

University Staff Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

Date: November 14, 2006
Meet Time: 8:30a.m. – 10:00a.m.
Meeting Location: Rand Function Room

Attendees: Becky Atack, Brad Awalt, Diane Banks, John Brassil, Beth Clark, Dan Cline, Kathleen Corbitt, Cathy Crimi, Michael Crowe, Sue Davis, Mary Ann Dean, Michele Dixon, Kay Donigian, Faye Dorman, Jeffery duly, Traci Fleischman, Antoinette Hicks, Shirley Hiltz, Sammie Huffmon, Jason Hunt, Tiffany Ingram, Faye Johnson, Sue King, Bonnie Kress, Ginger Leger, Joyce Matthews, Ian McCullough, Brenda McKee, Ginny McLean-Swartzell, Shelley Meadows, Regina Newsom-Snell, Donald Pickert, Martha Reid, Kathy Rhodes, Robert Rich, Andy Richter, Lori Shepard, Chase Smith, Susan Starcher, Dan Steward, Davis Strange, Gay Tidwell, Carlos Trenary, Kay Tyler, Susan Widmer, Cliff Wilson, Melissa Woche

Regrets: Ken Carter, Mary Clissold, Kevin Colon, Ashley Crownover, Tracy Cunningham, Mary Lou Edgar, Kenon Ewing, Sandie Frantz, Carol Guth, Sharone Hall, Nancy Hanna, Beth Hanson, Pam Hoffner, Rosalind Johnson, Heather Lefkowitz, Joe Lowe, Willa Dean Martin, Mary Kay Matthys, Jackie McMath, Laurie McPeak, JoAnn Patterson, Sheri Reynolds, Karen Seezen, Mike Smeltzer, Lynn Smith, Brian Smokler, Carol Soren, Sharon Stanley, Corwin Thomas, Malah Tidwell, Jim Webb, Mary Clark Webb, Sherry Willis, Jeff Youngblood

Visitors: Lauren Brisky, Nim Chinniah, Keith Huff, Janet Hirt, Kevin Myatt

- **President Diana Wohlfahrt called meeting to order**
- **October meeting minutes approved**
- **Conversations with Martha Ingram**

Mrs. Ingram began her presentation with an introduction of her assistant, Nana Carl, who attended the meeting to assist with the PowerPoint. Mrs. Ingram then introduced her topic as being about the arts. When asked to speak, she was asked to speak on any topic of interest to her that she would like to share with the group. Mrs. Ingram noted that other than loving Vanderbilt very much she also loves the arts and spends a lot of time working with them. She has been working with the arts for 30 plus years, and noted that there many of really great things happening here but we still have some challenges and she wanted to share those with the group.

First, she put the group into a frame of mind to discuss the arts. Mrs. Ingram noted that for many years she has enjoyed working in the arts invisibly, but as the spokesman for the new Symphony house, she has lost that anonymity. She is often stopped and thanked for what she has done. Mrs. Ingram says that it is not just her, but a team of people that

made it happen. She said that it is not about her, but about the hundreds, probably thousands, of people that worked on this. She believes that the gratitude is about the energy and excitement about the arts in Nashville. Mrs. Ingram noted that there is no other city in the Southeast, except Atlanta, that is working at Nashville's level in the arts. This is because of the commitment of many, many people. It has not always been this way, and it will not automatically continue to be this way.

A city's success in the arts is always a fragile balance of money, talent and audience support and we must continually work to ensure that all three are provided. We must work to sustain what we have accomplished to ensure that it does not go away. Sustaining the arts is the topic that Mrs. Ingram wanted to specifically address in her presentation. It is very important that everyone think about what they can do to sustain the arts. Martha noted that we now have the symphony, the opera, the ballet and the professional theater. To put this into perspective, when TPAC opened in 1972, we had no opera, no ballet, no professional theater and a very modest part-time orchestra, so we have really come a long way. The success of one has led to the success of others. It is the desire for this interrelatedness that led to the creation of TPAC. About 34 years ago, when Mrs. Ingram first became involved, the musicians were underpaid yet there was no way to raise their salaries unless we had an opera and a ballet company which would provide more opportunities for the symphony to perform, but we had no place for an opera or ballet to perform. Today, the Nashville Symphony, the Nashville Opera and the Nashville Ballet are internationally recognized for innovative compelling work of the highest caliber. The Tennessee Rep is also positioned for great things with a new mission and new leadership, with Michael Schoenfeld as president of that board. Mrs. Ingram's presentation then began to discuss each of these groups individually.

