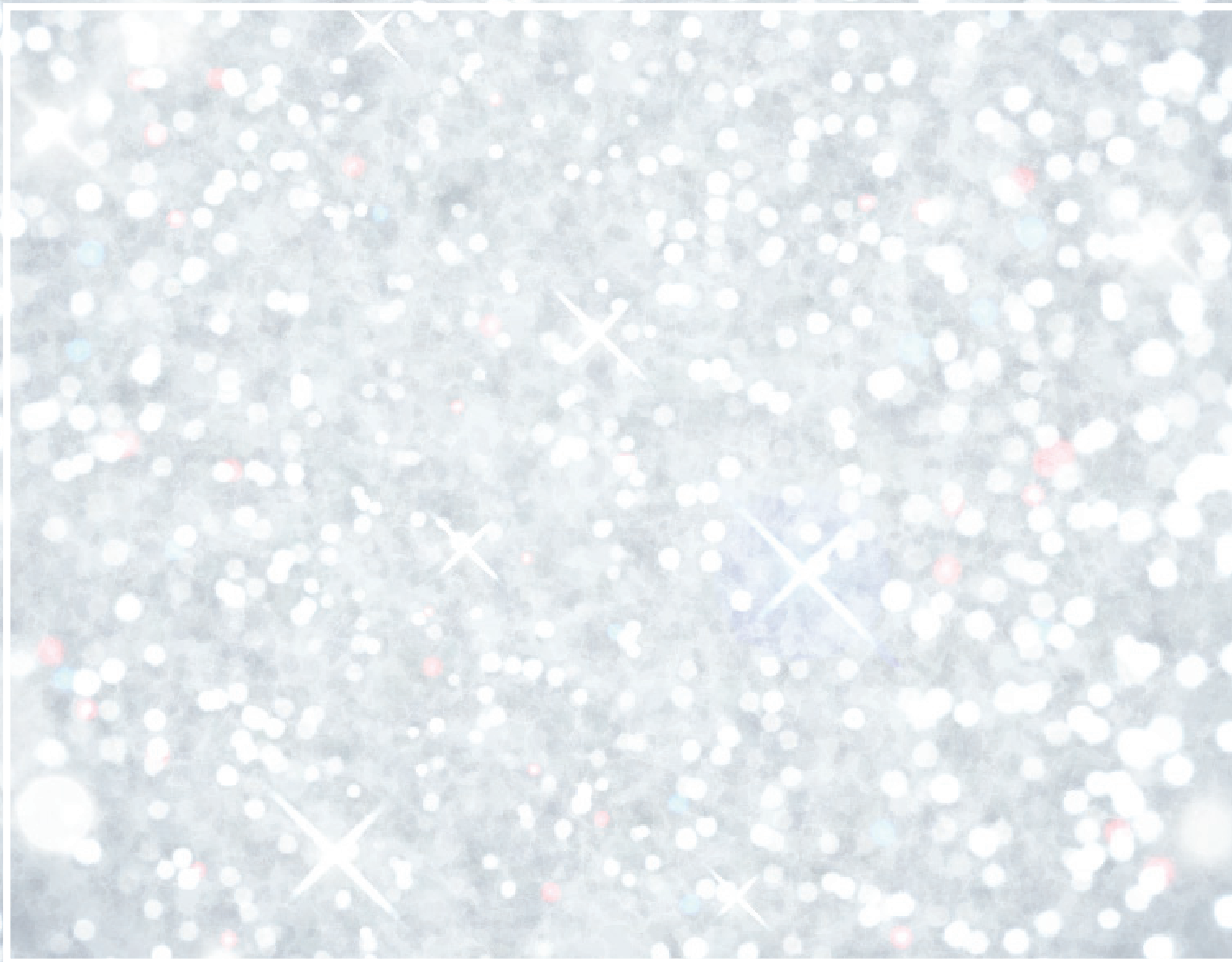


FRIENDS FOR
30 Years



FRIENDS FOR *30 Years*

A 30TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY PROJECT OF THE FRIENDS OF THE ARTS CENTRE GOLD COAST



Friends for 30 Year - A 30th Year Anniversary Project of the Friends of The Arts Centre Gold Coast

By Angela Hughes

First Published in Australia

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Publication layout design by Rae Cooper (*B Design, MAHons, Grad DipEd. Queensland College of Art, Griffith University.*)

ISBN details - 978-0-646-96150-7

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About the author

Angela Hughes has had a long association with the Gold Coast first arriving in the sleepy coastal town as a toddler in the early 1950s. Since then, she has been a regular to visitor to the region in between boarding school in Toowoomba and living on large cattle and sheep stations in outback Queensland.

Having come from a family where printer's ink runs through their blood (her great-great grandfather Ebenezer Sydney bought The Age and The Leader newspapers in 1856, later taken over after his early death by her great-great uncle, David Syme), Angela was quick to seize the opportunity to complete a journalism cadetship at The Gold Coast Bulletin in the 1960s. Afterwards, she moved between various newspaper and magazine newsrooms as a senior journalist and sub-editor in Brisbane and Sydney.

Angela returned to the Gold Coast in the 1970s to raise her two sons and, at the same time, returned to The Gold Coast Bulletin where she was a writer and editor in various feature news departments. It was during this period she extensively researched and wrote for many years The Gold Coast Bulletin Property Guide, winner of the prestigious International News Marketing Association (INMA) presented in New York on one occasion.

For many years, Angela successfully operated her own communications company on the Gold Coast at which time she was responsible for the initial public relations and marketing of large tracks of land for Bond University and Hope Island developments during their early planning stages. Again, she later returned 'home' to The Gold Coast Bulletin for an extended period.

She then co-founded and operated a second successful niche communications company for 16 years before semi-retirement. Author of The Pacific Cable Station Centenary for which she received a Gold Coast City Commendation, Angela has received other numerous awards including an Australian Air Force Cadet Commander's Commendation for her PR work with the Australian Defence Force and an Australian Bicentennial Award for establishing the Quill Awards for Media Excellence on the Gold Coast. Her latest endeavour is Friends for 30 Years – A 30th Year anniversary Project of the Friends of The Arts Centre Gold Coast.

Apart from her journalism and PR qualifications, Angela holds degrees in Business (Marketing) and a MA (Research) from Queensland University of Technology. While enjoying semi-retirement on the Gold Coast, Angela continues to enjoy research and writing/editing, reading, gardening and spending time with her family who, she says, have always been her inspiration.

+ The designer would like to add, that Hughes is a dream to work with. RC

Angela Hughes

Abbreviations

ADFAS Gold Coast - Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Society

ASKM – Australian Society of Keyboard Music

ASMA – Australian Society of Miniature Art

ATO – Australian Taxation Office

BMS – Beverly McIlwain Scholarship

CACA – Community Arts Centre Association

CCA – Cultural Centre Association

CCC – Cultural Centre Committee

FACGC – Friends of The Arts Centre Gold Coast (Friends)

FCAC – Friends of Community Arts Centre

FGCAC – Friends of the Gold Coast Arts Centre (Friends)

FOF – Focus on Friends (newsletter)

GCAC – Gold Coast Arts Centre

GCAP – Gold Coast Art Prize\

GCICAA - Gold Coast International Ceramic Art Award

GCLT – Gold Coast Little Theatre

TAC – The Arts Centre (The Centre)

TACGC – The Arts Centre Gold Coast (The Centre)

TFTACGCGF - The Friends of the Arts Centre Gold Coast Gift Fund

FOREWORD

by **Kerry Watson**

Board member and past Chair of The Arts Centre Gold Coast 2008-2016

As our City's Cultural Precinct looks to the future, it would be remiss not to look at our past. Indeed, it is the past that has catapulted us into an exciting future, one in which I am proud to have played a small part along with many others. But my part is insignificant when looking at the overall development of The Arts Centre Gold Coast. The Friends of The Arts Centre Gold Coast, and those who have gone before them, represent the true spirit of the evolving Gold Coast. Sadly, volunteers are often overlooked in the bigger scheme of the progress of a city.

THIS 30-YEAR HISTORY OF THE FRIENDS LOOKS 'BEHIND THE SCENES' OF THIS DEDICATED GROUP OF VOLUNTEERS WHO HAVE PUT THEIR HEART AND SOUL INTO FORGING A RESPECTED CULTURAL IDENTITY FOR OUR CITY. IF NOT FOR THEIR PERSISTENCE, BUSINESS ACUMEN, INGENUITY AND TIRELESS COMMITMENT TO THE VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS, WE SIMPLY MAY NOT HAVE REACHED THE EXCITING CROSSROADS WE STAND AT TODAY.

As you read this, you will appreciate the hard work of the committees over past 30 years. This has led us down a path I am sure many will want to follow in the future. This history recognises the commitment of many, some you will know and some you won't, but it is important that their contributions be recorded for posterity.

I congratulate the Board of the Friends of The Arts Centre Gold Coast on their insight and initiative in making sure this part of our Gold Coast history is preserved rather than let it be lost to the annals of time.

This history is your history. Read it; enjoy it, for in another 30 years the Gold Coast will have evolved into a totally different epoch while the Friends' era of the past three decades will have been preserved forever.





Introduction

IT COULD BE RIGHTLY SAID THAT DURING THE PAST 30 YEARS, EVEN LONGER, THE FRIENDS OF THE ARTS CENTRE GOLD COAST HAS HELPED TRANSFORM THE GOLD COAST'S IDENTITY INTO ONE OF CULTURAL ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION OF THE ARTS.

The inertia of the surf, sand and sun community was given a major cultural jolt when this group found its 'voice' to push for change. There was a united force with an agenda to bring cultural diversity into the arts and find a central community 'home' for the visual and performing arts.

A driving force behind this change was the Friends of The Arts Centre Gold Coast. Thirty years ago, preceded by two decades of intensive lobbying and debate within the community, The Arts Centre Gold Coast opened its doors much to the jubilation of many. While the Centre's story is for others to tell, this history celebrates 30 years voluntary support by the Friends.

THE FRIENDS INPUT DURING THE PAST 30 YEARS HAS BEEN NOTHING SHORT OF PHENOMENAL IN ENSURING THE GOLD COAST HAS CULTURALLY COME OF AGE IN THE VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS, AND ESPECIALLY IN MORE RECENT YEARS, THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF YOUTH IN THE ARTS. WHILE EARLY DAYS FOCUSED ON DEVELOPING A CENTRAL CULTURAL PRECINCT FOR THE ARTS, IT WOULD NOT BE UNREASONABLE TO SUGGEST THAT AN EXCITING FUTURE LIES AHEAD FOR YOUTH IN THE ARTS FULLY SUPPORTED BY THE FRIENDS.

This history is a compilation of many months of interviews, research through nearly 200 Focus on Friends newsletters and other printed collateral covering nearly 50 years, personal observations and a matrix of anecdotal knowledge from the wider community.

Written to celebrate the Friends' 30 years of friendship, this book would not have been possible without the support of many who have been unfailing in providing information that otherwise could be lost due to the passage of time. To single out the names of a few when there have been many would be unjust but their assistance in sourcing information, photographs, old programs, proofing stories and clarifying often contradictory information, has been invaluable in compiling this history.

This is their history and without their help it would not have been possible to tell the 30-year story of the Friends of The Arts Centre Gold Coast. Sadly some of the history of this group has been lost to the passage of time and failing memories. No doubt there will be inaccuracies for which the author takes no responsibility although every endeavour has been made to authenticate information.

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CHAPTER ONE 7



Final plans for The Keith Hunt Cultural and Entertainment Centre are given the tick of approval by Alderman Hilary Bloyce, John Cooper, Kelvin Cordell, Alderman Betty Diamond and Mr George Done. Image: Courtesy of City Libraries Local Studies Collection

Vision of the 'Founding Four'

THEY HAD A VISION. ALTHOUGH NOT TO BEAR FRUITION UNTIL NEARLY THREE DECADES LATER, JOE PINTER AND HIS WIFE GERDA, MALCOLM CUMMINGS AND BRUCE DUNCAN OAM LOOKED BEYOND THE GLITZY GOLD COAST'S '50S AND '60S IMAGE OF BEAUTIFUL BEACHES AND BRONZED BODIES TO SOMETHING FAR MORE TANGIBLE – A PERMANENT COMMUNITY CULTURAL CENTRE FOR THE ARTS.

Known as the 'founding four', their vision set in motion the wheels for what we enjoy today, The Arts Centre Gold Coast (TACGC) with its many support groups, benefactors and sponsors. One such enduring group morphing from the 'founding four' is the Friends of The Arts Centre Gold Coast (FTACGC), which celebrates its 30th anniversary this year.

The 'founding four' brought a collective wealth of individual knowledge of the arts and architecture to the table when they first 'officially' met around the pool at the Pinter's home on 1968 to discuss the feasibility of building a community centre designated specifically for the arts. Germinating from this meeting was the community lobby group, the Cultural Centre Association (CCA) formed in January 1969 and incorporated in 1971. Mrs Hilary Bloyce BEM (a local councillor) was appointed inaugural president and artist, John Cooper of Eight Bells Gallery, was a committee member. The CCA became a powerful and proactive group endlessly lobbying with Council and the community. Viewed by many as the genesis of today's Friends, it's important to understand the Gold Coast was then a small, but progressive seaside town attracting numerous artists and thespians. Hollywood stars in the peak of their career - Laurence Olivier, Vivien Leigh, Katherine Hepburn, Robert Helpmann, Lauren Bacall and Winifred Atwell - holidayed or performed here. There seems to be conflicting information about this era but it appears the CCA and the Cultural Centre Committee (CCC) formed in 1981 (Bruce Duncan was the Chair) were both under the same umbrella until March 1983 when they formally merged and renamed themselves the Community Arts Centre Association (CACA), later to become the Friends. The formalisation of the Friends coincided with the eventual opening of The Keith Hunt Cultural and Entertainment Centre at Evandale in December 1986 when the CACA

name was changed officially to the Friends of the Community Arts Centre (FCAC). Rebranding in 1992 saw the name changed again to Friends of the Gold Coast Arts Centre (FGCAC) and refreshed to Friends of The Arts Centre Gold Coast (FTACGC) in 2010. From 2010 onwards The Centre was referred to simply as TAC.

At the time of the CCA and CCC merger, funding in excess of \$60,000 (worth an approximate \$140,000 today) was provided by previous groups and individuals on the understanding monies would be used specifically for refurbishing the new community art gallery, purchase of pianos and provision of necessary equipment required for a first class cultural and entertainment centre.

In a letter celebrating the Centre's first decade in February 1996, Gerda Pinter wrote to TAC's chair Mr Stan Willmott stating the CCA was started as a community pressure group, eventually morphing into the 'Friends'. Pinter writes:

DURING THE LATE SIXTIES THE GOLD COAST COMMUNITY WAS THREATENED WITH CULTURAL STARVATION, THE ARTS COUNCIL, THE ONLY ORGANISATION WHICH AT THAT TIME BROUGHT PROFESSIONAL THEATRE, BALLET, CONCERTS AND ART EXHIBITIONS TO THE GOLD COAST, STOPPED TOURING THE COAST. THE REASON? LACK OF A SUITABLE VENUE.

Source - Bruce Duncan papers, 2016

It was not without angst and strong opposition from so many different quarters that the 'founding four' constantly found themselves confronted as they pursued their vision of a central hub for the performing and visual arts – a public place for residents and visitors alike to gather and become involved

with theatre and view the City's rapidly growing art collection. Their intense lobbying with anyone who was anyone (councils, mayors, aldermen) never waned in that vision for a centre where social and artistic endeavours could meld together. At the time it was a virtual arts versus beach culture battlefield.

The 'battles' these visionaries and their clique of artistic friends endured is well documented in Pamela Murray's 68-page *Arts and Soul: a history of the Gold Coast's cultural pioneers and the Gold Coast Arts Centre*, published in 1998 through the Queensland Studies Centre, Griffith University (NB: SUGGESTION – CAN MURRAY'S BOOK BE PDF SCANNED AND A HYPERLINK ADDED HERE?). Under the presidency of Barbara Midwood, the Friends contributed \$500 towards Murray's book which delves into machinations of the era. The late Alexander McRobbie in his *20th Century Gold Coast People* (2000) also examines this era.

While many have referred to the '50s and early '60s era as a cultural wasteland devoid of artistic endeavours, this not entirely accurate. The Gold Coast's population including visitors was indeed under 40,000 as at 1961 (Source - Midwood 2016). There was an eclectic, but fragmented, mix of artists and cultural activities albeit scattered along the coastal strip and throughout the hinterland.

The problem was it was very much a 'word of mouth' society with artists of all mediums working, teaching and exhibiting from their homes and small halls. Public performances were presented in what can only be described as entirely unsuitable venues designed for other purposes. Scraping together the funds to put on these performances is yet another story for others to tell.

The agenda of the 'founding four' was, indeed, an ambitious one but they had the knowledge and expertise to tide them through those early choppy waters. One has to remember the Gold Coast then attracted a culturally diverse mix of nationalities, unlike other towns and cities where you would see larger congregations of one or two large ethnic groups i.e. Italian, Greek, Chinese.

Immigrants came here from various parts of the world, many arriving in Australia before and after World War II. The Pinters were an example.



One of the 'founding four' Gerda Pinter who devoted most of her life to arts on the Gold Coast. Source: Focus on Friends newsletters

They arrived in Australia in the 1930s and moved to the Gold Coast a decade later. Joe was born in Transylvania, Hungary in 1921. He met Bavarian-born Gerda in Berlin where he was studying electrical engineering and she was studying medicine.

Both were intelligent, articulate and cultured having grown up in homes where there was a deep love (and talk) of the arts - no television in those days just the wireless - centred on literature and the arts. Individually and jointly, Joe and Gerda passionately contributed to so many facets our community enjoys today. Joe, who died in 1981, combined

his passion for the arts (he was an accomplished painter and sculptor) with his acumen for engineering and mining rutile and other minerals from Gold Coast and New South Wales beaches in what was to become the largest sand mineral mining venture in the world.

Gerda quickly threw her energies on arrival here into starting in 1950 the Gold Coast Little Theatre (GCLT) with Joe as its president. Seven years later she extended her love of theatre by forming the children's theatre group, SCATS. On Australia Day in January 1989, Gerda received a Gold Coast Citizen of the Year award in recognition of her contribution to cultural and educational facilities during her 40 years residency.

Among Gerda's many local involvements was leader of the Gold (South) Coast CWA, adjudicator at the first Gold Coast Schools' Drama Festival (leading her to found and direct the first children's theatre), foundation member of Forum and Life Line, member of the founding committee of TAFE College, founding member and artistic director of the Queensland Theatre of Puppets and life member and director of GCLT. She also held a BA from Queensland University majoring in art history. Gerda remained a firm friend of the arts here until her death in 2004.

Bruce Duncan OAM arrived here from New Zealand in 1966 with wife, Ona. To say Bruce had a love of the arts, theatre and opera is an understatement. An actor, businessman, administrator, promoter and much more, Bruce brought with him the many layers of artistic endeavours and expertise necessary to help establish the commercial filters and necessary foundations for a cultural

centre. His papers show he had grandiose ideas for a 1000-seat theatre-cum-stadium suited to multi-functional use. He was well ahead of his time and only now are we seeing his vision with work progressing on our new cultural precinct.

In New Zealand, Bruce was a driving force behind the Auckland Musical Trust, being its first president and a trustee. Sadly, he died in 2015 (Ona died in 2008), but his legacy lives on through his, and others, tireless lobbying when he was treasurer of the fledgling Gold Coast Branch of The Arts Council of Queensland, his community commitments through Rotary and the Surfers Paradise Chamber of Commerce. His own business, Valentine Gallery, was often used as a booking office pre-TAC.

