

America at a Cultural Crossroads: The Fifth Annual Robert Gard Lecture
Given by Robert Lynch
June 19, 2003

This is where I went to college and I kind of played it smart. My mother had wanted me to be a dentist and my father wanted me to go into law. And I came here to Bartlett Hall, a building just around the corner and decided to compromise and be an English major, specializing in poetry with a particular focus on creative writing. This, I discovered, was essentially the secular equivalent to a vow of poverty. Because when I got out, I discovered that all the poet jobs were taken. It was an interesting overall education: Catholic grammar school, Jesuit high school, and public university. Sixteen years of rebellion, being told what to do, didn't do it, did it late, felt bad - perfect preparation for a career in arts management specializing in community development. It was a life of procrastination followed by guilt, a peculiar taste for self-abuse, a confused disinterest in personal wealth, and the need to get out of town a lot. Which I am still doing and it has given me a kind of strange perspective so I'd like you to bear with me.

The other thing I should note is from my Woodstock concert day and a half - which took place at about the same time - I was the only person at Woodstock with a Hibachi grill. And so I think that is when I first realized my unique abilities in arts administration, balancing the art and the practical aspects as well.

The podium here tonight is an interesting perch for me because I can look out of these windows and see fourteen years of my life. Out the back window is a place called Draper Annex, which is where we at the Arts Extension Service first worked. We would hide out from Dr. Bill Venman over there and try to get some things done. And then Hasbrouck Hall on the other side is where we spent another few years and I ended up at the library where the Arts Extension Service of Continuing Education landed. And as I said earlier, out that other window I can see Bartlett Hall where the English Department was and beyond that the towers that I lived in as an undergraduate. So, it's kind of scary standing up here; it's a big responsibility. I want to say what a treat it is though, to be here in Amherst. It is a place that I love; love of the University of Massachusetts; love of Continuing Education and what it has done here - what Bill Venman did with Continuing Education and some of the kinds of people who came out of that program and went on to serve their state and their nation as well. And a particular love of the Arts Extension Service.

And to have, in the audience, the actual person who got me into this business twenty-nine years ago, Senator Stan Rosenberg, is pretty wonderful. We met on a bus. Those of you who know Stan - you'll discover tonight - he's a very energetic and highly persuasive kind of guy. He said "You've got to forget about that banking and that real estate stuff you've been thinking about - you will love this new thing called Arts Management... could be big money." Thanks to Shirley Sneve for bringing me here and for putting me together with all of my colleagues over the years: Stan, Barbara Schaffer Bacon, Craig Dreeszen, Pam Korza, and Dyan Wiley.

When I came here to work at the Arts Extension service I was a mellow person. I was looking for a little part-time work to help supplement the poetry and the music that you just heard about in Barb's introduction of me. Stan taught me how to work day and night. Thank you, Stan. Barbara brought incredible energy and the probing eye of an engineer husband to the mix. Craig meditated on his first day on the job; we all thought "what the hell is this?" A guy comes down from Canada and pretty soon we're talking hot tubs... But, we continued to collectively work together and made big decisions - such as that Pam Korza - who some of you will meet - at the age of twenty-three was the best person for us to send to the Concord Correctional Facility for our Arts in Prison Project. What were thinking back then? I have no idea.

A couple of other things I just want to point out: Something I like to think about as the 'Power of Yes'. I was a person on a free bus with Stan Rosenberg and he suggested that I come and do something with an organization - not really knowing me. I said "yes" to that. Interestingly - if anyone is here from the Daily Hampshire Gazette - the first assignment I had was as a freelance writer to write an article about the Arts Extension Service for the Daily Hampshire Gazette. An editor there said "yes" to somebody who was not necessarily already a newspaper writer - he gave somebody a chance. Then, once here, Bill Venman kept the program alive. He shut it down several times and then he built it back up. We would go in, have a conversation. He took a chance on the organization to continue and to grow and to blossom into I think something that's been pretty powerful. So, the 'Power of Yes'. Giving people a chance is, I think, an important part of what we have to give as arts administrators to the future.

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Now, one of the things that I want to start off with is a paraphrase of a poem by Robert Gard. This poem often has been cited as a quintessential Robert Gard thought and some previous speakers have ended their talks with this poem. He refers to community and he talks about a mixing of people and backgrounds through art, a new view of hope for mankind and an elevation of man, not degradation; new values for individual and community life, and a sense here in our place we are contributing to the maturity of a great nation. If you try, you can indeed alter the face and the heart of America.

