



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville Announces 48th Annual Arts Awards Winners *Artists, nonprofits, businesses and philanthropists to be celebrated on September 5*

Jacksonville, Fla. – June 23, 2025 – The Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville (CCGJ) will host its 48th Annual Arts Awards, presented by AT&T, on September 5, 2025, at the Florida Blue Conference Center. The highly anticipated event honors individuals, organizations and philanthropists that fuel Jacksonville’s creative economy.

CCGJ announced this year’s award winners today, recognizing their outstanding contributions to the city’s vibrant arts and culture landscape, shaping Jacksonville as a premier destination for quality of life, tourism and economic development.

This year’s theme, *Fire & Ice*, elegantly captures the spark and creative energy of Jacksonville’s cross-sector momentum — with the arts and culture community as the defining thread of success that sizzles through them all. The Arts Awards is the CCGJ’s largest annual fundraiser, supporting regranteeing efforts and responsive funding that fuels artists and organizations. The event offers a moment to gather, honor the achievements of our creative sector and celebrate the initiatives shaping Jacksonville’s future.

“For nearly five decades, the Arts Awards have recognized creative leaders, cultural catalysts and artistic innovators who are defining Jacksonville’s thriving creative economy,” said Diana Donovan, Executive Director of the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville. “This year’s *Fire & Ice* theme reflects the dynamic forces that fuel both quality of life and economic growth. When fire and ice meet, they make STEAM — a powerful symbol of how science, technology, engineering, arts and math intersect to drive our city forward. We are honored to celebrate this year’s award winners, and to champion our platform on behalf of our powerful sector shaping Greater Jacksonville as a destination to stay, work and play.”

CCGJ’s role as the City of Jacksonville’s legislated leading Local Arts Agency (LAA) is to champion the sector through community-driven programs while providing the platform to elevate broadly, collaboratively and intentionally. True to its mission and vision, CCGJ has embodied the power of community throughout both the nomination and selection process. Each award winner was nominated by a member of the community in the Greater Jacksonville area and selected by a committee of peers to celebrate their steadfast impact on the sector.

The 2025 winners in each of the eight categories are:

- **Helen Lane Founders Award**, which honors a leader who integrates arts and culture into everyday life within their community: *Dr. Milt Russos*

- **Corporate Business of the Year**, which honors a business that graciously gives support to arts and cultural programs and organizations: *Leadership Jacksonville*
- **Robert Arleigh White Award for Advocacy**, which honors an individual who fosters an environment of educating and learning of the benefits of the arts: *John A. Lumpkin II*
- **Small Business of the Year**, which honors an organization that has fewer than 250 employees and graciously gives support to arts and cultural programs and organizations despite its size: *Blue Jay Listening Room*
- **Art Innovator**, which honors an individual who creates new and innovative ideas to benefit the community: *Brian Niece*
- **Art Educator**, which honors an individual who demonstrates dedication to enriching their students with a passion for the arts: *Don Zentz*
- **Art of Giving**, which honors an individual or couple who stewards their resources to fund, support and sustain arts and culture programs: *Renee Favo*
- **Community Impact**, which honors an individual or organization who has a record of visible transformational results that are evident within their community, and a commitment to impacting others' lives: *Kemal Gasper*

Alongside this year's community-selected awards, CCGJ announced Diane Brunet-García as the 2025 Catalyst Recognition recipient. CCGJ spotlights public and private catalyst investors of funding throughout the sector.

Proceeds from the Arts Awards directly support youth, families, cultural nonprofits and public art initiatives throughout the Jacksonville community. As the region's leading regranteeing agency for arts and culture, CCGJ returns an average of 92 cents of every dollar back to support the local arts and culture sector. This investment generates a strong return by fueling Jacksonville's creative economy and benefiting multiple sectors across the community.

The 48th Annual Arts Awards is supported by AT&T, Amazon, Florida Blue, VyStar Credit Union, PRI Productions, Wingard, emcee and DJ Vic Micolucci, First Horizon and more.

Tickets for the 2025 Arts Awards, presented by AT&T, are limited and expected to sell out quickly. For more information and to purchase tickets, please visit culturalcouncil.org/artsawards.

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About the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville:

The Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville aims to enrich life in Northeast Florida by investing in Arts and Culture. Founded more than 50 years ago, the Cultural Council operates as a private, not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) organization and is designated as the official Local Arts Agency (LAA) by ordinance for the City of Jacksonville. It is governed by a volunteer board of directors and provides a range of services to ignite the creative economy and to address the ever-changing needs of the arts and cultural sector and broader community. Learn more at

culturalcouncil.org.