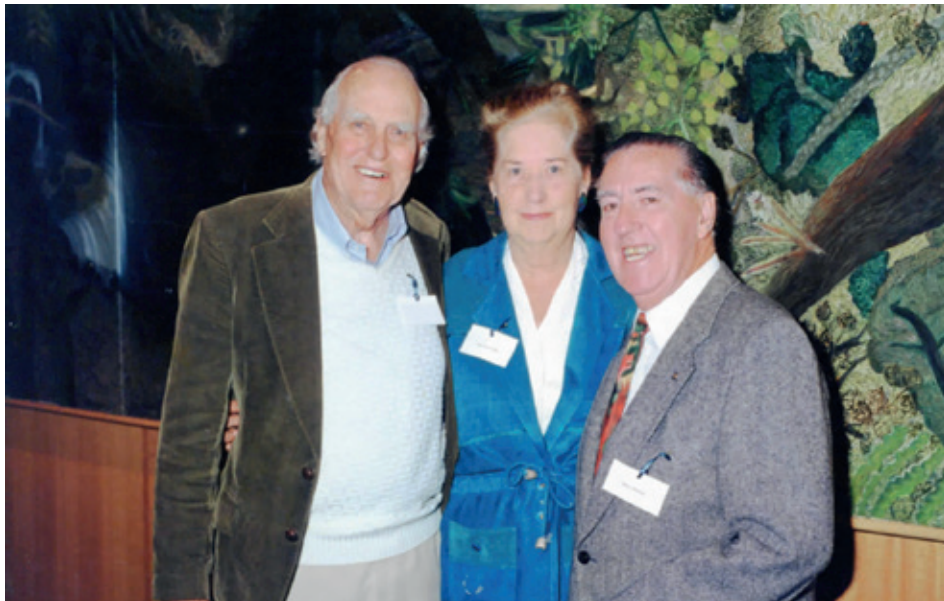
Bringing an entirely different perspective into the picture was the fourth member of the 'four', architect Malcolm Cummings. As Murray states:

MALCOLM CUMMINGS HAD RETURNED TO THE COAST FROM ENGLAND TO PRACTISE AS AN ARCHITECT IN THE MID-1960S. HE BEGAN GOING TO GOLD COAST LITTLE THEATRE PRODUCTIONS, STAGE MANAGING AND DESIGNING SETS, AND BECOMING ITS PRESIDENT IN THE LATE 1960s AND EARLY 1970s. THE CUMMINGS' PLAN FOR A CENTRE WAS [INITIALLY] DESIGNED FOR A PARK IN THE NORTHERN CORNER OF CASCADE GARDENS AT BROADBEACH. IT WAS TO INCLUDE CLUB ROOMS, A CENTRAL FACILITY WITH ABOUT 400 SEATS, CRAFT ROOMS, REHEARSAL ROOMS, SPACE FOR VISUAL ARTS TO INCORPORATE GENERAL GALLERY SPACE, AND A GALLERY FOR DISPLAYING THE COUNCIL'S GROWING PERMANENT ART COLLECTION GATHERED THROUGH THE ANNUAL GOLD COAST ART PRIZE. THE SPACE WOULD BE FLEXIBLE AND ABLE TO EXPAND OR CONTRACTED FOR DIFFERENT AUDIENCE SIZES.

Source - Pamela Murray, Arts and Soul, p23, 1998



Queensland Governor Sir Walter Campbell officially cutting the ribbon to the new Centre with Gold Coast Mayor Denis Pie. Image: Courtesy Wendy Spencer



Brian and Veda Arrowsmith with Bruce Duncan pictured in front of William Robinson's massive Rainforest painting donated to the City's art collection through funds raised by the community and the Friends. Image: Courtesy Margot Davies

The son of Professor Bob Cummings who was a member of the GCAP committee until his retirement when his son took over the same mantle, Malcolm Cummings had big, bold plans for the Cascade Gardens site with an estimated build cost of \$2.5million. Even though Bloyce and her committee had secured Gold Coast City Council support for such a centre, the then mayor of the time, Sir Bruce Small, had other ideas. Small wanted to site such a centre on land he owned at Benowa.

This created an impasse with much community friction and controversy. The project was basically 'knocked on the head' and set the 'founding four' down a different path. Eventually, when TAC opened in 1986, the cost had blown out to well in excess of \$10million and had decimated many civic leaders in the process. Again, Murray offers clear insight into the decades-long controversy and is an important reference to those early days.

While population at the time was well been under city status category, the Pinters, Duncan and Cummings had great foresight in recognising the Gold Coast was destined for far bigger things and needed to establish its own identity apart from sun, sand and surf. In their eyes, the region should be able to compete on a level arts playing field with Sydney and Melbourne.

In an early letter to architects Messrs Clarke Gazzard & Partners in December 1969, three of the 'founding four', Bruce Duncan, Joe Pinter and Malcolm Cummings wrote:

WE APPROACH YOU ON THESE DISCUSSIONS AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CULTURAL CENTRE COMMITTEE OF THE GOLD COAST FORMED BY VARIOUS CULTURAL SOCIETIES OF THE GOLD COAST, WITH A VIEW TO PROMOTING THE BUILDING OF A CULTURAL CENTRE. THESE ORGANISATIONS ARE: GOLD COAST LITTLE THEATRE, THE SPOTLIGHT THEATRICAL COMPANY, INDEPENDENT THEATRE GUILD, ABC CONCERT SUBSCRIBERS' COMMITTEE OF THE GOLD COAST, ORGAN SOCIETY, GOLD COAST ART PRIZE COMMITTEE, QUEENSLAND ART SOCIETY – GOLD COAST BRANCH AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS WHICH HAVE NO DIRECT REPRESENTATION ON OUR COMMITTEE.

Source - Bruce Duncan papers 2016

They recognised the urgency to establish a general principle applicable to the needs of the Gold Coast's permanent population, and an approximate 6,000 semi-permanent population and 2,000 annual tourists during that era.

As firm personal friends, the 'founding four' mixed with other like-minded locals – New Zealanders Brian Arrowsmith and his artist wife, Veda; Dutch-born artist Tony Scheelbeek; artist and gallery owner Max Boyd of the noted Boyd artistic family; art dealer John Cooper and his close mate, artist Hugh Sawrey; Viennese musicians Ray and John Goldner; and Fijian-born engineer, developer, self-proclaimed portrait artist, art collector, long-term arts advocate, and generous benefactor, Alderman Jock McIlwain OAM. It should be noted, there were many others who held the same vision as the 'founding four' during its infancy. They never waived in their endeavours to establish the thriving cultural community we enjoy today.

As the late Jock McIlwain OAM so poignantly put it just weeks before his death in 2016: "Culture gives a city a soul & gives it warmth. A city without a soul is not a city at all".

And more...

AS KEY DRIVERS BEHIND OUR CITY'S CULTURAL PRECINCT, THE 'FOUNDING FOUR' WAS FORTUNATE TO HAVE THE SUPPORT OF OTHERS IN WHAT WAS THEN A RELATIVELY SMALL, BUT RAPIDLY GROWING AND ECLECTIC COMMUNITY. IT WOULD BE AMISS NOT MENTION THE EFFORTS OF SOME OF THESE 'FRIENDS' FROM THE PAST. SADLY, MENTION OF OTHERS WILL BE MISSED DUE TO THE PASSAGE OF TIME BUT THAT DOES NOT MEAN THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS ARE FORGOTTEN.

Our TAC with its galleries, City art collection, live theatre, cinemas, community events, workshops, musical interludes and opportunities for advancement of youth in the arts have all come about due to much 'behind the scenes' work of many. Briefly, and in no particular order, they include:

Brian Arrowsmith OAM - arriving on the Coast from New Zealand in his pre-teen years in the late 1920s, Brian, a somewhat eccentric character who had tried his hand at many ventures from macadamia farming to oil salesman, married noted artist (painter and print-maker) Veda Joyce Dowling in 1945 while AWOL from the Army (the covert Z Force in North Borneo). The couple settled here in the mid '50s fully immersing themselves in our small but vibrant cultural life. From their Main Beach gallery, Art Primitif (specialising in the art of New Guinea), they threw their combined energies with others to establish the GCAP and finding a 'home' for the growing art collection. Both were free thinkers and maintained a strong commitment to the arts. Joseph Bernard 'Brian' Arrowsmith - 1916-2010, Veda Joyce Arrowsmith - 1922-2004

Dr Rudi Levy – one of the first medical practitioners on the Gold Coast, Dr Rudi Levy and his wife, Lotti, devoted 50 years to the arts, education and medical care here. Rudi and Lotti escaped Berlin in 1933 and headed to Florence then under the dictatorship of Mussolini. They then travelled to England before arriving in Australia in 1939 where Rudi was a locum at Maleny before moving to the Gold Coast in 1940. Rudi and Lotti were early advocates of musical soirees, often holding musical appreciation lecture evenings in their home due to the lack of suitable venues. They started Musica Viva and the orchestral movement here, founded the Blue Nursing service for the aged as well as the beginnings of TAFE holding educational workshops in their home

until suitable teaching venues could be sourced. An accomplished pianist and cellist, Rudi also always tried to make himself available as accompanist to other local performers. Dr Rudi Levy - 1905-2005

Hilary Bloyce BEM – as one of the 'originals' of the committee formed in 1969 to pressure for a cultural centre, Hilary Bloyce brought great commitment to the arts as an inaugural member of The Arts Council of Australia – Gold Coast Branch, foundation president of the CCC (1968), Council alderman (1967-1973) and directed many community productions for GGLT (of which she was a founding member from when it was known as South Coast Little Theatre). One of the 'founding four', Gerda Pinter, had been involved with the theatre since its inception. Born Hilary Jessie Offner and educated at Somerville House (1928-32) in Brisbane, she was senior vice president of FCAC when it was formed and remained a constant 'friend' to local cultural advancement and civic duties throughout her life. Hilary Bloyce BEM - 1915-2003

John Cooper – one of the early doyens of arts in the early '50s and a close friend of many (Hugh Sawrey is an example), John's legacy in promoting visual arts on the Gold Coast was next to none. He was a highly respected gallery owner, founding the Cellar Gallery in Brisbane (1935) and holding the first Sidney Nolan exhibition (Fraser Island series) at his Moreton Gallery (1948) before moving to the Gold Coast in 1950 to open Eight Bells Gallery in Surfers Paradise. Art critic and newspaper columnist, John was a patron of the Stockman's Hall of Fame and Gold Coast branch of the Queensland Sculptors' Society. One of his most enduring legacies was helping establish the GCAP in 1968 (he was a large and consistent donor) mooted the year before by John and his great mate, Alex McRobbie. John Cooper - 1912-1987

"I never found any trace of pa

Alexander McRobbie – a consummate word craft master, former Seaforth Highlander's captain Alex McRobbie researched and authored multiple histories of the Gold Coast during the 43 years he lived here. And that was in between his other commitments as camera store proprietor, photographer, newspaper owner, editor and journalist, publisher, PR professional, tourism promoter and much more. Most importantly, McRobbie claims in 20th Century Gold Coast People (2000), to be one of the instigators of the GCAP following persuasion from notable arts benefactors, the late Jock McIlwain OAM, to use \$1000 donated by the Gold Coast City Council. He sourced further funds from many different quarters for the first exhibition held in Chevron Hotel's Corroboree Room. Alexander McRobbie - 1926-2015

Arthur Creedy – a true friend of the Friends, Arthur Creedy, the Queensland director of Cultural Activities, supported Gerda Pinter in the '60s with her push for promoting music, theatre and even puppetry on the Gold Coast. English-born Creedy, a graduate of Cambridge and London universities, was a key driver behind the Queensland Arts Council – Gold Coast Branch assisting with funding and advocating permanency for a cultural city. In a visit to the Gold Coast in 1968, Creedy recognised the potential the region had to offer

and encouraged various groups to work together for the betterment of his own loves - theatre, art and music. It was his suggestion to form the Gold Coast CCC. (Source - Murray, Arts and Soul, p23, 1998) Arthur Creedy - 1900-1990

Nan Dwyer – As the Friends gathered momentum before the opening of TAC in December 1986, they had enjoyed a firm alliance from former Fleet Street journalist and editor, Nan Dwyer who joined the Council's PR team in 1979. A member of the CCC and Gold Coast Acquisition Society, Nan was a keen follower of the arts in all its forms. As the confidante of Mayor Keith Hunt during the turbulent period from 1979 until his death in office in 1982, Nan was an instrumental ally in driving the argument to establish a cultural centre. She also was an inaugural member of the FCAC as was Hilary Bloyce BEM and Brian Arrowsmith OAM. In 1986, she left Council to return to the smell of printer's ink in newsrooms although she remained a member of the Friends for some time afterwards.

rochialism amongst members"

- Alexander McRobbie

Mayors of mention

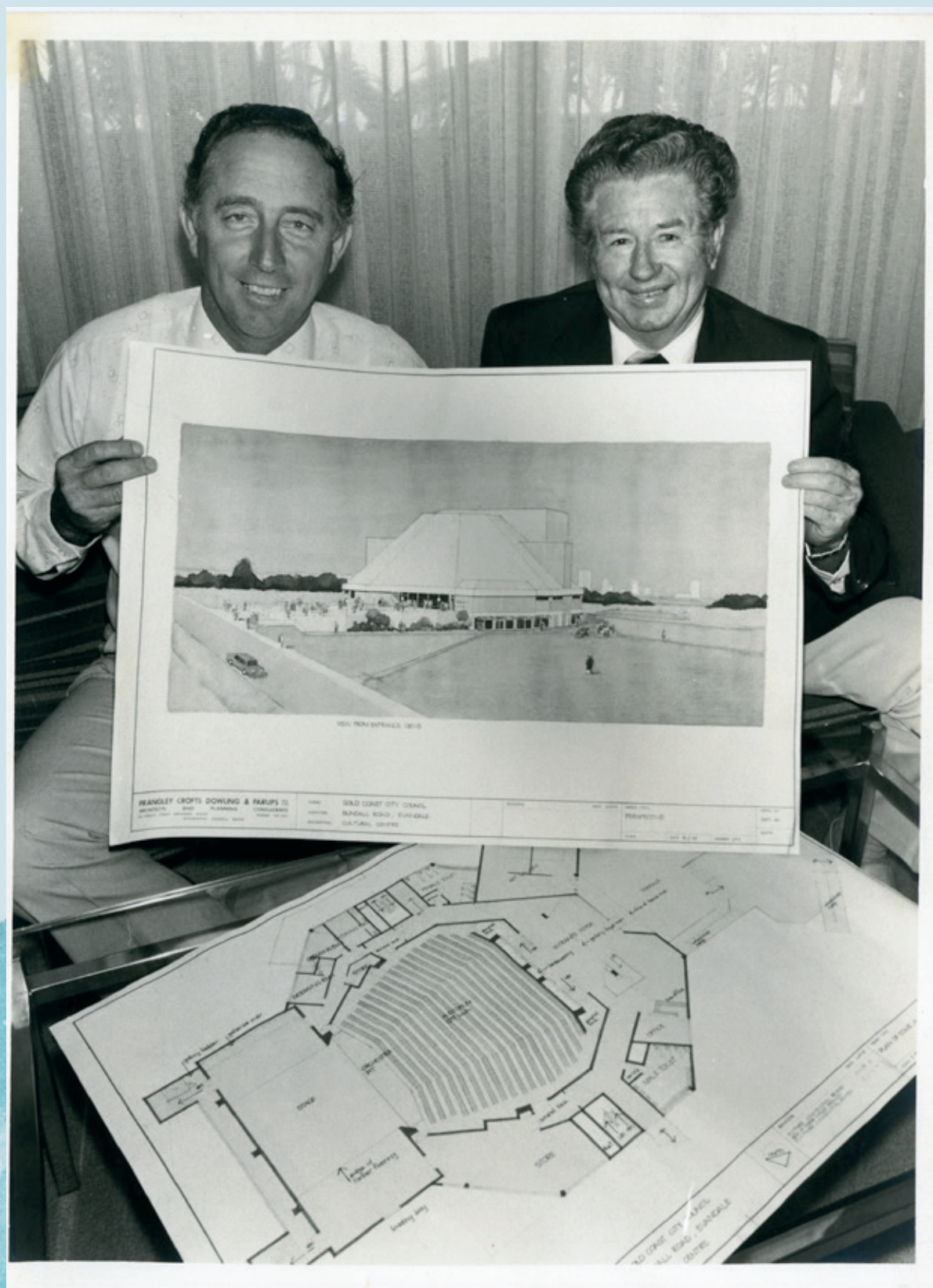
Although Murray details the roles of several Gold Coast mayors preceding the opening of TAC and formation of the Friends, mention should be made in brevity of several mayors who directly or indirectly contributed to our cultural precinct:

- Sir Bruce Small - 1976-1978* Before being sacked and an administrator appointed, Small wanted to see a civic centre (incorporating the arts) built on his land at Benowa. In 1971 he was a patron of the Royal Queensland Art Society and in 1976 a member of the Gold Coast City Council's Cultural Centre Steering Committee although it's questionable how animated he was with the arts given his abhorrence of contemporary art.
- Alderman Keith Hunt - 1979-1982* (re-elected in 1982 and died in office in November 1982) Hunt is described as the visionary who made TAC happen. Despite his down-to-earth image and apparent earlier lack of appreciation of the arts, it was Keith Hunt who became a true friend of the City's cultural endeavours lobbying strongly for its completion. Fittingly, when the centre opened it was called The Keith Hunt Community Entertainment and Arts Centre. Despite various names changes, the original name aptly covers what is offered at the precinct.
- Alderman Denis O'Connell - 1982-1985* (taking office after the death of Keith Hunt) O'Connell displayed a deep appreciation of the City's growing needs for an arts centre despite strong opposition from some other aldermen. Such was his commitment to TAC, he used his casting

vote to award the building tender to Theiss Watkins Ltd with contracts being signed two days before council elections. Many suggest this cost O'Connell his re-election in the mayoralty race.

- Alderman Denis Pie – 1985-1988* Despite being a strong advocate against such a centre, Pie found that all the lobbying, in-fighting and opposition from the past had impacted and it was too late to halt construction. His role was to begin a fast and furious fund-raising campaign to raise \$2.5 million for the project. It was during his mayoralty, TAC opened with much applause and gratitude from those who had supported the vision.
- Alderman Alexander Bell – 1988-1994* The Friends and wider community have always enjoyed the strong support of Councillor Lex Bell (retired) who was present at the Centre's official opening by Queensland Governor Sir Walter Campbell in 1986. In the Council-produced Evolving Evandale – Farmland to the Future, recently retired Lex Bell says he subscribes to the feeling that we should keep the cultural heart of the city and the civic heart of the city together [referring to the new Gold Coast Cultural Masterplan now in progress] so they are not separated and regarded as diverse thoughts.

Those mentioned above barely scrape the surface in terms of the many people who had thrown their support behind TAC over long and testing times. In particular, it is the all-encompassing role, commitment and achievements of these 'friends' upon which this 30-year history focuses. * Dates in office



Alderman Denis O'Connell (left) used his casting vote days before the council election to ensure the Centre would become reality, many believe costing him the mayoralty to Keith Hunt (right). Image: Courtesy of City Libraries Local Studies Collection

Early evolution

WHILE MUCH ALREADY HAS BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT THE EARLY EVOLUTION OF TACGC, LONG-TIME RESIDENT AND RETIRED LOCAL PROPERTY AND INVESTMENT CONSULTANT ALAN MIDWOOD RETAINS VIVID MEMORIES OF THAT PERIOD.

He describes how architect Allan Griffith was asked in 1977 to design an arts centre after constant community agitation and recalls theatre consultant Tom Brown (who had worked on the Sydney Opera House) being engaged to advise on the design. He said the Albert Shire (council) was asked to contribute but decided to build their own Waterways Hall, so ratepayers had to fund the project. "There had been a State scheme to assist the building of regional theatres but by the time the Gold Coast got its act together, they had missed the boat", said Alan.

"THERE WAS CONSTANT PRESSURE TO REDUCE SPENDING ON WHAT MANY VOTERS CONSIDERED TO BE A WASTE OF MONEY. AT EACH COUNCIL ELECTION, NEW CANDIDATES WOULD TRY TO WIN OFFICE BY PROMISING TO SCRAP TAC OR REDUCE ITS SIZE. WHEN EACH NEW COUNCIL TOOK OVER, IT WOULD ORDER A COMPLETE REDESIGN AND REDUCTION IN COST. BUT COMMON SENSE WOULD PREVAIL AND THE DESIGN WOULD CREEP BACK UP UNTIL THE CYCLE REPEATED ITSELF AT THE NEXT ELECTION."

"Eventually, Denis O'Connell made a stand and the week before the election, he signed the very competitive \$12 million contract (the building industry was suffering from a long recession). Denis Pie had promised to cancel the contract if elected mayor. In his first week in office, Denis Pie wrote to me as the quantity surveyor and asked for a report on the consequences of cancelling the contract. Rescinding it would have been an expensive exercise. When he (Pie) received my reply, he decided to allow the project to continue.

