After many years of rich tradition in the arts, and a national and international reputation, President David Adamany established the School of Fine and Performing Arts during the 1986 academic year. Dr. Kathryn A. Martin began her term as dean on July 7, 1986.

The new school includes the following departments: Dance Department, Georgia Reid, chair; Art and Art History, Richard Bilaitis, chair; Music Department, Dr. Peter Schoenbach, chair; and Theatre Department, Dr. Howard Burman, chair. The departments of Art and Art History, Music and Theatre were formerly in the College of Liberal Arts; Theatre was included in the Speech, Communication, Theatre and Journalism Department. The Dance Department was formerly part of Health and Physical Education.

The offices of the dean are located in the Linsell mansion on Gullen Mall, with the departmental offices remaining in their previous locations.

The offices of the School of Fine and Performing Arts are housed in the newly renovated and historic Frederick Linsell House. In 1904, Frederick C. Stahl, Jr. built this Federal Revival house for Frederick Linsell. It is located on Gullen Mall, formerly Second Avenue at the corner of what was once Putnam St. This house is significant as a work of John C. Stahl, Jr., a Detroit architect, who designed many churches in the Detroit area. The structure is significant also because it was among the first houses that Wayne University moved into when it began to expand in the late 1930's and 1940's. The Linsell House was one of the first of the neighborhoods substantial residences to pass into public ownership for the growing urban university. The first university role for the Linsell House was as the Women's Student Building. In 1956, the University's School of Business Administration occupied the house and then it housed the Biology Department offices. Today it houses the Dean and Staff of the newly formed School of Fine and Performing Arts.

The photography program moved into new quarters at 70 West Palmer in January. This newly renovated space provides studios and darkrooms equipped and fitted to service the needs of undergraduate and graduate majors in photography. It is anticipated that the many advantages provided by these new facilities will enable the program to grow and flourish.