privileged from 1977-1979 to be at the University of Wisconsin, in the arts administration program, where Bill Dawson was my advisor, and *Coming to our Senses* came out. Arts administrators came and talked to students. So many of you in that first generation of arts administrators were instrumental in encouraging new people who were coming into the field, where we were getting a degree in arts administration, and your message came across right away - you all were better at it than more recent generations maybe. When I come to these meetings I feel the obligation to find other people who are newer and encourage them. Last year I met a young theater director from



California and we continue to have a mentoring relationship, we talk regularly, for whatever will help her. I think the legislation that went into effect in 1994 has been really instrumental to arts education. I thank you, the leaders who have over the decades really extended those connections.

**Maryo:** One of the things we see today in Americans for the Arts is the emphasis on the emerging leaders program and how vital engaging new, younger leaders is.

**Richard Huff,** Irvington TX: I just want to make a comment. I think this is a terribly important project, as we sit and we listen, there are a lot of names of people who aren't here to share, and I thank Bob and Americans for the Arts for 50 years - there's a lot of grey hair in the room, some have no hair, but it's terribly important to capture these stories, because once the people are gone, the stories are gone. So this is a terribly important project, I congratulate you on the work you're going to be doing with it, and for all of you for sharing your stories.

**Maryo:** Thank you and I think you're right. It's not only the desire to share a personal story but to share it so that the field may evolve.

**Lee Howard:** I think of some of the people who are not here, and some of us who talked with them... I would love to sit down and talk with somebody about the Cindy Kiebitz story. She did so much for this organization, and she had so much to say. And the Jackie Beck story. But there are a number of people who still remember those people, and who were with us and that ought to be added to it as well.

**Maryo:** The stories are absolutely essential. The people who come after us are going to be drawing strength from all of us in this room, just as those of us who were younger were drawing strength you and your predecessors.

I need to say that Phil Hanes and George Irwin are not here today because they're so busy – still! - doing important work in their communities. Especially I need to mention what Phil is doing. Remember, he was on that first Winston-Salem arts council board, then he helped found CACI. And now? Well, he is funding research on the relationship between music and the development of the brain, he is underwriting and assisting with the development of a series of community gardens in Winston-Salem, he's doing some downtown development - talk about the "creative economy" - I think he was living it before Richard Florida coined the term! – and he is working on local food production and the farm-to- food- within-50-miles movement. He totally sees the relationship between development of local arts and the sustainable broad economy in one's "beloved community." So one of our spiritual "den-fathers" is still way out ahead of us.

It's really awesome to me that the people in this field keep leading us to greatness. George Irwin still actively supports the arts in Quincy. Look at Phil. Look at Chic, who is literally building world peace through his organization. We take what we learn and what we do – sure, we can keep building a really good arts institution, but we can also take what we learn in this field and apply it to just about anything in the service of humankind. That's one of the things that I'm in

awe of, in terms of all of the people in this room. I'd like to ask the current Executive Director of Americans for the Arts to say a few words. Bob?

**Bob Lynch:** Just one observation; from 1978 on, I've come to this conference, I've come for the positive reinforcement, the positive energy, the positive stories, but what I've learned from this session is that the most important thing is for us to gain an understanding of how to influence an ever-changing power table of key decision makers. The arts are still not seen as essential by those who control policy and purse strings, so we must be relentless in our messaging and in building an army of messengers.

**Maryo:** OK, so 50 years from now, Bob, when people are having a session like this and they look back at Americans for the Arts in 2010, what would you like to be the first thing that comes to their minds?

**Bob:** I would like to see that this was some kind of a turning point regarding the power structure, that story that Jack talked about in the beginning. That something permanent had been achieved. So it's not the arts trying to get to the table, it's the arts being at the table, and that is attainable. But it's only possible if we do the most difficult thing for the arts to do - and that is that everyone does work together.

**Maryo:** I'm going to put Chic Dambach on the spot. You were the first director of NACAA. Do you remember what you hoped you could say 30 years from then? Does it relate to what Bob is talking about? You've been gone from this organization for some years now but you've kept your eye on it: what do you have to say about what has happened in the last 30 years, and do you see the same trajectory from then to now as Bob projects from now to 30, 50 years out?

**Chic Dambach:** In many ways, yes, but that's part of knowing Bob as well as I do; we've been friends all these years. When I think back to what we were trying to accomplish at the conference in Denver in those early years, there were a few things that were really important. One of them was to build the sense of community. All of us who were involved in these community arts agencies had a real sense that we're in this together and that by being a community we could elevate the respect for what we were doing. The other was to pay respect from the larger arts community and from the body politic, where, and this is similar to what Bob was talking about, it's not even a struggle anymore, to fight for the recognition of the arts as a fundamental part, an essential part of what the community, the economy and this country are all about. I can remember what it was like then and where we are now, and we may not be all the way there, but we've come an awfully long way. I'm such a fan of Bob Lynch; I like to take credit for all the things that have happened, but I do that totally tongue in cheek.