With the opening of Schermerhorn Symphony Center, the Nashville Symphony has obtained a whole new level of recognition and excellence. The concert hall is itself an instrument, and will allow the symphony to build on its already strong reputation. As you know the late Kenneth Schermerhorn, maestro for over 22 years, was the mastermind behind this growth. Evidence of the symphony's success is virtually everywhere. Auditions that used to attract just a few musicians are now attracting hundreds from across the country. International Cd sales are breaking records and are now working with 2 labels. Other evidence of the Symphony's rise is that its Independence Day concert is regularly broadcast on national television, and it has received four Grammy nominations, including one for the best classical album of the year. The most recent, and perhaps most dramatic, evidence is the appointment of Leonard Slatkin as our music advisor. He is the music director of the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington DC and principal guest conductor of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and principal guest conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Maestro Slatkin is one of the world's most renowned music directors.

Mrs. Ingram noted that 2006 has been an incredible year for the Nashville Opera as well. With its excellence and innovation recognized by the Wall Street Journal, Variety magazine and Lincoln Center amongst others. Opera America, the National Association for Opera companies singled out Nashville with its prestigious award of achievement for Surrender Road, the Opera's first world premier. The presentation also attracted attention of the Lincoln Center Institute where it will present Surrender Road next July. It is not

just critical acclaim that the opera is receiving. Audiences have increased by 350% in the last 7 years, and the company has gone from one show per season to two and now four shows every season. They average 89% occupancy at performances. Its annual fundraising event, La Bella Note, set a new attendance record this year and individual contributions have increased by over 50%. The Nashville Opera is now the largest opera company in Tennessee and one of the fastest opera companies in the nation. Thanks to its success, the opera is moving to a new home for rehearsals, the Noah Lif Opera Center, next to the ballet's new home for rehearsals in Sylvan Park. The new 26,000 sq ft space, which is opening in the spring of 2008, will provide the opera with a rehearsal hall, office space, special events space and a small performance hall for experimental works. With all of this good news, it is no surprise that Opera America gave its annual bravo award to the Nashville Opera's executive and artistic leaders, Terrell Pinterman and John Humes.

There is still more dramatic news, this time coming from the Nashville Ballet. Artistic director Paul Vasterling was cited by Dance magazine as one of the top 16 choreographers in the world. Paul is a Fulbright scholar, a three time recipient of National Endowment for the Arts creations grants and has sat on the panel that determines the National Endowments awards for Dance. He has choreographed more than 50 works which have been performed on more than 3 continents, in nearly 50 cities around the world. Last October the Nashville Ballet toured Argentina and Uruguay generating both critical acclaim and energetic bravos. Principal dancer Christopher Mahany won the prestigious individual artist fellow from the Tennessee Arts commission and readers of the Nashville Scene voted the Nashville Ballet the best professional performing arts or musical arts group in Nashville. The Nashville Ballet may be catching the world's attention, but its style is uniquely Nashville. With Bluebird Café at the Ballet, Vasterling choreographed dance to the music of well known Nashville songwriters. There is also Emergence, a unique collaboration between the Ballet and the Blair School of Music that crosses all of boundaries combining music, drama and dance. Plowing the Dark, a creation of Emergence, last year moved beyond performances at Vanderbilt to several venues around the nation.

As mentioned, Mike Schoenfeld is the president of the Board of the Tennessee Rep Theater. This is an exciting time for the TN Rep, as producing director, Renee Copeland put it, it is like a brand new start up that has been around for 22 years. What this means is that Nashville's professional theater company, now an independent company as it began, is embarking on new era of its history focused on producing the best contemporary drama and comedy. The Rep is being led by new artistic leadership, Executive Artistic Director, David Alford, and Producing Director, Renee Copeland. Reviews of David and Renee's work have been wonderful and ticket sales have been going strong for this season with subscriber goals for this year almost met many months in advance. TN Rep is one of the few regional theater companies in America that actually sales more tickets via subscription than day of ticket sales which speaks of strong steady, support. The Rep is back independent and going strong because entertainment is a key industry here, and Nashville has a brilliant talent pool of actors. The TN Rep is taking advantage of this opportunity to produce compelling theaters. If it has been a while since you have been to a Rep performance, or have never been, Mrs. Ingram would encourage you to go to see them.