If you try, what may you expect?

First a community

Welded through art to a new consciousness of self:

A new being, perhaps a new appearance...

A people proud

Of achievements which lift them through the creative

Above the ordinary...

A new opportunity for children

To find exciting experiences in art

And to carry this excitement on

Throughout their lives...

A mixing of peoples and backgrounds

Through art; a new view

Of hope for mankind and an elevation

Of man...not degradation

New values for individual and community

Life, and a sense

That here, in our place,

We are contributing to the maturity

Of a great nation.

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That is what we, who come together to work in the arts and in community development through the arts, have in mind. What Robert Gard said so many years ago is what I think is the spirit behind this particular lecture.

Another poem, a very brief one by William Carlos Williams, is also something that is really important for us to think about right now. It's a very brief poem and it goes like this:

It is difficult to get the news from poems

Yet men die miserably every day for the lack of what is found there.

That is the power of the arts, the power of the message, the power of what we have to bring to the community through the arts and through the work that we do.

Later I came to know the work of John Gardner, former Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. Wonderful, wonderful leader; wonderful man. John Gardner also talked about the principles of a great community. And he had eight of them: he talked about wholeness that encompassed diversity. He talked about a shared culture, like a festival for example. He talked about the elimination of "we" and "they" in a great community. He talked about care, and trust, teamwork. He talked about leadership and sharing leadership tasks. And he talked about links to the outside world and, finally, links to the future. Eight principles that he felt made for a great community.

The arts are not one of those - the arts are not a ninth principle. But the arts are part of each one of the eight. And when we see something like a festival or the work that we do in a community that brings a community together, that eliminates the "we" and "they", that brings new ideas from the outside world, and that links us to the new ideas of the future - then that is contributing to a great community as Robert Gard first talked about and that is also a reason why the arts are so important and a reason to convince leaders and supporters of the arts about that importance.

Now, one of the things that I think is important to the arts is for us to keep our eye on that outside world. What are the trends out there? What's happening in our community, in our state, in our nation beyond the arts that we can link into? With that understanding - with that context - we will do better in the arts in terms of support and in terms of the ideas that we bring to our artwork.

So, taking a look at just a few thoughts: Bill Gates, in his recent book, talked about the period that we're in right now. He talked about this several years ago, but he talked about this period being defined by the velocity of change. "The velocity of change" and boy was he right. He was referring to business, but he was saying that anyone who's going to survive has to be able to, in business, understand that change will be quicker and quicker. If you look at businesses coming and going or even the way our entire society has changed in the last year, you understand that "velocity of change." You can understand that as arts organizations, our need to be nimble and ready to adapt is more and more important.

We often talk about the corporate world and the business world and how we can emulate it and learn from it. But I read that, even before the September 11, 2001 tragedy, some eighty-seven thousand businesses go bankrupt each year. That's twice the number of non-profit arts organizations that even exist. That change is continuing to happen all the time: a refocusing and a reshaping of the landscape. The landscape demographically is changing as well. The European and Canadian migrations of twenty-five years ago are completely replaced by huge numbers from Latin America, Asia, and other immigrants. So the landscape of our communities and of our nation is also changing dramatically. What does that mean for the kind of art that we are going to produce? The kinds of audiences? The audience needs? The profile of audience need? What does that mean given new kinds of support?

The same thing with the overall landscape of America. America is populated by more older people, living longer, spending money longer, more diverse, better educated - people who are going to revolutionize even

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the time of day that events happen. Or revolutionize where art happens: perhaps much much more in the home via electronic means. All things that we need to keep our eye on. We need to understand it. We can make our own choices, but we have to understand that context. You take a look at facts - random facts (I like to get information from some of the various futurist magazines and organizations). For example, one thought is that public schools will continue to lose influence to private educational efforts. If true in your community, what is that going to mean to the kinds of arts and education programs that we work on? More than a hundred million people will telecommute to work by the year 2015. What does that mean for our audiences? By the year 2030, the number of Americans over the age 65 will nearly triple to more than 70 million.

