Dear CFPCA Alumni, Supporters and Friends,

It’s an exciting time for Detroit, for Wayne State University and for the College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts. Detroit is enjoying an historic renaissance and Wayne State and CFPCA are literally and figuratively right in the middle of this amazing transformation.

Our faculty and visual, performing and communication arts students are working to bring about new places for learning and creating. Creative placemaking processes connect proven approaches to cultural enrichment with economic development through innovative infrastructures and supportive programming. This is how we create community.

One particularly exciting example is our Hilberry Gateway Performance Complex, a project that will enhance the cultural vitality of Detroit, the central city and Midtown. The Hilberry Complex will become a destination, a gathering place and an intimate performing arts center for Detroit. Hosting theatre, music, dance and film events, the Hilberry Gateway Performance Complex will build upon CFPCA’s long history of excellence in performance.

While the development of world class performance venues such as the Hilberry Gateway Performance Complex is critical, our core focus is upon our students. Students bring enthusiasm, talent and excitement. Our programs provide transformational experiences and learning opportunities that drive student success. We provide the supportive environments necessary to nurture creativity, bolster critical inquiry and inspire discovery. Our Detroit living-learning laboratory provides a unique educational environment that is simultaneously academic and real-world.

Our commitment to students and to Detroit is only possible through the support of alumni and friends. We are especially excited, therefore, that Wayne State launched the Pivotal Moments Comprehensive Campaign. The campaign allows us to celebrate the central role we have played in the lives of Wayne State students over decades and the support that alumni and friends continue to provide to CFPCA.

You will read about the comprehensive campaign and about many pivotal moments in this edition of Expressions. CFPCA continues to foster moments such as public relations and theatre double major Sydney Machesky’s national championship in persuasive speaking and music alumnus George Shirley’s National Medal of Arts. The college recognizes a Pivotal Moment of its own, as this year we celebrate the 30th anniversary of our founding. As we prepare for the opportunities that are developing in Detroit, we also look back on some of our important accomplishments.

Thank you for your support of the College of Fine Performing and Communication Arts, our students and our faculty as we continue to shape an exciting future filled with more pivotal moments.

Matthew W. Seeger
Professor and Dean
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Winter, in apparel form, wins top recognition

Fashion and costuming design student Anne Suchyta earned first place in the Rose Brand Action Design Competition at the 2015 United States Institute for Theatre Technology conference in Cincinnati. Suchyta’s project pictured here, a Winter seasonal design for found object costuming, was one of four national finalists and Suchyta was named top costume designer. “There can be no other,” said Tony Award-winning Costume Designer Jane Greenwood, a judge in the competition, about Suchyta’s design. Suchyta graduated this year with her MFA.

His light is bright on Broadway

BFA alumnus George Abud ’12 made his Broadway debut in April at New York’s Lyceum Theatre, playing the role of Karl Schell in the musical The Visit. The production ran for 61 performances and was nominated for five Tony Awards, including Best Musical and Best Original Score.

Last summer, Abud performed the cabaret act Never Been Young at New York’s 54 Below and has become a regular guest performer in their series titled Sondheimas. Abud played the role of Charlie Townsend in Classic Stage Company’s 2014 production of Allegro, a rarely produced Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein musical. This year he will open Classic Stage’s productions of Nathan the Wise, with F. Murray Abraham, and Peer Gynt.
Alumnus Melvin Gupton ’98 reflects on his time as Wayne State’s first White House intern

“I served under the first President Bush in the summer of 1991. I had responded to an open call I received through my church. I remember an exciting series of interviews and having to pass a security clearance. I was ecstatic when I received word I’d been accepted. I recall telling my late dad, ‘I am taking your name to the White House!’

“I worked in the constituent relations unit with an exceptional staff of professionals and reported to Richard W. Porter, special assistant to the president over the domestic policy council. We were housed in the executive office building next to the west wing.

