



# National Opera Trustee Recognition Awards

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## Guidelines and Nomination Procedures

**OPERA America**  
National Opera Center  
330 Seventh Avenue  
New York, NY 10001  
[operaamerica.org](http://operaamerica.org)

# About the National Opera Trustee Recognition Awards

The National Opera Trustee Recognition Awards, now in its 17<sup>th</sup> year, was established to honor opera company trustees for exemplary leadership, support, and service on behalf of their respective opera companies across the country.

OPERA America's commitment to recognizing excellence in governance stems from a core belief that the strength of an opera company is directly linked to the quality of governance demonstrated by its board members. National Opera Trustee Recognition Awards:

- Highlight the tenets of good governance.
- Provide models of trustee and volunteer excellence.
- Amplify the efforts of distinguished trustees to a national audience.
- Strengthen the relationships between trustees and the companies and communities they serve.

Moreover, National Opera Trustee Recognition Awards offer OPERA America's Professional Company Members an opportunity to demonstrate their gratitude and bring national attention to the leaders who play a pivotal role in charting the future of opera in America.

## Nomination Process & Eligibility

Every U.S. Professional Company Member in good standing is invited to submit one nomination by responding to the nomination questions provided.

A list of all nomination fields and questions can be found below. Nominations must be submitted online at [operaamerica.org/TrusteeNomination](https://operaamerica.org/TrusteeNomination) by **Friday, March 21, 2025, 5:00 p.m. PDT**.

The nominated trustee must currently be serving on your board of directors. Companies may choose to re-nominate a previous nominee who was not selected for an award in a previous year. With special permission, a company may be permitted to nominate a recent trustee emeritus or a couple who both serve as trustees.

For questions, contact Clint Walker, director of development and membership, at 646.699.5248 or [CWalker@operaamerica.org](mailto:CWalker@operaamerica.org).

# Nomination Form Questions

Nominations must be submitted online at [operaamerica.org/TrusteeNomination](https://operaamerica.org/TrusteeNomination).

You may save your trustee nomination draft in the online form and return to it later.

## 1. Nominating Company

### COMPANY ADDRESS

- Company\*
- Address\*
- Address 2
- City\*
- State\*
- ZIP Code\*

### COMPANY INFORMATION

- Budget Category (1–5)\*
  - Budget 1 (\$15 million or more)
  - Budget 2 (\$3 to 15 million)
  - Budget 3 (\$1 to 3 million)
  - Budget 4 (\$250,000 to \$1 million)
  - Budget 5 (Under \$250,000)
- To the best of your knowledge, is your company in good standing with OPERA America? (Yes/No) (A company is in good standing if it has completed the 2023 Professional Opera Survey and is current with dues payments, grant reports, and other invoices.)\*

### GENERAL DIRECTOR

- Title (Mrs./Ms./Mr./Mx./Dr./Prof.)
- First Name\*
- Last Name\*
- Professional Title\*
- Email\*
- Phone\*

### STAFF CONTACT

- Title (Mrs./Ms./Mr./Mx./Dr./Prof.)
- First Name\*
- Last Name\*
- Professional Title\*
- Email\*
- Phone\*

## 2. Nominator

- Did someone other than the general director or a staff member at the opera company prepare the nomination? (Yes/No)\*

### IF YES:

- Title (Mrs./Ms./Mr./Mx./Dr./Prof.)
- First Name\*
- Last Name\*
- Relationship of the Nominator to the Nominee\*
- Board Position (if applicable)
- Mailing Address\*
- Address 2
- City\*
- State\*
- ZIP Code\*
- Email\*
- Phone\*

## 3. Nomination

### NOMINEE

- Title (Mrs./Ms./Mr./Mx./Dr./Prof.)
- First Name\*
- Last Name\*
- Professional Title and Employer/Affiliation\*
- Board Position(s)\*
- Mailing Address\*
- Address 2
- City\*
- State\*
- ZIP Code\*
- Email\*
- Phone\*

