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Short North Arts District

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Seven Honorees to be Recognized at 2023 Short North Arts District Gala

Tickets on sale now for annual event honoring those who've impacted the Short North Arts District

COLUMBUS, OH (Feb. 17, 2023) – On Sunday, April 30, 2023, the public is invited to join the Short North Alliance at the 16th Annual Short North Gala to recognize the individuals, businesses, and organizations who have made an impact in the Short North Arts District. Taking place at the new Hilton Columbus Downtown, guests can enjoy one-of-a-kind cocktails, a “taste of the Short North,” including appetizers and desserts from various Short North Arts District culinary partners, a two-course menu by the team at the Hilton Columbus Downtown, a silent auction, performances and the annual award ceremony.

Each year, the Short North Gala celebrates the amazing contributions, achievements, and perseverance that took place in the Short North Arts District in 2022 by recognizing several honorees, all nominated by the community. This year, seven honorees will be recognized across four categories: Business Beacon, Community Partner, Unsung Hero, and The Sandborn D. Wood Award for Leadership & Service. The 2023 honorees include The Lamp Shade, The Columbus Greek Festival, Pastor John Wooden of Stone Village Church, Kris Harrison and Gina Cronley of Orbit Design, Dee Kates, Marcus Grimes of the Short North Alliance Ambassador Team and Block by Block, as well as Mark Wood of Wood Companies. Learn more about each category and honoree below.

More details about the 2023 event, including featured Short North Arts District Culinary Partners, entertainment, dinner menu, silent auction, will be released as available. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit ShortNorth.org/Gala.

The Short North Gala supports the Short North Alliance, the 501(c)(3) nonprofit that serves the business and property owners of the Short North Arts District. Funds raised for the Short North Gala support this annual event, as well as the mission of the Short North Alliance -- to nurture the Short North Arts District as a vibrant, creative, and inclusive community and leading arts destination.

2023 Short North Arts District Gala Honorees: Honorees in all categories are nominated by the community.

Business Beacon: Honorees in this category have served as catalysts to bring a broad range of visitors to the District, and have inspired others to invest in and nurture the Short North Arts District.

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- **Marianne Lannan, The Lamp Shade**

Celebrating its 17th year in the Short North Arts District and 50th year in business, The Lamp Shade has been a guiding light as a small business in Columbus. After selling shades from her home and station wagon for several years, Rita Quinn opened The Lamp Shade in Bexley in May of 1973. She built a business specializing in friendly, personal service in a warm, homelike setting. Shortly after Rita's death in 1988, Marianne Lannan purchased The Lamp Shade in 1995. Marianne has maintained the same warm atmosphere and personalized service that has attracted customers for years, while also remaining an engaged member and supporter of the Short North Arts District community.

Unsung Hero: Honorees in this category are selected for the contributions they have made over the years to the artistry, diversity, community, and spirit of the Short North Arts District.

- **Pastor John Wooden, Stone Village Church**

John Wooden has been a long time resident and community member in the Short North area, having served the community through King Avina United Methodist Church and now Stone Village Church. Throughout his tenure in our community, he has established numerous ministries that benefit individuals in need. At Stone Village Church, a church he founded, his service ministry has grown to be one of the only organizations dedicated to providing financial and administrative support to help individuals through the arduous process of obtaining state-ID cards and birth certificates – an essential step to secure employment and housing. John is the very definition of what it means to be an unsung hero in our community and we are grateful for his leadership and service to all.

- **Bobby Thaxton, former president, Short North Civic Association**

When he's not busy supporting New Americans through the legal practice he leads, Bobby Thaxton always takes the time to volunteer for and support his beloved neighborhood, the Short North Arts District. He has been an incredible asset to Short North over the years. For many years, Bobby devoted his time serving as president of The Short North Home and Garden Tour, as well as president and a member of the Short North Civic Association. Bobby has been an instrumental leader in working on efforts to engage residents throughout the Short North community and improving key safety initiatives.

- **Dee Kates, of the founding family of First Community Bank (now First Commonwealth Bank)**

For the past 32 years, when she wasn't helping businesses and individuals through their financial journeys at First Commonwealth Bank, Dee Kates could be found volunteering at numerous local events, fundraising for various cases, or strutting around in her famous artfully crafted shoe collection. More than just a friendly and well-known face in the Short North Arts District community, Dee also provides a helping hand at countless community events and causes. Dee was also heavily invested in providing a space for emerging artists to showcase their work in the Short North, hosting regular monthly exhibitions at the bank and programming during Gallery Hop.

- **Marcus Grimes, Block By Block, lead Short North Ambassador Operations Manager**

It might not always be a pretty job, but you will always catch Marcus Grimes with a smile. Overseeing the Short North Alliance Ambassador Team since August of 2021, Marcus Grimes elevated the Ambassador services to new heights, providing an unprecedented level of care when it comes to looking after the environment, safety, and all persons in the Short North Arts District. From keeping the public art and streets clean and checking in on businesses, to providing guest information and helping individuals in need, Marcus epitomizes the mission of the Short North Alliance – to nurture our community as vibrant, creative, inclusive, and artful.

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Community Partner: Honorees in this category have deep collaborations with the Short North Arts District resulting in significant advancement of the District's quality of life.

- **The Columbus Greek Festival**

In 2023, the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church celebrates its 50th anniversary of the festival and 113 years of existence. From the festival's humble beginnings in the early 1970s as a simple dinner dance, to the current 4-day celebration of Greek culture, the Greek Festival has truly become a Central Ohio Labor Day weekend tradition, and a fixture of the Short North Arts District. Now, each year, around 40,000 guests attend the festival to enjoy authentic, hand-made greek food and entertainment, participate in tours of the historic buildings, shop artists' showcases of paintings, photography, sculptures and more, and above all else, celebrate Greek Culture.

Sandborn D. Wood Award for Leadership & Service: Honorees in the category have made lasting contributions to the Short North Arts District through their life and service.

- **Mark Wood, Wood Companies**

Through his 30 years of holding many titles with The Wood Companies, serving as its President for the last two decades, Mark Wood has facilitated the birth and growth of so many businesses in the neighborhood, and has brought so many businesses to the Short North. He instills the core values of The Wood Companies: creating and preserving architectural significance, building a better living experience than has been done thus far, finding the most interesting experiential restaurant/gallery/retail partners to populate High Street spaces, and supporting independent businesses that help the city thrive. These core values have provided the Short North with a foundation for its unique success in being a mature neighborhood that continually reinvents itself with different buildings, businesses, and ideas that draw in new generations. In addition to his more than 10 years of service on the Short North Special Improvement District Board of Directors, Mark has maintained an impeccable record of integrity and a reputation as someone who will consistently do the right thing for the neighborhood.

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About the Short North Alliance

The Short North Alliance (SNA) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization serving both the property owners and business owners of the Short North Arts District, Fifth Avenue and Fourth Street Special Improvement District, and surrounding area. The mission of the Short North Alliance is to nurture the Short North Arts District, High Street, East 5th Avenue, and North Fourth Street commercial corridors as vibrant, creative, and inclusive communities and leading arts destinations.

About the Short North Arts District

The Short North Arts District is the most vibrant spot in the City of Columbus, and is home to more than 300 exciting businesses, the majority of which are locally-owned or headquartered. It has received numerous national accolades, is considered a model for urban revitalization, and is known as the art and soul of Columbus. The Short North Alliance (SNA) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization serving both the property and business owners of the Short North Arts District. For more information, visit

www.shortnorth.org.