“It was life changing for me in terms of advancing my world view and introducing me to the awesome privilege that is public service at the national level. It later helped me secure work with WJBK-TV FOX 2 Detroit and as a communications manager for Mayor Archer with the City of Detroit. It was so worth giving my all – and I did. I treasured, and still do, every moment.”

“Wayne State is a gold mine.”

William Underwood is a second year master of music candidate in flute performance. In October he debuted at the Schafer Music Recital Hall an original arrangement of his that mixes the works of Beyoncé, The Weeknd [sic] and Paganini. “I wanted to show the younger students it’s okay to try new things and to just be yourself,” Underwood said. “Becoming a part of the music department here at Wayne State has been a milestone in my education. There is a pool of limitless opportunities for students.”

A member of the WSU Wind Symphony, he won the University Symphony Orchestra concerto competition and opened the 2015 Department of Music Awards event with a performance of the Nielsen Flute Concerto. Not only a performer but also a scholar, Underwood took part in the WSU Graduate School’s inaugural Masters Showcase where he presented research on the National Anthem and its relationship to classical and popular music.

Student work throughout campus vies for Art Installation Award

Temporary public art provides an out of the ordinary experience for the viewer. The artwork is perceived as a fleeting reformulation of the architecture and its attendant landscape or urban-scape. Such site-specific work also provokes people who are experiencing the space on a daily basis to reconsider the manner in which they interact with their surroundings.

With these underpinnings in mind, the James Pearson Duffy Department of Art and Art History staged Wayne State’s 2015 Campus Art Installation Award competition in early fall. Art students took new works out to the campus community, installing six exhibitions around campus in four buildings and two outdoor locations. The public voted for its favorites on the web, with students competing for scholarship awards that were bestowed at a ceremony in the Art Department Gallery during a reception held in conjunction with the department-hosted, national SculptureX Symposium.
Between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s, a pioneering community of artists created an impressive range of groundbreaking and challenging works in the neighborhood just south of Wayne State University. The Cass Corridor movement was a pivotal moment in the evolution of Detroit’s art community. The movement had numerous connections to Wayne State, as many of its members studied or taught in the university’s fine art department.

It’s fitting, then, that a large and important collection of Cass Corridor art has returned permanently to the Wayne State campus, thanks to the generosity of university supporter John Hilberry.

In September, Hilberry formally presented over 60 original works created primarily from artists of the Cass Corridor movement to the Wayne State University Art Collection. The pieces come from the sizable private collection that Hilberry amassed with his late wife, Andronike “Nicky” Tsagaris.

The collection features works from Cay Bahmiller, Ann Mikolowski, Gordon Newton, Robert Sestok and many other prominent Cass Corridor contributors, as well as works by a later generation of Detroit artists. After Hilberry and Brooklyn-born Tsagaris moved to Manhattan in the 1990s, they added to the collection with works by emerging New York artists such as Tom Bills, Jane Hammond, John Lees, John Obuck and Ursula von Rydingsvard.

“It’s a balanced collection, and it will help the university to represent this important movement that took place largely because of Wayne State and the art department there,” Hilberry said. “This Cass Corridor stuff is pretty adventuresome. There’s a kind of exhilaration about it all.”

Hilberry now works as an architectural consultant after a successful career running his own architecture firm in Detroit, and later in New York, with a specialization in designing museum and gallery spaces. His father, Clarence, was Wayne State’s fourth president and a beloved figure during his 35-year tenure on campus. John Hilberry also served on the university faculty himself, teaching interior architecture for seven years during the heyday of the Cass Corridor movement.

In addition to recognizing his personal ties to the university, Hilberry views his gift as a tribute to his wife. Tsagaris was an alumna of the Wayne State University Law School, earning her Juris Doctor by attending night classes while working as an advocate for civil rights. She later became a successful lawyer and committed art collector, and Hilberry credits her insight and passion for the expansive scope of their collection.

In 2000, the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art organized the exhibition: A
Sustaining Passion: The Tsagaris/Hilberry Collection, which traveled to the University of Arizona Museum of Art. This exhibition acknowledged the couple’s “radical nerve and original, critical eye.”

