



## NEWS RELEASE

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RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE

### *2008 St. Louis Arts Awards raises \$400,000 for the arts*

*"I just love to go and to do. I hope that everyone gets out and supports the arts. At least, go...see...and do. You'll love it too!"*

*Mary Ann Lee, Excellence in Philanthropy 2008 Honoree*

St. Louis, MO / January 29, 2008 - The 630 attendees of the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual St. Louis Arts Awards ended their work day on Monday with a dazzling celebration of the arts as the Arts and Education Council presented the 2008 St. Louis Arts Awards. Each year the Arts and Education Council honors those who make the arts in St. Louis truly special. And this year was no exception.

The Khorassan Room was full of friends, families and supporters of the arts who were charmed by this year's honorees. **Gerald Early** received the first award of the evening for **Excellence in the Arts** and received a special video message from **Ken Burns**, with whom Gerald has worked on four film documentaries. Ken said, "When we study our American civilization 2000 years from now and get to the heart of what American studies is all about....We will need only three things to totally understand what was going on - Gerald...Lyn... Early. The three most beautiful words in American Studies."

Tom Minogue, accepting the **Corporate Support of the Arts** award for **Thompson Coburn LLP** said, "We are always focused on playing a positive role in our community. There's not a single award our firm will receive in 2008 that we will treasure more than this one."

The **Art Educator of the Year** went to **Linda Packard** who has spent her entire teaching career as an elementary art teacher at Reed School in the Ladue School District. Linda told the crowd, "This sure beats an apple for the teacher."

**Ivor David Balding**, honored for **Excellence in the Arts**, reminded us that "Childhood ends. Circus is forever. We must remember to cherish and embrace rituals which engage our hearts and souls. We need something from the arts we can not get from a computer screen."

With that **Sasha Nevidonski** illustrated David's sentiment with a beautiful display of artistry and strength using white silk. And **Tino Wallenda** along with his daughter Aurelia walked the high wire to honor David Balding. Tino told the crowd his family has been walking the high wire for eight generations or almost 200 years.

KFUO Classic 99 radio personality, **Jim Connett**, the evening's emcee pointed out that **Mary Ann Lee**, receiving the award for **Excellence in Philanthropy**, gives not only financially to many St. Louis arts organizations, but also invests so much time, talent and energy to making our community better for everyone.

When **Gyo Obata** accepted the **Lifetime Achievement in the Arts** award he told the audience, "It is significant that an architect is recognized tonight, for we as a profession can do so much to make our community a better and more meaningful place to live, work and enjoy. We in the world of art and education need to make our city more livable, beautiful, exciting and sustainable."

**STAGES St. Louis** also received an **Excellence in the Arts** award. **Jack Lane** accepted the award for STAGES and thanked the audience for the years of support. "All of you in this room, by supporting the arts, help us remind audiences that they have a soul and help us restore it."

**TeamSTAGES** gave us all a little more soul with their entertaining finale "Have a Little Faith".

The Arts and Education Council enriches the vibrancy of the St. Louis community by investing in arts organizations and growing the base of loyal arts supporters. The 2008 St. Louis Arts Awards chairs, **Cary Hobbs** and **Bill Donius**, announced the event raised **\$400,000** to continue this mission.

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