Now, take a look at some other kinds of change. Here are some things that you were not doing ten years ago: You were not checking your email from the road. You were not buying a car - or anything - online. You were not emailing pictures to family and friends. You were not playing video games against someone on another continent or maybe video games at all. These are all new changes that we're dealing with. Change, and technological change in particular, is not new; that's a 50,000-year evolution of change that we see evolving again and again. Technological inventions like the color purple that the Phoenicians invented, affects painting and design. The printing press, literature; the flat-backed mandolin, bluegrass music wouldn't exist without that. The amplifier, rock and roll. The toe shoe, ballet. These are inventions - technological inventions - they are not about the arts but they influence the arts and the arts influence them. So, it's a continuing partnership back and forth.

Now, when I'm talking about the arts, I am talking about a very, very broad spectrum. I am talking about things visual like craft and painting and film and video and sculpture and design and public art. A very, very broad definition. When I am talking about performance, I think of theater and dance and opera and jazz and popular music and multi-media mixes. I take a look at things that evolve on the stages of Broadway that were on the streets as hip-hop just a year or two before. Things mixed like the folk arts and performance art. I am talking about the whole spectrum in all of these art forms from the amateur to the professional - anything that's an expression of humankind's creativity. Not just the excellent, the good, the evolving as well, the amateur that the children produce. It's all part of this mix.

Now, Shirley wanted me to talk about the thirty-thousand year history of the arts. But in the interest of time, I am cutting it to twenty-eight thousand years. Twenty-eight thousand years ago, there was cave art - the first inkling of art came onto the scene and a new concept was born. Several concepts were born. "Your cave or mine" is a concept that probably came out of that. Enhanced dwelling through decoration and art. The beginning of destination marketing. The whole consulting and communications business. All came out of that cave art twenty-eight thousand years ago.

Now let's fast-forward to five thousand years ago: pyramids, the first great public art. Now, interestingly, unlike the movie when it was all slave built, the pyramids were largely public artworks, built by an agrarian society and workers in the off-farming season. And so we, those who do public art today, are part of a tradition that goes all the way back there to the pyramids. It wasn't good work in the off-season, it was kind of tough, but nonetheless, once again, an interesting arts evolution that we still see reflections of today.

500 B.C. - Athens. The first arts council. You know, a lot of you are running arts councils today. First arts council, first cultural district - downtown Athens. This, interestingly, though, was a community municipal government spearheaded and sponsored process and space. Multiple arts activities. Now each one of these things has drawbacks. In Athens, the cradle of democracy, no women were allowed to participate in those events. They were not allowed to participate in the public spaces. '

So, it's a learning process as we go forward. But there's this constant thread of community, of coming together, of synergy, and of cultural glue that we see throughout that twenty-eight thousand years.

In the 19th century, Walt Whitman in another poem starts to explore a new America, a changing America. The poem is called, I Hear America Singing, and he says:

"I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear, those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should ...the carpenter, the mason..." and so on. And he celebrates all of the different voices that were evolving and emerging in America. We started to see people investing in art work. One of the very first arts administrators of sorts was P.T. Barnum. We think of him as a circus promoter, but he brought the singer Jenny Lind from Sweden for a national tour and one of the stops was here, in Northampton, Massachusetts at a performance hall that still stands.

This journey has not always been smooth. In 1848, for example, in New York City, two competing productions of Shakespeare's MacBeth caused rioting in the streets. Now, I think it is great that there were two competing productions at the time - that's really good news. The bad news is - one was a "traditional" British production and the other was a "populist" American production and there was this huge debate about which was the right production, which was the correct interpretation. The newspapers fanned the flames of competition, so much so, that rioting broke out, soldiers were called out, and twenty-three people were shot and killed in the Shakespeare riots of 1848. The arts wars we have today pale compared to those arts wars.

In 1936 to 1939 in the Spanish Civil War, art was used as torture. Bauhaus-inspired abstract-art designed detention cells were created to try to make prisoners go mad. Sometimes it seems that same kind of activity is in college classrooms, but hopefully not here. In the Cold War, in Russia - I found this one interesting - whenever there was a crisis in power, the Russians would play endless repeats of the ballet Swan Lake on television, the official television, which would create an unintended Pavlovian response of fear and pain and doom among the people. So, these are ways that the arts have been abused and we have to be very careful about the power we have with us.

But today in America, we are seeing something that we have to recognize as a great celebration of the success of the arts. We only hear about the bad things. We read about problems. We read newspaper articles about funding cuts and so on. Yet, we are seeing more art today than has ever existed before in our nation's history. The Wall Street Journal came out with an article several years ago and called this a nation of culture. They talked about public radio stations having tripled since 1980 and 82% of the population getting high school diplomas when only 33% did in 1950. They had other indicators of a nation of culture and learning. The best one was U.S. consumption of red table wine; it had doubled in the last five years. So, all those receptions we're doing are very, very important to this.