*\*indicates a required field*

## BOARD HISTORY AND ROLE

- In what year did the nominee first join the board?\*
- How many years total has the nominee served on the board? (Do not include years of rotation off the board.)\*
- In a short list, please provide the nominee's current and recent board/committee roles, including duration of service. (max. 1,250 char.)\*
- If available, please provide a short, professional biography of the nominee. (max. 1,250 char.)
- OPERA America encourages companies to re-nominate strong nominees who were not selected in previous years. Has the nominee been nominated previously? (Yes/No)\*

## NOMINATION QUESTIONS

*In responding to the following questions, demonstrate how your nominee has excelled in advancing the work of your company, the strength of your board, your relationship with your community, and your company's long-term sustainability.*

- **How has your nominee contributed to the success of the company?** (max. 2,500 char.)\*  
*You might consider ways your nominee has supported staff, contributed to projects, recruited audiences, offered expertise, etc.*
- **How has your nominee advanced the effectiveness of the board?** (max. 2,500 char.)\*  
*You might consider ways your nominee has fostered learning, led special initiatives, promoted collaboration, encouraged teamwork, mobilized peers, etc.*
- **How has your nominee participated in the company's commitment to its community?** (max. 2,500 char.)\*  
*You might consider ways your nominee has forged partnerships, made introductions, participated in advocacy, served as an ambassador, etc.*
- **How has your nominee worked to ensure the long-term health and sustainability of your company?** (max. 2,500 char.)\*  
*You might consider ways your nominee has negotiated long-term contracts, helped build an endowment, secured multi-year funding, led strategic planning initiatives, etc.*

*\*indicates a required field*

## Considerations When Preparing Your Nomination

- The selection committee can only consider what they receive in your written nomination. Your nominee likely excels in all evaluation areas. Make sure your nomination makes that clear.
- Be specific. Provide concrete examples to illustrate how your nominee has impacted the company.
- The selection committee will look for evidence that your nominee has played an active role in the advancement of the company. The accomplishments of your company under your nominee's board tenure are less important than how your nominee helped achieve them.
- Help the committee understand the magnitude of your nominee's impact by qualifying any numerical data; for instance: "Jane tripled the endowment when she raised \$8 million in the campaign" or "Fred recruited nearly half of the 150 people who attended our free community performance."

## Selection Process & Criteria

Honorees will be chosen by a selection committee comprising past recipients of National Opera Trustee Recognition Awards. Five honorees will be selected, representing Budget 1, Budget 2, Budget 3, Budget 4, and Budget 5 companies. Notification of winners will be sent to companies and honorees in late April and early May.

The selection committee will review each nomination and assign scores in respect to four criteria:

1. The impact of the nominee on the company's success
2. The impact of the nominee on the board's effectiveness
3. The impact of the nominee on the community
4. The impact of the nominee on the company's long-term health and sustainability

## Honoree Recognition

OPERA America will work closely with the opera companies of the selected honorees to highlight their achievements and contributions to the field in a national press release. Awardees will be featured in *Opera America Magazine* and on the OPERA America website. All honorees will receive a one-year membership to OPERA America, including a subscription to *Opera America Magazine* and access to online resources.

## Awards Dinner

Honorees are invited to attend the OPERA America Salutes awards dinner in the winter of 2026 in New York City (date to be announced). The event, which includes a reception, dinner, awards presentation, and musical program, brings together company leaders and trustees from across the country.

Each honoree will receive two complimentary tickets to the evening; their general director will also receive two complimentary tickets. Additional tickets may be purchased for colleagues, family, and friends. (Please note: OPERA America Salutes is not black tie, and dress for the event is business attire. All additional tickets are priced at cost.)

OPERA America Salutes is a centerpiece of OPERA America's annual National Trustee Week (winter 2026), which includes the National Trustee Forum and additional special events, outings, and performances. Honorees and their guests are invited to participate in other events throughout the weekend; additional costs apply.

## Staff Contact

For questions, contact Clint Walker, director of development and membership, at 646.699.5248 or [CWalker@operaamerica.org](mailto:CWalker@operaamerica.org).