"It was a very tense time and without Denis O'Connell's sacrifice of the mayoralty, the contract would not have been signed and the Centre may not have been built for several more years. I believe Denis O'Connell has never been properly acknowledged for the considerable personal sacrifice he made to provide the City with an arts centre and it is appropriate now that he be recognised for his contribution to our cultural history." Source - Alan Midwood, 2016

"By the time the
Gold Coast got its act
together, they had
missed the boat"

- Alan Midwood

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CHAPTER TWO 19





*It was a packed house at the gala first night opening of the Centre.
Image: Courtesy of City Libraries Local Studies Collection.*

Supporting role

IN CELEBRATING THEIR 30TH ANNIVERSARY, THE FRIENDS CAN LOOK BACK WITH PRIDE AT WHAT THEY HAVE ACHIEVED. ACTING IN A PURELY VOLUNTARY ROLE, THE FRIENDS HAVE BEEN A MAJOR DRIVING FORCE PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR TAC ALTHOUGH THE EARLY FRIENDS (AS DISCUSSED IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER) PLAYED MORE AGGRESSIVE ROLES AS LOBBYISTS CONFRONTING CONTENTIOUS ISSUES AND FORGING A REPUTATION AS CULTURAL PIONEERS AND TRUE ENTREPRENEURS.

The Friends today encourage artistic pursuits and cultural awareness within our community sharing a united voice for the continued advancement of culture in our City. Their supporting role is both financial and physical.

With an approximate 2000+ membership they are a reliable presence at film screenings, gallery exhibitions, theatre performances, fund-raising functions and social events. They also inject generous funding into various cultural pursuits, youth development, acquisitions, much-needed equipment and 'behind-the-scenes' support.

Working collaboratively with the Board of TAC responsible for the Centre's funding and management on behalf of the City of Gold Coast (owners of the site and its buildings), the Friends as we know them today were forged in December 1986.

From their earliest days, the Friends strove to achieve five clearly defined objectives"

FRIENDS' AIMS

- TO PROVIDE AND ENCOURAGE ARTISTIC & CULTURAL PURSUITS OF ALL KINDS, THROUGH ACTIVE SUPPORT OF THE ARTS CENTRE
- TO PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE PUBLIC INTEREST IN THE ARTS CENTRE & ARTISTIC PARTICIPATION
- TO PROMOTE KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING, APPRECIATION AND ENJOYMENT OF ALL ARTISTIC EXPRESSION
- TO TEACH, TRAIN, INSTRUCT, CONDUCT LECTURES, SEMINARS, ETC. IN THE PURSUIT OF ADVANCING SKILL IN ALL FORMS OF EXPRESSION
- TO SUPPORT OTHER ORGANISATIONS WHOSE OBJECTIVES ARE OF A SIMILAR NATURE TO THOSE OF THE ASSOCIATION.

Source - Bruce Duncan papers 2016

From left to right: *The (in)famous Overnight Sleeper* by Michael Taylor caused quite a controversy when it was purchased in 1968 as the City's first art prize. Courtesy of Gold Coast City Gallery. The Friends purchased Paul Evan's larger than life oil on canvas portrait of John Cooper in 1988. Image: Courtesy of Gold Coast City Gallery. The Friends' very first purchase towards the City's art collection – Charles Blackman's screenprint, *Firebird*. Courtesy of Gold Coast City Gallery.



At the opening of TAC, the Friends were significant benefactors in their own right, pouring considerable funds into much-needed areas where there had been shortfalls.

Here it is important to look at the trust fund of the CCC of 21/07/81. It shows a healthy balance of \$14,275 (close to \$40,000 in today's terms) donated in the six months from 16/01/81 to 30/06/81.

THESE DONATIONS CAME FROM THE COMMUNITY – LOCAL BUSINESSES, INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS. MANY INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS WERE \$1000 (CLOSE TO \$3000 TODAY) WHICH, WHEN YOU CONSIDER THE COST OF A 4LB LOAF OF BREAD WAS JUST 53 CENTS AND A QUART OF MILK 63 CENTS, WERE EXCEEDINGLY GENEROUS. YOU COULD EVEN BUY A CAR FOR AROUND \$5000 AND A HOUSE FOR UNDER \$10,000 SO ANY DONATION NO MATTER HOW INSIGNIFICANT WAS INDEED A GENEROUS GIFT.

Wise investment at a time of high interest rates allowed the Friends to substantially increase their original \$60,000 that had been transferred from the CCC in 1983. This gave them the financial ability between 1986 and 1996 to purchase four pianos including a Steinway 9' concert grand (\$71,476), fit-out the Moncrieff Lounge (\$2,427), ancillary fitments (\$622), guarantees and assistance to organisations (\$10,839), funding assistance and grants to in-house productions (\$16,300) and grants to in-house productions \$9,900. And this was just for the auditorium alone.

The art gallery received \$22,906 for an original fit-out, \$12,436 for a mobile hydraulic platform, \$5763 for ceramics, sculptures and sculpture awards and assistance was given to the Gold Coast Sculpture Exhibition. A further \$14,793 during this decade was donated towards the purchase of paintings and another \$272 towards a reference library. This allowed the Friends to purchase such important artworks as Charles Blackman's screenprint *Firebird* and Paul



One of the major early purchases by the Friends was this Steinway 9' concert grand piano. Pictured at the handover are Bruce Duncan OAM, Hilary Bloyce, Max Boyd, Irene Battams and Mayor Denis Pie. Source: Focus on Friends newsletters.

Evan's larger than life oil on canvas John Cooper portrait. They also contributed towards the now prestigious William Robinson oil on canvas Rainforest. Total amount of all the above contributions was \$177,462 for the first decade. Source - Bruce Duncan papers 2016

In an interview with inaugural gallery director, Fran Considine (now Cummings), former TAC Board member, Dr Patrick Mitchell, revealed:

"THE FIRST 10 YEARS OF THE GALLERY'S OPERATION WERE NOT ONLY ABOUT OPERATION BUT ACHIEVEMENT ON A LOCAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SCALE... AUDIENCES FROM THE COMMUNITY AND SCHOOLS FLOCK TO SEE SUCH A RARE OPPORTUNITY ON THE GOLD COAST [WHEN CUMMINGS ARRANGED AN EXHIBITION OF PORTFOLIO PRINTS AND WORKING MODELS FROM RENOWNED SCULPTOR HENRY MOORE]."

Source - TAC Culture magazine, Issue 6

By 1993, the Friends had contributed \$157,885, garnered through their astute investments and an almost frenetic schedule of events. Classified as a not-for-profit organisation and hence tax exempt, 2016 treasurer Carol Little said the Friends was first registered with ASIC in 1992 as a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital. In 2006, The Friends of the Arts Centre Gold Coast Gift Fund (TFTACGCGF) was included in the Register of Cultural Organisations and, as such, gained tax deductibility status from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

In those early days, as today, there literally was nothing the Friends wouldn't tackle to ensure TAC would become, and remain, the focal point of culture for the Gold Coast. Lobbying, creative fun, innovative ways to raise funds, camaraderie, and the strength of the voluntary Friends' Board combined with strong vision and foresight leaves little doubt that evolving success would always be the outcome.

As you explore these chapters, you will see how important the Friends have been to the advancement of the City's cultural heart, taking over the mantle from those cultural pioneers previously explored. The Friends are, indeed, friends to all who live, work and visit the City of Gold Coast.

"Seen as a safe, attractive
and centrally located alternative
to the nightclub scene."

- Young Members



Young Members for Art's Sake

WHILE THIS BRANCH OF THE FRIENDS NO LONGER EXISTS, THEIR ENERGY AND DRIVE DURING THE INAUGURAL STAGES OF TAC SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN. CALLING THEMSELVES YOUNG MEMBERS...FOR ART'S SAKE, THIS POWERHOUSE GROUP DEVOTED MUCH ENERGY WITHIN THE FRIENDS.

Like their peers, they, too, had the vision for a culturally aware community injecting much enthusiasm, fun and passion into membership, events and fund raising. Their first function was a theatre party, the New York Stand Up Comedy show, held in December 1986. While the Friends may have scooped the numbers with 600 attending their inaugural November 1986 function, the younger group scored a not insignificant 200 attendance at their first function. From the outset, they held the same objectives of raising funds through membership, events and sale of key rings (\$5). This was not without some friendly competition from the Friends who had outback artist Hugh Sawrey limited prints of Mooraberrie Cattle Camp for sale (\$35).

Jumping into 1987 with the same enthusiasm, the group quickly organised a succession of events with Rodney Sprauge a key driver. These included:

- a getting to know you cocktail party in the Sculpture Centre Court with more than 100 attending
- a white picnic on the Evandale riverbanks - wearing white, of course, a masked ball held jointly with the Friends – Judy Dean, then a member of Young Friends, volunteered with the effervescent social Geulah Korman and Nan MacIvor to ensure its success. Judy, a past Friends' president, also was inaugural publicity officer for the Friends in Max Boyd's era and temporary editor of Focus on Friends (FOF) newsletter in 1987

A similar pattern of enthusiasm was repeated in 1989 when the group held a number of innovative junctions to help increase coffers. These included two rock 'n' roll events, black tie cocktail party, winemaker's dinners, Sunday morning brunches with gallery viewings, hit and giggle tennis days, car rally to Mt Tamborine ending in a bushland picnic and fancy dress balls.

By 1992, this group 'disappeared' although many remained members of the Friends. In 1998 Friends' president Barbara Midwood announced reformation of the Young Friends targeting the 18-35 age group. Their first event was themed dressing for the Rocky Horror Picture Show with 80 attending. Source - FOF newsletter 71, 1998

The group announced their aim was to attract new members and promote the use of TAC, as 'seen as a safe, attractive and centrally located alternative to the nightclub scene'. Needless to say, it was a great success. Further events quickly followed with attendance at Summer Fest '98, a tropical Christmas party at Café Arts, themed dressing for a Blues Brothers movie night in February 1999, a Super Heroes and Villains mystery, mayhem and melodramatic dinner in May 1999 and cocktail parties. From that point onwards, it appears the Young Members must have 'grown up', ending a very productive era in the life of the Friends.

Arts grow with population

To fully appreciate the need for development of an arts centre for the Gold Coast community one has to (a) understand population demographics and growth, and (b) the rapid growth in education.

Retired local demographer, development consultant and generator of the popular Midwood Report for many years, Alan Midwood explains in answer to (a):

There are many different interpretations of what the Gold Coast's population is as there are several different ways of defining its boundaries. To establish a common basis, I have used the ABS Gold Coast Statistical District (1976 but changed in 2008) to include contiguous populations of adjoining local authorities. I also use the Census to include visitors as they have to be serviced and also are potential theatre patrons.

ON THAT BASIS THE GOLD COAST POPULATION WAS 39,043 IN 1961 (AT A TIME JUST BEFORE THE 'FOUNDING FOUR' MET TO LOBBY FOR ONE CENTRAL COMMUNITY ARTS CENTRE) AND HAD GROWN TO 121,545 BY 1976. IT ADDED ALMOST 100,000 IN THE NEXT DECADE TO 219,458 BY 1986 WHEN THE CENTRE OPENED. THE FASTEST GROWTH PERIOD WAS IN THE FOLLOWING DECADE TO 1996 WHEN ANOTHER 150,000 WAS ADDED TO BRING THE POPULATION TO 375,856. SINCE THEN, THE GOLD COAST POPULATION HAS ONLY BEEN GROWING BY AROUND 14,000 A YEAR. WHEN RESULTS OF THE 2016 CENSUS ARE ANNOUNCED IT WILL PROBABLY BE AROUND 650,000.

Source - Alan Midwood, 2016

Alan's appraisal reveals the growing need for an arts centre in those early years and then rapid escalation to expand such a facility during the frenetic growth years. His statistics also reveal the urgent need to re-energise the cultural precinct (as is happening now) to meet future needs.

In looking at (b) and the rapid growth of education plus the need to give our youth greater opportunities in the arts – the author has examined the expansion of primary and secondary schools (public and private).

This growth in schools contributed to growth of the Tropicarnival (now Gold Coast) Eisteddfod). As eisteddfod general manager and former member of the TAC Board, Judith Ferber points out:

IT HAS BEEN A NATURAL GROWTH DUE TO THE EXPANSION IN SCHOOLS HERE. AS THE GOLD COAST HAS GROWN SO HAS THE EISTEDDFOD GROWN, ORIGINALLY STARTING OUT AS AN EVENT FOR STUDENTS FROM LOCAL SCHOOLS BUT NOW EXPANDED OUTSIDE OUR REGION ACCEPTING ENTRANTS FROM AROUND AUSTRALIA AND OVERSEAS.

- Author interview 2016

In the early '60s, the Gold Coast (which did not include Albert Shire until 1996) only had five high schools - The Southport School (1901), St Hilda's (1912), Southport High School (1916), Miami State High School (1963) and Aquinas College (1964). In the primary school sector there were approximately 21 schools, but many of these were small with just a few students in outlying hinterland and cane farm regions.

Eleven schools (primary and secondary) were developed in the 1970s and this figure almost doubled during the following decade. In the 1990s, 17 primary and secondary schools opened on the Gold Coast followed by 19 schools in the next decade up to 2010. Since then the rate has slowed although school numbers have increased and there has been the addition of special schools.

When looking at this growth and excluding universities, it becomes obvious that a centre such as TAC has filled a vital niche for youth to pursue and experience artistic endeavours in the community. Source – Wikipedia, List of schools in Gold Coast, Queensland.

One hundred plus newsletters later ...



Spreading the news

Focus on Friends (FOF), the newsletter of the Friends, was first published in 1986 as a tool promoting activities to members.

The Friends produce and pay for the newsletter enabling them to keep TAC events in the public eye. The newsletter has been at the forefront of promoting gallery exhibitions, movies, live theatre, community events and special performances. The Friends' preparedness to foot its expense over three decades displays huge generosity and commitment.

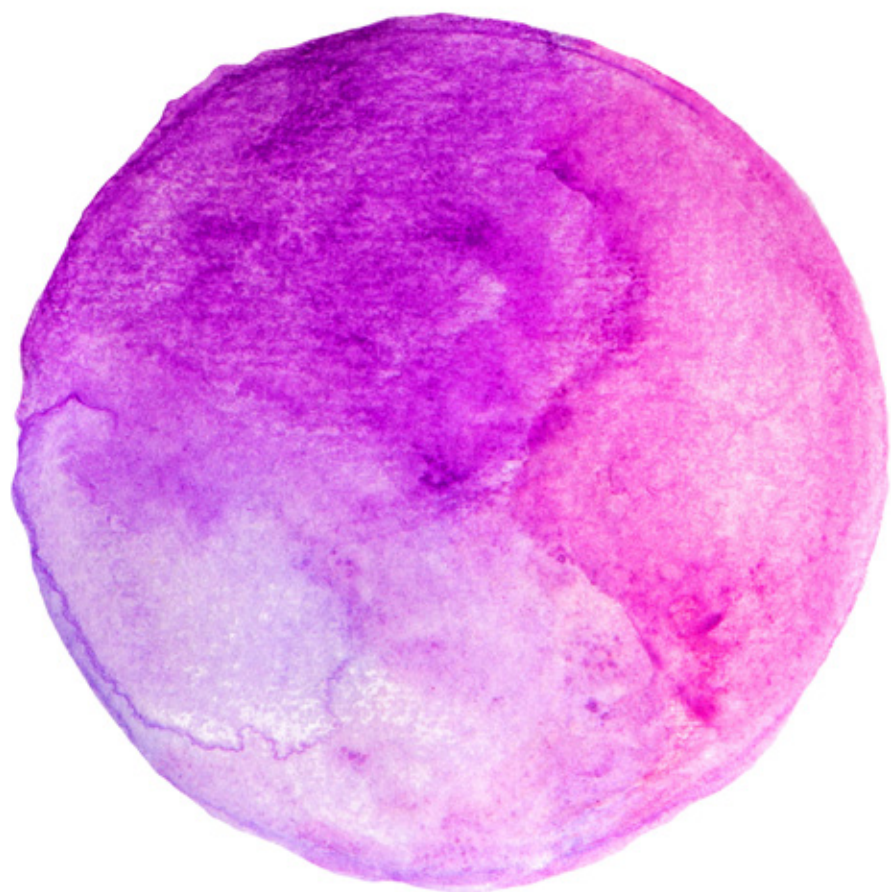
Today the newsletter is a slick production (in digital and print format), far different from the first FOF – an A5, single colour, eight-page booklet collated by a small group of volunteers. From the first edition it contained a plethora of information including the official TAC launch noting 600 had attended the Friends' inaugural function on Wednesday, November 18, 1986 in the Centre Space and foyer.

Such was the enthusiasm for the new Centre, 200 extra guests had to be 'squeezed' in for the launch and even more had to be turned away. The first newsletter also states that social convenor, Geulah Korman and vice president Bruce Duncan OAM, worked behind the scenes with Young Members, Dawn Webster and Judy Dean, to decorate and plan the event.

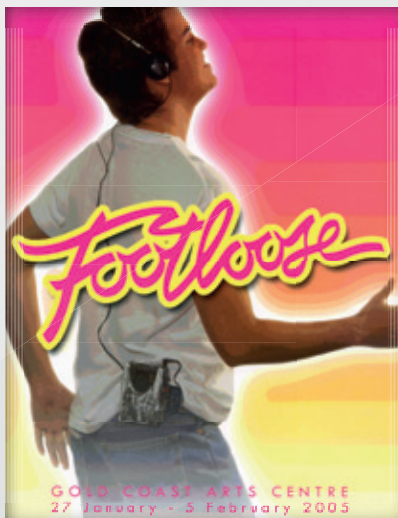
Prior to FOF, news of cultural happenings were promoted through a range of hand-typed newsletters, (often individually corrected by pen) covering everything from musicals at the 'old' Javeenbah Theatre and Spotlight Theatre to art exhibitions from Mount Tamborine to Coolangatta, music and art tutor contacts, city choir and band performances and light opera.

UNTIL LAST YEAR, FOF WAS A BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER. TO DATE NEARLY 200 FOF NEWSLETTERS HAVE BEEN PRODUCED IN THE PAST THREE DECADES. FOF IS NOW A QUARTERLY, FULL COLOUR PUBLICATION AND CAN BE VIEWED AT FRIENDSOFTHEARTSCENTRE.COM.AU

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CHAPTER THREE 29





Supporting youth

INITIALLY, THE FRIENDS CONCENTRATED ON DEVELOPING A DEDICATED CULTURAL CENTRE FOR THE ARTS. IN PAMELA MURRAY'S ARTS AND SOUL, YOU WILL READ JUST HOW DIFFICULT THIS WAS TO ACHIEVE.

In recent years, the Friends shifted their focus towards youth encouragement and engagement in the performing and visual arts. This not to say the Friends were not supportive of youth in their early days as past president Reg Glanville stated:

ANOTHER NEW ACTIVITY WE HAVE INSTITUTED IS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A YOUTH ACTIVITY COMMITTEE. ACCEPTING THE FACT THAT THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD OF ART IS IN THE HANDS OUR PRESENT DAY YOUTH, WE FELT THAT THE TIME WAS RIGHT TO ENCOURAGE THE YOUNGER MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR ARTISTIC SENSIBILITIES.

Source - FOF newsletter No 54, 1995

More youth activities were to follow from those early days with presentations from Somerset College's music department and youth orchestra (1996), a \$200 prize from the Combined Dance Teachers' Association presented to Angeli Chupungco (1999) and a bursary to Sheree Saye (1999) from the Gold Coast Teachers' Association.

Other youth highlights from this era included Aquinas College Year 12 presenting The Family of the Future (2008/09) followed by a presentation from the Gold Coast Social Singers, and the Gold Coast Dancers' Association with girls aged between 11 and 15 taking to the stage (2009).

Furthering youth support, a Friends' Gift Fund was established in 2006 with the first grants made in 2007 to Andrew Ross-Graham to complete his course at the Queensland School of Dance Excellence and Rhea Robertson to attend the NIDA Young Actors Studio Course. Each year since, grants have been given to young people through the generosity of supporters of the Fund. During the past decade the Fund has given grants totalling \$168,370 since its inception.

For 13 years, the Friends were one of the major sponsors of the Summer School program. This provided an opportunity for local youth to connect with the performing arts. The program, often referred to as the Robert Young era, was a huge success. When the curtain came down on the last Summer School musical performance in 2011, the Friends and TAC Board felt it was important to maintain this youth commitment and widen its agenda.