Now, Whitman also said "to have great poets, there must be great audiences". Some quick facts about the landscape today. More Americans today attend arts events than ever before. Well over 50% of adults attend at least one performing arts event each year; up from 41% in '92 and 37% in '82. So, we are attracting more people. There are more arts organizations: dance, theater, music, and museums than ever before. More than 40,000 non-profit arts organizations serve American communities, up from 7,700 in 1965 when the National Endowment for the Arts was begun. There are more artists among us than ever before making a living as artists. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than two and a half million artists making their living in that way. And in a recent economic impact study that Americans for the Arts did, we found that the economic impact of the non-profit arts alone, not the unincorporated arts, not the for-profit arts, was \$134 billion: \$80 billion from ancillary spending and over \$50 billion from adding up all the collective budgets of those non-profit organizations.

So, we see this incredible growth, this incredible excitement, this incredible result at the same time that there's a lot of bad news - a lot of bad news right now about funding. I'll come to that a little bit later. What we also see is an increasing investment - and I think it's a good thing - in simply those audiences and those people who want to enjoy art as a participant and not necessarily as a professional.

I came across a poem by an amateur poet that was written in about 1835 and it is called Memory. I'll just read a fragment of it. This is the only way I get to use my UMass English degree, through some of this poetry in speeches, so...

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"My childhood home I see again, and sadden with the view. And still as memory crowds my brain, there's pleasure in it too. As leaving some grand waterfall, we lingering list' its roar. So memory will hallow all, we've known but know no more."

A sad poem, an amateur poet, but that early effort helped this sad poet go on with life at the time and grow so that some twenty years later he would write another poem. Probably one of the greatest poems from our American writers.

"Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

Abraham Lincoln. And Abraham Lincoln was an amateur poet, but he learned from his writing, he learned from the poetry and he was able to use the arts, and use the arts not only for enjoyment but as a way to craft his thinking and his policy, and the beauty and power of his words.

Let me turn to issues of money. Now, we're in a situation right now where we are facing one of the most difficult times financially for the arts in over a decade. Despite all the good news, the good news comes and goes when we look at financial support. The reason that we're facing some of the most difficult times right now is that all five streams of funding are being challenged. And I look at these five streams: earned income, people paying at the door to come to things or tourists; individual donors, thirty percent of the pot and those people are challenged to give money in other ways to other things; government, and we're seeing a particular challenge at the state level right now, which is very much effected by the economy; foundations; and finally corporations. Even though they are both only at about five percent of the overall pot, we are seeing both of them being eroded. Foundations because of their investment base, and corporations because of stiff market competition and a challenged sales base.

So, the money is hurting, even if it is only a small bit in each one of those areas. Arts organizations are dealing with this by downsizing in some cases, closing in some cases, and creatively entering strategic alliances in other cases. There is a federal trend right now toward basics and classics. The National Endowment for the Arts is moving on creating some activities that are more like a large presenter than exclusively a funder. And the private sector is being pushed toward pain-related charities. So, arts are not only losing money, but they're losing share of the pot of money. All this creates a challenging landscape for funding to the arts.

So, we have some survival strategies that we have to think about and put into place. We need to possibly have a more simplified cost approach rather than cutting out things, simpler productions but not fewer because if you have fewer products you are not in a marketing position to do as well and possibly risk losing your audience. You want to make sure that the audience appetite does not get cut down.

Let's look at government support. What we have to ask about government, is what do they care about? It's not necessarily the arts. Look back to John Gardner and what makes up a great community. When we look at local government leaders and ask 'what do you care about?' we find that they care about city fiscal conditions, overall economic conditions, drugs, unemployment, violent crime, streets, roads, sidewalks, quality of education, and race and ethnic relations - in that order. That was from a survey of 20,000 local elected officials. We need to find the arts in each one of those things. When we find the arts in each one of those things, when we essentially address community development issues through the arts, we are able to move forward and get government investment in the arts, and we get the added benefit of better communities.

