

2005 Mayor's Arts Awards

CONGRATULATIONS
to the 2005 City of Ventura
MAYOR'S ARTS AWARDS
Honorees

Recognized for their contributions
to the cultural vitality and strength
of our community are:

Lee Hodges
Director (retired), Buenaventura Gallery Arts Leader

Focus on the Masters
Arts Educator

MB Hanrahan
Visual Artist Artist in the Community

Michel "Michellino" Petersen
Special Initiative Ventura Harbor Fishermen's Memorial

Lee Hodges: Arts Leader

Lee Hodges, who received three nominations in this category, was selected in recognition of her 14 years of service to the Buenaventura Art Association and the wider community as the director of the Buenaventura Gallery. She began serving the organization at a crucial point in its development and led the way to securing a permanent home for the gallery in downtown Ventura. As a founding anchor of the Downtown Cultural District, BAA has been a leading organization in many cultural tourism initiatives over the past decade under Lee's guidance. Lee was instrumental in the creation of the ArtWalk, laying the groundwork for the successful event it is today. After many years of leadership, Lee has recently retired from the Buenaventura Gallery to concentrate on her own career as a visual artist. She will continue to be involved with BAA as an active member and exhibitor at the Gallery.

MB Hanrahan: Artist in the Community

A highly visible member of the local arts community, MB Hanrahan has continually expanded her efforts to embrace members of the community who may have otherwise been untouched by the artistic realm. Of particular note is MB's involvement with kids in the

community, including many successful collaborations with incarcerated youth, mentally ill patients and tribal populations. Often working in the medium of large-scale mural painting, MB has also completed numerous projects at local schools working directly with students in the creative process. MB's most recent project has engaged both youth and adults in the re-creation of the Tortilla Flats mural honoring the community lost when the 101 freeway was constructed in Ventura.

Donna Granata/Focus on the Masters: Arts Educator

Focus on the Masters was selected for its outstanding arts education programs that serve all segments of society, from school children engaged in the "Learning to See" classroom outreach to senior citizens participating in Art & the Creative Spirit and Elderhostel sessions. FOTM offers a breadth of programming and is able to connect with participants through a multitude of media to fulfill its mission to educate the community on the achievements and contributions of local artists. In all three nominations received for FOTM, special mention was made of founder Donna Granata's unwavering vision for this organization. Her leadership has grown FOTM into a resource for art historical information used by prestigious organizations such as the Getty Museum and the National Steinbeck Foundation.

Michel "Michellino" Petersen: Special Initiative

In February, after four years of dedication on the part of visual artist Michel "Michellino" Petersen, the Ventura Harbor Fisherman's Memorial was dedicated. Michellino has served as the Ventura Harbor Artist in Residence, a non-stipend position that grew out of her Master's thesis project, since 1998 at which time she began creating a series of ceramic murals depicting local sea life. Familiar with her work at the Harbor, the Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's Association approached her to design and build the Fisherman's Memorial in honor of colleagues lost at sea. Michellino engaged the community in the creation and fundraising for this architectural ceramic sculpture and achieved success in the project through her talent, persistence and enthusiasm. Michellino has spent the last several months as a visiting scholar at the Jingdezhen Institute of Ceramics in China where she has furthered her studies of the medium while fostering cross cultural understanding.