

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT
FOR THE ARTS

2016

National Heritage Fellowships





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Clarissa Rizal regalia
Photo by Jeff Laydon/Pagosa Photography

COVER
Theresa Secord basket
Photo by Theresa Secord



Elk flute by Bryan Akipa
Photo by Mike Wolforth, Rapid City, SD

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In the 34th year of the NEA National Heritage Fellowships, we are pleased to present to this year's Fellows an award that carries with it the passion and knowledge of cultural traditions passed down through the generations. Ornamental ironwork found in Charleston, South Carolina, and Osage Nation ribbonwork were two craft traditions celebrated in 1982, the inaugural year of the NEA National Heritage Fellowships. Joined together, these traditions represent legacies of perpetuation, distinction, and extraordinary commitment to cultural heritage.

Georgeann Robinson (1917–1985), citizen of the Osage Nation, received a National Heritage Fellowship for her intricate ribbonwork stitched by needlepoint onto clothing worn by Osage people for the In-Lon-schka dances and other important social gatherings. Her granddaughter Lisa Powell continues this tradition from her home in Eudora, Kansas. With her daughter, Jami Powell, Lisa designed and delicately balanced the traditional red, blue, and yellow ribbon motif that drapes over each Fellow and joins together with the medal.

Philip Simmons (1912–2009), master blacksmith and ironwork designer, received a National Heritage Fellowship for his ornamental ironwork. His distinctive wrought-iron gates, fences, balconies, and free standing sculptures still grace many of the homes, gardens, and businesses in Charleston, South Carolina, and the surrounding areas, adding to the city's unique visual and cultural aesthetic. His nephew Carlton Simmons apprenticed with his uncle from age 13 and continues to work in the same workshop on the grounds of the former residence and now Museum Home of Philip Simmons (which also houses the Philip Simmons Foundation and Gift Shop). Carlton designed the award medal in a signature heart motif, skillfully representing the passion and beating drive that illuminates each National Heritage Fellow and the dedication they have to their life's work.

We would like to thank the artisans who created this special award and say congratulations to the 2016 NEA National Heritage Fellows.



August 26, 2016

I am pleased to join in congratulating the 2016 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) National Heritage Fellows.

Through each chapter of the American story, our people have drawn inspiration from artists and found meaning in their works. Capable of capturing the experiences, emotions, and ideas that define our common humanity, the artistic achievements that move us can speak to who we once were and who we are now, inspire us to question what surrounds us and envision what could be, and transcend barriers—both between and within us.

As men and women creating stirring and extraordinary work in the folk and traditional arts, the NEA National Heritage Fellows embody a most American of notions: that to carry forward our origins is to continue to shape the future. In their dedication to enriching our Nation and our world with meaning, beauty, and grace, we see the extraordinary diversity of perspectives that makes the arts essential and universal.

Again, congratulations to this year's honorees. I wish everyone gathered on this special occasion the very best for an outstanding evening.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be "Barack Obama", written in a cursive style.



Message from the Chairman

Thank you for joining us as we celebrate the 2016 NEA National Heritage Fellows. These men and women are master artists, demonstrating expert execution of folk and traditional art forms. But as they weave sweetgrass baskets or play the Dakota flute, or perform music in elaborate suits during Mardi Gras, they are creating something deeper than an exquisite piece of artwork; they are cultivating the future of their culture.

Since we began awarding these fellowships in 1982, our NEA National Heritage Fellows have served as cultural stewards, preserving their artistic traditions, passing down their knowledge to the next generation, and teaching us about ways of life that are perhaps different from our own. They have worked tirelessly to attract new audiences and develop new practitioners, expanding the reach and enhancing the vitality of their art forms. For example, since shipwright Mike Vlahovich founded the Coastal Heritage Alliance in 2003, the organization has trained more than 120 apprentices in shipbuilding. In California, the traditional Mexican music style of *son huasteco* has become an integral part of community life thanks to the efforts of Artemio Posadas. Not content to simply perform onstage, he has spent years renting halls, recruiting musicians, and organizing fandango events that invited people to eat, drink, and engage with *son huasteco* as a social experience.

As our fellows expand their art forms, they create new traditions for all Americans to celebrate and honor. They have broadened our notion of American art, and demonstrate the diversity of talent, culture, and meaning that empowers and energizes this country. The United States is as vibrant and rich today because we are infused with the colors, sounds, and movements of the art forms practiced by our fellows. As we celebrate and admire our 2016 honorees, let us also express our gratitude to them for filling our lives with extraordinary beauty, meaning, and value.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Chu". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jane" and last name "Chu" clearly distinguishable.

Jane Chu
Chairman, National Endowment for the Arts

Message from the Director

In 1958, then Senator John F. Kennedy published the book *A Nation of Immigrants*, outlining a premise that has gained a significant hold on the national imagination. But a review of this year's nine remarkable NEA National Heritage Fellows reveals a more complex tale of community journeys. To visit with this year's fellows is to know that we are also a nation of indigenous peoples, a nation of migrants, refugees, and descendants of enslaved Africans. Even with this small group of nine fellows, we can see that the makeup of the United States—like the ancient, exquisite basketry of Theresa Secord of the Penobscot Nation, and Leona Waddell of Kentucky—is an extraordinary interweaving of cultural fibers harvested from different roots.

Immigrants such as Artemio Posadas, and refugees like Bounxeung Synanonh, have transplanted their musical traditions from Mexico and Laos to new communities in California where they flower today. Michael Vlahovich and Billy McComiskey—both the sons of immigrants—show us how traditions migrate within the United States: moving from the ethnic enclaves of the immigrant generation and into new geographies never encountered by their parents. And both have taken their traditional skills—heartily nurtured here in the United States—back across the ocean to reinvigorate the traditions of the Old Country.

On the Sisseton Wahpeton reservation in South Dakota, Bryan Akipa's life's work has involved stewardship of the delicate melodies of his Dakota ancestors, maintained through the cacophony of westward expansion into the northern plains. And in New Orleans, Joseph Pierre "Big Chief Monk" Boudreaux's hand-stitched Mardi Gras suits, inspired by Native-American regalia, pay tribute to a history of oppression—and an assertion of identity—shared with the indigenous people.

Our traditions—like the Tlingit robes of Clarissa Rizal—are a garment we wear to reflect the stories of our elders and the geography of our people; a source of strength that enables us to walk forward into the headwinds of change. Like the baskets of Secord and Waddell, our traditions carry the promise of who we will become—as individuals, as a community, and as a nation.

Our heartfelt thanks and congratulations go to the 2016 NEA National Heritage Fellows.



Clifford R. Murphy, PhD

Director, Folk & Traditional Arts, National Endowment for the Arts



Photo by Edwin Remsburg

Bryan Akipa

Dakota Flute Maker and Player

Sisseton, SD

Growing up in the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Reservation of northeastern South Dakota, Bryan Akipa did not know that traditional flutes were to be found in Dakota culture. That changed when he was studying painting with famed Dakota artist Oscar Howe at the University of South Dakota (USD). While in Howe's studio, he saw and became entranced with a wooden mallard-head flute, made by Lakota artist Richard Fool Bull. Akipa spent hours studying, measuring, drawing it, and puzzling out how it was made. Eventually he made one of his own, carved with a pocketknife from red cedar. Thus began a career in music and art that helped revive a long put-away tradition. Akipa sought out tribal elders who knew the flute tradition, remembered songs, and showed him old flutes. He absorbed every bit of that knowledge and used it to perfect his art.

The Očhéthi Šakówin Native-American flute is unique in its construction, with a plug partway down the body of the instrument that forces air up through a hole above, and then back down, controlled by a tuning block or saddle tied over the opening with a leather thong. The block is usually carved in the shape of a bird or animal, and it faces the player. The far end of the instrument is also often carved as a bird or animal head, as was the mallard flute that drew Akipa in many years ago. Akipa is one of the few artists to play the ancestral flute using the indigenous musical scale. Additionally the age-old flute songs have melodies based on how they are sung. When a traditional flute player performs these songs, they play the melodies as the songs are sung, with additional bird imitations and sound techniques. As Akipa says, "When I play the flute, I can hear this melody in my mind."

Akipa took a break from college to serve in the Army, but his mentor Howe passed away shortly after Akipa returned to USD, so he changed his studies from art to elementary education. While working his first teaching job at the Pierre Indian Learning Center, he would often play the flute for his class, the music echoing through the building. Soon his fellow teachers were asking him to come to their classes, and other schools were inviting him to perform. He began making and selling flutes, in addition to performing, to supplement his income. Audiences began asking for recordings of his music, and after he produced his first CD in 1993, he realized he could turn his craft and music into a career. He has taught, demonstrated, performed at workshops, museums, schools, colleges, and prestigious venues across the country, always generous in sharing his knowledge. He has won several Nammies (Native American Music Awards) and has been nominated for a Grammy. In addition to making and playing flutes, Akipa is also a traditional dancer, visual artist, and digital media artist.

The flute circle would not be complete without passing on the tradition. "For me, the red cedar flute and its aria are my cultural journey," he said of the path that brought him where he is today. He has taught his son, friends, and relatives, most recently teaching two of his nephews through an apprenticeship grant from the South Dakota Arts Council.

Bio by Andrea Graham, South Dakota Arts Council



“When I looked at the mallard flute for the first time, I was so amazed. I could not imagine that we had red cedar flutes in our culture. I wanted to play it, I wanted to hear it, and then I wanted one.”