Why the arts in America now? They bring beauty and pleasure and entertainment - yes. But they also bring explanation. More and more the arts are being used to understand cultural equity and fairness, in some cities, or helping kids deal with emotion and feeling and values, something that's critical right now. I mentioned earlier in the advocacy workshop that for me there was a first understanding of the value of the arts from a commercial film when I was in high school: The Heart is a Lonely Hunter. There's a moment in

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that film where Alan Arkin as a deaf man has lost his friend and he talks to himself using his hands walking down the street using his fingers. For me, that was a realization that I was not the center of the universe. There are other things out there, other needs. Art is what did that for me. That is a use of the arts that we are seeing cities use to help children understand who they are.

Now, Robert Gard was an inspiration to me and it's an honor to talk about him and to deliver this talk tonight. He prowled the back woods of Wisconsin, bringing new ideas, skills, and communication through theater to small communities and was able to reach clusters of citizens in every corner of the region. I want to celebrate that same energy, that same moment of community, clarity, and vision that Bob Gard brought through theater and through writing projects in those small communities. I want to celebrate that local triumph by talking about our obligation to bring the arts and all the societal benefits that we've just talked about to every citizen and every community in the nation.

I got here to this campus in 1967 as an undergraduate. My family had arrived 120 years earlier on the other side of that small mountain range that you can see out the back of the window. They came here to a place that was appropriately called then New Ireland Parish and it's now known as Holyoke, Massachusetts. If Patrick Lynch, the first to come here, came to your house in 1847, it was to come and dig a ditch in your backyard. And if his son John came, it was to do the master brickwork in your wall. And if his son Michael came, it was to arrive in uniform and to inform you of an infraction of the law. And if his son John came, it was to legally represent you for that infraction. And if his son Robert Sr. arrived, it was to tutor you in history. And if his son, Bob, me, came, it was to talk to you about the arts. It's the John Adams' vision in six generations. John Adams said:

"I must study politics and war that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy. My sons ought to study mathematics, commerce and agriculture, philosophy, geography, natural history, naval architecture, navigation, etc. in order to give their children the right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry, and porcelain."

Just like in that family history of mine, the arts have come to the fore slowly in a practical nation - the nation that we talked about historically before. For hundreds of years, here, perhaps even a thousand this area that you see, was home of the Algonquin nation. Art was part of everything. They were already an old, settled people two hundred years before Patrick Lynch arrived. In the 1600s, old Deerfield, just twenty miles that way north of here was the frontier for America's new European settlers.

So, if you go there today, you can still see the dichotomy that they lived. A daily need to struggle for survival, for food, for protection, and no time for a full embracing of the arts and yet a craving for things that were of beauty: the elegant design of a sturdy home, the quest for color in a floor or a wall, a few precious beautiful things like a piece of China or a hand blown glass goblet or a musical instrument. These people struggled against dictates from Puritan Boston to the east banning dance or theater or certain colors. They heard fearsome stories about a man named Stoughton who thought that the games and dress of children or the struggling and storytelling of older women might be witchcraft and he executed these witches in the name of a stern, unforgiving God. They made that man governor and they named the town that I grew up in after him Stoughton, Mass.

So, against this backdrop of obstacles to creativity and fear of the frontier, fear of the new and certainly a necessary survivalist attitude, some great adventurers and brave artistic experimenters began to emerge. The creative artists and the decorative artists in ironwork of the early blacksmiths. The shape of glassware out of sandwich glass in Cape Cod. The woodwork on the rails and the headboards of ships. The leatherwork of saddles from the Spanish settlers in the south and in the west. The libraries that began to evolve and the architectural design and the revolutionary thinking of the next generations that became our founding fathers: Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams. A taste for literature and classical music was being born. But not for most people who were struggling just to stay alive.

I think of Ralph Waldo Emerson in the early 1800s - perhaps one of the first Americans to live exclusively

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from his thinking and his writing and his readings - the explosion of hunger for thoughts and ideas lead to, in the 1800s, the lyceum movement and the arts and the speakers were brought throughout the country - Dickens and Mark Twain - to hundreds of lyceums that were set up on an ever expanding frontier. Soon there are - in the 1800s - some musical societies evolving. Interestingly, one in Stoughton, Massachusetts. The first in early 1800s. An unlikely place with an unlikely name. We see roving theater troupes like the Booth family and theaters themselves, like Fords Theater in Washington, D.C. - a slow coming forward. And the same pattern continues again and again. There is fear and repression and obstacle, there is a long period of sameness and waiting, there is innovation - a Franklin, an Emerson, a P.T. Barnum, a Louis Armstrong, a Marian Moore, a Robert Gard, a you. An old boundary is crossed and a new frontier established.

