

Mayor's Arts Award 2011 Honorees:

Ann Deal – Arts Patron

Nominator Cheryl Heitmann says, "There is no doubt that the Ventura Music Festival has become one of the county's signature cultural events because of the philanthropic support of Ann Deal and Fashion Forms." For the past six years, Ann's generous contributions have not only sustained the VMF's annual Spring Festival but also allowed them to expand programming throughout the year to include jazz and "crossover" genres. As the principal sponsor for the Festival's outdoor concerts at Ventura College, Ann has been instrumental in bringing music legends such as Mark O'Connor, Chris Botti and Herbie Hancock to Ventura. In addition to her support of the Music Festival, Ann has been a longstanding and solid supporter of many Ventura nonprofits such as the Rubicon Theatre, the Rotary Club International and the Boys & Girls Club. "Ann's positive energy and enthusiasm for the arts infects those around her," says Heitman. "She draws people in with her sheer love of music and has brought many other wonderful supporters and participants to the Festival"

Susan Cook – Artist in the Community

Nominated by Jack Halbert, visual artist Susan Cook's dedication and passion for Ventura is only surpassed by her skill as an artist. An accomplished painter with a distinctive style, her work has been exhibited in prestigious venues around the county for the past ten years. She currently serves as the Vice Chair of the City's Public Art Commission and as a member of the Municipal Art Acquisition Committee and the Bell Arts Factory Advisory Board. Susan has held leadership positions on the boards of the Ventura Music Festival and the Buenaventura Art Association and hosted a cable access television show on art. In 2009, she served as Chair of the Citizen Blue Ribbon Budget Committee, shepherding the City budget through one of the worse financial crisis in our history. Focus on the Masters Founder Donna Granata comments, "In a world increasingly known for brusque and rude manners, Susan stands out for her civil demeanor. She is always positive, always upbeat, even in the face of personal tragedy. She is an ideal candidate for this award."

Steve and Polly Hoganson, Zoey's Café – Creative Entrepreneur

Voted Best Live Music venue in Ventura County for eight years in a row, Zoey's epitomizes the creative entrepreneurial spirit. A family owned business operated by Steve and Polly Hoganson, Zoey's showcases local and national acts every night of the week and is one of the premier listening rooms for original acoustic music on the Central Coast. The "surrogate mom and pop of the local music community", as they have been called, Polly and Steve have created a warm and welcoming launching pad for new talent. One of Ventura's only all-ages venues, their Ones to Watch showcase offers the opportunity for young musicians to win cash, and studio recording time to produce a demo CD. They regularly hold fundraisers for community groups such as FoodShare, Peace Thru Music, the Surfrider Foundation, the Harmony Project, ArtWalk, DVO and many local schools. Nominator MB Hanrahan says, "They really respect artists and create a context for truly experiencing live music."

Tim Schiffer – Arts Leader

Tim Schiffer has served as the Executive Director for the Museum of Ventura County since 1999. In that capacity, he is responsible for all the operations of the largest nonprofit cultural organization in Ventura overseeing a 15-member staff, 25 board members and over 150 docents and volunteers. In July 2010, the Museum completed Phase I of their Main St. facility expansion with the Smith Pavilion, funded through an \$8.5 million dollar fundraising campaign. A highly respected leader of the arts community, Tim has created strategic partnerships with the City of Ventura, the Ventura County Transportation Commission, the Santa Cruz Island Foundation, Moorpark College and has served on numerous juries and advisory committees countywide. Tim's expansive vision has led to the creation of the Agriculture Museum in Santa Paula which officially opened in September. Nominator and former Museum board member James Rivera said of Tim, "His vision, drive and passion for the arts have made dreams into reality. The impact of his leadership and hard work will be felt in the community for years to come."

Mary Perez – Arts Educator

Nominated by Joshua Addison, Mary Perez is a founder (with her husband Luis Perez) of the Vita Art Center. Housed at the Bell Arts Factory, Vita's mission is to provide diverse art experiences for individuals and the community through classes, exhibitions, special events and community outreach program. They offer a full menu of courses for children, teens and adults all taught by professional artists. Her commitment to ensuring equal access to arts education has led to the Center's scholarship program, which supports high-risk youth. As the Artist Outreach Coordinator for the first Westside ArtWalk, Mary came up with the poster campaign featuring photos of local artists in their working environs. Her leadership and hard work ensured that the event came together. Said Josh, "When it got really hard and I considered rolling it up, Mary said no. And we finished, brilliantly, to her immense credit. It probably looked easier than it was ... Mary tends to make things look easy."

Maribel Hernandez – Emerging Artist

A multidisciplinary artist working in design, photography, ceramics and painting, Maribel Hernandez has a deep understanding of traditional Mexican art and has worked extensively with the community on Dia de los Muertos events. Her work has been exhibited at the Museum of Latin American, the Museum of Ventura County, the Cal State Channel Islands Gallery, the Ventura County Government Center and the De Colores exhibit. Maribel volunteers with the Youth Arts Program at Bell Arts and works as a teacher of mentally disabled children with the Developmental Milestones Project. Maribel has also been an instructor at the Boys and Girls Club Teen Project, and is the founder of the Living Love Foundation, dedicated to improving the long-term health of underserved communities through hands-on exposure to the arts.