Photo by Bill Goehring/Sioux Falls

Joseph Pierre “Big Chief Monk” Boudreaux

Mardi Gras Indian Craftsman and Musician

New Orleans, LA

Joseph Pierre “Big Chief Monk” Boudreaux is the leader of the Golden Eagles, a Mardi Gras Indian tribe of New Orleans, Louisiana. Born in New Orleans on Pearl Harbor Day, December 7, 1941, Boudreaux is a vital figure in the tradition, and has steadfastly distinguished himself as a gifted folk artist and dynamic performing musician through his unwavering dedication to this singular African-American culture.

The New Orleans Black Indians emerged in the late 19th century, appearing as various “tribes” or “gangs,” in stunningly elaborate costumes, or “suits,” that combine the visual aesthetics of 19th-century American Plains Indians and Afro-Caribbean Carnival revelers. Completely handmade, these suits include brightly colored feathers, intricate beadwork, rhinestones, sequins, satin, and ruffles.

Music and movement are as central to the tradition as is symbolic costuming, or “masking.” The 1956 field recordings by documentarian Samuel Charters first captured the group’s *mélange* of percussion, hypnotic chanting, and improvisational singing. This musical tradition is expressed through a shared canon of song form, lyrical allusions, Black Indian patois phraseology, and rhythmic structure.

Boudreaux began masking with the White Eagles tribe as a young man of 16. He drew personal inspiration from his father Raymond, a carpenter by trade, who had been a member of the Wild Squatoulas when he was very young. After Boudreaux became a member of the White Eagles, an internal dispute led to

the dissolution of the tribe and he joined the Golden Eagles. Boudreaux later became the Big Chief of that tribe.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, a small group of New Orleans students and folklorists worked to bring the Mardi Gras Indian tradition to a wider community. Boudreaux, and several others, eventually became nationally known recording artists by blending their folk traditions with R&B and funk.

Boudreaux’s musical career has spanned nearly a half-century and has seen him perform in the world’s finest concert halls, including Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center. Additionally, he has performed in the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Japan. Boudreaux has recorded several critically acclaimed albums and has appeared as a guest musician on numerous recordings. In 1982, he performed with rock legend Robbie Robertson on NBC’s *Saturday Night Live*. More recently, Boudreaux portrayed himself in several episodes of HBO’s original series *Treme*.

Though Boudreaux has traveled the world as an ambassador of the Mardi Gras Indian culture, he remains deeply rooted in the traditions of place and family. Today, he focuses his artistic energies on his children and grandchildren, who now form the members of the Golden Eagles. As Boudreaux completes his sixth decade of masking, he grows ever more dedicated to maintaining, and indeed perpetuating, the foundations of this vibrant American vernacular culture.

Bio by Robert Brown, Appalachian State University



“Take me downtown on the battlefield; and when you meet ‘em that morning you’d better not kneel.”

Photo by Robert Brown

Billy McComiskey

Irish Button Accordionist

Baltimore, MD

Billy McComiskey is a world-renowned accordion, or “box,” player and composer who was taught by the great Sean McGlynn, a master of the East Galway style of Irish traditional music. Also known as the Slieve Aughty style, named after the mountains that cross Counties Galway and Clare, McComiskey explained, “The music is slower and steadier than other styles, and the tunes are extremely well thought out—it’s stately music and very round, particularly the grace notes.”

McComiskey was born in 1951 in Brooklyn, New York, to a family steeped in Irish music and dance. It was a home where recordings of the great Flanagan Brothers, the McNulty Family, and Joe Derrane, a 2004 NEA National Heritage Fellow, often played, and in a region to which masters in Irish fiddle, accordion, flute, tin whistle, and dance immigrated. He notes that it was through early 20th-century New York, and its network of musicians, that Irish traditional music was brought from more informal settings to the performance stage. Each summer, Irish musicians and dancers from northern cities would congregate in the foothills of the Catskill Mountains north of the city, a place significant to McComiskey’s musical growth. His godfather owned a popular pub in Cairo, and his uncle brought together the legendary Mary Bergin, Joe Cooley, Angela Crotty, Larry Redican, Andy McGann, Charlie Mulvihill, and Sean McGlynn to regularly perform. McGlynn played his Paolo Soprani accordion for 14-year-old McComiskey, a

moment, he recalled, that felt like a “horse kicking my head.” He then became McGlynn’s “sidekick,” learning intricate fingering and phrasing techniques. During the 1970s and ‘80s, he won gold and silver in the prestigious All-Ireland musical competitions in solo accordion and in duets with the renowned fiddler, Brendan Mulvihill (son of 1984 National Heritage Fellow, Martin Mulvihill).

In the mid-1970s, McComiskey, Mulvihill, and guitarist Andy O’Brien were invited to play a weekend gig at the Dubliner in Washington, DC by Lou Thompson and Peggy Reardon, who were interested in growing an Irish music community in the region. Soon after, McComiskey played at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival during the U.S. Bicentennial, and after meeting his future wife, Annie, they settled in Baltimore. Over decades, McComiskey has played an integral role in building the now thriving Baltimore-DC Irish traditional music scene, connecting the deep legacy of the Slieve Aughty traditions of New York to the region. Through to today, he teaches musicians all over the world, as well as in his home state, as a master through the Maryland Traditions apprenticeship program. He won the *Irish Echo*’s Album of the Year for his 2008 *Outside the Box* and was their 2011 Traditional Artist of the Year. He has been invited to share his outstanding talents at the White House, the Kennedy Center, and throughout the U.S., Ireland, and beyond.

Bio by Michelle L. Stefano, Maryland Traditions

“I didn’t learn this tradition;
I was born into it.”



Photo by Tom Pich

Clarissa Rizal

Tlingit Ceremonial Regalia Maker

Juneau, AK

Clarissa Rizal, member of the Raven T'akDein Taan (black-legged kittiwake) Clan of Hoonah/Glacier Bay, Alaska, is a highly respected cultural leader and a multitalented artist who has contributed to the revival and perpetuation of Chilkat blanket weaving. These difficult and time-consuming twined robes made of wool and cedar bark depict highly stylized images of the crests which embody a clan's history and eminence. In the gender-divided world of Tlingit art, a Chilkat robe is the female equivalent of the male-carved totem pole. In addition to Chilkat weaving, Rizal has perfected the Ravenstail technique, an earlier, more geometric type of Tlingit weaving, and has also created blankets depicting crest beings in appliqué and buttons. Rizal not only creates fine textiles, which would be sufficient to guarantee her artistic reputation, but she makes paintings, collages, and drawings that integrate the formline style of historic Tlingit art with modernist visions, creating almost surrealist two-dimensional works of visual intensity and drama.

Several Tlingit elders mentored Rizal. Harry K. Bremner, Sr., taught her Native songs and dance and basketweaver Selina Peretrovich trained her to make spruce root baskets. But, perhaps most significantly, Rizal trained in Chilkat weaving by 1986 NEA National Heritage Fellow Jennie Thlunaut. When she first started weaving with Thlunaut, the oldest living woman trained in this complex textile technique at that time, almost no one knew how to make these powerful and, by that time, rare robes. Following her mentor's directive to teach others how to weave, Rizal

has educated scores of students in Chilkat, Ravenstail, and button robe techniques. Today at clan ceremonies as well as public festivals, the abundance of such textiles being worn and danced with is a testament to Rizal's training, influence, and inspiration. More than a mentor, Rizal's vision to create a community of artists dedicated to Northwest Coast Native heritage inspired her to organize the Biennial Northwest Coast Native Artists' Gathering and assemble the Shaax 'SaaniKeek' Weavers' Circle of Chilkat and Ravenstail weavers. Her passion for community participation in artistic creative projects recently led to the creation of "Weavers Across the Water," a Chilkat-Ravenstail robe composed of squares woven by 54 weavers which she sewed together to create blanket that will be used in celebrations of Northwest Coast canoe launchings and other ceremonies.

Rizal's weavings have received Best in Show at the Heard Museum Indian Art Fair, the Santa Fe Artists Market, the Anchorage Museum All Alaska Juried Art Show, and the Sealaska Heritage Invitational Art Exhibit. She has had visiting artist fellowships at the Pilchuk Art School in Washington state, the Rasmusson Foundation in Alaska, and the Native Arts and Cultural Foundation in Vancouver, Washington. She has also received a Smithsonian Creative Capital Grant from the First Peoples Fund in Rapid City, South Dakota, and a George Kaiser Foundation Tulsa Artist Residency.

Bio by Aldona Jonaitis, University of Alaska Museum of the North



Photo by Tom Pich

“After learning Chilkat, I gained the art of patience, the way of gratitude, and the act of compassion. The universe opened its doors with a flood of information; the kind of information not definable, yet powerfully written in our Native art, in the ways of our people, and in our commune with nature.”

Theresa Secord

Penobscot Nation Ash/Sweetgrass Basketmaker

Waterville, ME

A passionate advocate for preserving the ash and sweetgrass basketmaking heritage of the Wabanaki tribes of Maine (Maliseet, Micmac, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot tribes), Theresa Secord is a master basketmaker, still using the basket molds that she inherited from her great-grandmother to shape her art.