These are hard times. There is money difficulty everywhere. There's not enough appreciation of the arts. There is a desperate need for arts education. That's true today; that was true for Emerson, that was true for Jefferson, that was true for Pericles, and that was true throughout history. Now, Pericles also had the Spartan unpleasantness as well, but...

I imagine this is what Caravaggio thought or what Shakespeare thought or what Scott Joplin thought or what Walt Whitman thought. I have just come from Seattle. In Seattle, I was with two thousand glassblowers and in Portland there were eight hundred local arts agency leaders and two hundred and sixty public arts leaders and there is a convening in Minneapolis of all the theater companies and a convening of all the dance companies in Dallas and one of all of the museums in the western part of the country, three thousand of them. There are more artists and arts organizations than ever before. Yet, we cannot be satisfied. We owe a lot of people today and historically and in this country who struggled for that piece of art in their lives.

We know how easily it all can be lost. Pericles and the work of that time - lost. The Irish age of the great monks - lost. The books and libraries of the Roman Empire - lost. The Buddhist statuary of Afghanistan - lost. We have to pay attention to these kinds of things and do something about it.

Now, some people can always pay, the few, but some things are, however, not for the few. Some things should be for the common wealth, the common good.

One understanding that we must pass on is that for the common good, the arts are an important thing. Some things must be valued highly enough that people and society are willing to pay extra to keep them from going away. We have reached another turning point - it can go either way: regressive, backward, or a recognition of the value of what we have in the arts and all that arts contribute to society. A better society. I think that it's time for us to redouble efforts to fight harder not just against cut-backs, but for all that the arts can be. It's time for all the national efforts on behalf of the arts to create a united front as never before. It's time to pool talent and resource and resolve to collectively and locally create. It's time to put together the largest national effort on behalf of the value of the arts ever seen. It's time to create the strongest nationally networked advocacy campaign aimed at elected decision makers at the federal, state, and local level. It's time to create the strong, electoral voice that the arts have not had before - legally doing it - to work hard to elect national, state, and local leaders for the arts and art education and even harder to unelect those who are against this cause.

It was mentioned earlier that Americans for the Arts got a phone call last year. And it's one of those great phone calls, like from the television show The Millionaire. When Michael Anthony calls and says "You know, I have some good news for you." This was the call from the lawyers of Ruth Lilly and they said: "Are you Americans for the Arts, the former Associated Arts Councils for America?" And on that day I earned all my salary because I knew the answer, which was "yes."

"Uh, yes we are."

And they said:

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"And your goals are more money for the arts and a high quality education for every child and community development through the arts?"

And I said:

"Yes they are."

And they said:

"Well, Ruth Lilly would like to give you \$120 million over the next thirty years."

I said: "Bill Venman, is that you? Quit pulling my leg... C'mon Bill!"

But, no, it was the truth. One of the things I mentioned tonight is that our hope is that we have come as far as we have already come the hard way, with no money, and building alliances and fundraising and memberships and putting it all together and trying to do the job of those three goals. And now our board of directors wants to take the bigger leap, the bigger picture, toward the things I was just talking about: a stronger united front to really advance the arts in a much more exciting, and strong and leveraged way that has ever been done before.

There's a book that I love: How the Irish Saved Civilization. It points out great truths like how the Irish invented the term "well, yes and no." More importantly, it points out how the Irish monks kept thought alive and art and literature from being destroyed in the Dark Ages. Whether we like it or not, the arts and you here are the guardians of thought for the twenty first century. What you bring to communities is what people will get. What you bring to them is what they will get. And we are in a tougher time, money is tight, but money has always been tight and the audiences are difficult to find, but they've always been difficult to find. We can boil it down to one word and that word is leadership. Leadership. You. This meeting, this conference, what you do at home, the building of partnerships, the networking, the strategic alliances, the power of 'yes'... when a Hampshire Gazette will allow somebody to write an article and take a chance on them... or Stan Rosenberg and Bill Venman will say 'yes' to an organization or to a person. Leadership which allows you in the arts to do what you do and give what you have to America, which is priceless. The lessons of life, the content of history, the magic of self-revelation, the blinding jolt of creativity, the secret of life in a sudden line of poetry like what William Blake said:

"The universe in a grain of sand or eternity in an hour."

When we connect art, dialogue and policy, and connect that to principle, we shape the way we live. You can change the direction of one person, a nation, or a world. Thank you."