Stemming from this were more youth activities offering greater diversity to a larger number of participants. While the Summer School musicals had been held during the Christmas holiday break, the extended range of free activities was spread throughout the year under the Youth Arts Academy program. These included workshops, master classes, student immersion days and one-to-one mentoring across multiple creative platforms to showcase achievements in all age groups. Speaking at the launch of the academy in 2012, past president Wendy Spencer stated:

THE FRIENDS ARE EXCITED TO BE A KEY SUPPORTER (THEY DONATED \$20,000) AND I CONGRATULATE TAC ON THIS INITIATIVE OF WHICH THE FRIENDS ARE PROUD TO BE A PART. BEST OF LUCK TO ALL OUR YOUNG PARTICIPANTS AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO PLAYING A LEADING ROLE IN HELPING YOU ACHIEVE YOUR ARTISTIC DREAMS.

Source - FOF newsletter No 150, 2012

In her 2012 annual report, Wendy said the Youth Arts Academy had achieved record high membership resulting in more funding. "As a key supporter of the new initiative, the program has enabled many more talented young people on the Gold Coast to access the expertise and wisdom of a variety of industry professionals."

And thus began a new era for supporting youth in the arts on the Gold Coast with a plethora of fun and developmental activities from professional mentors including Queensland Theatre Company, Artslink Queensland and artist-in-residence workshops. Once such workshop was an 11-day program attended by more than 80. Theatre workshops run by the Queensland Theatre Company were divided into two, five-day residencies for ages from 8 to 24.

In 2013, the Friends donated \$15,000 for a four-part program for different age groups and \$25,000 in 2014 with one of the initiatives being an eight-week The Friends of The Arts Centre Gold Coast Young Artist Development Program (TFOTAGCGCYADP!) reaching out to 1856 young people on the Gold Coast. Source: Friends Annual Report 2011- 2014. Financial reports for this period also show that smaller amounts were granted.

Today, the Friends distribute funding of approximately \$20,000 a year. Friends president (2015/16) David Huddy acknowledges that most of these funds are now directed towards supporting youth in the arts with Immersion Days including Energies (an exhibition organised by Gold Coast secondary school art teachers) and Photo Fanatics. The youth theatre project supported by Friends is a platform for young actors to hone their skills and perform in a working theatre under professional direction in front of a live audience.



The depth of community commitment is reflected in this photo taken during rehearsals of Hair. Back row: Terry Morris, James Smart, Mark Niall, Andrew Barnett, Tony Wilkins, Ken Brown; Front row: Monique St James, Paul Fitzgerald, Wendy Spencer, Tai Hara. Image: Courtesy Wendy Spencer



Summer School success

ONE OF THE GREAT SUCCESS STORIES OF THE FRIENDS WAS THEIR HELP IN FUNDING THE SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAM. THE PROGRAM GAVE LOCAL SCHOOL STUDENTS AN OPPORTUNITY TO FULLY IMMERSE THEMSELVES IN A MAJOR STAGE PRODUCTION DURING THE LONG CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY BREAK.

For 13 years, the Friends was a one of the major sponsors of the program, helping springboard the careers of many young artists. Many of those who cut their teeth in Summer School productions are, today, enjoying successful professional careers.

TAC's first general manager Kelvin Cordell, said the program helped develop the craft of theatre in costuming, set, lighting, audio and props production and design as well as overall management of a live production. He believes the program was a 'first' in Australia to offer so much hands-on involvement as well as student scholarships. - Author interview 2016

One of reasons for the program's success was the combination of annually choosing a big-name musical, the expertise of those working behind the scenes and the boundless amount of talent hidden in our schools. The hard work and discipline asked of students certainly didn't dampen their enthusiasm with each musical destined to be a sell-out success.

A total of 13 consecutive Summer School musicals were held, with the Friends contributing in excess of \$100,000 towards individual full and part scholarships. Other major sponsors included TAC, the ever-present and one of the 'founding four' Gerda Pinter and Jock and Beverly McIlwain.

While the first Summer School musical, Pippin, could be viewed as a 'test' for the program, it certainly set the standard that followed. From the outset, the Friends committed themselves to the program with past president Barbara Midwood announcing the Friends Board had approved three scholarships (\$900 each) towards Pippin. Source - FOF newsletter No 73, 1999

GCAC Chair president, Ray Bolwell, acknowledged success of the first Summer School stating:

OUR FIRST SUMMER SCHOOL AND IT SUCCESSFUL PRODUCTION OF PIPPIN LEADS THE BOARD OF TAC TO BELIEVE THIS SHOULD BE AN ONGOING PART OF YOUR CENTRE'S ETHOS. THE YOUNG PEOPLE GAINED GREATLY IN EXPERIENCE, CONFIDENCE AND ENHANCED SELF-ESTEEM. UNDOUBTEDLY SOME OF THEM WILL HAVE CAREERS IN SHOW BUSINESS. THE FRIENDS AND SOME INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE FRIENDS WERE, AS ALWAYS, GENEROUS IN THEIR SUPPORT, BOTH FINANCIALLY AND PERSONALLY. IT'S REASSURING TO KNOW THAT THERE IS A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO ACTIVELY CARE ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY AND ITS CULTURE.

Source - FOF newsletter No 75, 1999

Following the success of Pippin, other Summer School musicals supported by the Friends were Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat, Chess, Godspell, Grease, Footloose, Annie, Hair, Disney High School Musical I On Stage, Cabaret Berserkus, High School Musical 2, Disney's Beauty and the Beast. Of the 13 musicals held at TAC, the extremely talented director/choreographer Robert Young was the guiding light behind the first 10. His total personal commitment to the performing arts was next to none (he had been awarded a Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council Grant and a Churchill Fellowship which enabled him to study in New York and London). In one of the Summer School performance programs he was quoted as saying his

training in classical ballet and vocal training provided the grounding required to achieve the numerous and diverse range of musicals and ballets he directed and choreographed over the years.

During the decade he was involved with the program he displayed genuine commitment to work with young people when he wrote:

THE AIM FOR STUDENTS IS TO BROADEN THEIR EXPERTISE AND GIVE THEM A FAR BETTER CONCEPT OF ALL THE VARIED ASPECTS WITHIN THE ARTS, RATHER THAN FOCUSING ON ONE SPECIFIC AREA...I CONGRATULATE THE BOARD (TAC) AND SPONSORS FOR THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE SUMMER SCHOOL WHICH GIVES YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXCEL IN THEIR CHOSEN FIELD.

Source - Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat 2000

This era displayed a focus on budding artists, front and back stage, and certainly set standards in youth musical theatre that, no doubt, our early cultural pioneers may never have dreamt possible. While he helped pioneer the Summer School program, Robert Young also directed and choreographed more than 40 shows over a 20-year span at TAC and was made an honorary life member of Friends in 2008. Sadly he died in December 2013 leaving behind a great legacy.

Eisteddfod awards

One of the great strengths of the Friends has been their consistent support of youth, even in the smallest way. One area regularly supported is the Gold Coast Eisteddfod, one of the largest events of its type in the world. Last year, the eisteddfod broke all records in the number of entries including two dance groups from China and participants this year as far as Albania.

Since 1982 when it was part of the Gold Coast City's first ever festival, Tropicarnival, the Friends have assisted with sponsorship. They sponsor a \$200 award to the winner of the most outstanding primary school and a trophy to the runner up in this section. They also offer another two \$100 cash prizes to the adjudicator's choice for the most outstanding primary and secondary school string orchestras.

The Friends continued support has been integral to its ever-growing success. "Generous benefactors such as the Friends remain loyal supporters by helping provide an outlet for all genres for our youth," said Judith Ferber, a driving force behind the eisteddfod and a former TAC Board member for seven years. "Without funding, we could not have achieved what we have."

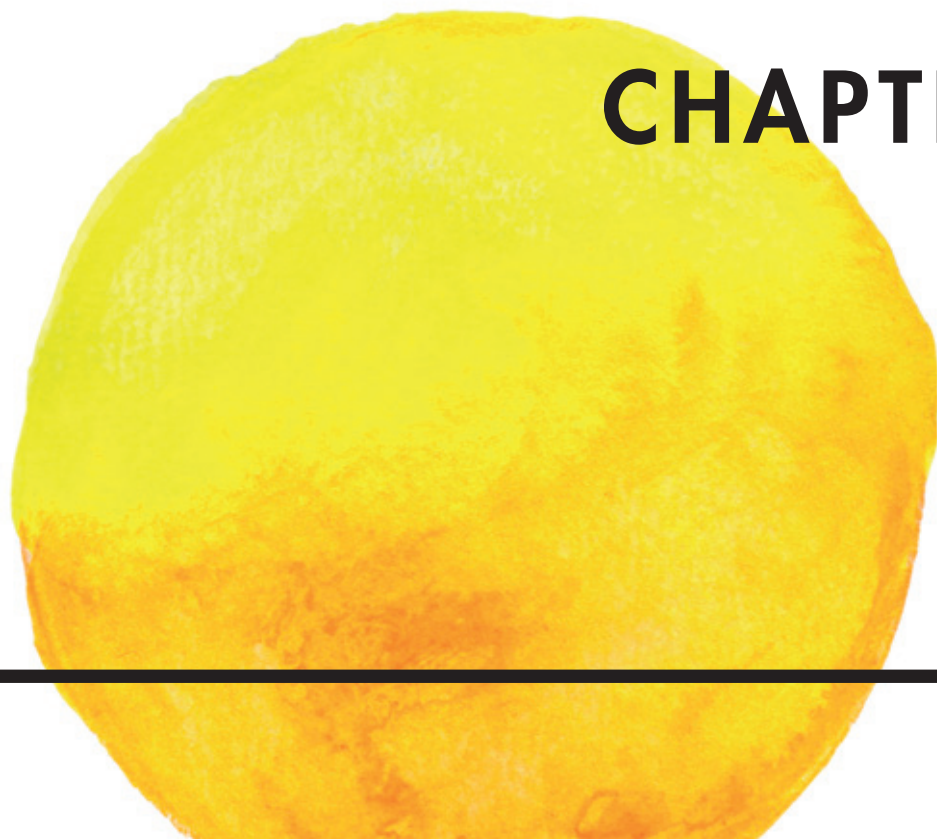
One doubts whether Bruce Duncan OAM could have foreseen such international stage success when, as Friends' president, he wrote:

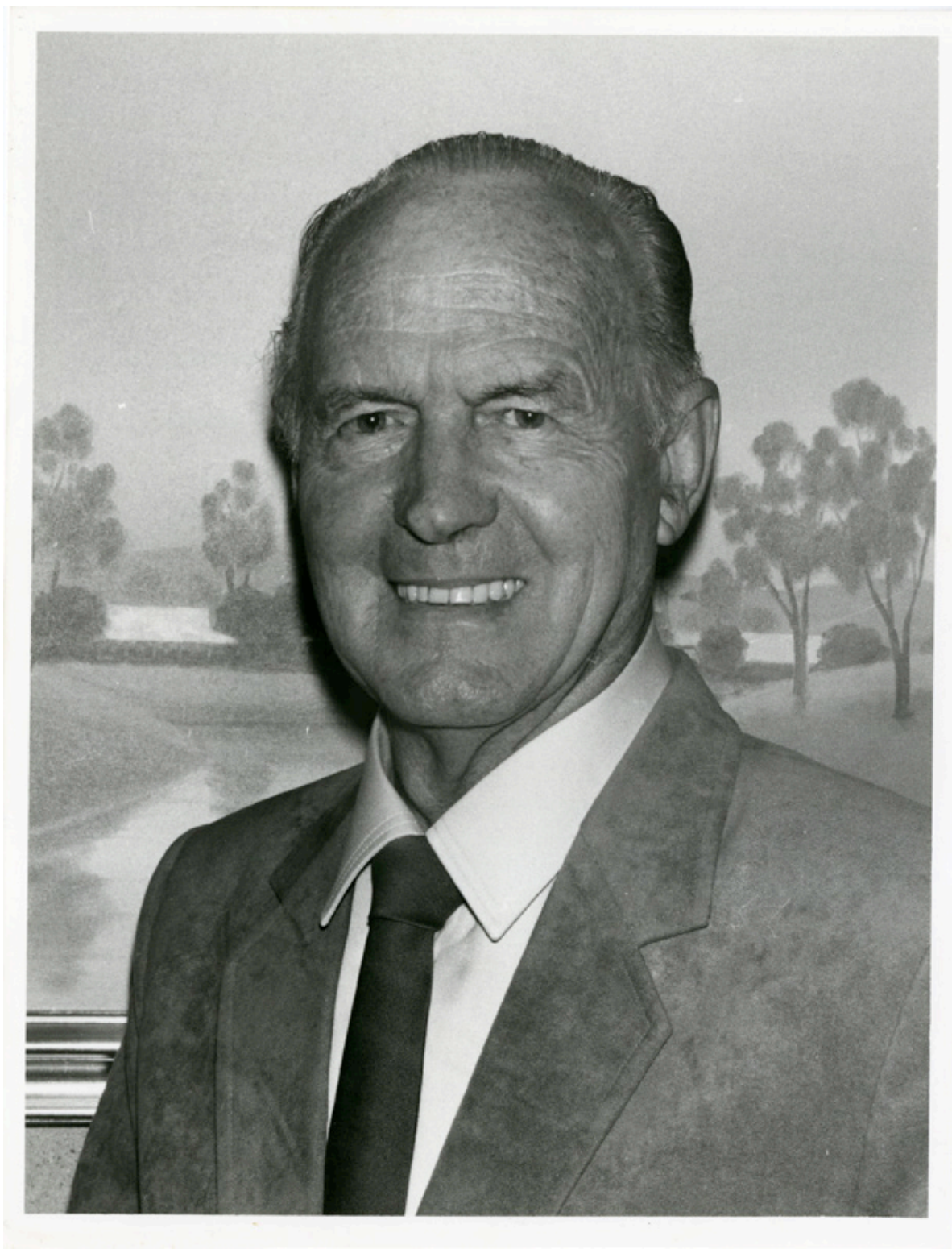
Our first Encouragement Award for Music is now in place. The award this year will be made to the winners of the best primary school and best secondary school string orchestra adjudicated at the Tropicarnival Eisteddfod. The award will consist of \$150 for each category winner for the purchase of scores or instruments of their choice. It is the intention of the Board to make encouragement awards in the future for dance, drama and musical theatre.

Source – FOF newsletter No 42, 1993

Perhaps even more poignant is that the late Mayor Keith Hunt who jockeyed so hard for the Tropicarnival festival and TAC, never lived to see his dreams become reality.

CHAPTER FOUR 35

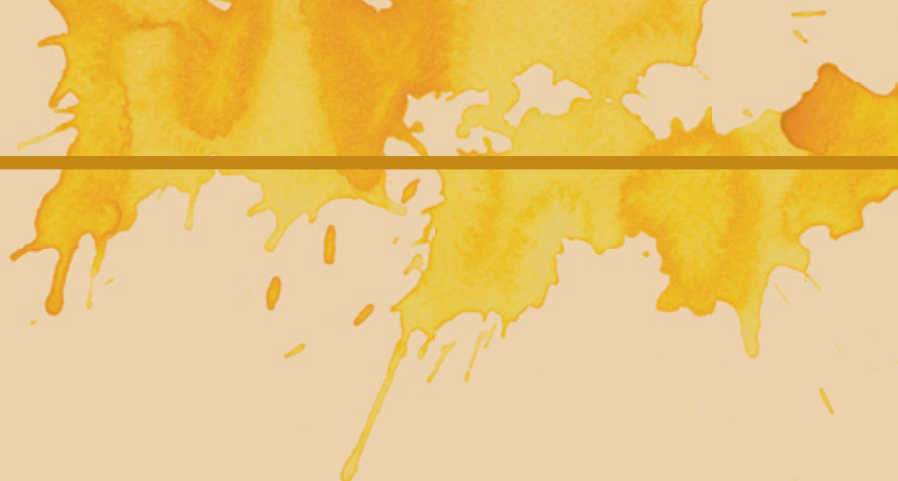




The Friends' first president Max Boyd.

Image: Courtesy of City Libraries

Local Studies Collection



Presidents

UNDER THE VOLUNTARY GUIDANCE OF VARIOUS PRESIDENTS AND SUPPORT FROM MEMBERS, THE FRIENDS CONTINUE TO PROSPER AND PROMOTE AWARENESS OF THE ARTS. EACH PRESIDENT DESERVES INDIVIDUAL RECOGNITION FOR ENSURING WE CONTINUE TO RETAIN A VIBRANT ARTS COMMUNITY.

While mention already has been made of the 'founding four' and others (it could be said they were the very first Friends), it seems appropriate to list the Friends' presidents from the past 30 years in celebration of this history.

Max Boyd

When TAC opened in 1986, artist Max Boyd continued as president from his appointment in 1976 as president of the CCA (formed in 1969) and then president of the CACA (resulting from a merger between the two groups in 1983). The Friends, with Max Boyd at the helm, was actually formed a year before the official opening.

HE CHAIRED THE EXECUTIVE MEETING OF THE CACA HELD IN 1985 (THE ASSOCIATION HAD NOT MET FOR TWO YEARS PRIOR) AND IT WAS AT THIS MEETING THAT BOYD PROPOSED RECONSIDERING A MAJOR FUND RAISING CAMPAIGN AFTER DISCUSSIONS WITH THE NEW COUNCIL. THIS CAMPAIGN WAS SHELVED WHILE COUNCIL REMAINED UNDECIDED ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE COMMUNITY CENTRE.

Source - Bruce Duncan papers, 2016

Max Boyd arrived on the Gold Coast in 1971. He was a respected and prolific landscape painter during the '70s and '80s, having come from a large and artistic family of painters, sculptors and potters. Born at Gayndah in 1915 and educated at Queensland Agricultural College which his grandfather founded

almost a century before, Boyd was a key lobbyist for building a community arts and entertainment centre right up to his death in 1988. His contribution, both monetary and otherwise, in bringing arts to the Gold Coast, remains widely acknowledged today.

He was an inspiration to all those on the Association and later the Friends, and his dedication and cheerfulness led us to numerous successes over the years. His beautiful paintings, wherever we may see them hanging, and the Centre itself, will serve as a meaningful reminder of his contribution to our community. Source - FOF newsletter No 11, 1988

Dr Norman Davies

At the invitation of Max Boyd, Dr Norman Davies was appointed Friends' secretary and a short time later became its second president after Boyd's sudden death. Davies came from Manchester, England, where he was a talented pianist and had a love of the arts.

After gaining first class honours at 19 and living through the London Blitz, he was sent by the British Army to Germany after the war to help restore their chemical factories before being asked to take up work in Australia.

Australia was to become his home where, in 1963, he met his wife, Margot, a successful potter whose artistic skills and love of theatre were put to work when she later became of a Friends' Board member. Her involvement included organising functions, meet-the-cast parties and bus trips. Together the couple formed a formidable artistic team in promoting the arts.

Reflecting on her late husband, Margot said, "Norman was very aware of his responsibilities as president, going about it methodically and wanting to see membership grow. His goal was to make sure every member of the Friends felt part of an important team." In his annual report prior to retirement, Davies stated:

Your Board and I attach equal importance to two considerations in planning any activity. It must fulfil the acknowledged principal function of our association of support for the Centre but also it must provide service and benefit to members. In fact, the second objective indirectly serves the first. The greater the perceived benefit of belonging to 'The Friends', the greater will be our membership and the more seats we will fill at events. Source - FOF newsletter No 14, 1989

Judy Dean

On retirement of Davies, Judy Dean, one of the original members of the CCC, became president after having been the Friends' publicity officer for many years. Stepping into the president's shoes was a natural progression for Judy who arrived on the Gold Coast in 1981 to join the Council's PR department. Originally from Gympie where she was a senior journalist, Judy brought with her a wealth of knowledge in promoting the Friends to the wider community. She also had a great love of theatre stemming from her early days in local theatre, an interest she still retains today, as well as her position on the Friends' Board.

Due to her wide knowledge of journalism and PR, Judy helped instigate the bi-monthly newsletter and was a driving force lobbying Council for the formation of Young Members...For Art's Sake. She brought a youthful vibrancy to the Friends. Having been involved with the Friends since its earliest days, Judy was well aware of the importance of growing membership and the introduction of the bi-monthly newsletter quickly saw this happen, with numbers reaching around 1000.

