



Hollins, Roanoke College Announce Perry F. Kendig Award Winners for 2017

Roanoke, Va. – The late John Sailer, the Grandin Theatre Foundation, and Judy and Joel Tenzer have been honored with this year’s Perry F. Kendig Arts and Culture Awards.

The awards were presented during a ceremony at Roanoke College’s Olin Hall on September 28.

Co-sponsored by Hollins University and Roanoke College, the Kendig Awards program has recognized distinction in arts and culture in the Roanoke Valley for more than 30 years. Awards are presented in each of the following categories: Individual Artist, Arts and Cultural Organization, and Individual or Business Arts Supporter.

Sailer, who died in 2015, is this year’s Individual Artist award recipient. With an M.F.A. in scene and lighting design from the University of Oklahoma, he first came to Roanoke in 1981 to work at what was then called Mill Mountain Playhouse. Sailer soon became the “go to” set and lighting designer in the Roanoke Valley, mounting sets for Mill Mountain Theatre, Opera Roanoke, Hollins University, Roanoke Ballet Theatre, Patrick Henry High School, Opera on the James, and others. Ernie Zulia, director of the Hollins Theatre Institute, said of Sailer, “He had an imagination that could create a world for a play that was not only beautiful but dynamic. He had a real gift.” Sailer’s wife Rachel accepted the award on his behalf.

The Grandin Theatre Foundation received the Kendig Award in the Arts and Cultural Organization category. In addition to its role as a neighborhood economic and cultural anchor offering a movie theatre, art gallery, and gathering place, the Grandin has been successful in

supporting educational outreach within the community at large. Over 20 schools attended programs at the Grandin last year, and the facility has collaborated with local organizations and non-profits to present films that stimulate conversation on important issues. The newest educational outreach program is the Grandin Theatre Film Lab, an after school program for high school students interested in the cinematic arts who want to learn the process of filmmaking from screenwriting to production to editing.

The Kendig Award in the Individual or Business Arts Supporter category was presented to Judy and Joel Tenzer. For more than four decades, the Tenzers have distinguished themselves with their devotion to and patronage of the arts in the Roanoke Valley. They have served on the boards of such organizations as the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra, the Taubman Museum of Art, the Arts Council of the Blue Ridge, and Mill Mountain Theatre. “They have built relationships and networks of people to join them in collecting art, attending performances, and supporting cultural organizations,” said Roanoke College President Mike Maxey. “The Tenzers are leading by example and their long-standing commitment has truly enhanced the quality of life in our region.”

Named for the late Perry F. Kendig, who served as president of Roanoke College and was an avid supporter and patron of the arts, the Kendig Awards program was established in 1985 and presented annually by the Arts Council of the Blue Ridge through 2012. Hollins and Roanoke College first partnered the following year to bestow the honors, and congratulate the 2017 winners.

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