After earning her MS degree in geology from the University of Wisconsin, and a short stint with Mobil Oil, Secord returned to Maine to work for her tribe as the staff geologist in the mid-1980s. In 1988, she became one of the first apprentices in the Maine Arts Commission's Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program, learning basketry from elder Penobscot basketmaker Madeline Tomer Shay over the next five years. Determined not to watch traditional basketry fade into history, she co-founded the Maine Indian Basketmaker's Alliance (MIBA) and became its first director in 1993, mobilizing fellow Maine basketmakers to work together to save their own art and bring forward a new generation of artists. With funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, in 2006, MIBA established its own apprenticeship program, supporting more than 200 apprenticeships since then. This program validated elder basketmakers, re-established an ancient tradition through young tribal members, and helped culture bearers of all ages realize cultural pride and income. Secord has taught dozens as a master basketmaker and served as a long-time instructor in MIBA's tribal community basketry workshops.

Under her leadership, MIBA is credited with lowering the average age of basketmakers in Maine from 63 to 40 and increasing numbers of weavers from 55 to 200. For her commitment to sustaining Wabanaki culture, Secord was named a Community Spirit Award recipient in 2009 by the First Peoples Fund. In October 2003, she became the first U.S. citizen to receive the Prize for Creativity in Rural Life from the Women's World Summit Foundation granted at the UN in Geneva, Switzerland, for helping rural basketmakers rise out of poverty.

A nationally recognized basketmaker, Secord has won many awards, including Best of Basketry at Eiteljorg Museum Indian Market, and several first place awards in Basketry at Heard Museum Guild Indian Fair and Market and the storied Santa Fe Indian Market. Secord was named the 2011 Traditional Arts Fellow for Maine and the 2013 Maine Master Craft Artist of the Year. Her baskets have been purchased by collectors and museums throughout the U.S. and have appeared in several exhibitions, most notably, *The Language of Native American Baskets, from the Weaver's View* at the National Museum of the American Indian in New York.

Since retiring from MIBA after 21 years, Secord continues her work as an artist and passionate cultural advocate. Her latest work encourages ongoing conservation of the sacred ash trees against the emerald ash borer beetle.

Bio by Kathleen Mundell, Maine Arts Commission



Photo by Steve Wewerka

“From pack baskets woven with curved bellies to fit the sides of our birch bark canoes to fancy Victorian art pieces or potato baskets for the harvest in Aroostook County, Maine, Indian baskets have long embodied a way of life and identified us as a Woodland people.”

Bounxeung Synanonh

Laotian Khaen Player

Fresno, CA

Laotian-born Bounxeung Synanonh is a master performer on the *khaen*, a free-reed mouth organ made from 16 lengths of bamboo. Born in Savannakhet, Laos, in 1949, Synanonh is a member of the majority lowland ethnic group, the Lao. At the age of 15, he lost his sight and that same year he started learning the khaen from village elders, including his uncle. The musical tradition of the khaen is essentially oral and must be learned directly from other musicians. Learning by ear, Synanonh quickly became proficient and expanded his knowledge by listening to khaen players on the radio and by performing at festivals and other community gatherings. The sound of the khaen is extraordinarily complex, as the player inhales and exhales through the instrument so it produces sounds continuously, and because of its multiple pipes, it plays multiple pitches simultaneously.

When Synanonh immigrated to the U.S. as a refugee in the early 1980s, fleeing war and the Pathet Lao re-education camps, his musical skills were quickly prized by the stateside Lao community. The khaen and its repertoire are strongly associated with and central to lowland Lao culture. The khaen tradition is generally found in Lao communities in

Laos, northeast Thailand, and in the Laotian diaspora. Synanonh is especially adept in the style of *Savannakhet*, his home community, but he is also recognized in the Lao community for his skill in a wide range of regional styles. He has been invited to travel to all the major Lao communities in the U.S. to perform for public events like the Lao New Year's celebration, as well as for home-based ceremonies like that which is performed to initiate a new home.

The khaen has a deep solo tradition and also provides essential instrumental accompaniment for *lum*, a tradition of sung poetry. For many years, Synanonh was the preferred accompanist for lum singer and 1991 NEA National Heritage Fellow, Khamvong Insixiangmai. Their work together is commemorated on the album *Bamboo Voices: Folk Music from Laos* (1989). In 2007, Synanonh performed at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival as part of the Mekong River: Connecting Cultures program. He has also made sustained efforts to teach the next generation, taking on two apprentices in 2008.

Bio by Amy Kitchener, Alliance for California Traditional Arts

“[The *khaen*] keeps me connected to my culture. It gives me peace, as well as connects me to the Lao community in the U.S. It gives the Lao community great joy to celebrate our culture in a way that has been done for generations. My art brings people together in ways that transcend their differences because the *khaen* is a common thread in their lives.”



Michael Vlahovich

Master Shipwright

Tacoma, WA/St. Michaels, MD

Mike Vlahovich is a master shipwright and third-generation commercial fisherman who has dedicated his adult life to the preservation of the cultural, material, and environmental heritage of fisheries of the Northwest and the Chesapeake Bay.

Born in Tacoma, Washington, to Croatian immigrants, Vlahovich began fishing for salmon commercially at age 15. Following high school, he pursued a calling to the Roman Catholic priesthood, but after a year in the novitiate, he experienced an epiphany during a walking meditation within smelling distance of the kitchen: “I smelled the coffee. Well, immediately that aroma took me to the coffee you smell on the fishing boat. I mean, *I was on the deck of the boats again*. And it came to me: Wow! I have to be back with my people!” Shortly thereafter, Vlahovich was fishing the Pacific waters between Alaska and Mexico.

In the off-season, Vlahovich was taught by shipwrights back home on Tacoma’s working waterfront. His inspiration and mentor was Joe Trumbly, a member of the Osage Nation, who himself had learned in the boat yards of Tacoma and Gig Harbor, most of which were run by members of the Yugoslavian-American community. Vlahovich served as shipwright and foreman in wooden boat yards in Bristol Bay, and Ketchikan, Alaska, before returning to Tacoma to settle down and raise a family of four children with his wife, Paula Clark.

In 1982, Vlahovich opened a boat shop in Tacoma, and by 1992 launched his heritage education efforts with the restoration and

conversion of the *Commencement*, a 65-foot wooden purse seine salmon boat that now functions as a floating classroom. By 1999, his reputation as a master shipwright and as an advocate for the heritage of Northwestern fisheries earned him Washington’s prestigious Governor’s Heritage Award.

In 2001, Vlahovich was lured across the continent by the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels, Maryland, and the Maryland Historical Trust to help sustain the region’s iconic—but rapidly diminishing—fleet of sail-powered oyster-dredging boats known as skipjacks. “I didn’t come here to build museum pieces,” Vlahovich told the *New York Times* in 2002, instead focusing on “saving what matters”—the skills and the culture of shipwrights and seafood harvesters.

Vlahovich founded Coastal Heritage Alliance in 2003 with bi-coastal operations in Maryland and Washington. Coastal Heritage Alliance has trained more than 120 apprentices (including minimum-security inmates) in shipbuilding. He and his daughter, Teresa, have trained Maryland watermen to serve as heritage tour guides to supplement their incomes and provide education to the public. Vlahovich has received numerous apprenticeship awards from Maryland Traditions, and has been a featured artist at the Smithsonian, Northwest, and Maryland Traditions Folklife Festivals. He has lectured throughout the Republic of Croatia as a guest of the Croatian-American Society in Zagreb.

Bio by Clifford R. Murphy

“When what you know as a master is your greatest treasure, it’s kind of a matter of your inheritance. Who are you going to leave that with? And how do you leave a skill? Well, only through education and teaching. Yes, it can be documented: you can interview people, you can photograph people. But, really, if it’s to stay alive, that treasure needs to be implanted in another human being.”

