

PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Kira Bacon, communications director, kbacon@vermontartscouncil.org, 802.828.5422

2018 Governor's Arts Awards Recipients Announced

Montpelier – The Vermont Arts Council, in association with Governor Phil Scott, is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2018 Governor's Arts Awards. These prestigious awards are presented annually to recognize outstanding individual and organizational contributions to the arts. Awards honor educators, artists, performers, advocates, administrators, volunteers, and scholars. In 2018, Vermonters will be recognized for their contributions in five categories. All awardees will be honored at a reception and ceremony on Wednesday, November 14 at the Vermont State House.

At an event at the Vermont Granite Museum in Barre earlier today, Governor Scott announced that sculptors Chris Miller and Jerry Williams would receive [The Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts](#), the highest honor presented to an artist by the state of Vermont. In selecting Miller and Williams for this award, Governor Scott said, "Chris Miller and Jerry Williams are both talented artists who have had long and successful careers. Examples of their artistic excellence and skill can be seen throughout Vermont and the U.S. We also honor them for carrying on Vermont's longstanding tradition of exceptional stone craftsmanship that is recognized around the world."

In addition to the Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts, the Vermont Arts Council announced award recipients in four categories:

[Alison Bechdel](#), Bolton, will receive the [Walter Cerf Medal for Outstanding Achievement in the Arts](#)

[John Willis](#), Dummerston, will receive the [Ellen McCulloch-Lovell Award in Arts Education](#)

[Allison Coyne Carroll](#), Hinesburg, will receive the [Margaret L. \(Peggy\) Kannenstine Award for Arts Advocacy](#)

[Judith Chalmer](#), Burlington, will receive the [Arthur Williams Award for Meritorious Service to the Arts](#)

"With their creativity, passion, and skill, these outstanding Vermonters have made a deep and lasting mark on our state," said Vermont Arts Council Executive Director Karen Mittelman. "In different ways, these awardees have dedicated their careers to reaching out to people whose voices are not always heard. They have given us the gift of their own unique visions and at the same time, enabled others to discover and express their creative spirit."

More about the awardees:

[Chris Miller](#), Calais, began carving in 1976. Largely self-taught, he also studied art in college and then anatomy and sculpture with the late Lothar Werslin of Sandgate and drawing and anatomy under Billy Brauer of Warren. He also worked alongside and collaborated with several of the country's top stone sculptors in Barre.

[Jerry Williams](#), Johnson, attended the fine art program at Northern Vermont University (formerly Johnson State College). He has worked as a sculptor in central Vermont since 1986, when he established Barre Sculpture Studios following his apprenticeship with Frank Gaylord. His practice is centered on public and private commissions of representational sculpture. His work can be seen in locations across New England, Texas, and the greater Midwest.

[Alison Bechdel](#) created the countercultural comic strip *Dykes to Watch Out For*, which ran in lesbian and gay publications from 1983 to 2008. In 2006, she gained a wider readership with the publication of her graphic memoir *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*, named Best Book of the year by Time Magazine. A musical based on *Fun Home*, written by Lisa Kron and Jeanine Tesori, won five Tony Awards in 2015, including best musical. In 2017, Bechdel was named Vermont's third cartoonist laureate. She is a 2014 MacArthur fellow and is currently working on a graphic memoir called *The Secret to Superhuman Strength*.

[John Willis](#) is professor of photography at Marlboro College. He was a co-founder of In-Sight Photography Project, a program offering free photography classes to Brattleboro area youth. He also co-founded the Exposures Project, a cross-cultural youth arts program. Willis received a Master of Fine Arts in photography from the Rhode Island School of Design, and received a Guggenheim fellowship in 2011. His work is included in numerous permanent collections including the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, the Bibliotheque Nationale de France, and, the National Museum of Native Americans. He has published two books, *Recycled Realities* and *Views from the Reservation*.

[Allison Coyne Carroll is the director of Middlebury College's acclaimed](#) Performing Arts Series, curating visiting artist performances and residencies for the Middlebury community. She frequently serves as a grant panelist and advocates for the arts, specifically in regard to issues relating to cultural diplomacy, immigration, and taxation for artists from abroad. After studying music education and French horn at both the Manhattan and Crane Schools of Music, Coyne Carroll worked as the Vermont Symphony Orchestra's chorus coordinator and assistant to director Robert DeCormier, before joining the Middlebury staff in 1997. As a musician, she has performed with numerous Vermont ensembles, been a featured vocal soloist, and sung choral works on four record labels.

Judith Chalmer began inclusive practices as a teacher of creative writing to non-traditional college students and seniors with disabilities. From 2005 to 2017, she was devoted to inclusive arts as executive director of VSA Vermont. She is the author of one collection of poems, and co-translator of two collections of haiku and tanka. Her poems have been published in more than 50 journals or anthologies. In 2001 she received the Great Performances Award from Onion River Arts Council for a dance-narrative she created with immigrants and refugees. The Governor's Arts Awards celebration

will be held at 5 p.m. Wednesday, November 14, at the Vermont State House in Montpelier. The event is free and open to the public, but reservations are requested. An online reservation form will be available on October 1.

The Vermont Arts Council envisions a state where all people have access to the arts and creativity in their lives, education, and communities. Engagement with the arts transforms individuals, connects us more deeply to each other, energizes the economy, and sustains the vibrant cultural landscape that makes Vermont a great place to live. Since 1965, the Council has been the state's primary provider of funding, advocacy, and information for the arts in Vermont. www.vermontartscouncil.org.

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