

This past Wednesday, Yuba Sutter Arts & Culture (YSAC) held its Annual Members Meeting at its Sutter Theater Center for the Arts in lieu of our monthly board meeting. Our by-laws mandate that we host a public meeting each year and give our members the opportunity to vote for our proposed new slate of officers. The public is always welcome to attend any of our monthly meetings, but this one was special. Once the board business was completed, I gave a presentation about YSAC which covered our past, present and future programs, events and projects. And then we enjoyed a performance by our friends, the Folias Duo, who join us each summer all the way from Grand Rapids, Michigan. The appetizers and beverages helped to enhance the evening's experience.

Before the concert, we recognized several of our outstanding volunteers who help make what we do possible. This year's recipients in the Volunteers of the Year category included Beverly Cameron-Fildes, Ron Ingram and Bob Puliti. Our Lifetime Award Recipient was Susan Miller, a lifelong educator and current YSAC Board President. I was once President of our Board of Directors. I started my career at YSAC as a volunteer usher for Joaquina Calvo Johnson's last opera, the Marriage of Figaro. Next thing you know I was asked to join the Board and somewhere along the line I was elected President. I was a bit overzealous as President and caused our former Executive Director a bit of angst, I'm sure. There is a line between supporting nonprofit staff as president and not stepping over the line too far.

Susan Miller exemplifies what it means to be a strong, supportive and engaged board president. As president, she holds a vital leadership role, but she goes above and beyond her basic duties to ensure our success. Beyond presiding over meetings, Susan is a dedicated and tireless ambassador, strategic thinker, and bridge-builder. In the arts, where storytelling, creativity, and community engagement are a big part of what we do, Susan as board president plays a crucial role in promoting the organization's mission. She champions the value of the arts in everyday life, advocating for increased access, equity, and public support. Susan regularly attends our performances, exhibitions, and other community events, and actively encourages others to experience our organization's work.

Exceptional nonprofit board presidents foster strong relationships with fellow board members, staff, donors, and the broader community. They lead by example, setting a tone of collaboration, transparency, and inclusivity. Susan has played a vital role in fundraising and resource development and has given generously of her time and treasure. She has been part of the Sutter Theater Center for the Arts project since just about the beginning. She was Co-Chair of the Sutter Performing Arts Association and oversaw the reinvention of the old Sutter Theater into what it is today. Susan has connected with local arts patrons, secured sponsorships, and enthusiastically promoted fundraising events and campaigns. Her commitment inspires others to support and invest in what we do. Susan's leadership continues to bring our mission to life and inspires lasting impact. And over and above all this high-level work, Susan remains humble and helps organize our monthly direct mail campaign sitting in the lobby placing address labels on the 3,000 postcards we send out each month to subscribers. To say Susan is passionate about our nonprofit would be an understatement. We were blessed when she agreed to stay on when ownership of the theater was transferred to YSAC and even more so when she agreed to assume the role of president of our board. At Wednesday's meeting, we were proud to recognize Susan Miller as our latest Lifetime Award Recipient. Congratulations, Susan!