



**PRESS RELEASE**  
330 Seventh Avenue, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10023



**For Immediate Release**  
**January 26, 2009**

Press Contact: Patricia Kiernan Johnson, Marketing & Media Manager  
212-796-8620 ext. 217, PKJohnson@operaamerica.org

### **OPERA AMERICA ANNOUNCES RECIPIENTS OF THE 2009 NATIONAL OPERA TRUSTEE RECOGNITION AWARD**

New York, NY—**OPERA America**, the national service organization for opera, is proud to announce the 2009 recipients of the National Opera Trustee Recognition Award. In its second year, this award honors trustees of U.S. opera companies for exemplary leadership, generosity and audience building efforts on behalf of their respective opera companies.

The 2009 National Opera Trustee Recognition honorees are Mr. John T. Cody, Jr. of The Dallas Opera, Mr. Richard Holland of Opera Omaha, Mrs. Beth Ingram of Lyric Opera of Kansas City, and Mr. C. Guy Rudisill, III of Piedmont Opera.

OPERA America is committed to recognizing strong trustee leaders, understanding the pivotal role they play in the success of opera companies and the vitality of the communities they serve. In acknowledging and celebrating the dedication of board members at the national level, the National Opera Trustee Recognition Program seeks to strengthen the relationships between opera companies and their trustees and to inspire exemplary service to opera companies across the United States.

“Presenting consistently high-quality opera requires a dedicated staff guided and supported by a strong board,” stated Marc A. Scorca, president & CEO of OPERA America. “The value of dedicated board members who provide passion, vision and generous support cannot be overstated. We are pleased to be joined by Bank of America in recognizing the achievements of these trustees.”

“Bank of America is a leading supporter of the arts and believes that these institutions are critical to ensuring the cultural and economic vitality of our communities,” said Keith Banks, head of Bank of America Global Private Client, Institutional and Investment Management. “We are pleased to sponsor this noble initiative as the trustees play an important role in developing their local opera company as cultural pillars in their community.”

Each year, OPERA America member companies are invited to nominate one of their trustees for this award. A single honoree from each of the four OPERA America budget levels is chosen by an adjudication committee through a competitive selection process.

The honorees represent a significant range of accomplishments, generosity and a deep commitment to promoting opera in their communities. The following profiles illustrate just a few examples of the dedication of these trustees.

After fourteen seasons with The Dallas Opera, **John Cody** held the top administrative position for a year while the company searched for its new general director. He has resumed the position in the wake of the brief tenure of George Steel. Mr. Cody is the retired President and COO of J.C. Penney with more than 35 years of executive experience. He joined the Board of Directors of The Dallas Opera in 1993 and has served on the Development, Finance and Marketing committees, as well as on the Board of The Dallas Opera Foundation. Mr. Cody became President of the company in June 2004 and guided a two-year project to develop a strategic positioning statement and roadmap designed to take The Dallas Opera through its historic move into the Margot and Bill Winspear Opera House. He served as Chairman of the Board of Directors from 2006-2008 and as Interim General Director from June through September 2008. He resumed the position of Interim General Director as of January, 2009.

Native Omahan and retired advertising executive **Richard Holland** has been a tireless advocate of Opera Omaha. Shortly after its 1958 founding, Mr. Holland joined other community leaders in helping them grow from a community enterprise to a budding professional regional company. He served as Board President from 1966 to 1970 and, over the past 40 years, has remained a constant supporter, both in a governance capacity and as a donor. In his forward for the book *Opera Omaha: The First Fifty Years*, Mr. Holland wrote "...we believe we have helped make Omaha a better place to live and work." While maintaining and expanding his leadership giving to Opera Omaha, Mr. Holland is a major supporter of many social service organizations. He called on the Peter Kiewit Foundation to co-commission a study on the economic impact of performing arts in Omaha, which clearly proved the high value these groups bring to the region.

**Beth Ingram** is an enthusiastic promoter and generous patron of the Lyric Opera of Kansas City. As a 42-year member of the Board of Directors, she has held the officer positions of secretary, treasurer, vice-president, president, vice-chairman and chairman. She was the first woman president on the Lyric Opera Board and continued in her leading role by serving on the Executive Committee for the majority of those years. Mrs. Ingram was the lead donor and honorary chairman for the Company's 2003 Endowment Campaign that raised \$11.5 million to establish a fund to enhance the artistic quality of productions and twice has served as honorary chairman for the Company's major fund raising event, the Lyric Opera Ball. The Golden Anniversary Ball held last season raised a record-breaking \$1.4 million for the Company and ensured adequate funding for their ambitious 50th Anniversary Season.

**C. Guy Rudisill, III** has been involved with Piedmont Opera for more than ten years, serving as President of the Board from 2000 to 2002. A member of Piedmont Opera's Major Gifts Committee, Mr. Rudisill is highly involved with fundraising for the company and last year helped raise \$200,000 over and above the company's budget. For a period of time during his tenure as Board President, Piedmont Opera was without a General Manager. Until a successor could be identified, Mr. Rudisill assumed many of the General Manager's duties. Mr. Rudisill also serves on the Advocacy Committee of the local Arts Council and takes an active role in reminding the local, state and national elected officials of the importance of the arts to the community, state and nation.

**OPERA America and Bank of America will pay tribute to the 2009 honorees and celebrate their remarkable achievements at a dinner and reception on Saturday, February 21, 2009, in New York City.**

OPERA America's commitment to recognizing excellence in governance is shared by its sister organization Opera.ca, the Canadian national association for opera. Opera.ca honors Mr. J.

Rob Collins of the Canadian Opera Company as the first recipient of its National Opera Directors Recognition Program.

###

### **About OPERA America**

OPERA America leads and serves the entire opera community, supporting the creation, presentation and enjoyment of opera.

- Artistic services help opera companies and creative and performing artists to improve the quality of productions and increase the creation and presentation of North American works.
- Information, technical and administrative services to opera companies reflect the need for strengthened leadership among staff, trustees and volunteers.
- Education, audience development and community services are designed to enhance all forms of opera appreciation.

Founded in 1970, OPERA America's worldwide membership network includes nearly 200 Company Members, 300 Associate and Business Members, 2,000 Individual Members and more than 18,000 subscribers to the association's electronic news service.

OPERA America's long tradition of supporting and nurturing the creation and development of new works led to the formation of *The Opera Fund*, a growing endowment which allows OPERA America to make a direct impact on the ongoing creation and presentation of new opera and music-theater works. Since its inception, OPERA America has made grants of more than \$10.5 million to assist companies with the expenses associated with the creation and development of new works.

Photo of John T. Cody, Jr. by Karen Almond, courtesy of The Dallas Opera.