"I think one of the most memorable moments for me, and really there were many, was seeing our hard work come to fruition with our outlays for pianos and backstage equipment being used for the enjoyment of others," said Judy. Judy has always remained a firm and proactive friend of the Centre and the Friends and, in fact, was one of its longest-serving Board members (although not consecutively).

Nan MacIvor OAM

Although only president for one year, Nan MacIvor certainly had the 'qualifications' to take over from Judy, as both had previously been on the CCC together. No stranger to theatre, the FOF newsletter Oct/Nov 1989 quotes MacIvor as coming from a talented musical family – her grandfather was organist at Westminster Abbey in his youth, her father had a trained baritone voice and her mother was a professional musician.

Encouraged to study piano and voice, MacIvor was lead soprano with St Giles Church in Brisbane where she was born and educated. Her love of theatre was further fostered when she was involved with the Brisbane Gallery Nighters Club and later when she ran charity nights for Gold Coast Little Theatre productions. Charity fund raising was MacIvor's forte and she was involved in many local charities apart from the Friends.

IN HER PRESIDENT'S REPORT OF AUGUST 1992, SHE PRAISED THE FRIENDS FOR THEIR DILIGENCE IN SUPPORTING MEMBERSHIP GROWTH AND GIVING FINANCIAL SUPPORT (\$3000) FOR THE CENTRE'S MAJOR COMMUNITY PRODUCTION, JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOUR DREAMCOAT (1991) AND ANOTHER \$500 FOR THE AFTER SHOW FOYER PARTY. SHE ALSO MENTIONED THE HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL FRIENDS' EVENING CELEBRATING THE LATE GLADYS MONCRIEFF'S 100TH BIRTHDAY HELD, OF COURSE, IN THE MONCRIEFF LOUNGE, AN EARLIER PROJECT OF THE FRIENDS WHO HAD INJECTED \$2427 INTO ITS FIT-OUT. MACIVOR DIED IN JUNE 2003.

Bruce Duncan OAM

As one of the 'founding four', the late Bruce Duncan OAM brought an inordinate depth of knowledge to his presidency. He was always going to be proactive in the role having worked and lobbied tirelessly for a cultural centre to be built on the Gold Coast to serve the smaller and fragmented artistic community. Duncan's knowledge of the intricacies involved in establishing a major cultural centre stemmed from when he and others succeeded in forming the Auckland Musical Arts Trust in 1967. Duncan had been one of the visionaries behind the Trust, the culmination of three years planning to give the city a permanent amateur theatre embracing music, drama and ballet

while encouraging, promoting and actively assisting in musical plays, opera and ballet. Through his business acumen, he had obtained backing of the Auckland Operatic Society Inc. founded in 1912.

In essence, it was a case of déjà vu when he arrived on the Gold Coast and teamed up with Malcolm Cummings and Joe and Gerda Pinter to ignite enthusiasm for a similar project here. Until his death in 2015, Duncan remained a staunch supporter of the arts and diligently recorded valuable information on how the Centre and the Friends had evolved.

He was a strong leader but also a team player, gaining the respect of those who surrounded him. "We must continue to extend the scope and pace of our own activities, embracing all aspects of the arts," he wrote in one of his first newsletter columns.

ACUTELY AWARE THE FRIENDS ALWAYS WOULD PLAY AN INTEGRAL ROLE IN FUND RAISING AND THE DAY-TO-DAY OPERATION OF THE CENTRE, ONE OF HIS FIRST INITIATIVES WAS TO EXPAND THE FRIENDSHIP TAG BY LAUNCHING 'MAKE A FRIEND A FRIEND' TO BUILD MEMBERSHIP.

In 1992, Duncan was made an honorary life member of the Friends. He was a consistent advocate for instigating creative new events to raise funds, purchase acquisitions and assist live theatre, as well as youth advancement in the arts. In fact, it was during Duncan's tenure that the Friends made their first ceramics purchase, a multi-coloured majolica platter, Tropical Delight, from the Gold Coast International Ceramic Art Award exhibition and showed support for sculpture by subsidising the program. Other acquisitions were to follow.

Being an 'ideas' man', Duncan recommended the Friends volunteer to offer guided tours through the quickly expanding gallery and give visitors specific insight into the City's art collection and visiting exhibitions.

During Duncan's time, the Friends initiated an encouragement award for music at primary and secondary school levels in Tropicarnival. This was the beginning of many such awards (still offered today) through the Gold Coast Eisteddfod. With membership increasing and a wide variety of functions to keep friendship flowing, Bruce Duncan OAM was a true inspiration to all, promulgating the vision of the 'founding four'. Sadly he died in 2015 but left a lasting legacy.

Reg Glanville

Approaching his term of presidency with the same enthusiasm, the late Reg Glanville set out to streamline the Board for greater efficiency and give more members an opportunity for greater participation. Maybe it was Reg's military training (he served with the British Royal Corps of Signals and saw action in World War II in Europe, Malaysia and Singapore with his beloved Ghurkha regiment) that gave him the impetus to establish four sub-committees to supervise various activities. This reorganisation meant the Friends' Board was reduced from 16 to 10.

GLANVILLE WAS PARTICULARLY KEEN TO SEE A THRIVING YOUTH CULTURE IN THE ARTS AND DECLARED IN HIS FOF NEWSLETTER COLUMN THAT THE GOLD COAST SHOULD NO LONGER BE CALLED A 'CULTURAL DESERT'. THE CENTRE WAS A CONSTANT HUB OF ACTIVITY DURING HIS PRESIDENCY.

Apart from the plethora of activities, there also was the lead-up to the 10th anniversary - a fantasy costume ball, Vienna Pops performance, the long-running West End comedy No Sex, Please - We're British, The Pirates of Penzance, a Who Dunnit dinner evening titled the Curse of the Golden Diggeridoo, South Pacific Song Contest, Queensland Ballet's Nutcracker, numerous visits to special exhibitions in Brisbane to see the various works and enjoy The Mikado with Jon English, The Ukrainian Dance Ensemble Rusalka and Oliver, to name just a few.

The gallery, too, was alive with some amazing exhibitions of aboriginal art, contemporary Queensland photography, a Taiwanese art exhibition, some private collections including paintings of the calibre of Picasso and Matisse, a collection of glass art by Ken Bartlett, the ever-popular schools' Energies art youth show, Tamworth textiles, salt glaze ceramics and works of the annual Gold Coast International Ceramic Art Award, Scottish artists' prints from the British Council Collection in London and even a comic book display. All happenings in the theatre and gallery (often with contributions from the Friends) gave the Centre a contagious vibe.

In his first president's report, Glanville noted that a close liaison and cross fertilisation of ideas had been formed with the TAC Board. A \$155,000 porte

cohere was also planned to celebrate the Centre's 10th anniversary. Glanville also noted the Friends continued to contribute to on-going promotion of the arts with grants in excess of \$12,000 and increased to \$13,000 plus another \$8,500 in acquisitions for the gallery supporting the ceramics, pottery and sculpture. Reg died suddenly in October 1997 not long after vacating the president's chair.

Barbara Midwood

Realising the Friends were steadily growing in numbers and needed to be a totally autonomous group working cohesively with the TAC Board and Council, Barbara Midwood used her presidency to establish efficient business protocols for the future.

"WE HAD BEEN FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO HAVE AN EXCELLENT POWER-HOUSE TREASURER, EX BANK MANAGER TED GRIFFITH, WHO HAD PUT OUR FINANCIALS AS A NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATION ON A SOUND FOOTING," SAID BARBARA. "I FELT WE NEEDED TO ESTABLISH AUTONOMY FOR THE FRIENDS AND THAT INCLUDED IMPLEMENTING A SUCCESSION PLAN FOR THE FUTURE."

"We had to build membership and build funds while ensuring we could provide much-needed financial and physical support to the Centre and its operations. Our former president Reg Glanville had begun the genesis of a business plan for the Friends and we had to ensure its delivery and embrace all the work and planning already in place. It was an intensive time for all of us but we were determined to be successful so the Friends would remain an integral component to the overall operations, acquisitions and support of the Centre."

This was no small feat but Barbara and her Board succeeded in growing membership (and funds) significantly. For increased efficiency, a computerised membership database was implemented to process fees. Until then, processing fees had been done manually. Friends' subscriptions are a vital source of income used to pay for the newsletter to promote happenings at the Centre, contribute funds towards acquisitions, support for specific performances and youth in the arts and, most importantly, provide effective communication to make members feel part of an all-inclusive organisation.

During Barbara's term as president, the Friends made many contributions including twin chesterfields (still in use today in the foyer), gallery and sculpture acquisitions, a baby grand piano, grants, scholarships and cash donations. They also held many functions where the emphasis was on fun and camaraderie (and raising further funds) while supporting and promoting the visual and performing arts.

The end of her presidency coincided with the 10th anniversary of the Centre. Barbara and the Board had turned the Friends into an efficient, friendly, fund-raising operation that fulfilled the original vision of the 'founding four'.

Anthony 'Tony' Wilkins OBE

Taking over the reins from Barbara, Tony Wilkins achieved much in his two terms as president. Much was accomplished as he took up the baton from his predecessors, embraced what they had achieved and then moved forward to see the Friends recognised as a thriving, resourceful and well-respected organisation representing the community in the arts.

"Our members were always good chums but I believed the time had arrived for us to be finally recognised as a group with a voice – a voice which I believe we had been losing despite all the good efforts of our members and the Board," said Tony.

"Remember, we had started with nothing, just a vision. I was fortunate at the start of my term. There had already been a big concentration on building membership and establishing a computerised system which I wanted to ensure continued. Bringing order to membership was vital for our future otherwise we really would begin to lose our voice so I felt there was a need to further spruik the values of being a Friend."

Wilkins was, and remains, a strong advocate for all things friendly and is a constant 'face' at functions volunteering his services in support of the Friends. He is also the hard-working secretary of the Gift Fund, which he helped establish in 2006 for the specific purpose of distributing grants annually to aspiring young thespians, musicians and artists. In the decade the Gift Fund has been operating, it has distributed more than \$140,000. During his presidency, Tony witnessed the growing success of the Sunday soirees (attendances growing from 30 to more than 160) and the Summer School program.



Friends' former presidents gather at The Arts Centre Gold Coast to reflect on some of their contributions including two leather chesterfields and the William Robinson Rainforest painting (background). Pictured (back left to right) David Huddy, Judy Dean, Wendy Spencer, Barbara Midwood, Paul Fitzgerald and (seated left to right) Tony Wilkins, Nikki Zantiotis, Tim Cole. Image: Courtesy Jay Vincent from Bibi Haus

TONY LOBBIED SUCCESSFULLY FOR A CHANGE IN THE FRIENDS CONSTITUTION TO HAVE THE CAPPED MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS INCREASED FROM 2000 TO 4000. HE ALSO INTRODUCED A NEW COMPUTER-LINKED SWIPE MEMBERSHIP CARD SYSTEM TO REDUCE COSTS AND BOOST FUNDS.

A further initiative was to oversee the launch of a website to promote activities which had expanded with the addition of offices, The Space, a second cinema, function and entertainment rooms and a boardroom.

Nicolette 'Nikki' Zantiotis

With her somewhat zany approach to life and infectious personality, Nikki brought a totally different kind of vibrancy to her term as president. From the outset, she wanted to ensure the Friends truly were friends. Her zest for life already had been evident in her role of managing social and special events for the Board and this continued during her presidency.

"While I wanted to make sure we had a good revenue stream from functions, I also wanted these events to be fun and memorable," said Nikki. This was very

much a reflection of her almost nomadic life, having been born in Nairobi where her father, who spoke fluent Arabic from when he lived in Iraq, used to refer to her a kaifchee translated to 'seeker after pleasure'. After the Mau Mau uprising, Nikki and her family moved to Perth where she trained as a nurse.

Attendances at Sunday soirees, regular bus trips to Brisbane to see special exhibitions at galleries followed by champagne picnics (yes, with white linen tablecloths) under the jacarandas at New Farm Park and fun lunches and cocktail parties all increased as Nikki brought her own special joie de vivre to the Friends.

HER FRIENDLINESS WAS CONTAGIOUS, WITH NEW MEMBERS COMING ON BOARD REACHING THE 2000 MARK. NIKKI MADE SURE THERE WAS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE TO DISCOVER AT THE CENTRE AND THIS MADE FOR A SOUND BOARD. TREASURER AT THE TIME, KEN BROWN, WORKED QUIETLY BEHIND THE SCENES TO DEVELOP AN INNOVATIVE BUSINESS PLAN TO ENSURE THE FRIENDS WOULD FORGE AHEAD FULL THROTTLE INTO THE FUTURE.

Despite her nomadic life, Nikki enjoyed her 11 years with the Friends and today, despite living in outback Queensland, (perhaps it reminds her of life in Kenya?) she is a regular visitor to TAC whenever on the Gold Coast.

Paul Fitzgerald

As ninth president, Paul took up the baton as only a former diplomat would do to stamp his own values and integrity on the position. A former diplomat who had been posted to Singapore, Cambodia, Papua New Guinea and Washington, as well as serving in the Foreign Affairs Department, Paul certainly had much to offer in knowledge and accountability, as well as being a devotee of the arts from childhood.

Both he and his late wife, Maureen, were talented singers (although Paul suggested he only had a 'reasonable' voice) and had known Kate Peters as a child in Yass and Canberra. Kate, a noted live theatre producer, had a long association with TAC and Paul recognised the importance of this in benefiting the Friends.

Among Paul's many achievements in his double term as president, was establishing a closer connection with the Board of TAC through increased information exchanges. He also pushed for closer rapport with many other institutions including the Gold Coast City Council, State Government and political institutions.

"I WAS HAPPY AND PROUD TO BE POKING AND PRODDING TO ACHIEVE RESULTS," HE SAID.

"I felt our link with the Board (TAC) and Council was weak and lacked liaison and cohesion. Basically, it was a matter of continually knocking on the mayor's door, something the Friends had never really done before except in the very early stages, " said Paul.

"I wanted the community to have something better and looked forward to the day when we would be considered a national identity instead of a 'lovely organisation'. The vision worked and we all became more comfortable with each other to the betterment of community."

This was further confirmed by outgoing TAC Board chair, Kerry Watson, who believed in developing a strong working relationship with the Friends. He said his Board was keen to work productively with the Friends by providing assistance in developing increased membership through discounts and working together to develop opportunities for youth to gain experience and careers in the visual and performing arts.

In pursuit of his vision, Paul stated in his first president's report that he would seek regular dialogue with the Board (TAC) and its representatives, maintain close consultation with the TAC's general manager (Kelvin Cordell) and the Centre's business departments, and conduct a survey to ascertain expectations and support of being a member of Friends. The survey, he recorded, would establish the *raison d'être* of the Friends, its fund raising through membership and other means, and help assist with funding demands of the Centre.

HE ALSO NOTED THE FRIENDS' 20TH ANNIVERSARY SHOULD OFFER SOMETHING SPECIAL. A SPECIAL MEETING WAS CALLED TO AMEND THE FRIENDS' CHARTER SO A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE FUND (THE GIFT FUND) COULD BE ESTABLISHED. THE APPLICATION WAS SUCCESSFUL AND THE GIFT FUND WAS LAUNCHED IN DECEMBER 2006 WITH MAJOR DONORS BEING THE LATE JOCK MCILWAIN OAM AND HIS WIFE, BEVERLY – QUITE A COUP FOR FITZGERALD AT THE BEGINNING OF HIS FOUR-YEAR PRESIDENCY.

A fervent lobbyist much like the 'founding four', it was always Paul's vision to see TAC expand and grow. A man of vision, his following statement was quite prophetic as the City's cultural precinct now enters its first stage of major development. {Note: Fitzgerald was an original member of the taskforce to lobby for the new world-class precinct}

Given the population of the Gold Coast and its status as Australia's fastest growing city, planning should proceed expeditiously to expand and develop the present cultural precinct as a world-class cultural centre. Source - FOF newsletter No 129, 2008

Wendy Spencer

Wendy Spencer's long association with the Friends since 1986 certainly gave her depth of insight into operations. She was keen to see the Friends maintain the momentum and involvement with the Evandale Redevelopment Taskforce and strategic master plan that had begun under her predecessor. Her relationship with the development of a fully integrated cultural precinct stems back much further when her husband, Peter, and his company, Rider Hunt, was commissioned as the Council's quantity surveyor for construction of the Centre.

AT THE TIME OF HER PRESIDENCY, WENDY ALSO WAS THE SECOND LONGEST SERVING FRIENDS' BOARD MEMBER. AS FORMER SECRETARY, WENDY HAD IN-DEPTH KNOWLEDGE OF THE 'WORKINGS' OF THE FRIENDS AND WAS ABLE TO USE THIS TO HER ADVANTAGE IN ASCERTAINING FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND WHAT NEEDED TO BE CHANGED OR IMPROVED. AS MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY FOR SEVERAL YEARS, SHE BROUGHT TO THE PRESIDENCY A WEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE ON THE FRIENDS' MEMBERSHIP DATABASE.

Her appointment coincided with the appointment of TAC's second general manager, Destry Puia, who introduced many sweeping changes in TAC staffing, department structure and procedures. Of course, this impacted on the Friends but Wendy was quick to understand it was a 'time for change' and worked tirelessly towards a smooth transition.

"I felt it was still important to maintain the history of the Friends and saw my main role as overseeing the integration of these new procedures with the Friends' current practices to establish a good working relationship between TAC management and the Friends," said Wendy.

"Integral to this was amalgamation in 2011 of several individual databases (TAC, Art Gallery, Cinema Club, Friends) to streamline communications."

The Friends' database, originally established by Barbara Midwood and Beverly McIlwain, with Kaye Sheppard taking over before Wendy, continued to run parallel with the TAC amalgamated database for several years, so it was important historical data would not be lost during the amalgamation.

"I was very involved in ensuring the new amalgamated database would give us reliable membership information in the form we required. The biggest benefit to the Friends at this time was handing over the membership application and renewal processes, both data recording and finances, to TAC. With membership around 2000, the workload for treasurer and membership secretary, as volunteers, was becoming unwieldy. The introduction of payment on-line from our website (separate to TAC), while quick and convenient for members, was another variable in the mix.

"By 2012, the success of changes implemented revealed a substantial increase in membership and more than 500 memberships had begun receiving news and social reminders via email.

"A large percentage of members did not have email addresses so all newsletters were, and still are, posted. Due to TAC's perseverance, this percentage has decreased, and in 2016, renewal notices are emailed to most members.

"I was continually negotiating for special member prices on entertainment and working out mutually beneficial arrangements with other organisations to make Friends a more attractive commodity, and hopefully increase membership. While it was important to me to be able to give as much support as we could, financial and otherwise, to TAC and its programs, we still wanted to show that a Friends' membership was value for money."

Tim Cole

Tim also had his own vision. The former foreign affairs diplomat (Paul Fitzgerald had encouraged him to become involved with the Friends) who had been stationed in Papua New Guinea, China, Thailand, South Africa, Greece, Hong Kong, Switzerland and was ambassador to Micronesia, had much to offer in his management style and understanding of the importance of the Friends being involved in redevelopment of the cultural precinct.

He and Paul lobbied tirelessly (there seems to be a sense of déjà vu here) for the new cultural precinct but with important changes. "The original plan was to incorporate a 10-storey administration tower (later rejected) on the 11-hectare site but we were keen to see it remain a site dedicated to the arts," said Tim.

"WE ALMOST GAVE UP AS IT WAS A HEATED TIME FOR EVERYONE WITH MANY CONSULTATIONS TAKING PLACE AND PEOPLE EXPRESSING DIFFERENT VIEWS ON THE DESIGN. WE WERE DELIGHTED THE NEW TAC GENERAL MANAGER, DESTRY PUJA, UNDERSTOOD THE IMPORTANCE OF REMAINING CONNECTED WITH THE FRIENDS AS WE WERE SO CONCERNED WE MIGHT LOSE THE TRUE IDENTITY OF THE EVANDALE SITE. THE CENTRE WAS BEGINNING TO LOOK TIRED AND WE KNEW THE TIME HAD ARRIVED FOR A NEW, VIBRANT AND DEDICATED CULTURAL PRECINCT."

Tim and his wife, Diane, always had a love of the arts. They actually had met on stage during amateur theatre in western Victoria – Diane dabbling in greasepaint and tapping the boards and Tim enjoying painting. During their many years travelling the world and living in so many different countries, they experienced various cultures and developed a deep appreciation of how the performing and visual arts impacted on each society.

