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Photos of honorees, co-chairs and performers  
are available upon request.

*For immediate release*

## Annual ArtsKC Awards Luncheon

### Celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ArtsKC and Honored Six Arts Leaders

Kansas City Metro (March 1, 2019) ArtsKC Regional Arts Council held its **Annual Awards Luncheon** in the Kay Barnes Ballroom at the Kansas City Convention Center on Feb. 28, 2019. This year's theme was "Celebrate!" in honor of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ArtsKC.

ArtsKC recognized six honorees at the luncheon for the significant roles they have played in advancing the mission of ArtsKC and our regional arts community during the last two decades.

"Our honorees exemplify outstanding arts leadership," said Dana Knapp, president and CEO of ArtsKC. "Thanks to their contributions, ArtsKC and the arts ecosystem of our region are thriving."

#### 2019 ArtsKC Awards Luncheon honorees:

- **Visionary Award: Joan Israelite.** In 1999, Joan became the first CEO of ArtsKC. She advocated for the arts in civic conversations, helped strengthen corporate involvement in the arts and ensured that ArtsKC promoted the arts and invested in local arts nonprofits and artist entrepreneurs.
- **Virtuoso Award: Shirley Bush Helzberg.** Shirley was the founding board chair of ArtsKC and remains its honorary chair today. She dedicates her time and investment to many philanthropic causes including arts organizations that make our city a cultural destination. Shirley serves on many arts and education boards.
- **Pillar Award: Muriel McBrien Kauffman Foundation (MMKF).** The Muriel McBrien Kauffman Foundation focuses on enhancing the quality and accessibility of the arts. Founded in 1987 by the late Mrs. Muriel Irene Kauffman, with daughter Julia Irene Kauffman serving as its Chairman of the Board/CEO today, the Foundation makes significant annual investment in many of our iconic arts organizations including ArtsKC, the Kansas City Symphony, Lyric Opera and the Kansas City Ballet.
- **Advocate Award: Janice Kreamer.** Janice spearheaded the founding of ArtsKC and called on Joan Israelite to be its first CEO. Janice is a visionary and a nationally recognized community foundation leader who has advanced national and regional investments in the arts.
- **Collaborator Award: Artist INC.** This program empowers artists across disciplines with the tools, resources and opportunities they need to succeed as creative entrepreneurs. ArtsKC, Charlotte Street Foundation and the UMKC Innovation Center launched Artist INC as a shared program in 2009 to serve local artists. Mid-America Arts Alliance assumed direction of the program in 2017, expanding its reach to 10 Midwestern communities.
- **Pioneer Award: Henry Bloch.** As a business leader, arts visionary and notable philanthropist, Mr. Bloch is one of our city's most treasured citizens. He believes in strengthening the connection between businesses and the arts. Mr. Bloch worked with local business leaders to establish the Kansas City chapter of the Business Committee for the Arts (BCA) in 2002, and is a board member emeritus of the National BCA.

Nate Orr, partner at **Spencer Fane LLP** and Richard Wetzels, partner at **Centric**, were this year's luncheon co-chairs. **Stephen Proski** was the event's featured artist. Featured performers were: **AY-MusiK**, **The Living Room Theatre**, **The Sextet**, **Calvin Arsenia** and the Horn Quartet from the **Kansas City Symphony**.

**About ArtsKC – Regional Arts Council and the event:**

ArtsKC is a regional nonprofit arts council that promotes, supports and advocates for the arts for the benefit of our region. We promote the arts for their individual, community and economic benefits. And, we create initiatives, including ArtsKCGo.com, to help drive audience engagement and participation in the arts. We support arts organizations, individual artists and arts programs of every size by awarding competitive grants for missions and projects. We serve as the voice of the arts regionally by building relationships with government officials and advocating for the development of public funding, all in support of the arts as an economic & social driver. The mission of ArtsKC is to unleash the power of the arts. Please visit [ArtsKC.org](http://ArtsKC.org) for more information. Visit [ArtsKCGo.com](http://ArtsKCGo.com), an ArtsKC initiative, for a local arts and cultural events calendar.

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