Now that the collection has come to campus, the entirety of the Hilberry gift is being installed at the newly dedicated Tierney Alumni House where it will be available to the campus community and visitors to this historic house. The collection will also function as a major resource for scholars pursuing research on the Cass Corridor movement and its influence on contemporary American art.

“My hope is that art students can look at this and say ‘This was done by someone in a position not that much different from me. That’s what they did way back then!’” Hilberry said.

As coordinator of Wayne State’s University Art Collection, Sandra Schemske is charged with preserving these works and with contextualizing their significance for the university community.

“The work created by artists of the Cass Corridor movement has not been adequately recognized on a national or international level,” Schemske said. “This gift is going to further that audience, encourage scholarship and provide a forum for a broader discussion about contemporary art.”

Thomas T. Tierney ’60 and his wife Elizabeth gave $2 million to support the preservation of the historic Hecker House located on Woodward Avenue at Ferry Street. In honor of their generosity, the home was rededicated the Tierney Alumni House at a special celebration in September.

The home was designed by architect Louis Kamper in the late 19th century for Col. Frank J. Hecker and his family, who lived there until 1927. In subsequent years, the home operated as a boarding house and the offices of a music company and a law firm. The Tierney’s gift created a $1 million endowment to ensure the Tierney Alumni House is preserved and maintained for generations. An additional $1 million supports future programming. The building will house staff from the Alumni Association, Annual Giving, the HIGH Program and emeriti faculty members. •

Paintings by Ann Mikolowski
Gifts of John Hilberry, 2015
Wayne State University Art Collection
Photos: Tim Thayer

Nicki Tsagaris, 1984
Oil on canvas, 2 3/4 x 2 in.

John Hilberry, 1987
Oil on canvas, 2 5/8 x 3 1/8 in.
Artist David Barr, BA ‘62, MFA ‘66, was known for creating large outdoor sculptures of steel, stone and wood. He was the artist behind the massive, multi-column Polaris Ring that stands outside of the State Library of Michigan in Lansing, and the 63-feet tall, steel arch Transcending that stands near Detroit’s riverfront between Hart Plaza and UAW headquarters. Perhaps his biggest undertaking was Michigan Legacy Art Park, plans for which he announced at his 1988 acceptance of the Governor’s Michigan Artist Award. The Thompsonville, MI, park opened in 1995 and includes 47 sculptures by 27 artists.

Pictured here is his Bloom 1996 steel sculpture, a gift of Roger Garrett to the University Art Collection, installed at the new Integrated Biosciences Center. “David Barr’s curiosity, intellect, creativity and passion for art are distinguishable from all others,” said former CFPCA Board of Visitors member and Michigan Legacy Art Park founding board member, Marilyn Wheaton. “Creative experience was David’s mantra.” Barr taught at Macomb Community College for 40 years, until his retirement in 2002.

Art history alumna Susanne Hilberry was born in Chicago in 1943. She was raised in Detroit and worked at the Detroit Institute of Arts in the ’70s before opening her own gallery in 1976. The Susanne Hilberry Gallery has been one of the region’s stalwart exhibition spaces for contemporary art for nearly 40 years, massing a long list of important artists shown at, and represented by, the gallery. “She always tried to show interesting art,” said Wayne State painting and drawing Professor Jeffrey Abt. “She was interested in nurturing new talent – some of which was local. I think she felt that Detroit artists had something to say.” Hilberry earned an undergraduate degree in art history at Wayne State and a master’s in architectural history at Yale. She served on CFPCA’s Board of Visitors and served on the first steering committee of the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, MOCAD, which she was instrumental in bringing into existence.