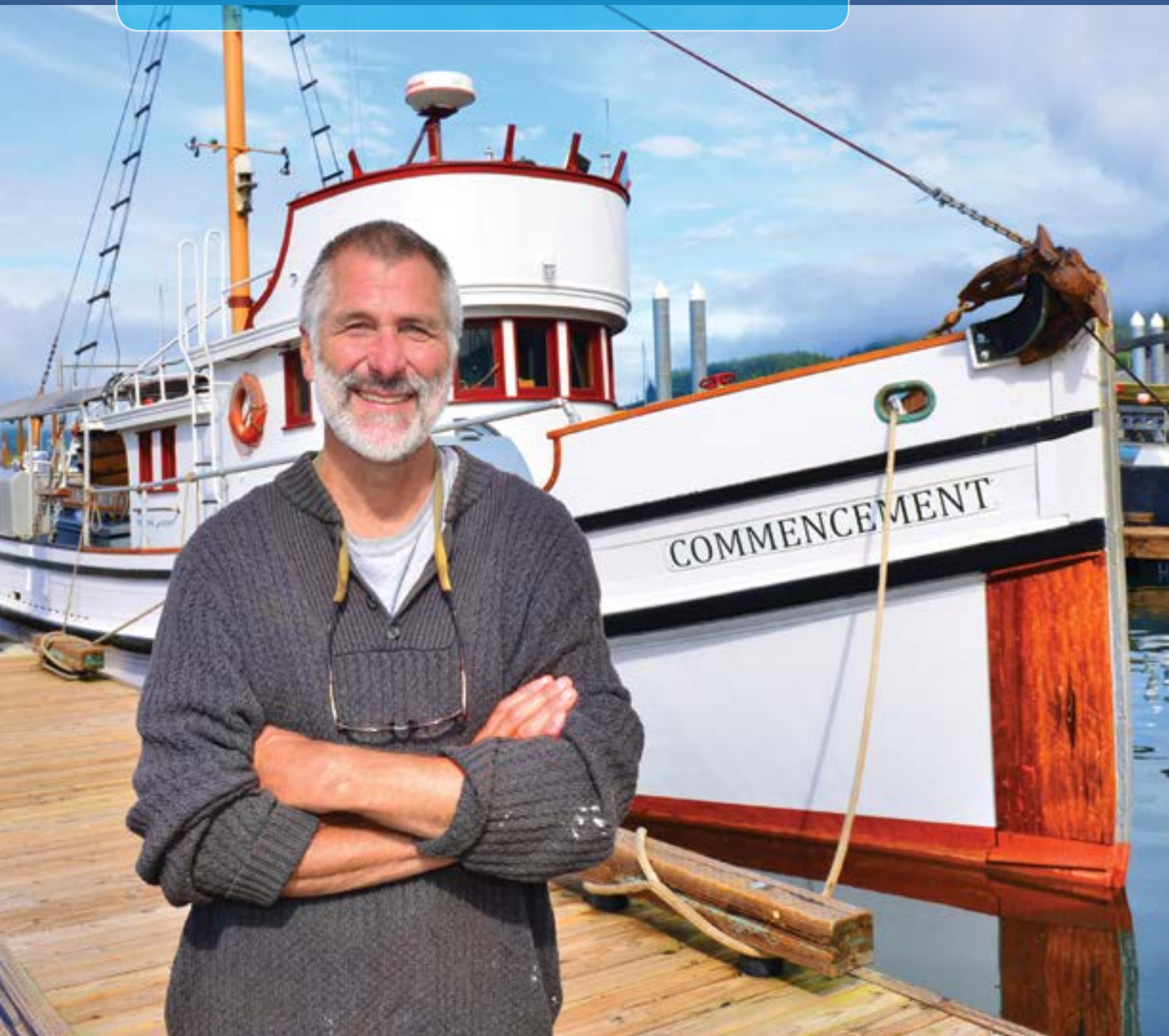


Photo by Tom Pich

Leona Waddell

White Oak Basketmaker

Cecilia, KY

A revered leader in the white oak basketmaking community, Leona Trulock Waddell is a master artist whose basketmaking skills have been perfected by her years of experience and exemplify the interaction of tradition and innovation, as she both maintains the traditional form of the region's baskets and puts her own personalized evolving imprint on each one.

Waddell was born in 1928, in Cub Run, Kentucky, a small rural community at the edge of what is now Mammoth Cave National Park, known as the epicenter of white oak in the south central area of the state. Growing up on a farm during the Depression, she learned by an early age that basketmaking was essential to providing for the family in a subsistence-based household. By age ten Waddell began learning from her masterful mother, Ella Mae Puckett Trulock, who concluded that she, out of all her children, had a real "talent for it."

After marrying in 1945 and raising a family, Waddell returned to the art form she loved after her oldest daughter was born. Over the past half century, the white oak baskets she creates have changed radically from the less-refined market baskets she made in her youth to intricately woven creations owned by basketmakers and collectors throughout the world.

In South Central Kentucky, the basketmaking material of choice has remained the white oak tree for generations because of the wood's superior qualities, including workability, durability, and aesthetic appeal. For years Waddell's practice began with hiking the

forests, selecting the perfect tree, splitting the log by hand, and meticulously scraping and trimming her white oak splits. She has taken the utilitarian form and refined it, and her baskets display painstaking uniformity and precision. Today, Waddell takes great pride in her position that cherishes her work as both a detailed innovator and a historical exemplar of the tradition.

In addition to her own basketmaking, Waddell ensures that the tradition lives on through education and public presentations. She has served as a master artist in the Kentucky Arts Council's NEA-supported Master Folk and Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program, demonstrated at festivals and community events, and consistently wins multiple prizes at the annual Hart County Fair basket competition. In 2008-2010, Waddell was a featured artist in *Tradition/Innovation*, *American Masterpieces of Southern Craft & Traditional Art*, a touring exhibit produced by South Arts. Most recently she was honored as the recipient of the 2012 Kentucky Governor's Award in the Arts Folk Heritage Award for her outstanding effort to perpetuate and promote Kentucky's unique artistic traditions. In 2013, Waddell's work was included in the Smithsonian American Art Museum and Renwick Gallery exhibit *A Measure of the Earth: The Cole-Ware Collection of American Baskets* and the National Basketry Organization presented her with its highest honor, its Lifetime Achievement Award.

Bio by Brent Bjorkman, Kentucky Folklife Program, Western Kentucky University



Photo by Clinton Lewis

“You know, I’ve always thought that if you’re going to make a basket and put that much work in it, you want to do it as neat as you can, the best you can.”

Artemio Posadas

Master Huastecan Son Musician and Advocate

San Jose, CA

THE 2016 BESS LOMAX HAWES AWARD

Artemio Posadas is a musician, dancer, teacher, and tireless cultural organizer, and this year's Bess Lomax Hawes National Heritage Fellow for his commitment to the Mexican tradition of *son huasteco*.

The son of a traditional violinist, he was born in 1948 and raised in the northeastern Mexican state of San Luis Potosí, in the cultural region known as La Huasteca. As a youth, Posadas became fascinated with the region's music known as *son huasteco*, with its singing style embellished with falsetto breaks and a rich practice of poetic, instrumental, and dance improvisation. He learned the music's three instruments—*huapanguera* (large rhythm guitar), *jarana* (small guitar), and violin—as well as traditional repertoire and dance style. He sought out the region's best groups as teachers and performed with the Grupo de la Universidad de San Luis Potosí. He worked with the late Beno Liberman to record regional *sones* for the milestone *Antología del Son Mexicano*. After touring to the San Francisco Bay area in 1973, he was invited back in 1974 to give workshops to local music and dance enthusiasts in the Mexican-American community. He resettled in the Bay Area in 1979 and later became a United States citizen.

In northern California, he performed with local musicians and since 1990 has taught the *son huasteco* (along with the *son jarocho* and other regional forms of *son*) at Richmond's East Bay Center for the Performing Arts, helping to anchor the growth and understanding of authentic *son* in the greater San Francisco Bay Area. During this time, Posadas served as

master teacher under apprenticeship grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. He accompanied several *ballet folklórico* companies, including the prominent Los Lupeños de San José, and consulted with them on traditional *son huasteco* music and dance styles. A major contribution to the burgeoning practice of traditional Mexican music in California was his insistence on keeping the *son huasteco* part of social life as well as staged performance. He rented halls, recruited musicians, and organized fandango events that invited people to eat, drink, and perform *son huasteco* as a social experience. Musician, anthropologist, and Posadas disciple Russell Rodriguez sums up Posadas's contributions: "The arrival of Artemio Posadas to the Bay Area of California was a blessing. He modeled how traditional arts, such as the dance, poetry, and music of the *son mexicano*, are significant in our daily lives."

Posadas produced two recordings of the renowned *trío huasteco* Los Camperos de Valles. One of these recordings, *El Ave de Mi Soñar*, featuring Artemio's original poetry, was released in 2005 by Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, and one track of which appeared in the movie *A Better Life*. In 2005 and 2009, he participated as a dancer with Los Camperos de Valles in the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, and in 2014, he was featured in the Library of Congress American Folklife Center's "Home Grown" concert series, an event produced by the Alliance for California Traditional Arts.

Bio by Daniel Sheehy, 2015 NEA National Heritage Fellow

“I don’t know why I was drawn to the *son huasteco*. I believe it was the falsetto that really got to me, along with the profundity of its poetry.”



Photo by Maria Virginia Prieto Solis



The Bess Lomax Hawes National Heritage Fellowship honors “keepers of tradition” who through their efforts as organizers, educators, producers, cultural advocates, or caretakers of skills and repertoires have had a major beneficial effect on the traditional arts of the United States. A member of the Lomax family of pioneering American folklorists, Bess Lomax Hawes (1921–2009) committed her life to the documentation and presentation of American folk artists. She served as an educator both inside the classroom and beyond, and nurtured the field of public folklore through her service at the National Endowment for the Arts. During her tenure as director of the NEA Folk Arts Program (1977–1993) an infrastructure of state folklorists was put in place, statewide folk arts apprenticeship programs were initiated, and the National Heritage Fellowships were created. In 1993 she received the National Medal of Arts for her many contributions in assisting folk artists nationwide and in bringing folk artistry to the attention of the public.

Acknowledgments

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

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Michael Vlahovich boat
Photo by Michael Vlahovich



Concert Credits

The National Endowment for the Arts would like to express its appreciation to the National Council for the Traditional Arts (NCTA) for its assistance in planning and producing the 2016 National Heritage Fellowships events, which were managed for the NCTA by Associate Director Madeleine Remez. The NCTA is a private non-profit corporation founded in 1933 and dedicated to the presentation and documentation of folk and traditional arts in the United States.

National Heritage Fellowships Concert

Director

Paul Douglas Michnewicz

Set Design

Tony Cisek

Lighting Design

Dan Covey

Sound Design/Production

Stephen Fisher

Charlie Pilzer

Production Manager

Elaine M. Randolph

Stage Manager

Shari Moxley

Assistant Stage Manager

Martita Lee Slayden

Production Assistants

Brittany Truske

Elizabeth Zagraniski

Khileen Herry

Green Room Coordinator

Susie Pamudji

Logistics

Nicole Martin

Video Projection/Production

Creative Video of Washington, Inc.