The Gold Coast is no different. Tim said he was proud of the role the Friends had had working with the Board (TAC) and Council to bring the new cultural precinct to fruition, and to see it take shape and form with public and Friends support in toto.

David Huddy

David and his Board were at the forefront of Friends celebrating 30 years involvement in TAC and revitalisation of the cultural precinct. Like his predecessors, David's commitment is to the future of the Friends.

He said it was awe-inspiring to see the evolution of the new cultural precinct as a heart for arts, culture and civic celebration. "I believe the 'the founding four' would indeed feel they had achieved their goal and much more, with where we are at the moment in recognising the importance such a precinct will have on our future in meeting the cultural needs of our City," he said. A member of the Friends Board since 2007, David migrated from the United Kingdom to Sydney before moving to Canberra where he spent 20 years in technical and further education administration with the Commonwealth

Public Service before establishing his own business. After 10 years in private business, David and wife, Barbara, retired to the Gold Coast where they devote their time to the arts.

IN THE FOF NEWSLETTER (NO 169), HE EXPRESSED GRATITUDE FOR THE MANY FRIENDS WHO HAD VOLUNTEERED THEIR SERVICES DURING THE PAST 30 YEARS, ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING THE ORGANISATION IS NOT-FOR-PROFIT AND REQUIRES CLOSE ATTENTION TO DETAIL IN CORPORATE GOVERNANCE. HE SAID THE FRIENDS WERE AN AMAZING GROUP OF VOLUNTEERS ADMINISTERING OPERATIONS AND DISTRIBUTING FUNDS TO MANY DIFFERENT AND WORTHY CAUSES, IN PARTICULAR PROMOTING YOUTH IN THE ARTS.

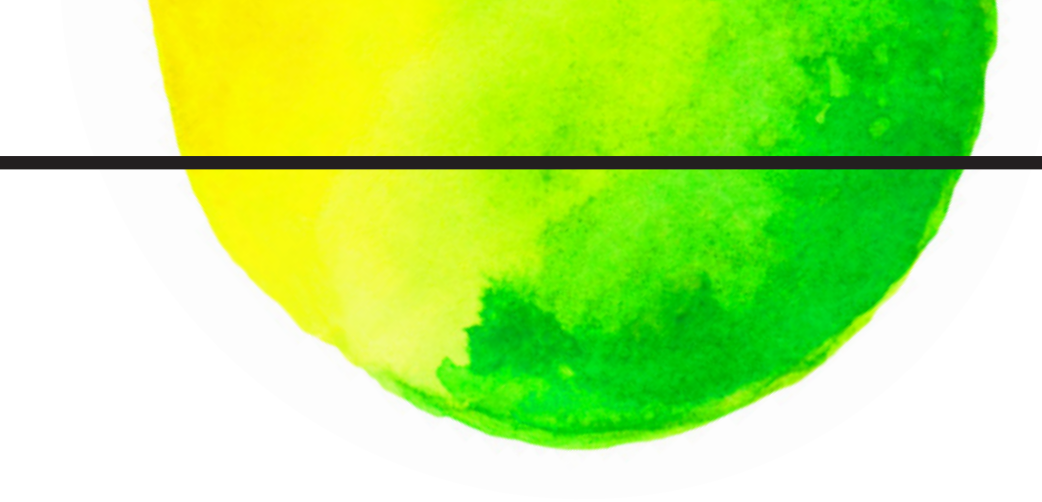
His vision is to see recognition of this long-term commitment by so many for so long in this 30th anniversary history book, a project of the Friends. The history collates and details much information that has never been published before and offers insight into the past, present and a sneak preview into the future.

"It is a tangible record of the Friends and reveals their commitment to a thriving cultural community for the Gold Coast across many decades and into the future," said David.

Rebecca Paranthoiene

As incoming president, Rebecca is looking forward to a vibrant new future with the Friends as the Cultural Precinct evolves and ushers in a new future for the Gold Coast. "These are exciting times for us and I am delighted to be part of it through the Friends," said Rebecca who has lived here many years and devoted much of her time to voluntary community work. She is an avid believer in giving back to others - a facet that no doubt will shine during her term of presidency.





CHAPTER FIVE 45





**THE CURSE
OF THE
GOLDEN
DIDGERI-
DOO**

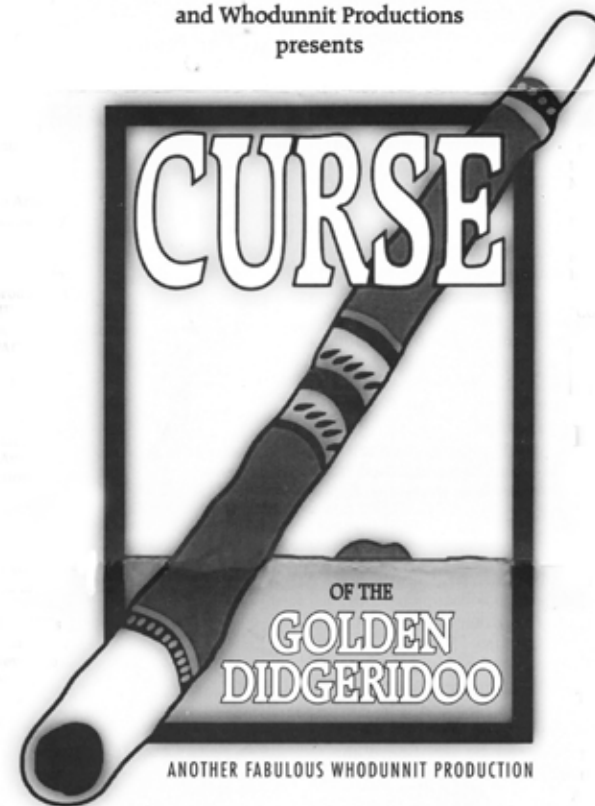
Dinner at The Harlequin Restaurant
Saturday 18th February — Dinner at 7.00pm
\$41.00 inclusive of 3 Course Dinner
Gold Coast Arts Centre's Box Office

**IT'D BE A CURSE
TO MISS IT!!**

BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL
Gold Coast Arts Centre's Box Office
or Dial-a-ticket on 816 900

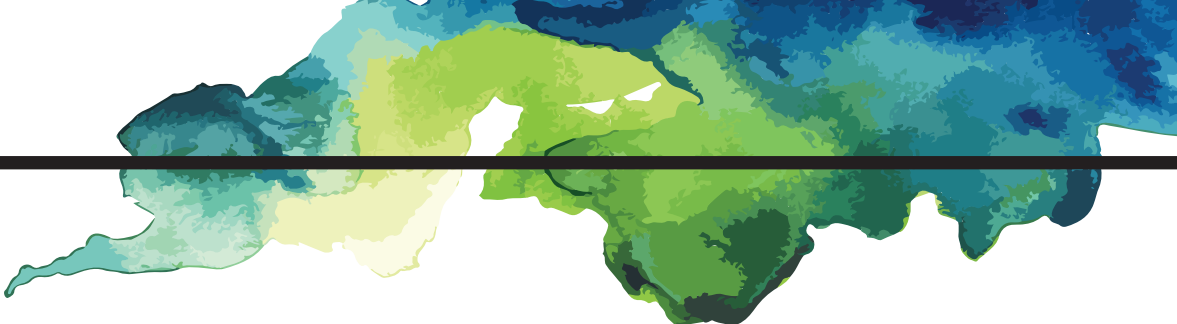
“WHODUNNIT RETURNS”

The Friends of the Gold Coast Arts Centre
and Whodunnit Productions
presents



ANOTHER FABULOUS WHODUNNIT PRODUCTION

**An Australian
interactive mystery**



Friendly focus on the performing arts

A KEY FOCUS OF THE FRIENDS IS THEIR CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO MAINTAINING AN ACTIVE INTEREST IN PROMOTING AND DEVELOPING THE PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS. APART FROM BEING MAJOR SPONSORS OF THE SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAM AND HOLDING SUCCESSFUL SUNDAY SOIREES, THE FRIENDS HAVE ALWAYS COME TO THE FORE WITH CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS MANY OTHER PERFORMANCES SUCH AS PYJAMAS IN PARADISE (\$5000 IN 2011) THE GOLD COAST JAZZ FESTIVAL (\$2000 IN 2005) AND MY FAIR LADY (\$5500 IN 2001).

In 1996, the Friends contributed \$3000 towards the production of Oliver and \$3500 in 1998 towards West Side Story and 42nd Street musicals, to assist with staging costs and an opening night party. A similar contribution of \$3500 was made earlier towards the local production and meet the cast party of Chicago.

As a bicentennial project, the Friends contributed \$6500 to assist in guarantees towards the National Piano Concerto Concert organised by the Gold Coast branch of the Australian Society of Keyboard Music (ASKM). This was to assist in bringing 12 selected young pianists aged under 26 from various states for a 45-minute recital in front of adjudicators, with four finalists later to perform with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra.

Their Annual Report of 2005/2006 shows the Friends had contributed a total \$138,160 in the decade from July 1, 1996. This included support for six musicals during that time, the purchase of three pianos (including one grand) and drums, financial assistance to the art gallery to purchase a computer, plinths and costume purchases. In the same period, they also contributed \$5,225 in grants over 10 years to the Gold Coast (Tropicarnival) Eisteddfod, \$1750 across six years to the Combined Dancers' and Teachers' Association and grants of \$1250 to the Gold Coast Youth Orchestra.

This decade of gifting certainly reaffirms the Friends' commitment to the arts on a broad basis. In recent years, this commitment has continued, with their focus on the performing arts through financial support and attendance at the many shows held at TAC, and enjoying the opportunity to meet with visiting performers afterwards.





William Robinson's, The Rainforest 1990 oil on canvas - purchased in 1991 with funds raised by the Gold Coast business and art loving community.

Image: Courtesy of Gold Coast City Gallery.

...and the visual arts

AS EARLY AS APRIL 1987, FOLLOWING THE OPENING OF THE CENTRE, THE FRIENDS THREW THEIR SUPPORT BEHIND THE VISUAL ARTS BY SPONSORING THE AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPE EXHIBITION. MORE THAN 400 ATTENDED THIS SPECIAL EXHIBITION SHOWING HISTORICAL WORKS FROM THE QUEENSLAND ART GALLERY.

In reality, appreciation of the visual arts had begun decades earlier with the launch of the Gold Coast Art Prize (GCAP) capturing the attention of an emerging cultural society. The Friends' support of the GCAP has been nothing short of phenomenal and, together with TAC, the City's art collection rates as one of the finest in the country.

ALTHOUGH THIS FALLS UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF TAC, THE GCAP HAS ATTRACTED WORLDWIDE EXHIBITORS. MANY OF THE EXHIBITS HAVE BEEN PURCHASED BY THE CITY TO ADD TO ITS BURGEONING COLLECTION. THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN SIGNIFICANT DONATIONS, NOT THE LEAST FROM TAC LIFE BENEFACTORS, BARBARA AND PAT CORRIGAN AM AND WIN SCHUBERT AO ON BEHALF OF THE JOSEPHINE ULRICK AND WIN SCHUBERT FOUNDATION.

Both life members of the Friends, the Corriganes have been at the forefront of establishing the City's collection boasting 4155 items, some on loan, with a total value of \$27.3million (author interview with Pat Corrigan). The Corriganes personally have contributed artwork well in excess of \$4 million in 20 years. In the past decade, with Patrick Corrigan as Chair of the Art Gallery, the collection has grown from 842 items with a value of \$4730,850 in 1996 to today's value of \$27.3million. Source: Author interview 2016

From the outset, the Friends provided much more than a 'helping hand' in establishing this remarkable collection when, in one of their first newsletters, president Max Boyd commented:

The Friends can add to the city art collection with the donation of one or more significant arts works under the Australian Government Taxation Incentives for the Arts (scheme) where provision is made for citizens who wish to donate

'museum quality' paintings, sculpture or craftworks to a public collection may claim the value of works as a tax deduction under the scheme's guidelines.

Source - FOF newsletter No 6, 1987

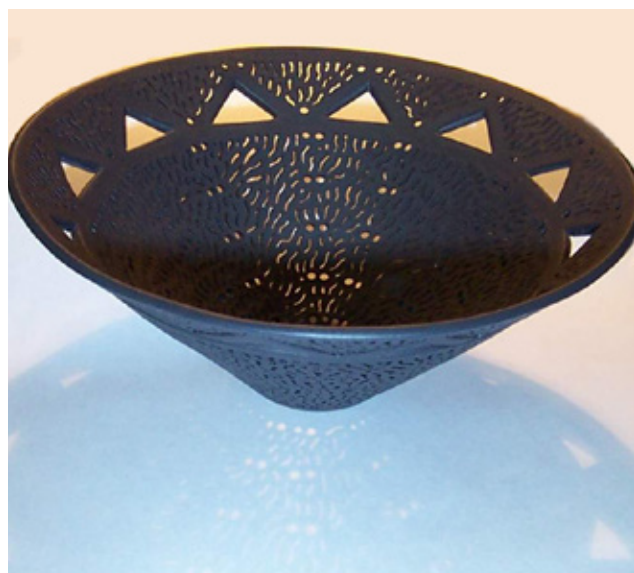
In 1986, the Friends already had purchased a Charles Blackman screenprint Firebird believed to be their first acquisition. Source - Bruce Duncan papers 2016)

Just six months after announcing the incentive available for donors, Boyd reported:

The Friends have made a decision to purchase the \$4000 painting of John Cooper by Paul Evans painted in 1986 and entered in the Moran Portrait Competition and, I believe, the Archibald Prize. It is a larger than life. Boyd was one of the largest individual donors to the city collection giving thousands of dollars for the purchase of works for the gallery and [he] never faltered in his support of the need for a first class art gallery and theatre complex for the Gold Coast. Source - FOF newsletter No 9, 1988

The John Cooper portrait was purchased from Win Shubert, also a strong supporter and sponsor of the growing needs for a first class gallery complex on the Gold Coast. The portrait became part of the nucleus of the growing collection. In 1990, the Friends, combined with community donations, helped purchase William Robinsons' Rainforest, oil on canvas painting.

Maintaining their commitment to the visual arts, the Friends gave \$1800 to the Gold Coast branch of the Australian Society of Miniature Art (ASMA) and \$300 to the Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Society (ADFAS), as well as miscellaneous amounts for a sculpture prize and some bronze casting during 2005-2006



From left to right: A set of three porcelain bowls carved by West Australia's Sandra Black was another purchase by the Friends in 1996. This untitled anagama wood fired bottle by Chester Nealie was an early purchase by the Friends in 1994. The Friends purchased this unusual paper clay work, Spinifex 2, by Sydney sculptor, Kim-Anh Ngugen, in 2008 from monies raised by two bus trips. Images: Courtesy of Gold Coast City Gallery.

It would be amiss at this stage not to mention the Friends' re-energisation and appreciation of the GCAP through their support of the People's Choice Award. In 2014 and 2015, the Friends helped fund functions announcing the coveted award started in 1967. In their 30th anniversary, the Friends extended their support with a grant of \$1000 to the People's Choice winner, Camille Hannah of Victoria, for her oil on Perspex/ Perspex frame called Venus in Fleurs. Whether this is the beginning of a new era in Friends' support for the GCAP remains to be seen but it does augur well for the future while respecting the forefathers of the prize.

Ceramics also have been integral to our visual arts. Established in the early 1980s by Ruth Lyons and Errol Barnes, the Gold Coast International Ceramic Art Award (GCICAA) brought a new dimension to the visual arts. The Friends' first ceramics acquisition from the GCICAA was Tropical Delight by Helen Taylor, a multi coloured majolica platter bought for \$275. Source - FOF newsletter No 37, 1993

The following year they purchased two ceramic pieces – untitled anagama wood fired bottle by Chester Nealie, and a colourful earthenware (with polychrome slips and stains) serving tureen and ladle called On the Reef with Parrot Fish by Uki potter Catherine Lane. Source - FOF newsletter No 43, 1994

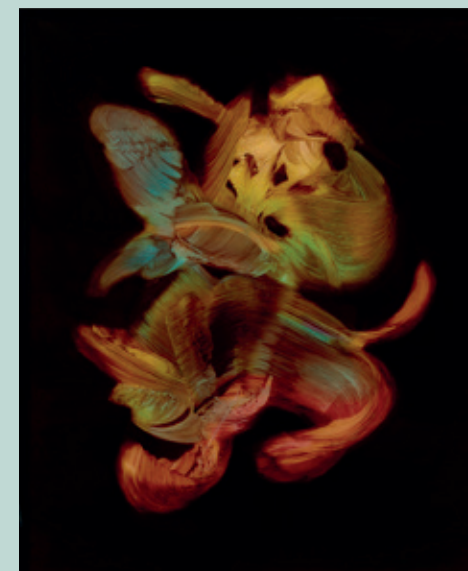
In 1996, two more acquisitions from the GCICAA were bought by the Friends

– a set of three porcelain bowls carved by West Australia's Sandra Black and a porcelain abstract vase, Appendicle, by Victoria's Andrea Hylands who was later invited back to be a judge of the awards.

In his annual report, president Reg Glanville acknowledged the Friends' major sponsorship of a Rubens and Rembrandt exhibition in the gallery, noting they had donated \$13,000 in sponsorship over two years and \$8,500 for art acquisitions for the art gallery in support of associated art groups such as the GCICAA, Gold Coast Potters' Association and the Gold Coast Sculpture Exhibition. Source - FOF newsletter No 60, 1996

In 1997, the Friends held an exhibition in the gallery of all acquisitions they had contributed to, or purchased outright, during the previous decade. Held from August to October and opened by Pat Corrigan AM, the exhibition included the works of Blackman (their very first acquisition), the Rainforest painting, David Oswald's untitled piece from his Warrior series (purchased in 1994), and Andrea Hyland's Appendicle with other various pieces. Altogether 12 'Friends' works were included in the exhibition.

One of the most significant purchases of the Friends happened in 1996 when they commissioned and contributed \$10,000 towards Peter Cole's sculpture, View, plus a commemorative plaque two years later. The sculpture can be viewed today along the Sculpture Walk, an amazing and relaxing waterside



wander behind the Evandale precinct where parklands and water meet a variety of interesting sculptures.

President at the time, Barbara Midwood, recalls the installation of the sculpture close to the picnic area (and sadly its use as a children's climbing frame) and installation of the dedication plaque to which all living mayors were invited. "It was the first time that Denis O'Connell had ever been invited to anything at TAC as apparently his name was not on any of the Centre's invitation lists until that time," said Barbara. (Remember, it was Denis O'Connell who had signed off on the project just days before the mayoral elections in which he lost his seat).

In her 1998 president's report, Barbara advised that although the Friends had donated towards a non-acquisitive prize for the GCICAA, the Board had decided not to continue to acquire and further ceramic exhibits, as finding appropriate space to display them was becoming a problem. To counter-balance this, the Friends, instead, chose to help fund display and storage modules for the collection. Source – FOF newsletter No 73, 1999

But this was not the end of ceramic acquisitions by the Friends. In 2008, the 26th year of this award, the Friends used monies raised from two bus trips for the purchase of an unusual work by Australian sculptor, Kim-Anh Ngugen from Sydney, called, Spinifex 2. Source – FOF newsletter No 131, 2008

The Friends also agreed to sponsor a new exhibition in the art gallery called Jack Eden's Surfabout Revisited: a Photographic History of Australian Surfing in the '60s. The exhibition displayed photographs stretching back 35 years and was a superb recording of the Gold Coast's surfing history. Source - FOF newsletter No 74, 1999.

This year for the first time, the Friends have initiated a new People's Choice Ceramics award in celebration of their 30th anniversary. Announced in October, the Friends have given a grant of \$1000 to Larissa Warren for her work titled, In Flux. Her winning work is a focus in recreating family stories by reinventing textures which are then imbedded within the thin walls of her translucent vessels.

Images above from left to right: Peter Cole's View sculpture was commissioned in 1996 and a plaque two years later by the Friends and remains a highly visual work in Evandale Park. Image: Courtesy of the author. Andrea Hylands' unusual Appendix bone china vase was purchased by the Friends to add to City's growing ceramics collection. Image: Courtesy of Gold Coast City Gallery. To celebrate 30 years, the Friends supported the GCAP's People's Choice winner, Camille Hannah with purchases of Venus in Fleurs. Image: Courtesy of Gold Coast City Gallery.