**Maryo:** So would it be fair to say that the vision collectively is to truly be at the table, to better understand what it means to be an American? And to address American culture, in the world?

**Audience member:** I just want to mention one of the things that happened in the '90's was that we immersed ourselves in politics, and went to war. I know that for the state arts agencies that was the decade where the arts and economic development, education, strengthening

communities, cultural tourism became important. And the number one issue facing the state arts agencies was the arts becoming an integral part of the government.

**Maryo:** And in 50 years it'll be very interesting to look back and see where we have moved the policy discussion. It's time for us to end. So what would each of you like to leave us with?

**Jack:** As the guy from the 60's, or, to some, "the 2000-year-old man," I started out by saying that in the beginning there was darkness and a void. I wish I could be Pollyannaish about the future, but I can't, and I don't want to be a Cassandra either. But the storm clouds are gathering again. The darkness is closing in, budgets are getting tight, governments are going to be going through periods of severe fiscal restraint, and the fights over a diminishing arts pie will increase if they're allowed to. Organizations like this one can pull people together, and I think this is very important. You've grown tremendously, and the arts constituency has grown, but you never can rest on the achievements of the past.

It's not going to be easy, but the potential of that multifaceted constituency that got things started in the 60's is still there. And AFTA is by far the one that can pull it all together. To do this, you have to reach out to them beyond your zone of comfort. When I was working with Nancy Hanks, we brought together groups who had never before thought of themselves as arts advocates – boy and girl scouts, campfire girls, unions, business associations, and others became involved. But as things become more difficult, as the clouds start to gather again, we can't take what was achieved in the past for granted. We have to work at it again, reach out to them again, involve them, keep them informed, so that when the Gingriches and the Dick Armies arise, there's somebody to take them on and it isn't just you, or the arts organizations, but the wider community the arts serve.

**Maryo:** Thank you.

**Milton:** To me, the light is in the relationships outside of the arts field, and it's in commerce, transportation, education, all the other areas. It's not a separate thing that those arts folks are doing, like what Jonathan was talking about, it's integrated into the whole of society, that the word "arts" still labels us; but I believe that the new good work is going to happen outside of our little field: health and human services, education, outside.

**Maryo:** Thank you.

**Skip:** A wonderful thing that happened a few years ago was that the arts went from an "also" to an "and". And I consider that highly significant because when you become an "and," there's an equality there that means you're bringing to the table as much as someone else is bringing to the table. And that has really been one of the key developments over the years. And what I find encouraging today is that creativity is recognized as a way of life. We're seeing it in older people, invalid people, all kinds of populations, so it isn't just what we're doing here, but we're having a whole nation now, moving forward and recognizing that this isn't something out there, but this is something we can be part of. I find that extremely encouraging.

**Maryo:** Thank you.

**Lee:** A couple of things come to my mind. All of us sitting in this room are in line that it takes more than art folk. Many of us have connections in our lives which can be nurtured and developed into other links. The challenge is to find a way to use those links in a productive manner. One of the challenges for Americans for the Arts is to build the link that is between the national and the local level.. Because at the national level how can you spread through this whole country without having an extra help that take you from one level to the other level?

The other thing which is tied into that is an inborn lethargy or frustration, that we keep hoping somebody else will do it. I've gone to meeting after meeting after meeting where they talk about this and say well what are you going to do about it? Talking to Bob or whoever it is, what is the organization going to do about it? And it's what each one of us is going to do about it. It's what I am and what you are and you are and I think that has a lot to do with how we're going to overcome this. Along with what you, Jack, were saying is that we're going to have to have a lot of other groups to help us. But it is going to be tough. And we all know there's going to be that underlying "Who's going to get that piece of the pie?"

**Maryo:** Taking personal responsibility – a perfect way to close. In 500 B.C. – talk about history! – citizens of Athens had to take an oath. So I'd like us to take the Athenian Oath together; it's what I think we do, as arts workers in communities, or states. Please stand, and repeat after me:

We will never bring disgrace to this, our city....  
We will fight for the ideal and sacred things of the city...  
Both alone, and with many....  
We will strive unceasingly to quicken the public sense of duty...  
Thus, in all these ways...  
We will transmit this city, not only not less...  
But greater and more beautiful...  
Than it was transmitted to us.

Thank you.