Sign Language Interpreter

Jayne Tubergen

Lisner Auditorium

Cassandra Lammers

Eric Annis

Radio Production

American Routes, public radio
from PRX

Host and Producer:

Nick Spitzer

Editor: Nina Feldman

Associate Producer:

Garrett Pittman

Recording Engineer:

Michael Schweppe

Drivers

Joe Lally

Dean Carrigan

Program Book Design

Fletcher Design, Inc.

Master of Ceremonies

2015 NEA National Heritage Fellow and Bess Lomax Hawes Award recipient **Daniel Sheehy** exemplifies what it means to be a public servant and devoted cultural heritage advocate. A Fulbright-Hays scholar in Veracruz, Mexico (1977–78), Sheehy earned his doctorate in ethnomusicology from UCLA in 1979. In 1978, he was hired at the National Endowment for the Arts to work under his mentor and teacher, Bess Lomax Hawes. He was instrumental in developing and sustaining the infrastructure of the folk and traditional arts field while serving in multiple capacities at the NEA, including as staff ethnomusicologist and assistant director (1978–92) and director of Folk & Traditional Arts (1992–2000). In 2000, Sheehy joined the Smithsonian Institution as director and curator of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, succeeding Anthony Seeger. Under his

leadership, Smithsonian Folkways published more than 200 recordings, earning five Grammy awards, one Latin Grammy, and 17 nominations. While at the Smithsonian, he has also served as acting director of the Smithsonian Latino Center and the director of the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. Sheehy now serves as director and curator emeritus of Smithsonian Folkways. He has served on the boards of the Alliance for California Traditional Arts (currently president), the National Council for the Traditional Arts, the American Folklore Society, the Society for Ethnomusicology, and the Association for Cultural Equity. An active musician, he co-founded Mariachi Los Amigos in 1978, Washington, D.C.'s longest-existing mariachi ensemble. In 2016, he was awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship.



Photo by Tom Pich

NEA National Heritage Fellowship Awardees

1982–2015

1982

Dewey Balfa *
Cajun Fiddler
Basile, LA

Joe Heaney *
Irish Singer
Brooklyn, NY

Tommy Jarrell *
Appalachian Fiddler
Mt. Airy, NC

Bessie Jones *
Georgia Sea Island Singer
Brunswick, GA

George Lopez *
Santos Woodcarver
Cordova, NM

Brownie McGhee *
Blues Guitarist/Singer
Oakland, CA

Hugh McGraw
Shape Note Singer
Bremen, GA

Lydia Mendoza *
Mexican-American Singer
San Antonio, TX

Bill Monroe *
Bluegrass Musician
Nashville, TN

Elijah Pierce *
Carver/Painter
Columbus, OH

Adam Popovich *
Tamburitza Musician
Dolton, IL

Georgeann Robinson *
Osage Ribbonworker
Bartelsville, OK

Duff Severe *
Saddle Maker
Pendleton, OR

Philip Simmons *
Ornamental Ironwork
Charleston, SC

Sanders “Sonny” Terry *
Blues Harmonica/Singer
Holliswood, NY

1983

Sister Mildred Barker *
Shaker Singer
Poland Spring, ME

Rafael Cepeda *
Bomba Musician/Dancer
Santurce, PR

Ray Hicks *
Appalachian Storyteller
Banner Elk, NC

Stanley Hicks *
Appalachian Musician/
Storyteller/Instrument
Maker
Vilas, NC

John Lee Hooker *
Blues Guitarist/Singer
San Francisco, CA

Mike Manteo *
Sicilian Marionettist
Staten Island, NY

Narciso Martinez *
Texas-Mexican
Accordionist/Composer
San Benito, TX

Lanier Meaders *
Potter
Cleveland, GA

Almeda Riddle *
Ballad Singer
Greers Ferry, AR

Joe Shannon *
Irish Piper
Chicago, IL

Simon St. Pierre
French-American Fiddler
Smyrna Mills, ME

Alex Stewart *
Cooper/Woodworker
Sneedville, TN

Ada Thomas *
Chitimacha Basketmaker
Charenton, LA

Lucinda Toomer *
African-American Quilter
Columbus, GA

Lem Ward *
Decoy Carver/Painter
Crisfield, MD

Dewey Williams *
Shape Note Singer
Ozark, AL

1984

Clifton Chenier *
Creole Accordionist
Lafayette, LA

Bertha Cook *
Knotted Bedspread Maker
Boone, NC

Joseph Cormier
Cape Breton Violinist
Waltham, MA

Elizabeth Cotten *
African-American Singer/
Songster
Syracuse, NY

Burlon Craig *
Potter
Vale, NC

Albert Fahlbusch *
Hammered Dulcimer
Player/Builder
Scottsbluff, NE

Janie Hunter *
African-American Singer/
Storyteller
Johns Island, SC

Mary Jane Manigault *
African-American Seagrass
Basketmaker
Mt. Pleasant, SC

Genevieve Mougín *
Lebanese-American Lace
Maker
Bettendorf, IA

Martin Mulvihill *
Irish-American Fiddler
Bronx, NY

Howard “Sandman” Sims *
African-American Tap
Dancer
New York, NY

Ralph Stanley *
Bluegrass Banjo Player/
Appalachian Singer
Coeburn, VA

Margaret Tafoya *
Santa Clara Pueblo Potter
Española, NM

Dave Tarras *
Klezmer Clarinetist
Brooklyn, NY

Paul Tiulana *
Eskimo Mask Maker/
Dancer/Singer
Anchorage, AK

Cleofas Vigil *
Hispanic Storyteller/Singer
San Cristobal, NM

Emily Kau’i Zuttermeister *
Hula Master (Kumu Hula)
Kaneohe, HI

1985

Eppie Archuleta *
Hispanic Weaver
Garden City, ID

Periklis Halkias *
Greek Clarinetist
Astoria Queens, NY

Jimmy Jausoro *
Basque Accordionist
Boise, ID

Mealii Kalama *
Hawaiian Quilter
Honolulu, HI

Lily May Ledford *
Appalachian Musician/
Singer
Lexington, KY

Leif Melgaard *
Norwegian Woodcarver
Minneapolis, MN

Bua Xou Mua *
Hmong Musician
Portland, Or

Julio Negrón-Rivera
Puerto Rican Instrument
Maker
Morovis, PR

Alice New Holy Blue Legs
Lakota Sioux Quill Artist
Rapid City, SD

Glenn Ohrlin *
Cowboy Singer/Storyteller/
Illustrator
Mountain Veiw, AR

Henry Townsend *
Blues Musicain/Songwriter
St. Louis, MO

**Horace “Spoons”
Williams ***
Percussionist/ Poet
Philadelphia, PA

* Deceased

1986

Alphonse “Bois Sec” Ardoin *
Creole Accordionist
Eunice, LA

Earnest Bennett *
Anglo-American Whittler
Indianapolis, IN

Helen Cordero *
Pueblo Potter
Cochiti, NM

Sonia Domsch
Czech-American Bobbin
Lace Maker
Atwood, KS

Canray Fontenot *
Creole Fiddler
Welsh, LA

John Jackson *
Black Songster/Guitarist
Fairfax Station, VA

Peou Khatna *
Cambodian Court Dancer/
Choreographer
Silver Spring, MD

Valerio Longoria *
Mexican-American
Accordionist
San Antonio, TX

Doc Tate Nevaquaya *
Comanche Indian Flutist
Apache, OK

Luis Ortega *
Hispanic-American
Rawhide Worker
Paradise, CA

Ola Belle Reed *
Appalachian Banjo Picker/
Singer
Rising Sun, MD

Jenny Thlunaut *
Tlingit Chilkat Blanket
Weaver
Haines, AK

Nimrod Workman *
Appalachian Ballad Singer
Macot, & Chattaroy, TN/WV

1987

Juan Alindato *
Carnival Maskmaker
Ponce, PR

Louis Bashell *
Slovenian Accordionist
Greenfield, WI

Genoveva Castellanoz
Mexican-American Corona
Maker
Nyssa, OR

Thomas Edison “Brownie” Ford *
Anglo-Comanche Cowboy
Singer/Storyteller
Herbert, LA

Kansuma Fujima
Japanese-American Dancer
Los Angeles, CA

Claude Joseph Johnson *
African-American Religious
Singer/Orator
Atlanta, GA

Raymond Kane *
Hawaiian Slack Key
Guitarist/Singer
Wai’ane, HI

Wade Mainer
Appalachian Banjo Picker/
Singer
Flint, MI

Sylvester McIntosh
Crucian Singer/Bandleader
St. Croix, VI

Allison “Tootie” Montana *
Mardi Gras Chief/Costume
Maker
New Orleans, LA

Alex Moore, Sr. *
African-American Blues
Pianist
Dallas, TX

Emilio & Senaida Romero *
Hispanic-American Tin and
Embroidery Workers
Santa Fe, NM