## Past Honorees *Listed alphabetically by year*

### 2024

**Maria Lagios**, Chicago Opera Theater  
**Claire Liu**, Houston Grand Opera  
**William Miller**, Opera Columbus  
**Leah Solat**, Annapolis Opera  
**Jennifer Suh Whitfield**, HERE Arts Center

### 2023

**Sarah Moulton Faux**,  
The American Opera Project  
**Keith Geeslin**, San Francisco Opera  
**Anne Kline**,  
Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts  
**Russell McColman**, BARNOPERA  
**Nadege Souvenir**, Minnesota Opera

### 2022

**Gary Casagrande**, MassOpera  
**Arlene Ferebee**, Opera Carolina  
**John Fitzgerald**, IN Series  
**Susan G. Marineau**, The Santa Fe Opera  
**Ranney Mize**, New Orleans Opera

### 2020

**Robert Ellis**, San Francisco Opera  
**Linda Koehn**, Des Moines Metro Opera  
**Phil Meyer**, Pacific Opera Project  
**Chris and Anita Murray**, Opera Las Vegas  
**H. Bernt von Ohlen**, Minnesota Opera

### 2019

**Elizabeth Hernandez**, Opera Cultura  
**Charlie Schaffler**, Opera Memphis  
**Stacey Hunt Spier**, El Paso Opera  
**Maryanne Tagney**, Seattle Opera  
**Robert Tancer**, Arizona Opera

### 2018

**Henry Fogel**, Chicago Opera Theater  
**Carol F. Henry**, Los Angeles Opera  
**John Serrage**, Opera Maine  
**R. Jamison Williams**, Michigan Opera Theatre

### 2017

**Jerry Clack**, Pittsburgh Festival Opera  
**R. Marsh Gibson**, Opera Memphis  
**Carol Lazier**, San Diego Opera  
**Holly Mayer**, The Dallas Opera

### 2016

**Michele S. Fabrizi**, Pittsburgh Opera  
**Martha Rivers Ingram**, Nashville Opera  
**Jeanette Lerman-Neubauer**,  
The Metropolitan Opera  
**Jacqueline Badger Mars**,  
Washington National Opera  
**Cynthia du Pont Tobias**, Opera Delaware

### 2015

**Susan Bienkowski**, Long Beach Opera  
**Frank Kuehn**, Opera Southwest  
**Capt. James H. McCoy**, Hawaii Opera Theatre  
**John Nesholm**, Seattle Opera

### 2014

**Michael and Noémi Neidorff**,  
Opera Theatre of Saint Louis  
**Ruth W. Harper, M.D.**, Pensacola Opera  
**Kenneth G. Pigott**, Lyric Opera of Chicago  
**Robert L. Roschel, M.D.**, Opera Lancaster

### 2013

**Lisa Erdberg**, San Francisco Opera  
**Patricia A. Richards**,  
Utah Symphony | Utah Opera  
**Cherie Shreck**, Des Moines Metro Opera  
**Timothy J. Wagg**, Opera North

### 2012

**Elizabeth Eveillard**, The Glimmerglass Festival  
**Joseph and Judy Liff-Barker**, Nashville Opera  
**Susan F. Morris**, The Santa Fe Opera  
**William C. Morris**, The Metropolitan Opera  
**Dr. George R. White**,  
Opera Theater of Pittsburgh

**2011**

**Eleanor “Ellie” Caulkins**, Opera Colorado  
**Jackie Lockwood**, Dayton Opera  
**John I. (Jack) Riddle**, PORTopera  
**Lynn Wyatt**, Houston Grand Opera

**2010**

**Jeffrey A. Evershed**, Portland Opera  
**Benjamin Keaton**, Long Leaf Opera Company  
**Fred and Eve Simon**, Opera Omaha  
**Marc I. Stern**, Los Angeles Opera

**2009**

**James T. Cody Jr.**, The Dallas Opera  
**Richard Holland**, Opera Omaha  
**Beth Ingram**, Lyric Opera of Kansas City  
**C. Guy Rudisill III**, Piedmont Opera

**2008**

**Betty W. Healey**, Opera Birmingham  
**Sally S. Levy**, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis  
**Jane A. Robinson**, Florida Grand Opera  
**G. Whitney Smith**, Fort Worth Opera