That is where Nashville is today in the major performing arts, not to mention the wide variety of other options at TPAC (Tennessee Performing Arts Center), but also other things at the Schermerhorn Symphony Center. But, this is not the first time that Nashville has been so fortunate. Throughout our history, particularly before the Civil War, we have been blest with the exceptional opportunities in the performing arts, but we did not sustain them. We let them go away, we let them melt away, and we must do things differently this time, because if we don't it may literally be a century before we have this chance again. It has been almost a century and a half since we lost what we had here.

Next Mrs. Ingram discussed what we had in Nashville before the Civil War. It really was the Athens of the South. It had its first theater by 1817 and by 1850 it had erected the Adelphi Theater that held almost 2,000 people. That is almost the same as the Schermerhorn. It was said to have had the second largest stage in the United States. It was designed in the classical style and hosted internationally renowned artists and audiences were so large that William Strickland, who designed the Tennessee state capital building, was hired to build a second tier to accommodate more patrons. Ginny Lind, the internationally acclaimed opera star, came to the Adelphi Theater in the spring of 1851. Tickets were in great demand, and rather than being sold at the box office, they were auctioned at the theater two days before the concert. The bidding started at \$50 for the first ticket and reached \$200, which is more than \$4000 in today's currency. The only thing that generates that kind of premium today is Super Bowl tickets. When Charlotte Cushman, a great Shakespearean actress, was to perform at the Adelphi, a circus was also in town, which would be like competing against the Titans today. However, Cushman played to a full house and the circus to an almost empty one.

Before the Civil War, Nashville could also be called the piano capital of America. In 1854, the Republic Bannar, paper, wrote that there were probably more pianos in Nashville than any other city of its size in the United States. So, what happened? Why were we unable to sustain this level of excellence in the performing arts? Mrs. Ingram suggested that it was because of the Civil War and because Nashville became an occupied city early in the conflict and remained occupied until the war 3 years later. The landscape changes were apparent almost immediately. Schools and churches were closed; businesses were shut down, often to be reopened by Northerners. Musical instruments were smashed. Paintings were slashed and books were burned, and of course, many lost all of their money having invested in Confederate bonds.

Although the city was not completely devastated, as was Atlanta, the federal government destroyed, or took, property that was valued at approximately 160 million dollars, which in today's world would be about 2 billion dollars. Some people say that America is fortunate to have never been invaded by a foreign power. Mrs. Ingram would say that it probably depends on where you are from. A lot of people felt that they had been invaded and occupied for those three years during the Civil War. The scars on the city remained long after the war was over, and the arts in Nashville, and in the South, were set back by decades, and probably more than a century. The war took away the three ingredients of a vibrant arts culture. It doesn't take a war to make the arts unsustainable. They will not survive if any one of the three ingredients is missing (money, talent and audience). Mrs. Ingram has seen this happen first hand.

The opening of the Tennessee Performing Arts Center was one of the best and one of the worst days of her life. It represented the culmination of work by many people to raise millions of dollars. When it opened in 1980, TPAC was one of one of the finest performing arts centers in the country. It was also one of the first performing arts centers in the US that resulted in the partnership between the state government and a private sector. Ed Wilson, a critic for the Wall Street Journal, was in town and Mrs. Ingram asked him if he would want to write a story about TPAC. Ed said it would be an embarrassment to both her and the city. Without any resident arts companies, what we had was just a place for out of towners to perform. This was very deflating. Afterwards, she looked at the steps needed to start a ballet, opera and theater company. The efforts were successful, which is why Nashville is a thriving orchestra, opera, ballet and theater town. But, our early efforts were instructive about losing the arts, losing an art form. Mrs. Ingram's late husband, Bronson Ingram, bought a building as they were trying to get TPAC built. He gave it to the theater company. They had the expectation that the group would move into TPAC. They made it three seasons, but with an enormous deficit. The problem was simply not enough people attended the performances. The theater could not be sustained. They actually had talent and money, but they did not have enough people to sustain. That is when it was realized that even if they had the money and talent, they were doomed to fail without an audience. In those days Nashvillians stayed away from the arts in droves. There were many reasons why: television, lack of arts education, and lingering effects of the civil war were a few of them. Something had to be done about the lack of audience. The answer was to introduce the children to the performing arts. Out of this desire arose the Humanities Outreach Tennessee (HOT) program. This was a coordinated effort to offer dramatically reduced, or free, tickets to school children. This started 25 years ago when the audiences were miserably small. We had to grow our own audiences, and now many of the children are adults who are comfortable in concert halls and theaters and appreciate what is going on. It has really been a wonderful success and is still going on today. All arts companies have built on the HOT program with their own outreach programs to school children. The children come in for performances, and the arts groups go out to the schools to reinforce what they have seen.

