



Sculptor and Architect David Engdahl Chosen for 2nd Annual Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures Award

His contributions to art and architecture span five decades in Northeast Florida

JACKSONVILLE, Florida – February 9, 2017 — David Engdahl’s devotion to his work as a sculptor, his career in architecture and his selfless contributions of talent and energy to the local arts community prompted The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida to present him with the 2nd Annual Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures Award. The award, which includes a \$10,000 unrestricted grant, recognizes an artist whose work brings distinction to Northeast Florida, and is named for the late Ann McDonald Baker, whose leadership helped create and nurture such vital cultural gems such as The Community Foundation’s Art Ventures Fund, the Arts Assembly (now the Cultural Council) and Douglas Anderson School of the Arts, among others. The award was presented at a private reception this week.

Engdahl has been a sculptor since 1971, and has exhibited works in over twenty states throughout the U.S., including nine solo exhibitions. His sculptures are included in numerous museums, corporate, public and private collections, including U.S. embassies abroad. In Jacksonville, countless residents and travelers have seen his signature high-flying wooden sculptures, ‘Ascent’ and ‘Descent,’ which were suspended above the escalators at Jacksonville International Airport from 1980-1989; they now reside at Florida State College at Jacksonville’s South Campus. His 2004 installation, ‘Migration of the Paper Airplanes,’ hangs over the moving sidewalks at the Jacksonville International Airport parking garage.

After practicing architecture for 44 years, Engdahl retired from The Haskell Company in 2007. He had been with Haskell 28 years, most recently as Senior Vice President and Chief Architect, and helped manage the extensive Haskell art collection.

Engdahl has generously contributed his artistic vision to numerous community endeavors. He helped lead the group Art Celebration! from the 1970’s through early 1990’s, providing a forum for Jacksonville artists to share and learn from each other. In 2000, Engdahl volunteered, along with 30 architects, engineers and interior designers, in a design collaborative to design the Jacksonville Museum of Modern Art (now MOCA Jacksonville).

Currently, Engdahl is spearheading the downtown Haskell Sculpture Initiative, comprised of ten major sculptures privately funded by Preston Haskell and other community philanthropists. This is a continuation of Engdahl’s commitment to engage the community around art in public places. He helped create the AIA’s Downtown Visioning Initiative, serves on the boards of the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville and MOCA Jacksonville, and chairs the Art in Public Places Committee. He is a member of the Jacksonville International Airport Arts Commission, the curatorial committee of the Cultural Center at Ponte Vedra Beach, and he leads the Northeast Florida Sculptors Association.

“David’s breathtaking artistry, combined with his generosity of spirit and commitment to the local arts community, made him an outstanding candidate for the Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures Award,” noted Nina Waters, president of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida. “We are truly lucky to have him in our midst, and equally fortunate to have the Baker family continue Ann McDonald Baker’s dream of a vibrant local arts community where talented individuals can thrive and share their talents with their fellow citizens.”

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“Throughout his long and successful career, {David} has remained active within his studio practice, continues to exhibit widely, has acted as a mentor and resource for younger artists, and has been an engaged participant in many cultural organizations,” noted Ben Thompson, deputy director of MOCA Jacksonville, in his letter of support for Engdahl. “He is also a committed arts advocate...and it is {for} this deep commitment to his community and selfless service that I also nominate him.”

Engdahl has indicated that he plans to reinvest his Art Ventures Award grant back into the arts and cultural community.

The selection process for the Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures Award includes a knowledgeable, anonymous panel of advisors who put forward a short list of finalists after considering a wide range of deserving artists in all disciplines throughout the year. A Selection Committee (a member of the Baker family, a Trustee of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, a representative from the advisory panel and The Community Foundation president) reviews the finalists and names the winner.

Art Ventures

For more than 25 years, The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida has invested in the local cultural community as part of an exceptional initiative known as Art Ventures. In 1989, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) chose Jacksonville to receive \$50,000/year for four years, provided that The Community Foundation and (at the time) The Arts Assembly work together to raise \$100,000/year in unrestricted gifts over the same period. The challenge was a success, and the first grants were made in 1990. Art Ventures provides support for the more fragile part of the arts community—emerging individual artists and small arts organizations—and it has provided more than \$1 million in grants to individuals and small arts organizations since its inception. In 2015, The Community Foundation created the Ann McDonald Baker Art Ventures Award to honor the late Ann Baker, who led the initial Art Ventures fundraising with Courtenay Wilson, and who chaired The Community Foundation Board of Trustees from 2002-2003.

About The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida

The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida (www.jaxcf.org), Florida’s oldest and largest community foundation, works to stimulate philanthropy to build a better community. The Foundation helps donors invest their philanthropic gifts wisely, helps nonprofits serve the region effectively, and helps people come together to make the community a better place. Now in its 53rd year, the Foundation has assets of \$344 million and has made nearly \$410 million in grants since 1964.

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EDITORS: Photo available by request. Suggested caption: “David Engdahl with his daughter and members of Ann McDonald Baker’s family in front of his laminated wood sculpture, Axial Split Vessel (1999) Left to right: Missy Boney, Kirsten Engdahl, David Engdahl, Martha Baker, Tom Baker.” Photo credit: laird/blac palm, inc.