

Salute visionaries Stone and Olson, Young and Kremer at June 4 event



The public is invited to the Vision Awards, a third bi-annual event, 6-8 p.m. June 4 at the Ritz Theater, 345 13th Ave. NE.

Presented by the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District board, the Vision Awards honor those who have provided leadership and commitment in the service of arts, artists and culture in the Arts District. Peter Rothstein, Artistic Director of Theater Latté Da, will host.

Walt Dziedzic, former council member and park board member, will be honored posthumously for his support and fundraising for the first Art-A-Whirl.

There will be an after party at Rogue Buddha Gallery.

by Margo Ashmore

Two couples who will be honored as Northeast Minneapolis Arts District's Vision Award winners demonstrate what happens in community when artists and visionary arts-friendly investors own property.

In celebrating their contributions, we go back to 1991 when "we both saw that [the] downtown [arts scene] and the Wyman building were going to die with the building of Target Center," said John Kremer.

He and Jennifer Young bought the California Building to give displaced artists a place to land, the first such intentional arts building in Northeast.

They acquired the Northwestern Casket building in 2006 and what is now the Casket Carriage House in 2007. Currently, they rent to 250 artists in 250,000 square feet of real estate, and own other business rental properties, including the Odd Fellows building on 4th and East Hennepin which won a heritage preservation award. They've known some of their tenants since the 1980s.

Along the way, they served as the fee developers for the Ritz Theater in 2000 and most recently the Flux Arts Building. They've assisted others in quests to own property, and helped a lot of people make connections. Kremer calls it "social sculpting," seeing needs for elements of a community, then making places for and nurturing them. Another early example: Around 1993 they started Mill City Coffee because "I needed a place for lunch that wasn't McDonald's, a dim bar or fine dining," Kremer said. "And now look at all the restaurants."

Young started the Bottineau Neighborhood Association and was on the East Side Neighborhood Services, Inc. board for 20 years. She

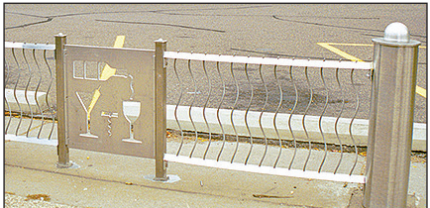
served on the earliest Above the Falls task force and countless other initiatives. Her family owned and managed property.

Kremer learned as he went. For five years he was a development official part-time in Cook County where they have a cabin. "I worked for the government, it was helpful to understand that side of the desk."



Left above: Jennifer Young and John Kremer at their Casket Arts Building. (Photo by Margo Ashmore)

Right, Frank Stone and Lynn Olson, and Frank's 2004 project, the Surdyk's fence. (Gail Olson Photo)



His history major gave him a sense for the forces at work making neighborhoods change.

But Northeast's transformation has "happened much bigger, better, and faster than I thought it would," Kremer said. "Now the district needs compression, a density of places to see, purchase and do art. And to make for sustainability and succession" as the founders age.

Sculptor Frank Stone made his living through his art since his early 20s. He met now-retired judge Lynn Olson in 1995. In 1997, they married and bought the former pharmacy building at 1228 2nd St. NE for a gallery to sell his work. Things really took off when they acquired next-door properties, giving them expanded gallery space, upstairs tenants when they added on, some parking in back, their courtyard, and a house.

Olson estimates showing more than 300 local artists at Frank Stone Gallery. Her formula of six to eight weekends each season, a new show each week paired an emerging artist with an established artist who could learn something from each other. Stone's work on display

led to some great commissioned work, like Surdyk's, a connection made during an Art-A-Whirl.

The late 1990s and early 2000s "were heady times, things started building," Olson said, with several galleries nearby. In 2008, "getting tired of working two jobs," they closed the "big" gallery and rented the space to Chowgirls.

Frank Stone served on the Above the Falls City of Minneapolis Advisory Committee (AFCAC) and the Lowry Bridge Building Committee as artist representative for Northeast. Lynn & Frank were among the founders and board members of Sheridan Neighborhood Organization (SNO).

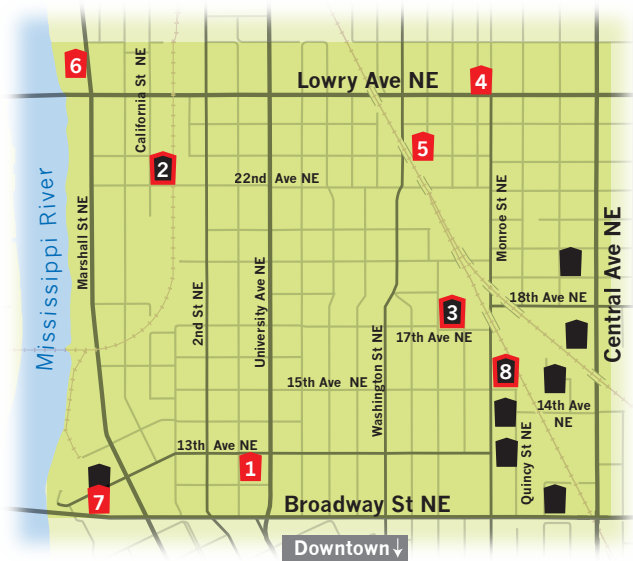
Olson was Vice President of the Ballet of the Dolls Board, helping to buy the Ritz, and later served on its Foundation Board.

In her career as a judge, Olson learned Spanish. She felt a mission to help people communicate



arts INSIGHTS

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National recognition: Americans for the Arts leaders will visit the Arts District mid-June

Americans for the Arts will hold their annual convention in Minneapolis June 12-16. They'll be visiting the Northrup King Building and the Flux Arts Building in the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District on a tour called "Doing it for Ourselves - Artist-led Spaces."

While at Northrup King, they'll visit Studio 400 which was featured in the Northeast Minneapolis Arts Association's In Studio magazine. It is a residency program for emerging artists of color.

Americans for the Arts' mission is "to build recognition and support for the extraordinary and dynamic value of the arts and to lead, serve, and advance the diverse networks of organizations and individuals who cultivate the arts in America. Connecting your best ideas and leaders from the arts, communities, and business, together we can work to ensure that every American has access to the transformative power of the arts."

Kudos, and stay tuned for NE Influential

- Congratulations to Theater Latté Da on raising about \$220,000 at their gala held May 8. It had been rescheduled from a March blizzard night. Find out more about what makes this theater so popular and successful, and why they chose Northeast, at the Vision Awards June 4 (see top article).
- Northeast Minneapolis Arts Association logged the 24th Art-A-Whirl, full of interactive arts experiences at studios big and small. It was a great event for exploring the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District

and beyond on a chilly weekend, May 17-18-19. Friendly trolley drivers and helpful guides welcomed guests from all over to experience arts and the neighborhood.

- Mark your calendars for June 21, the Northeast Influential, a potluck picnic on the summer solstice for artists and arts supporters. It is typically held at a park or other outdoor space. Arrangements still pending, watch the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District Facebook page for details.



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