Newton Washburn *
Split Ash Basketmaker
Bethlehem, NH

1988

Pedro Ayala *
Mexican-American
Accordionist
Donna, TX

Kepka Belton
Czech-American Egg Painter
Ellsworth, KS

Amber Densmore *
New England Quilter/
Needleworker
Chelsea, VT

Michael Flatley
Irish-American Stepdancer
Palos Park, IL

Sister Rosalia Haberl *
German-American Bobbin
Lace Maker
Hankinson, ND

John Dee Holeman
African-American Musician/
Dancer/Singer
Durham, NC

Albert “Sunnyland Slim” Laundrew *
Blues Pianist/Singer
Chicago, IL

Yang Fang Nhu *
Hmong Weaver/Embroiderer
Detroit, MI

Kenny Sidle
Anglo-American Fiddler
Newark, OH

Willi Mae Ford Smith *
African-American Gospel
Singer
St. Louis, MO

Clyde “Kindy” Sproat *
Hawaiian Cowboy Singer/
Ukulele Player
Kapaae, HI

Arthel “Doc” Watson *
Appalachian Guitarist/
Singer
Deep Gap, NC

1989

John Cephas *
Piedmont Blues Guitarist/
Singer
Woodford, VA

Fairfield Four
African-American a Capelle
Gospel Singers
Nashville, TN

José Gutiérrez
Mexican Jarocho Musician/
Singer
Norwalk, CA

Richard Avedis Hagopian
Armenian Oud Player
Visalia, CA

Christy Hengel *
German-American
Concertina Maker
New Ulm, MN

Vanessa Paukeigope Jennings
Kiowa Regalia Maker
Fort Cobb, OK

Ilias Kementzides *
Pontic Greek Lyra Player
and Builder
South Norwalk, CT

Ethel Kvalheim *
Norwegian Rosemaler
Stoughton, WI

Mabel E. Murphy *
Anglo-American Quilter
Fulton, MO

LaVaughn E. Robinson *
African-American Tap
Dancer
Philadelphia, PA

Earl Scruggs *
Bluegrass Banjo Player
Nashville, TN

Harry V. Shourds
Wildfowl Decoy Carver
Seaville, NJ

Chesley Goseyun Wilson
Apache Fiddle Maker
Tucson, AZ

NEA National Heritage Fellowship Awardees

1982–2015

1990

Howard Armstrong *
African-American String
Band Musician
Boston, MA

Em Bun
Cambodian Silk Weaver
Harrisburg, PA

Natividad Cano *
Mexican-American Mariachi
Musician
Fillmore, CA

**Giuseppe * and
Raffaella DeFranco**
Southern Italian Musicians
and Dancers
Belleville, NJ

Maude Kegg *
Ojibwe Storyteller/
Craftsperson/Tradition
Bearer
Onamia, MN

Kevin Locke
Lakota Flute Player/Singer/
Dancer/Storyteller
Wakpala, SD

Marie MacDonald
Hawaiian Lei Maker
Kamuela, HI

Wallace McRae
Cowboy Poet
Forsyth, MT

Art Moilanen *
Finnish Accordionist
Mass City, MI

Emilio Rosado *
Woodcarver
Utado, PR

Robert Spicer *
Flatfoot and Buckdancer
Dancer
Dickson, TN

Douglas Wallin *
Appalachian Ballad Singer
Marshall, NC

1991

Etta Baker *
African-American Guitarist
Morgantown, NC

George Blake
Native American Craftsman
(Hupa-Yurok)
Hoopa Valley, CA

Jack Coen *
Irish-American Flautist
Bronx, NY

Rose Frank *
Nez Perce Cornhusk Weaver
Lapwai, ID

Eduardo “Lalo” Guerrero *
Mexican-American Singer/
Guitarist/Composer
Cathedral City, CA

Khamvong Insixiangmai
Southeast Asian Lao Singer
Fresno, CA

Don King *
Western Saddlemaker
Sheridan, WY

Riley “B.B.” King *
African-American Blues
Musician/Singer/
bandleader
Las Vegas, NV