"...leaving a smile on
your face and a song
in your heart..."

- Robert Young

CHAPTER SIX 53



*Enjoying high tea in the gallery – Judy Dean, Karen Warmington and Colleen Holiday.
Image: Courtesy Rebecca Paranthoienne.*

Friendly functions

APART FROM APPRECIATION OF THE ARTS, AT THE HEART OF THE FRIENDS IS THEIR DRIVE TO RAISE FUNDS TO ENHANCE OUR COMMUNITY'S CULTURAL FUTURE. THEY ARE TIRELESS FUNDRAISERS, ALWAYS PLANNING AND HOLDING A VARIETY OF FUNCTIONS, SOME EXTREMELY INNOVATIVE, AND USING THEIR NOT-FOR-PROFIT STATUS TO HELP ASSIST OTHERS IN THE ARTS.

They contribute significant funds to assist with acquisitions, those little 'extras' when annual budgets don't quite stretch, and to promote youth in the arts, as well as charities and organisations.

FROM THEIR EARLIEST DAYS, THE FRIENDS QUICKLY CAPITALISED ON FUND-RAISING OPPORTUNITIES – SELLING LIMITED EDITION ARTIST PRINTS, THE EFFERVESCENT GEULAH KORMAN RAISING AN INCREDIBLE \$800 FROM THE INAUGURAL CACA COCKTAIL PARTY ATTENDED BY 600 (SOURCE - FOF NEWSLETTER NO 3, 1987), SOURCED A GRANT OF \$9900 FROM THE PREMIER'S DEPARTMENT IN 1989 TO GO TOWARDS PRODUCTION COSTS OF JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR WHICH HAD A LOCAL CAST OF MORE THAN 300, AND RAISED AN AMAZING \$4600 (2003) FROM AN MELBOURNE CUP FUNCTION FOR THE LEUKAEMIA FOUNDATION.

Some functions held by the Friends include celebrity lunches, cinema nights and special viewings, gala cocktail parties, masked and fantasy balls, 'getting-to-know you' evenings (often held after the AGM so Friends can meet and mingle with the Board), Who Dunnit dinners involving professional casts to add mystery and mayhem, educational and musical evenings with special guest speakers, backstage meet-and-greet cast parties, trivia nights, gastro-nomic experiences, supper nights, gallery viewings, new member nights, and their legendary annual Christmas party.

These photographs through the past three decades offer a snapshot into functions held by the Friends but in no way cover all their friendly happenings.



Former president Tim Cole presents Mary Lopez AM with flowers after entertaining the Friends. Image: Courtesy Rebecca Paranthoiene. Margot and Norman Davies enjoy the Friends very first ball shortly after opening of the Centre. Image: Courtesy Margot Davies





This is just a scan from a previous newsletter as the soirees ended in 2010.

Sunday soirees

HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU FOUND YOURSELF AT A BIT OF 'A LOOSE END' ON A SUNDAY? WITH THE WORKING WEEK FINISHED – AND ANOTHER JUST AROUND THE CORNER - SUNDAYS ARE THE PERFECT DAY TO RELAX AND TAKE TIME TO ENJOY LIFE.

This was the thinking behind the Friends Sunday Soiree program started in 1999. The program offered an endless range of entertainment to suit all tastes. They also served another purpose - giving up-coming TAC performers a chance to 'test the waters' and hone their skills. The soirees presented endless opportunities for up-and-coming artists and community groups to perform before a live audience without fear of any repercussions about their performance. It was a perfect 'win win' situation for both groups.

In 1999, Tony Wilkins reported (FOF newsletter No 77) that the very first soiree, despite inclement weather, had been a big success with entertainer Kate Peters keeping her audience spellbound along with amusing ditties by David Ferguson. At the time Kate was playing a major role in Annie. Making the soiree affordable - \$5 including small eats and a glass of wine for all – made them more popular.

THE SOIREES WERE IN KEEPING WITH ROBERT YOUNG'S PROMISE OF 'LEAVING A SMILE ON YOUR FACE AND A SONG IN YOUR HEART'. AS SHOWN ELSEWHERE, ROBERT YOUNG DEVOTED 17 YEARS TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE ARTS AT TAC. GENERALLY, THE SOIREES WERE HELD LATE AFTERNOON OR EARLY EVENING AND ALWAYS OFFERED SOMETHING DIFFERENT. THEY GAVE MEMBERS A CHANCE TO MINGLE WITH PERFORMERS IN A LOW-KEY ATMOSPHERE GENERATING CAMARADERIE AND FUN.

Perhaps one of the major attractions of the soirees was their variety. For example, the UK's Craig Roberts entertained in 2002 with his demonstrations and descriptions of the importance of costume design – his skill in this area of the arts is evident in the popular Coronation Street TV series. He also was costume designer for some James Bond movies. Another soiree in 2002 was a preview of the GCLT's A Stroll Down Piccadilly.

Apart from the many thespians who freely gave up their time to entertain, other soirees included stage makeup demonstrations with master makeup artist Janice Howe (2000), puppetry with the indomitable Gerda Pinta (2000), painting with Mal Leckie and sculpture with Megan Puls (2001), old time music hall shows, a major 40+ performance by the Gold Coast Youth Orchestra (2003), much oompahing and foot stamping by 180 Friends during Oktoberfest with a brass band and accordion group (2003) and even an ANZAC eve soiree followed by a preview of Kate Peter's Jerry's Girls. Another soiree with a difference was food and beverage manager, Jason Solman's talk on refurbishment plans for the Centre, followed by the Coastal Sounds Youth Orchestra jazz band whose ages ranged from 12 to 20 (2002).

Further soirees, and there were many, included a performance by noted Russian concert pianist Helen Prismall (2005).

Although the bi-monthly soirees may have started small with just 20-30 attending, their popularity grew and, at times, it was a packed house with up to 200 enjoying their Sundays with a little light entertainment. What made them even more popular was the fact that you didn't have to book. It simply was just a matter of turning up TAC and enjoying yourself.

But times change. With planning progressing for the new Evandale cultural precinct and a smorgasbord of new events at TAC, attendances declined, and the once-popular Sunday soirees ceased around October 2010. But what a wonderful ride it was for the many who had attended over the years.



*Rebecca Paranthoienne chats with John Wood after the show, When Dad Met Fury.
Image: Courtesy Rebecca Paranthoienne.*



From top to bottom: Simon Gallaher and Helen Donaldson backstage after an early performance of the Mikado also starring Jon English. Kimberley Joseph with Tony Bonner during a meet the cast party. Geoffrey Hughes (Onslow from TV's Keep Up Appearances) with Mayoress Ruth Stevens after the hilarious hospital comedy romp When I Only Laugh in 1996. Images: Courtesy Margot Davies.

Backstage banter

THE FRIENDS 'MEET THE CAST' BACKSTAGE PARTIES BECAME LEGENDARY FROM THE OUTSET WHEN YOUNG MEMBERS... FOR ART'S SAKE ENCOURAGED ATTENDEES TO MEET AND MINGLE WITH THE CAST OF THE NEW YORK STAND UP COMEDY SHOW IN 1986.

These innovative backstage gatherings offered evenings filled with fun and laughter as cast members welcomed the opportunity to meet their audience and vice versa. The gatherings became so popular they soon became 'the norm', held at every opportunity day or evening.

MANY FRIENDS TODAY STILL REMINISCE ON THESE GATHERINGS. WITHOUT THEM, THEY WOULD NOT HAVE MET SO MANY FASCINATING STAGE PERSONALITIES SUCH AS GOOGIE WITHERS AND JOHN MCCALLUM (WHO WERE APPEARING IN THE COCKTAIL HOUR) AND THEIR DAUGHTER JOANNA AND NICHOLAS HAMMOND (OF SOUND OF MUSIC FAME) IN 1990, AND STUART WAGSTAFF WITH MAGGIE KIRKPATRICK AND ROWENA WALLACE WHO WERE APPEARING IN LEND ME A TENOR IN 1993.

A picnic beside the Evandale lake gave Friends a change to meet informally with the cast of Jesus Star Superstar when performing in September 1989. It was voted a big success and, as always helped raise funds.

Among the many other meet the cast parties – and there were many - Friends meet with cast members of The Comedians, Top Silk, Chicago, Don't Dress for Dinner, the Lyric Opera Company who were performing Barber of Seville, The Mikado with Jon English and Simon Gallaher, Three Tall Women with Ruth Cracknell, Pippa Williamson and Pamela Rabe, and a very memorable evening with the redoubtable Geoffrey Hughes aka Onslow in TV's popular UK comedy Keeping Up Appearances.



From top to bottom: Esme Bryce, Margot Davies, Dawn Hogan and Pamela Hoare outside the Matisse exhibition. Mrs Peggy Payne, Reg Glanville and Esme Bryce outside Brisbane Gallery before an exhibition. Many trips were made by bus in the Friends early days to attend special exhibitions followed by picnics in the park. Images: Courtesy Margot Davies.



Picnics in the park

NEVER ONES TO 'SIT AROUND', THE FRIENDS ARE AN ACTIVE GROUP AND NOT JUST ON THE HOME FRONT. THEY HAVE BEEN A HIGHLY VISIBLE PRESENCE FURTHER AFIELD MAKING MANY BUS VISITS TO ART GALLERIES IN BRISBANE AND THE TWEED REGION TO SAVOUR THE ARTS. THEY LAUNCHED A HAPPY, AND VERY POPULAR, BUS EXCURSION PROGRAM EARLY IN THE 1990S.

These 'adventures' had a two-fold purpose of viewing some of the truly spectacular exhibitions at Brisbane galleries and adding a little panache to each trip with morning teas, elegant picnics and champers.

FOR MANY YEARS, THE FRIENDS HAVE DELIGHTED IN OPPORTUNITIES TO VIEW TOURING EXHIBITIONS OF WORKS BY VINCENT VAN GOGH, HENRI MATISSE, AUSTRALIAN ART (ARTHUR STREETON, TOM ROBERTS AND FREDERICK MCCUBBIN), PARIS IN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY – AN EXHIBITION FROM THE MUSEE D'ORSAY, AND THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF AUSTRALIA (WILLIAM DOBELL, RUSSELL DRYSDALE, ANDY WARHOL, PICASSO, SIDNEY NOLAN AND MARGARET OLLEY).

One trip in particular that had Friends enraptured was to see Picasso's works at GoMA in 2008 plus a tour of the State Library's Rare Book and Family History sections as well as a Sidney Nolan exhibition. These exhibitions often were followed by elegant picnics in the park where beautiful white damask tablecloths were laid out – or purple to coincide with the flowering of the jacarandas at New Farm Park – topped with delicious lunches and bubbly.

Adventure and fun set the theme for these outings so much so that entertainment was often added into the mix. An example of this was when bush poet Dennis Scanlon boarded the bus after lunch at the tiny NSW town of Tyalgum and entertained with music and poetry before the group went 'walkabout' at the Pinnacle in the Border Ranges.

Coach trips further afield have been organised by Barbara Corrigan, a TAC life benefactor. In association with Gold Coast ADFAS many members have ventured 'across the border' to see paintings entered in the Archibald Prize and the Olive Cotton Award for photographic portraiture. The opportunity to see the recent addition of the Margaret Olley Museum at the Tweed River Regional Gallery was so popular that two coach trips were organised.

MEMBERS CARD
THE ARTS COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA-QUEENSLAND DIVISION



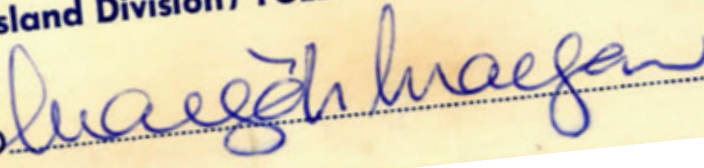
GOLD COAST _____ BRANCH

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE HOLDER

MR. BRUCE DUNCAN _____ IS

A BONA FIDE MEMBER OF THE ARTS COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

(Queensland Division) FULL/JUNIOR FOR YEAR ENDED 1970

SIGNED  SECRETARY/TREASURER

Bruce Duncan OAM's 1970 membership card.

Meet you in the lounge

IF THERE'S ONE THING THE FRIENDS KNOW HOW TO DO WELL, IT IS TO HAVE FUN WHILE THEY ENJOY THE ARTS AND RAISE FUNDS. FROM THE OUTSET, THE LOUNGE AREA HAS BEEN THE FRIENDS 'HOME AWAY FROM HOME' – A PLACE TO ENJOY CAMARADERIE, NIBBLES AND DRINKS BEFORE AND AFTER SHOWS, SPECIAL GATHERINGS AND EVENTS AND KEEP THE CENTRE 'ALIVE' AND HUMMING.

Meetings in the lounge virtually started with the opening of TAC, when the Friends contributed \$2,427 (Source - Bruce Duncan papers 2016) towards the Moncrieff Lounge to become their first meeting place. Drawing inspiration from a 1920 oil painting of Gladys Moncrieff OBE, the lounge was decorated with memorabilia of 'our Glad' donated by her long-time friend and companion, Miss Elsie Wilson who, at the time was living on the Isle of Capri. (Source – FOF newsletter No 2, 1987)

The Moncrieff Lounge overlooked parks, gardens and mountains – a perfect location for cocktail parties, private functions and theatre party gatherings. It was located upstairs from today's foyer and next to the movie projection box.

APPROPRIATELY, THE FRIENDS CHOSE TO CELEBRATE (THERE'S ALWAYS A REASON TO CELEBRATE IN THE FRIENDS' VIEW) OUR GLAD'S 100TH BIRTHDAY IN THE MONCRIEFF LOUNGE IN 1992 EVEN THOUGH SHE HAD DIED ON THE GOLD COAST IN 1976 AT THE AGE OF 83. THE GOLD COAST HAD BECOME HER HOME IN LATTER YEARS AND SHE WAS ALWAYS KNOW TO STEP OUTSIDE HER CANAL-FRONT HOME AND WAVE TO PASSING BOATS. COINCIDENTALLY, SHE HAD RETIRED HERE IN 1968, AROUND THE SAME TIME THE 'FOUNDING FOUR' MET AT THE PINTER'S HOME TO MOOT THE IDEA OF BUILDING A COMMUNITY CULTURAL CENTRE.

While the Moncrieff Lounge was a happy meeting space for many years, times change and along with change came a different venue. In the 1996 FOF newsletter, president Reg Glanville stated there had been a shift in meeting place. This time it was to a new members' area at the Harlequin Bar. It appears the Harlequin Restaurant fulfilled Friends' needs in camaraderie from this period

Skip ahead a few years and the Friends' meeting space had shifted to their own specific lounge with TAC showing appreciation for their ongoing support.

To show their appreciation for the ongoing support of the Friends, TACGC has created a unique Friends' Lounge. This exclusive area will be made available for you (the Friends) to enjoy before selected performances with the subscription season. The new Friends' Lounge is the perfect place to meet and have a casual drink before the show. The space offers an exclusive area to chat with like-minded people in a private bar so there is no need to wait in long queues. Source – FOF newsletter No146, 2011

First use of the Friends' Lounge was in April 2011 from 6.45pm (show time was 7.30pm) although on some occasions it was not available due to the growing pressures from increased usage of TAC. Not long after (October 2011), an express lane for the Friends was trialled for Bell Shakespeare's performance of Julius Caesar.

The need to give the Friends their 'own space' is evidenced by the growth in membership during the years. When treasurer Manfred Schroeder reported in February 1987 that membership figures had reached a more than respectable 394 (and there were 120 young members at the same time), he probably never envisaged it would increase so rapidly to 600 later the same year, then 1228 in 1995, 1587 in 1997, 1800 in 2003, 1942 in 2005, just under 2000 in 2007, 2100 in 2012 and more than 2800 in 2015. Sources - FOF newsletters and FACGC Annual Report 2014/2015.

Of course, other sections of TAC are used for special Friends' functions as the dedicated Friends' Lounge no longer exists. The current foyers and porte cochere are now meeting places for friends to catch up other friends as well as meet various performers.

TODAY, MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS ARE IN EXCESS OF 2500 (INCLUDING DOUBLE, SINGLE, LIFE MEMBERSHIPS, HONORARY AND ASSOCIATE/BENEFACTORS MEMBERS). IN THE PAST 30 YEARS, MEMBERSHIP FEES HAVE REMAINED MINIMAL, BEGINNING IN 1986 WITH \$20 (SINGLE OR FAMILY/COUPLE), \$10 (UNDER 18S) AND \$100 FOR A COMPANY OR INSTITUTION. IN 2004, FEES ROSE MINIMALLY TO \$30 (SINGLE) AND \$40 (DOUBLE) WITH HALF-YEAR RATES INTRODUCED AND A DISCOUNT FOR DOUBLE MEMBERSHIP.

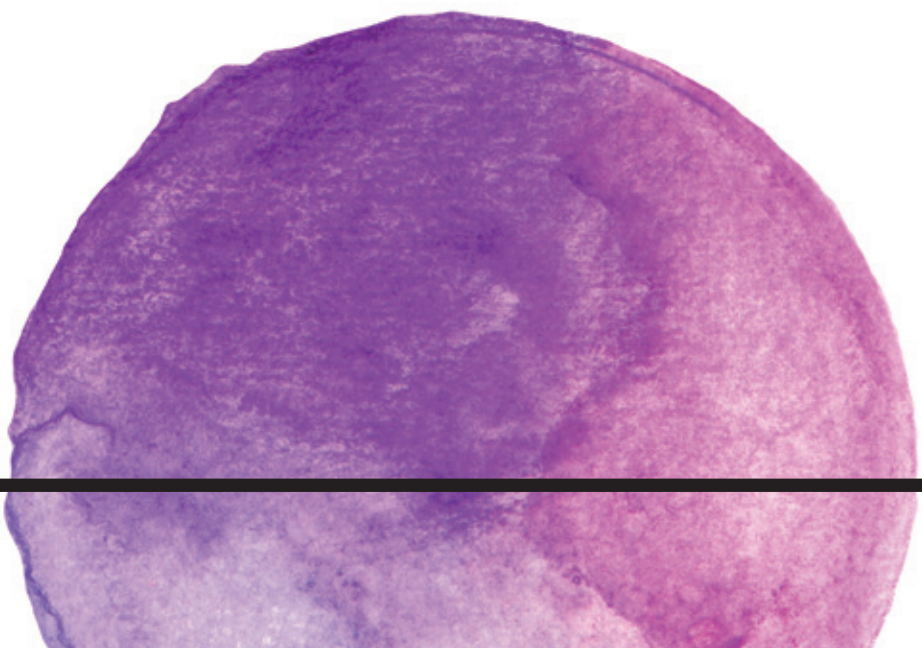
A further increase of \$5 for single membership and \$10 for a double was introduced 2011. Life membership fee in 2011 was \$350-\$500. Source – FOF newsletter No 149

Today, it costs \$35 to be a single member and \$50 for double membership - extraordinarily good value when you consider all the benefits members received.

“In the past 30 years,
membership fees have
remained minimal”



CHAPTER SEVEN 65





Flautist Jonathan Henderson. Image: Courtesy Carol Little.

Gift Fund

FOUNDED IN 2006, THE SAME YEAR THE CENTRE CELEBRATED ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY, THE FRIENDS OF THE ARTS CENTRE GOLD COAST GIFT FUND (TFTACGCGF!) SIGNIFICANTLY RAISED THE BAR IN COMMUNITY PHILANTHROPY TO ASSIST YOUNG PEOPLE FURTHER THEIR CAREERS IN THE PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS.

A key driver in the success of the Fund is its tax deductible status whereby all donors can claim full tax concessions for donations and the Friends, also, can claim tax deductibility on interest earned. The Fund was conceived by the late Jock McIlwain OAM, a generous benefactor of the arts on the Gold Coast especially youth encouragement, and Friends' past president, Tony Wilkins. Underpinning the Gift Fund was the strong support of the TAC Board who still continue to back the Fund by supporting operating expenses, and the generosity of many other supporters.

At Jock's invitation, the two set about developing targets to make positive change through charitable funding on the Gold Coast where Jock had made his name and fortune in land and canal development. Tony enlisted the financial and legal assistance of fellow Board members, Ken Brown and Mark Niall, to bring the Gift Fund into being. A philanthropist at heart, Jock was passionate about the arts. He was a talented amateur portrait painter and a singer, traits he no doubt inherited from his parents, Eric and Ivy. Ivy (who died after giving birth to Jock's younger sister) was an accomplished violinist who used to accompany her pianist sister Muriel at Fiji's silent movies. Eric not only fell in love with Ivy (they eloped to marry) but also the violin, and encouraged his son to play, which, in an interview with the author just weeks before his death, he said made him 'fascinated with music'.