Born in Detroit in 1921, Elaine L. Jacob, BFA ’42, was a third-generation member of the family that founded one of the nation’s oldest packaging companies, M. Jacob & Sons, now MJS Packaging. Jacob worked at the Livonia, Michigan-based company from 1953 until

Painter Gilda Snowden, BFA ’77, MFA ’79, was born in Detroit in 1954 and graduated from Cass Technical High School. She taught painting for more than 30 years at Detroit’s College for Creative Studies, where she mentored thousands of young artists. A central figure in Detroit’s arts scene, and a 2009 Kresge Artist Fellow, Snowden was known for creating art-making and exhibition opportunities for artists throughout the city. Her own paintings were heavily influenced by Detroit’s Cass Corridor arts movement. A self-described "found objects scavenger," Snowden fused into her paintings a wide array of actual objects picked up around the city. “This is an outgrowth of my early experiences as a young artist in school, observations and immersion in the Cass Corridor community and a constant study of art history,” she once wrote. “To be radical is required for forward progression.” Pictured at right is her Untitled (Tornado Series), 1998, pastel on paper, 29.5 x 41.5 in., given to the University Art Collection by Compuware in 2015.
Dr. Jack Kay, BA ’74, PhD ’79, was a much loved and respected member of Wayne State University’s administration and faculty. His administrative appointments at Wayne State included chair of the Department of Communication; two terms as interim dean of the College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts; interim dean of the former College of Urban, Labor and Metropolitan Affairs; associate provost for assessment, retention and global education; and associate provost for student services.

“Dr. Jack Kay, BA ’74, PhD ’79, was a much loved and respected member of Wayne State University’s administration and faculty. His administrative appointments at Wayne State included chair of the Department of Communication; two terms as interim dean of the College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts; interim dean of the former College of Urban, Labor and Metropolitan Affairs; associate provost for assessment, retention and global education; and associate provost for student services. "This is a significant loss to our community," said Wayne State Provost Margaret Winters. "Jack was the quintessential Wayne State teacher-scholar. He came from a modest background and worked tirelessly to overcome barriers, prejudices and injustice so that others might benefit from higher education."

Dr. Kay was recognized widely for his research into hate speech. He was past president of the Michigan Association of Speech Communication and the Central States Communication Association. While attending WSU he was a member of the nationally recognized debate team, which he coached as a graduate student.

Dr. Linda Moore served as dean of Wayne State’s College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts 1998–2003. She was an active researcher whose areas of interest included curriculum development, conflict resolution and speech education. She advanced the high quality of WSU’s arts and communication programs and sharpened CFPCA’s focus on its faculty.

“Linda Moore was a gifted administrator who truly understood and could successfully manage the complexities of higher education,” said CFPCA Dean Matthew Seeger. “More than that, she was a warm and genuine person who helped form the identity of our college.”

Dean Moore earned her undergraduate and master’s degrees in communication at Bradley University and her doctorate at Kent State University. In 2003, she accepted the position of vice president for academic affairs at Emerson College in Boston, a post she held until her retirement in 2013.

Stanley Rosenthal earned his MFA at Wayne State and began teaching at WSU in 1969, progressing through the academic ranks to become a full professor in 2006. He was employed by WSU for 46 years and served as a graduate officer for the Department of Art and Art History, member of the Graduate Council, and served on a number of college and university committees.

In 2001 Professor Rosenthal received the WSU President’s Award for Excellence in Teaching, and in 2013 he received WSU’s prestigious Murray E. Jackson Scholar in the Arts Award. A retrospective highlighting his extensive body of work, coinciding with that award, culminated into a solo exhibition, *Memories: Stanley Louis Rosenthal*, held at the Art Department Gallery in 2014.

“Stanley was a wonderful colleague and a great friend of mine for twenty years,” said Professor Emerita Marion Jackson, former chair of the Department of Art and Art History. “He was larger-than-life, with a talent for seeing the complexity in people and to respond to their complicated humanity with appreciation and humor.” Pictured below is his *Memory Series #9, Self Portrait / Birding* which was on view in his retrospective exhibition.
Robert Broner (1922-2010)
*Do Not Destroy*
1980
Oil on canvas
52 x 71 in.
Gift of Nahama Broner
Wayne State University Art Collection