Esther Littlefield *
Alaskan Regalia Maker
(Tlingit)
Sitka, AK

Seisho “Harry” Nakasone *
Okinawan-American
Musician
Honolulu, HI

Irvan Perez *
Isleno Singer (Canary Islands)
Poydras, LA

Morgan Sexton *
Appalachian Banjo Player/
Singer
Linefork, KY

Nikitas Tsimouris *
Greek-American Bagpipe
Player
Tarpon Springs, FL

Gussie Wells *
African-American Quilter
Oakland, CA

Arbie Williams *
African-American Quilter
Oakland, CA

Melvin Wine *
Appalachian Fiddler
Copen, WV

1992

Francisco Aguabella *
Afro-Cuban Drummer
Los Angeles, CA

Jerry Brown *
Potter (southern stoneware
tradition)
Hamilton, AL

Walker Calhoun
Cherokee Musician/Dancer/
Teacher
Cherokee, NC

Clyde Davenport
Appalachian Fiddler
Jamestown, TN

Belle Deacon *
Athabaskan Basketmaker
Greyling, AK

Nora Ezell *
African-American Quilter
Five Points, TN

Gerald Hawpetoss *
Menominee/Potowatomie
Regalia Maker
Neopit, WI

Fatima Kuinova
Bukharan Jewish Singer
Rego Park, NY

John Yoshio Naka *
Bonsai Sculptor
Whittier, CA

Marc Savoy
Cajun Accordion Player/
Builder
Eunice, LA

Ng Sheung-Chi
Chinese Toissan Muk'yu Folk
Singer
New York, NY

Othar Turner *
African-American Fife Player
Senatobia, MS

Tanjore Viswanathan *
South Indian Flute Maker
Middletown, CT

1993

Santiago Almeida *
Texas-Mexican Conjunto
Musician
Sunnyside, WA

Kenny Baker *
Bluegrass Fiddler
Cottontown, TN

Inez Catalan *
French Creole Singer
Kaplan, LA

**Elena & Nicholas *
Charles**
Yupik Woodcaver/
Maskmaker/and Skin
Sewer
Bethel, AK

Charles Hankins *
Boatbuilder
Lavallette, NJ

**Nalani Kanaka'ole &
Pualani Kanaka'ole
Kanahele**
Hula Masters
Hilo, HI

Everett Kapayou *
Native American Singer
(Meskwaki)
Tama, IA

**McIntosh County
Shouters**
African-American Spiritual/
Shout Ensemble
St. Simons Island, GA

Elmer Miller *
Bit and Spur Maker/
Silversmith
Nampa, ID

Jack Owens *
Blues Singer/Guitarist
Benton, MS

**Mone & Vanxay
Saenphimmachak**
Lao Weaver/Needleworker
and Loom Maker
St. Louis, MO

Liang-Xing Tang
Chinese-American Pipa
(Lute) Player
Bayside, NY

* Deceased

1994

Liz Carroll

Irish-American Fiddler
Mundelein, IL

Clarence Fountain & The Blind Boys of Alabama

African-American
Gospel Singers
Atlanta, GA

Mary Mitchell Gabriel *

Native American
(Passamaquoddy)
Basketmaker
Princeton, ME

Johnny Gimble *

Western Swing Fiddler
Dripping Springs, TX

Frances Varos Graves *

Hispanic American "Colcha"
Embroidery
Rancho De Taos, NM

Violet Hilbert *

Native American (Skagit)
Storyteller/Conservator
Ca Conner, WA

Sosie Shizuye Matsumoto

Japanese Tea Ceremony
Master
Los Angeles, CA

D.I. Menard

Cajun Musician/Songwriter
Erath, LA

Simon Shaheen

Arab American Oud Player
Brooklyn, NY

Lily Vorperian

Armenian (Marash-Style)
Embroidery
Glendale, CA

Elder Roma Wilson

African-American
Harmonica Player
Oxford, MS

1995

Bao Mo-Li

Chinese-American Jing-Erhu
Player
Flushing, NY

Mary Holiday Black

Navajo Basketmaker
Mexican Hat, UT

Lyman Enloe *

Old-Time Fiddler
Lee's Summit, MO

Donny Golden

Irish-American Step Dancer
Brooklyn, NY

Wayne Henderson

Appalachian Luthier,
Musician
Mouth of Wilson, VA

Bea Ellis Hensley

Appalachian Blacksmith
Spruce Pine, NC

Nathan Jackson

Tlingit Alaskan Woodcaver/
Metalsmith/Dancer
Ketchikan, AK

Danongan Kalanduyan

Filipino-American Kulintang
Musician
South San Francisco, CA

Robert Jr. Lockwood *

African-American Delta
Blues Singer/Guitarist
Cleveland, OH

Israel "Cachao" López *

Afro-Cuban Bassist,
Composer, and Bandleader
Miami, FL

Nellie Star Boy Menard *

Lakota Sioux Quiltmaker
Rosebud, SD

Buck Ramsey *

Anglo-American Cowboy
Poet, Singer
Amarillo, TX

1996

Obo Addy *

African (Ghanaian) Master
Drummer/Leader
Portland, OR

Betty Pizio Christenson

Ukrainian-American Pysanky
Suring, WI

Paul Dahlin

Swedish-American Fiddler
Minneapolis, MN

Juan Gutiérrez

Puerto Rican Drummer/
Leader (Bomba and Plena)
New York, NY

Solomon * & Richard Ho'opi

Hawaiian Falsetto Singers/
Musicians
Makawao, HI

Will Keys *

Anglo-American Banjo Player
Gray, TN

Joaquin Lujan *

Chamorro Blacksmith
GMF, GU

Eva McAdams

Shoshone Crafts/Beadwork
Fort Washakie, WY

John Mealing & Cornelius Wright, Jr. *

African-American Work
Songs
Birmingham, AL

Vernon Owens

Anglo-American Potter
Seagrove, NC

Dolly Spencer *

Inupiat Dollmaker
Homer, AK

1997

Edward Babb

"Shout" Band Gospel
Trombonist & Band Leader
Jamaica, NY

Charles Brown *

West Coast Blues Pianist &
Composer
Berkeley, CA

Gladys Leblanc Clark

Acadian (Cajun) Spinner &
Weaver
Duson, LA

Georgia Harris *

Catawba Potter
Atlanta, GA

Wen-Yi Hua

Chinese Kunqu Opera Singer
Arcadia, CA

Ali Akbar Khan

North Indian Sarod Player
& Raga Composer
San Anselmo, CA

Ramón José López

Santero & Metalsmith
Santa Fe, NM

Jim* & Jesse McReynolds

Bluegrass Musician
Gallatin, TN

Phong Nguyen

Vietnamese Musician/
Scholar
Kent, OH

Hystercine Rankin *

African-American Quilter
Lorman, MS

Francis Whitaker *

Blacksmith/Ornamental
Iron Work
Carbondale, CO

NEA National Heritage Fellowship Awardees

1982–2015

1998

Apsara Ensemble
Cambodian Musicians &
Dancers
Fort Washington, MD

Eddie Blazonczyk *
Polish Polka Musician/
Bandleader
Bridgeview, IL

Bruce Caesar
Sac Fox-Pawnee German
Silversmith
Anadarko, OK

Dale Calhoun *
Boatbuilder (Reelfoot Lake
Stumpjumper)
Tiptonville, TN

Antonio De La Rosa *
Tejano Conjunto
Accordionist
Riviera, TX

Epstein Brothers
Klezmer Musicians
Sarasota, FL

Sophia George
Yakima Colville Beadwork
and Regalia
Gresham, OR

Nadjeschda Overgaard *
Danish Hardanger
Embroidery
Kimballton, IA

Harilaos Papapostolou *
Byzantine Chant, Greek
Orthodox
Potomac, MD

Roebuck “Pops” Staples *
Gospel /Blues Musician
Dalton, IL

**Claude “The Fiddler”
Williams ***
Jazz Swing Fiddler
Kansas City, MO

1999

Frisner Augustin *
Haitian Drummer
New York, NY

**Lila Greengrass
Blackdeer**
Hocak Black Ash
Basketmaker,
Needleworker
Black River Falls, WI

Shirley Caesar
Gospel Singer
Durham, NC

Alfredo Campos
Horeshair Hitcher
Federal Way, WA

**Mary Louise Defender
Wilson**
Dakota Hidatsa Traditionalist
and Storyteller
Shields, ND

Jimmy “Slyde” Godbolt *
African-American Tap
Dancer
Hanson, MA

Ulysses “Uly” Goode *
Western Mono Basketmaker
North Fork, CA

Bob Holt *
Ozark Fiddler
Ava, MO

Zakir Hussain
North Indian Master Tabla
Drummer
San Anselmo, CA

Elliott “Ellie” Manette
Trinidadian Steel Pan
Builder, Tuner, Performer
Osage, WV

Mick Moloney
Irish Musician
New York, NY

Eudokia Sorochaniuk *
Ukranian Weaver, Textile
Artists, Embroidery
Pennsauken, NJ

Ralph Stanley
Master Boatbuilder,
(Friendship Sloop)
Southwest Harbor, ME

2000

Bounxou Chanthraphone
Lao Weaver, Embroiderer
Brookland Park, MN

Dixie Hummingbirds *
African-American Gospel
Quartet
Philadelphia, PA

Felipe García Villamil
Afro-Cuban Drummer/
Santero
Los Angeles, CA

José González *
Puerto Rican Hammock
Weaver
San Sebastián, PR

Nettie Jackson
Klickitat Basketmaker
White Swan, WA

Santiago Jiménez, Jr
Tex-Mex Accordionist/
Singer
San Antonio, TX

Genoa Keawe *
Hawaiian Tto Singer/
Ukulele Player
Honolulu, HI

Frankie Manning *
Lindy Hop Dancer
Choreographer/Innovator
Corona, NY

**Joe Willie “Pinetop”
Perkins ***
Blues Piano Player
La Porte, IN

Konstantinos Pilarinos
Orthodox Byzantine Icon
Woodcarver
Astoria, NY

Chris Strachwitz
(Bess Lomax Hawes Award)
Record Producer/Label
Founder
El Cerrito, CA

B. Dorothy Thompson *
Appalachian Weaver
Davis, WV

Don Walser *
Cowboy & Western Singer/
Guitarist/Composer
Austin, TX

2001

Celestino Avilés *
Santero
Orocovis, PR

Mozell Benson *
African-American Quilter
Opelika, AL

Wilson “Boozoo” Chavis *
Zydeco Accordionist
Lake Charles, LA

Hazel Dickens *
Appalachian Singer
Washington, DC

Evalena Henry
Apache Basketweaver
Peridot, AZ

Peter Kyvelos
Oud Builder
Bedford, MA

**João “João Grande”
Olivera Dos Santos**
Capoeira Angola Master
New York, NY

Eddie Pennington
Thumbpicking Style
Guitarist
Princeton, KY

Qi Shu Fang
Peking Opera Performer
Woodhaven, NY

Seiichi Tanaka
Taiko Drummer Dojo
Founder
San Francisco, CA

Dorothy Trumpold
Rug Weaver
High Amana, IA

Fred Tsoodle *
Kiowa Sacred Song Leader
Mountain View, OK

Joseph Wilson *
(Bess Lomax Hawes Award)
Folklorist/Advocate/
Presenter
Fries, VA

* Deceased

2002

Ralph Blizzard *
Old-Time Fiddler
Blountville, TN

Loren Bommelyn
Tolowa Singer, Tradition
Bearer, Basketmaker
Crescent City, CA

Kevin Burke
Irish Fiddler
Portland, OR

Francis & Rose Cree *
Ojibwa Basketmakers/
Storytellers
Dunseith, ND

**Luderin Darbone/
Edwin Duhon ***
Cajun Fiddler and
Accordionist
Sulphur/Westlake, LA

Nadim Dilaik
Lebanese Nye (Reed Flute)
Player
Southgate, MI

**David "Honeyboy"
Edwards ***
Delta Blues Guitarist/Singer
Chicago, IL

Flory Jagoda
Sephardic Musician/
Composer
Alexandria, VA

Losang Samten
Tibetan Sand Mandala
Painter
Philadelphia, PA

Bob McQuillen *
Contra Dance Musician
Composer
Peterborough, NH

Clara Neptune Keezer *
Passamaquoddy Basketmaker
Perry, ME

Jean Ritchie *
(Bess Lomax Hawes Award)
Appalachian Singer/
Songwriter Dulcimer
Player
Port Washington, NY

Domingo "Mingo" Saldivar
Conjunto Accordionist
San Antonio, TX

2003

**Basque "Bertsolari" Poets
Jesus Arriada**
San Francisco, CA

Johnny Curutchet
South San Francisco, CA

Martin Goicoechea
Rock Springs, WY

Jesus Goni
Reno, NV

Rosa Elene Egipciano
Puerto Rican Bobbin Lace
"Mundillo"
New York, NY

Agnes Oshanee Kenmille *
Salish Beadwork and Tanning
Ronan, MT

Norman Kennedy
Weaver/Ballad Singer
Marshfield, VT

**Roberto * & Lorenzo
Martinez**
Hispanic Guitarist & Violinist
Albuquerque, NM

Norma Miller
African-American Jazz
Dancer, Choreographer
Cape Coral, FL

Carmencristina Moreno
(Bess Lomax Hawes Award)
Mexican-American Singer,
Composer, Teacher
Fresno, CA

Ron Poast
Hardanger Fiddle Luthier
and Player
Black Earth, WI

Felipe I. & Joseph K. Ruak
Carolinian Stick Dance
Leaders
Saipan, MP

Manoochehr Sadeghi
Persian Santour Player
Sherman Oaks, CA

Nicholas Toth
Diving Helmet Builder
Tarpon Springs, FL

2004

Anjani Ambegaokar
Kathak Dancer
Diamond Bar, CA

**Charles "Chuck" T.
Campbell**
Gospel Steel Guitarist
Rochester, NY

Joe Derrane *
Irish-American Button
Accordionist
Randolph, MA

Jerry Douglas
Dobro Player
Nashville, TN

Gerald Subiyay Miller *
Skokomish Tradition Bearer
Shelton, WA

Milan Opacich *
Tamburitza Instrument
Maker
Schererville, IN

Eliseo & Paula Rodriguez *
Straw Applique Artists
Santa Fe, NM

Koko Taylor *
Blues Musician
Country Club Hills, IL

Yueqin Wang & Zhengli Xu
Chinese Rod Puppeteers
Tigard, OR

Chum Ngeik
(Bess Lomax Hawes Award)
Cambodian Musician and
Teacher
Gaithersburg, MD

2005

**Herminia Albarrán
Romero**
Paper-Cutting Artist
San Francisco, CA

Eldrid Skjold Arntzen
Norwegian-American
Rosemaler
Watertown, CT

Earl Barthé *
Decorative Building
Craftsman
New Orleans, LA

Chuck Brown *
African-American
Musical Innovator
Brandywine, MD

Janette Carter *
(Bess Lomax Hawes Award)
Appalachian Musician,
Advocate
Hiltons, VA