They have been very successful. The symphony reached more than 100,000 students last year with both free and discounted tickets to concerts in the schools and in the concert halls. They also created and distributed a video, narrated by none other than Vanderbilt's Chancellor, Gordon Gee, which teaches children the basics of attending a concert. Its curb records young musician's concerto competition draws young musicians from across the state and nso.kids.org, the symphony's website just for young people, uses interactive games to involve children in the symphonic experience. The Nashville Opera set a record last year with its educational touring program, performing a specially written opera into 53 schools throughout 15 Middle Tennessee counties reaching over 24,000 children. It now has a waiting list of 40 more schools wanting the program. In order to reach all of these children, the Opera performed 2 shows a day, 6 days a week for 6 weeks. That is real dedication. The Nashville Ballet as part of its Learning Curves program performs in schools and library in 12 Middle Tennessee counties. Three different ballets have been created just for this program. The Ballet goes beyond just performing for children to teaching them how to perform in the AmSouth School of Nashville Ballet which opened a new facility in Brentwood this year. School students have opportunities to perform throughout the year, including dancing in the annual Nutcracker performance.

Outreach to children actually began with the Tennessee Repertory Theater. Right after TPAC opened, we had the wonderful Polk Theater, the middle sized theater, that nobody was using. That is where the Advent Theater was to have gone, but it did not last long enough to put it in there. So, Mac Perckle staged a special children friendly production of Tennessee Williams *The Glass Menagerie*. It was a tremendous hit, and was the beginning of the children's outreach program (HOT). Since that time, Tennessee Rep has performed for more than half a million children with 7000 students treated last year to a performance of the classical musical *1776*. It also provided half priced tickets to educators and students. Tennessee Rep also does an excellent job of providing ways for both children and adults to learn more about the thoughts and feelings behind works of art. It sponsors 5 different types of sessions on a regular basis, including discussion both before and after most performances, opportunities to meet the actors, lunch seminars at Vanderbilt and a special program at WNPT that delves into each play that the Rep performs. The company also works with the Nashville Adult Literacy Council using theater to encourage adult learners to find joy and excitement in the written word.

Our performing arts companies are doing their part to sustain the level of excellence we now have in the arts, but the question is what are we doing? What are you doing, what am I doing? A woman named Andrea Dillenberg, who is now the executive director of the Nashville Ballet said something recently. Andrea came to Nashville from Atlanta, where she held executive positions at the Woodrow Art Center for several years. Andrea said that though Atlanta has more resources than Nashville when it comes to quality in the arts, Nashville and Atlanta are basically on a par, we are actually, here in Nashville, much healthier than most, but we won't sustain it unless we understand the difference between having a strong arts culture and using it. As Andrea put it, we love bragging about what we have in Nashville, but many of us don't go to performances or give to arts organizations. People have to participate or there will be nothing left to brag about.

Even if you have never attended, or never plan to attend a single performance of the symphony, opera, ballet or theater, you still benefit. You benefit from the corporate headquarters that are drawn here by our vibrant arts culture. You benefit from the revitalization of downtown that follows the building of arts facilities, such as the Schermerhorn Symphony Center and the Frist Center for the Visual Arts. You benefit from Nashville's growing international reputation as a culturally aware city. During the Titans game last Sunday, the announcers mentioned that Nashville has one of the best symphonies in the world. You also benefit from the tourism dollars that the arts attract and from the higher level of civic discourse. The wonderful thing is that the most appropriate response is to just go and enjoy yourself. If you want to help sustain the arts in Nashville, you can do several things. You can volunteer, you can donate, you can encourage out of town visitors to attend, but the most important thing is that you enjoy yourself by attending a performance. Mrs. Ingram ended with the words that the city needs our help to keep the arts strong and suggests that you enjoy yourself, but realize the fragility of what we have and do your part to sustain what we have now.