"I always loved to see the Fijians get up on stage and perform," said Jock whose real name was John Robert McIlwain. This love of the arts never faded throughout his life, even when moving from Fiji to study economics and engineering, in Sydney and Brisbane respectively, and afterwards when maintaining a hectic working career in private business and local government.

Arriving on the Gold Coast in 1960, Jock admitted that when he was appointed to Council, he quickly 'got them to see the value in the arts', instigating a donation of \$1000 towards the Gold Coast City Art Prize. He chuckled at the memory of the first winning entry, The Overnight Sleeper, which caused a stir within the community at the time. He said some of his greatest mentors on the Gold Coast had been artists such as John Cooper and Patrick Kilvington, the latter often referred to as the poor man's Hugh Sawrey, capable of smashing out a large and respectable Aussie bush/horse oil on canvas painting within a day. In fact, this author once worked with Kilvington and remembers the oil was rarely dry on any of his paintings!

JOCK SAID HE WANTED HIS LEGACY TO BE THAT OF OFFERING ENCOURAGEMENT AND OPPORTUNITY TO YOUTH. HIS GOAL WAS TO SEE THE FUND REACH THE \$1 MILLION MARK IN DONATIONS, ENABLING IT TO OFFER MUCH LARGER SCHOLARSHIPS.

"I want to help youth who aspire to achieve. From my experience, I know that people grow to love the arts and it mellows them," said Jock whose philanthropy also extended to major donations to Griffith University in the area of science and maths. "The Gold Coast has been very kind to me; it has rewarded me handsomely therefore I have the ability to help other people and I love that. When you see the calibre of young people who have received scholarships, everyone selected has been a star."

Married for 40 years to 'the love of his life', Beverly, Jock was determined to see bigger and better things for the Gold Coast. He was the first to donate \$50,000 to the Fund to get it off the ground and from that point onwards, there

Ballerina Zoe Shepherd chatted with drivers behind the Gift Fund, the late Jock McIlwain OAM and his wife Beverly late last year. Image: Courtesy Rebecca Paranthoienne. Outgoing chair of the TAC Board Kerry Watson, the late Jock McIlwain OAM and Destry Puria at the 2015 presentation.



was no end to his philanthropy. This donation, like so many others to follow from Jock and the wider community, has resulted in more than \$160,000 being awarded in grants and scholarships. Embedded within the Gift Fund is the Beverly McIlwain Scholarship, an award recognising the potential of budding young artists.

“Jock was always a major donor and always delighted in seeing where the Fund distributed its monies,” said Tony Wilkins. “To date, nearly 50 scholarships have been awarded, placing many of the recipients at the top of their career on the world stage.”

A management committee within the Fund determines distribution and donors have no input as to where the monies are awarded. This is entirely at the discretion of the appointed management committee and a rigorous application and selection process determines successful applicants.

Tracking back to before its beginnings, Tony Wilkins stated that:

In 2006, it was decided by the Friends’ Board that something should be done to mark the 20th anniversary opening (of the Centre) and formation of the Friends. Since inception, the Friends spend spare income supporting the Centre and activities. In particular, the Friends were major sponsors of the Summer School. Over time requests were received from individuals for

financial help to progress their artistic careers. We decided that it would be a major step forward to set up a fund to assist talented people needing support to start or progress their careers. Source – FOF newsletter No 122, 2007

Tony said a special meeting had been held to amend the Friends’ charter to establish a Fund on the Register of Cultural Organisations. This would allow for tax-deductible donations to the Fund, thus requiring ATO approval. He said the application had been successful and a formal launch was held on December 18, 2006 ‘with a most generous donation to start us off from those major benefactors of the arts on the Gold Coast, Jock and Beverly McIlwain’.

So the fund was off to a flying start. Paul Fitzgerald later reaffirmed its importance, noting the genesis of the idea had come from Jock McIlwain, who also chaired the fund raising committee of TAC at the time. Wendy Spencer, another Friends’ past president, also stressed the importance of the Fund in assisting youth development.

The extent of the McIlwain’s philanthropy also is reflected in The Jock and Beverly McIlwain Bus Fund, a separate grant providing much needed transport to access and view quality experiences at TAC.

GIFT FUND AWARDS SINCE 2007

2007

Rhea Robertson - actor
Andrew Barnett (Ross-Graham) - actor (BMS)

2008

Gina-Marie Leathem - ballet dancer (BMS)

2009

Aaron Smyth - ballet dancer (BMS)
Katherine Rodrigues - actor
Gina-Marie Leathem - ballet dancer
Alison McKenzie - actor
Sara Harmon - ballet dancer

2010

Aaron Smyth - ballet dancer
Sara Harmon - ballet dancer
Jonathan Henderson - flautist (BMS)

2011

Matthew Landel - ballet dancer
Courtney Macmillan - ballet dancer
Hayden Smith - pianist
Catherina Lee - violinist (BMS)

2012

Catherina Lee - violinist
Sara Harmon - ballet dancer
Jonathan Henderson - flautist
Helena Gjone - ballet dancer (BMS)

2013

Catherina Lee - violinist
Talia Fidra - ballet dancer
Stephanie Li - cellist (BMS)
Sara Harmon - ballet dancer

2014

Catherina Lee - violinist
Stephanie Li - cellist
Emy-Lee Rogers – viola
(BMS not awarded)

2015

Dylan Hodge – entertainer (BMS)
Zoe Shepherd – ballet dancer
Stephanie Li – cellist
Christopher McKenzie – photography
Joshua Price – ballet dancer

2016

Dylan Hodge – entertainer
Stephanie Li – cellist
Rira Kong – cellist
Joshua Price – ballet dancer
Nicola Barrett – entertainer
Nina Fan – pianist
Zoe Shepherd – ballet dancer
Doninie Lythgoe – ballet dancer
Jenna Dearness-Dark – opera singer (BMS)

*Beverly McIlwain Scholarship.



Major benefactor to the arts, Pat Corrigan and Barbara Midwood with gallery manager John Walsh in 1997. Image: Courtesy Margot Davies

Early stalwarts

RUTH LYONS – TOGETHER WITH ERROL BARNES, RUTH WAS A DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THE GOLD COAST INTERNATIONAL CERAMIC ART AWARD STARTED IN 1982. RUTH WAS AN ARTIST IN HER OWN RIGHT, HAVING STUDIED AT THE ADELAIDE SCHOOL OF ARTS, THE SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS IN HOBART AND LATER DRAWING AND PERSPECTIVE WITH RUSSO OF THE CORCORAN.

Ruth was known for her slightly wicked sense of humour, maybe emanating from her days in the WRANS where she was seconded to signals and communication on HMAS Lonsdale and HMAS Cerberus. After a whirlwind romance, she married Russell Lyons and they lived in Hobart for most of their 39-year marriage.

She settled on the Gold Coast in 1957 where she completed a certificate in ceramics at the Gold Coast TAFE then immersed herself in the world of ceramics. Through TAFE, she agitated for ceramics on the Gold Coast to be granted international status. She was invited to join the CCC in 1981 to promote interest in the planned community arts centre and was made a life member of the Friends for her unfailing support of the arts.

EVEN FAILING EYESIGHT DID NOT DETER THIS FEISTY WOMAN FROM HER LOVE OF THE ARTS. HER DEATH IN 2011 WAS A BLOW TO THE MANY WHO HAD GROWN TO LOVE AND ADMIRE HER FOR ALL THAT SHE HAD ACHIEVED – AND THAT WICKED SENSE OF HUMOUR.

Manfred Schroeder – an original Friend and inaugural treasurer of the Friends, Manfred was another early stalwart. Manfred had migrated to Australia with his wife, Margot, from Germany in 1952. Before retiring to the Gold Coast, he worked as Superintendent of Industries for the Victorian Prisons, responsible for coordination of prison industries and workshops.



*Ruth Lyons admires one of the early ceramics pieces from the Gold Coast International Ceramic Art Award.
Image: Courtesy Margot Davies.*

"A Venetian Affair...
truly a night to remember"



He was a member of the Victorian Prison Classification Board and decorated by the Victorian governor for his leadership abilities, distinctive devotion to duty and work in rehabilitating prisoners. On retirement, he became active in community projects – an announcer on Radio 4-CRB-FM presenting a German program each week and was a foundation member of the Friends. His FOF newsletter reports were always precise and provided in-depth information on membership, fund raising and activities.

Geulah Korman OAM – perhaps one of the most colourful personalities on the Gold Coast for several decades, Geulah was, for many early years, the social convenor for functions held by the Friends. She just had that knack for knowing what worked and what didn't. Because of her business acumen, she managed to raise serious funds for the Friends during their early days.

For example, a Venetian Affair gala cocktail party (combined with the Young Friends and its interior designer president, Rodney Sprague) was truly a night to remember for those who attended, raising nearly \$1000 from that function.

On another occasion in 1990, Geulah and Rodney pulled out all stops to decorate what was then The Space for a masked supper dance, with profits going towards an acquisition for the gallery. They decorated The Space with masses of white flowers gracing the tables atop spaghetti jars, fairy lights in palm trees, helium filled balloons behind every chair and songbird Suzanne O'Connell (daughter of mayor Denis) providing live entertainment. The night raised close to \$1500.

FOR HER SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY, GEULAH WAS AWARDED AN OAM IN 1992 IN RECOGNITION OF THE FREE CHARITY WORK SHE UNDERTOOK WHILE STILL OPERATING HER OWN FASHION BUSINESS IN SURFERS PARADISE. TODAY, GEULAH LIVES IN SYDNEY WITH HER SISTER BUT HER NAME AND EFFERVESCENT PERSONALITY STILL IS WELL REMEMBERED.

George Wittman – the former treasurer of the CCA (precursor to Friends) George was born in Hungary where he studied dentistry at the Dental Institute in Budapest. His career was interrupted when he was conscripted into the Hungarian Army in 1940. When Hungary fell to Nazi Germany, George was sent to a forced labour camp on the Eastern Front where he was incarcerated for the next five years before escaping at the end of 1944. He was one of only five from his unit of 212 who survived the ordeal.

When George returned home to Hungary, he found his parents and most of his family had been killed at the dreaded Auschwitz death camp. With little to keep him in Hungary, he went to Paris for a year and again took up dentistry before coming to Australia in 1949.

The horrors of World War II always remained with George who, in 1972, worked as a volunteer in Israel for one year. Well known for his community spirit, George and his wife, Angela (they married in 1960), were very much a community-minded spirit. He was active within the local Jewish community and the couple always opened their Isle of Capri home for charity and social functions during the lobby stages of TAC.

Note: Most of these details have been obtained from FOF newsletters.



Crucial to the City's new cultural precinct will be this versatile outdoor space as per this architect illustration. Image: Courtesy City of Gold Coast.

Friends face exciting future

EXCITEMENT IS GROWING AS THE GOLD COAST EMBARKS ON ITS VISION FOR A NEW CULTURAL PRECINCT AT EVANDALE TO BE THE HEART FOR ARTS, CULTURE AND CIVIC CELEBRATION.

With the first stage already well in progress and due for completion in time for the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games, this new precinct exceeds all expectations in terms of what it will offer a rapidly increasing population. Expected to cost \$37million, the first stage will include:

- a garden-themed amphitheatre with stage and event platform capable of catering for up to 5000 at one time;
- concept design of a purpose-built City Gallery that meets international standards and is capable of hosting touring exhibitions and which will house the City's impressive and growing art collection;
- initial artscape works scattered around Evandale Lake for use in artistic programing, markets, festivals, cinema and family recreations.

The role of the Friends will be vital to the future of the cultural infrastructure project. TAC general manager, Destry Puia, foresees the Friends' future role as similar to when it started 30 years ago, if not before.

"In many ways, I see that the Friends' role has come full circle. Their fund raising will be even more essential in the future as will their willingness to keep filling our corridors with their presence at all types of events (cinema viewings, exhibitions, performances) and using the facilities in multiple ways.

"I have no doubt they will continue to lobby for new initiatives as they have done in the past, and I will be encouraging them to maintain their active role in every stage of construction. There is an amazing correlation between the Friends and the TAC Board," said Destry.

Outgoing Chair of the TAC Board, Kerry Watson stated:

"We've appreciated the Friends in terms of their cultural input and political assistance, particularly in getting the issuer of the CP (cultural precinct) raised, when it was then taken up with the mayor. But where I believe it (the

Friends) works well is demonstrating that The Arts Centre has the ability to work with people who have a mutual interest."

For example you (the Friends) are supporting us in the area of youth development. As the Friends probably have more community engagement in that sphere, we're looking for Friends to have ownership in that area, supported by us (TAC). I am very happy with the way the Friends is developing – and long may it continue! Source - FOF newsletter No 166, 2014

TRANSITIONING TODAY'S CULTURAL PRECINCT INTO THE FUTURE WILL GIVE THE FRIENDS, JUST LIKE THE COMMUNITY, MANY CHALLENGES AHEAD, JUST AS BUILDING THE SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE FROM JORN UTZON'S CONTROVERSIAL DESIGN DID IN 1958 TO ITS OFFICIAL OPENING IN 1973. TODAY, IT STANDS AS ONE OF THE MASTERPIECES OF MODERN URBAN DESIGN WORLD HERITAGE LISTED BY UNESCO IN 2007 AND IS ONE OF THE MOST RECOGNISABLE BUILDINGS IN THE WORLD.

That old adage of 'build it and they will come' certainly rang true for the Sydney Opera House and one can only imagine what the future holds for the Gold Coast Cultural Precinct when fully completed in Australia's current sixth largest city. Being part of this innovation for the arts will only add to the pride the Friends already share in what has been achieved in a modestly short period.

"In many ways, I see
the Friends' role has
come full circle"

-Destry Puia



APPENDIX 77

*This page has deliberately been left blank for readers to add their own memories
- autographs, photos, theatre programs etc.*

Appendix 1

1971 Cultural Centre Association

Arrowsmith, Brian
Baker, Margaret
Boyd, Max
Cummings, Malcolm
Dean, Judy
Duncan, Bruce
Dwyer, Nan
Hollindale, Alan
Hunt, Joyce
Lyons, Ruth
Mott, Stella
O'Connell, Denis
O'Connell, Lorraine
Pinter, Gerda
Shepherd, Brian

Appendix 2

1981 Cultural Centre Committee

Arrowsmith, Brian
Baker, Margaret
Boyd, Max
Cummings, Malcolm
Dean, Judy
Duncan, Bruce
Dwyer, Nan
Hollindale, Alan
Hunt, Joyce
Lyons, Ruth
Mott, Stella
O'Connell, Denis
O'Connell, Lorraine
Pinter, Gerda
Shepherd, Brian

Appendix 3

Boards of Friends of The Arts Centre from 1986 showing date joined.

Year Joined			Year Joined			Year Joined		
ARROWSMITH	Brian	1986	KORMAN	Geulah	1986	MUNRO-FORD	Ron	1988*
BATTAMS	Irene	1986	MacIVOR	Nan	1986	O'BRIEN	Louise	1988*
BLOYCE	Hilary	1986	MOTT	Stella	1986	PICKFORD	Linda	1988
BOSTON	Warren	1986* 1987*	O'MOORE	Colleen	1986*	SPRAGUE	Rodney	1988* 1989*
BOYD	Max	1986	PINTER	Gerda	1986	STEER	Paul	1988
CHARLES	Edward	1986	SCHROEDER	Manfred	1986	CAREY	Maree	1989
DEAN	Judy	1986	STAFFORD	Paula	1986	WITTMAN	George	1989
DUNCAN	Bruce	1986	WEBSTER	Dawn	1986*	KYSELY	Robert	1990
DWYER	Nan	1986	DAVIES	Norman	1987	CANNON	Geoff	1992
EDWARDS	Viv	1986	CARLIN	Liz	1988*	COLLINS	Joyce	1992
FITZ-WALTER	Mark	1986*	COX	Frances	1988	GLANVILL	Reg	1992
GORDON	Jo	1986*	FELLER	Karin	1988*	JAY	Cassia	1992
HAMILTON	Sydney	1986	HALLIDAY	Colleen	1988*	PELLERMAN	Ann	1992
HILLS	Frank	1986*	LYONS	Ruth	1988	PETERSEN	Frank	1992
KEKWICK	Rhonda	1986	MARSDEN	Miri	1988	COOK	Randall	1993

Year Joined			Year Joined			Year Joined		
CORBETT	Lynne	1993	SHEPPARD	Kaye	1999	BELLCHAMBERS	Greg	2012
DAVIES	Margot	1994	SPENCER	Wendy	1999	DALY	Druscilla	2012
MATIC	Peter	1994	NIALL	Mark	2001	FRENCH	Gillian	2012
BROWN	Vicki	1995	BROWN	Ken	2003	COOPER	Rae	2014
DeNETT	Larraine	1995	FITZGERALD	Paul	2004	DEAN	Judy	2014
KENNY	Dennis	1995	COLE	Tim	2006	ENDENBURG	Daniel	2014
MIDWOOD	Barbara	1995	FOSKETT	Sue	2006	HUDSON	John	2014
SULLIVAN	Barry	1995	BELL	Trevor	2007	LAKEY	Kathleen	2014
GRIFFITH	Ted	1996	HUDDY	David	2007	MARCHANT	Jacqueline	2014
HYLES	David	1996	HUMBLE-CROFTS	Pam	2007	COUNDOURIS	Gina	2016
McGHIE	Jill	1996	LITTLE	Carol	2008	FUELOEP	Sandi	2016
CONLON	Ian	1997	CHRISTEN	Delma	2009	RUZZENE	Patricia	2016
ZANTIOTIS	Nikki	1997	MORRIS	Brian	2009	WILLIAMS	Olwen	2016
ALEXANDER	z	1998	PARANTHOIENE	Rebecca	2009	*Young Friends date joined		
WILKINS	Anthony	1998	McCORMACK	Dorothy	2010			
McILWAIN	Beverly	1999	LANDIS	Christina	2012			

Appendix 4

Friends Presidents

1986, '87 (to 21/7/87) - BOYD, Max
22/07/1987, '88 - DAVIES, Norman
1989, '90 - DEAN, Judy
1991 - MacIVOR, Nan
1992, '93 - DUNCAN, Bruce
1994, '95 - GLANVILL, Reg
1996, '97, '98 - MIDWOOD, Barbara
1999, 2000, '01, 02, '03 - WILKINS, Anthony
2004, '05 - ZANTIOTIS, Nikki
2006, '07, '08, '09 - FITZGERALD, Paul
2010, '11 - SPENCER, Wendy
2012, '13 - COLE, Tim
2014, '15 - HUDDY, David
2016, - PARANTHOIENE, Rebecca

Appendix 5

Honorary Life Members

Alexander, Lorraine
Bloyce, Hilary BEM
Brown, Ken
Denham, David
Duncan, Bruce OAM
Griffith, Phyll
Griffith, Ted
Hunt, Joyce
Korman, Geulah
Lyons, Ruth
McCormack, Di
McIvor, Nan OAM
Young, Robert
Wykes, Jackie

Appendix 6

Featured Gold Coast City Gallery artworks

William Robinson - Rainforest
Charles Blackman - Firebird
Paul Evans - John Cooper
David Oswald - Untitled
Kim-Anh Ngugen - Spinifex 2
Camille Hannah - Venus in Fleurs
Andrea Hylands - Appendicile
Sandra Black - bowls
Chester Nealie - anagma bottle

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Barnett,	Andrew	32, 69
Barrett,	Nicola	69
Bartlett,	Ken	39
Battams,	Irene	23
Bell,	Trevor	81
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Boston,	Warren	80
Boyd,	Max	12, 23, 25, 36, 37, 49, 79, 80, 82
Brown,	Vicki	81
Brown,	Ken	32, 41, 67, 81, 83
Brown,	Tom	17
Bryce,	Esme	60
Campbell,	Sir Walter	11, 15
Cannon,	Geoff	80
Carey,	Maree	80
Carlin,	Liz	80

Catherine,	Lane	50
Charles,	Edward	80
Christen,	Delma	81
Chupungco,	Angeli	31
Cole,	Tim	41, 43, 55, 81, 82
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