Michael Doucet
Cajun Fiddler, Composer,
and Band Leader
Lafayette, LA

Jerry Grcevich
Tamburitza Musician,
Prim Player
North Huntingdon, PA

Grace Henderson Nez *
Navajo Weaver
Ganado, AZ

Wanda Jackson
Early Country, Rockabilly, and
Gospel Singer
Oklahoma City, OK

**Beyle Schaechter-
Gottesman ***
Yiddish Singer, Poet,
Songwriter
Bronx, NY

Albertina Walker *
Gospel Singer
Chicago, IL

James Ka'upena Wong
Hawaiian Chanter
Waianae, HI

NEA National Heritage Fellowship Awardees

1982–2015

2006

Charles M. Carrillo
Santero (Carver and Painter
of Sacred Figures)
Santa Fe, NM

Delores E. Churchill
Haida (Native Alaskan)
Weaver
Ketchikan, AK

Henry Gray
Blues Piano Player, Singer
Baton Rouge, LA

Doyle Lawson
Gospel and Bluegrass Singer,
Arranger, and Bandleader
Bristol, TN

Esther Martinez *
Native American Linguist
and Storyteller
San Juan Pueblo, NM

Diomedes Matos
Cuatro (10-String Puerto
Rican Guitar) Maker
Deltona, FL

George Na'ope *
Kumu Hula (Hula Master)
Hilo, HI

Wilho Saari
Finnish Kantele (Lap-Harp)
Player
Naselle, WA

Mavis Staples
Gospel, Rhythm and Blues
Singer
Chicago, IL

Nancy Sweezy *
(Bess Lomax Hawes Award)
Advocate, Scholar, Presenter,
and Preservationist
Lexington, MA

Treme Brass Band
New Orleans Brass Band
New Orleans, LA

2007

Nicholas Benson
Stone Letter Carver and
Calligrapher
Newport, RI

Sidiki Conde
Guinean Dancer and
Musician
New York, NY

Violet De Cristoforo *
Haiku Poet And Historian
Salinas, CA

Roland Freeman
(Bess Lomax Hawes Award)
Photo Documentarian,
Author, and Exhibit
Curator
Washington, DC

Pat Courtney Gold
Wasco Sally Bag Weaver
Scappoose, Or

Eddie Kamae
Hawaiian Musician,
Composer, Filmmaker
Honolulu, HI

Agustin Lira
Chicano Singer, Musician,
Composer
Fresno, CA

Julia Parker
Kashia Pomo Basketmaker
Midpines, CA

Mary Jane Queen *
Appalachian Musician
Cullowhee, NC

Joe Thompson *
African-American String
Band Musician
Mebane, NC

Irvin L. Trujillo
Rio Grande Weaver
Chimayo, NM

Elaine Hoffman Watts
Klezmer Musician
Havertown, PA

2008

Horace P. Axtell *
Nez Perce Elder, Spiritual
Leader, and Drum Maker
Lewiston, ID

Dale Harwood
Saddlemaker
Shelley, ID

Bettye Kimbrell
Quilter
Mt. Olive, AL

Jeronimo E. Lozano
Retablo Maker
Salt Lake City, UT

Walter Murray Chiesa *
(Bess Lomax Hawes Award)
Traditional Crafts Advocate
Bayamón, PR

**Oneida Hymn Singers
Of Wisconsin**
Hymn Singing
Oneida, WI

Sue Yeon Park
Korean Dancer and Musician
New York, NY

Moges Seyoum
Ethiopian Church Musician
Alexandria, VA

Jelon Vieira
Capoeira Master
New York, NY

Michael G. White
Jazz Clarinetist, Band Leader,
Scholar
New Orleans, LA

Mac Wiseman
Bluegrass and Country Singer
and Musician
Nashville, TN

2009

The Birmingham Sunlights
A Cappella Gospel Group
Birmingham, AL

Edwin Colón Zayas
Cuatro Player
Orocovis, PR

Chitresh Das *
Kathak Dancer and
Choreographer
San Francisco, CA

Leroy Graber *
German-Russian Willow
Basketmaker
Freeman, SD

“Queen” Ida Guillory
Zydeco Musician
Daly City, CA

Dudley Laufman
Dance Caller and Musician
Cantebury, NH

Amma D. McKen
Yoruba Orisha Singer
Brooklyn, NY

Joel Nelson
Cowboy Poet
Alpine, TX

Teri Rofkar
Tlingit Weaver and
Basketmaker
Sitka, AK

Mike Seeger *
(Bess Lomax Hawes Award)
Musician, Cultural Scholar,
and Advocate
Lexington, VA

Sophiline Cheam Shapiro
Cambodian Classical Dancer
and Choreographer
Long Beach, CA

* Deceased

2010

Yacub Addy *

Ghanaian Drum Master
Latham, NY

**Jim “Texas Shorty”
Chancellor**

Fiddler
Rockwall, TX

Gladys Kukana Grace *

Lauhala (Palm Leaf) Weaver
Honolulu, HI

Mary Jackson

Sweetgrass Basketweaver
Johns Island, SC

Del McCoury

Bluegrass Guitarist and
Singer
Hendersonville, TN

Judith McCulloh *

(Bess Lomax Hawes Award)
Folklorist and Editor
Urbana, IL

**Kamala Lakshmi
Narayanan**

Bharatanatyam Indian
Dancer
Mastic, NY

Mike Rafferty *

Irish Flute Player
Hasbrouck Heights, NJ

Ezequiel Torres

Afro-Cuban Drummer and
Drum Builder
Miami, FL

2011

Laverne Brackens

Quilter
Fairfield, TX

Bo Dollis *

Mardi Gras Indian Chief
New Orleans, LA

Jim Griffith

(Bess Lomax Hawes Award)
Folklorist
Tuscon, AZ

Roy and Pj Hirabayashi

Taiko Drum Leaders
San Jose, CA

Ledward Kaapana

Slack Key Guitarist
Kaneohe, HI

Frank Newsome

Old Regular Baptist Singer
Haysi, VA

**Carlinhos Pandeiro De
Ouro**

Frame Drum Player and
Percussionist
Los Angeles, CA

Warner Williams

Piedmont Blues Songster
Gaithersburg, MD

Yuri Yunakov

Bulgarian Saxophonist
Bloomfield, NJ

2012

Mike Auldridge *

Dobro Player
Silver Spring, MD

Paul & Darlene Bergren

Dog Sled and Snowshoe
Designers and Builders
Minot, ND

Harold A. Burnham

Master Shipwright
Essex, MA

Albert B. Head

(Bess Lomax Hawes Award)
Traditional Arts Advocate
Montgomery, AL

**Leonardo “Flaco”
Jimenez**

Tejano Accordion Player
San Antonio, TX

Lynne Yoshiko Nakasone

Okinawan Dancer
Honolulu, HI

**Molly Jeannette
Neptune Parker**

Passamaquoddy Basket
Maker
Princeton, ME

The Paschall Brothers

Tidewater Gospel Quartet
Chesapeake, VA

Andy Statman

Klezmer Clarinetist,
Mandolinist, and
Composer
Brooklyn, NY

2013

Sheila Kay Adams

Ballad Singer, Musician,
& Storyteller
Marshall, NC

Ralph Burns

Storyteller, Pyramid Lake
Paiute Tribe
Nixon, NV

Verónica Castillo

Ceramicist & Clay Sculptor
San Antonio, TX

Séamus Connolly

Irish Fiddler
North Yarmouth, ME

Nicolae Feraru

Cimbalom Player
Chicago, IL

Carol Fran

Swamp Blues Singer &
Pianist
Lafayette, LA

Pauline Hillaire

(Bess Lomax Hawes Award)
Tradition Bearer, Lummi
Tribe
Bellingham, WA

David Ivey

Sacred Harp Hymn Singer
Huntsville, AL

Ramón “Chunky” Sánchez

Chicano Musician
& Culture Bearer
San Diego, CA

NEA National Heritage Fellowship Awardees

1982–2015

2014

Henry Arquette *

Mohawk Basketmaker
Hogansburg, NY

Manuel "Cowboy" Donley

Tejano Musician and Singer
Austin, TX

Kevin Doyle

Irish Step Dancer
Barrington, RI

The Holmes Brothers

Sherman Holmes

Wendell Holmes *

Popsy Dixon *

Blues, Gospel, and Rhythm
and Blues Band
Rosedale, MD
Saluda, VA

Yvonne Walker Keshick

Odawa Quillworker
Petoskey, MI

Carolyn Mazloomi

(Bess Lomax Hawes Award)
Quilting Community
Advocate
West Chester, OH

Vera Nakonechny

Ukrainian Embroiderer,
Weaver and Beadworker
Philadelphia, PA

Singing and Praying Bands of MD and DE

African-American Religious
Singers
Maryland and Delaware

Rufus White

Omaha Traditional Singer
and Drum Group Leader
Walthill, NE

2015

Rahim AlHaj

Oud Player & Composer
Albuquerque, NM

Michael Alpert

Yiddish Musician and
Tradition Bearer
New York, NY

Mary Lee Bendolph, Lucy Mingo, and Loretta Pettway

Quilters of Gee's Bend
Boykin, AL

Dolly Jacobs

Circus Aerialist
Sarasota, FL

Vary Livan

Cambodian Ceramicist
Lowell, MA

Daniel Sheehy

(Bess Lomax Hawes Award)
Ethnomusicologist/
Folklorist
Falls Church, VA

Drink Small

Blues Artist
Columbia, SC

Gertrude Yukie Tsutsumi

Japanese Classical Dancer
Honolulu, HI

Sidonka Wadina

Slovak Straw Artist/Egg
Decorator
Lyons, WI

* Deceased

Joseph Pierre "Big Chief Monk" Boudreaux
Photo by Robert Brown

BACK COVER

Leona Waddell basket
Photo by Scott Gilbert and Beth Hester





**National
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for the Arts**
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