Question: Do you have any other big plans on the horizon?

Mrs. Ingram: I am trying to make sure that Vanderbilt raises all of the money that is needed to keep Lauren happy. Really, sustainability is my big plan. I will talk about that as often as people will let me. It is so key. It is so easy to just sit home and say I just won't bother. Can we sustain it? When we had the free day of music, we had 16,000 people come through the symphony center. Can we capture them and keep them coming back? Have we got enough education to make it where people just can't stay away? I have promised everyone in my life that I am not going to do anything like this again. I am just going to help Vanderbilt.

Question: Antoinette Hicks let Mrs. Ingram know that she admires her team. When Antoinette worked in dining she witnessed students who had the opportunity for the Ingram Scholarship. She stated that it starts with the children. Her daughter learned the violin and her daughter was selected to play once per month with the symphony and now teaches at Memphis State. Her child introduced her to classical music.

Mrs. Ingram: Thank you, it is very nice to hear. The thing that is interesting is the Nashville Alliance. It raises private money for public schools. One of their projects has been raising one million dollars so that every child in the school system has a musical instrument to take home. Studies at Vanderbilt indicate that children that study music do better in school. The fact that our grades are going up, and this may be anecdotal evidence, but I wonder if that is part of the reason. The arts should be loved for themselves, but they may have a ripple effect. It seems to trigger something to allow them to learn more easily. I am really here today to appeal to you as leaders in the Vanderbilt community to support the high level of artistic community we have here. We are so fortunate now.

Question: You didn't mention it in your talk, but there is a beautiful building on campus, a beautiful concert hall that bears your name, and I don't if people here know about it or not, but the Blair Concert series is free to the public, due in no small part to your generosity.

Mrs. Ingram: These things have been important to me. I started out as a deprived child, not because my parents could not give me material stuff, but I grew up in Charlestown, SC and they did not have these things. It wasn't until I moved away to NY for college that I discovered them. I wanted that for my children as they grew up in Nashville, and not for them to have to go away to discover these things. For them to have it, it had to be for everyone else's children as well. I found that many other people were interested in these things and we just needed to get together as a force.

Questions: One thing I was thinking is that you can't have performing arts in isolation. You said that you went to New York and got hooked. One of the things is that even if you have a great performing arts center, Nashville needs to be more cosmopolitan all around. This is not the way that NY and other great arts cities are. They are walking cities. Cosmopolitan is about that air of culture that you get. That is what I see that Nashville is lacking is a good public transportation system. Bringing people in that might enjoy the arts. To get that audience, you are going to have to work on all of these things.

Mrs. Ingram: I think that will evolve. I think that the fact that more and more people are moving downtown and there are more and more places to live is going to help that connectivity that you are talking about. There is a public transportation system; it is just that people are not using it. That is what a community is all about, identifying places that need help. Identifying the blanks that need help.

Question: Do you have a plan for more adult integration or education? The free day at the new symphony hall seemed to be a great idea.

Mrs. Ingram: That is going to happen once a year. Next October it is going to happen again. Before each classical concert, there is a lecture in the education room. There is also a Vanderbilt lecture series. One of the great contributions that Gordon Gee has made, and he has made many, is to encourage the Vanderbilt community to interact with the community at large. I think that if you called any one of the arts groups, they could tell you where there is a lecture series. Adult education is key.

Question: Did you have a mentor?

Mrs. Ingram: I grew up wanting to make a difference, but I would say that my mentor was Albert Schweitzer. This is what I tell the Ingram Scholars, many people that studied under Dr. Schweitzer, asked him if they would be successful. His reply was that he did not know who would be successful, but he knew that those that would be happy are those that chose to serve. It is about service. You can choose your area, and I have chose arts. It has been very satisfying, at times very frustrating, and times challenging.

We applaud what you have done.

- **Brad Awalt: Healthplus Announcements**

We have 16 days left before gold for the gold. Don't wait until the last minute. We also have Hold the Stuffing starting this week. If you maintain or lose weight over the holidays, you win a prize.

Brad also announced that compared to October the new Healthplus facility has seen a 75% increase in participation. He thanked everyone for coming over and encouraged others to visit.