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For immediate release

Awards Luncheon to Honor Arts Leaders and Visionaries

Kansas City Metro (November 16, 2016) — ArtsKC – Regional Arts Council announces its [14th annual awards luncheon](#) to be held February 23, 2017, at the Kansas City Convention Center from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The event will honor arts leaders and visionaries in our community. Additionally, ArtsKC will kick off its [2017 ArtsKC Fund Campaign](#), which raises money for arts organizations, arts programs and artists throughout the five-county metropolitan area.

The luncheon will recognize 18 finalists, and one honoree from each award category will be announced at the event. [Rachelle Gardner-Roe](#) will be the event's featured artist, and featured performers will include: [The Kansas City Boys Choir](#), [MoonDrop Circus](#) and [UMKC Conservatory of Music & Dance](#): Xiangyu Zhao.

"It's important to recognize individuals and companies who represent the best of the best in arts leadership, innovation, partnership, service and advocacy," said Bruce Davis, ArtsKC President and CEO. "The luncheon's theme 'Electrify' represents the impact each honoree has on making the Kansas City Metropolitan area an engaged, creative arts community."

Paul Mesner of [Mesner Puppets](#) also will be honored with a special lifetime achievement award. He commented on what it means to receive the award: "I am thrilled and honored to be recognized by ArtsKC. I am very fortunate to have had such a long and gratifying career in Kansas City. I did none of this alone. Every step of the way I was supported by those who love the art form of puppetry, by those who simply love the arts, by the generous philanthropic community and the long-time support of many individuals. As the founder, it is fulfilling to be able to step aside with the knowledge that our board of directors, the management team and artistic leadership of Mike Horner and Alex Espy are ready for exciting challenges and continued growth."

Honorees in each Awards Category:

Virtuoso

Individuals who exemplify dedicated volunteerism, artistic contributions and/or work within the KC arts community.

Dr. Loretta Britton
Dr. Ann Kenney
Lee Pentecost

Advocate

Elected or public figures who represents outstanding advocacy for the arts.

Mayor Michael Boehm
Mark McHenry
Dr. Larry Meeker

Education

School or districts using the arts as a tool for achieving educational excellence in a K-12 setting.

DeLaSalle Education Center
Fort Osage High School
University Academy

Innovator

Nonprofits providing arts education opportunities to underserved communities and creating innovative partnerships to build unique programs.

The HALO Foundation
Harmony Project KC
Summit Art

Creative Impact

Metropolitan-area businesses that foster innovation, support local artists or arts organizations and provide leadership in the arts community.

Centric Projects
JE Dunn Construction
Lead Bank

ArtsKC Fund Excellence

Companies or individuals promoting, supporting and advocating for the arts by raising funds and awareness for the ArtsKC Fund Campaign.

Bank of Blue Valley
Lathrop & Gage
Starlight Theatre

About ArtsKC – Regional Arts Council and the event:

For more information on the luncheon, visit artskc.org/awards. The mission of ArtsKC is to unleash the power of the arts. Visit artskc.org for more details about our organization.