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When Helio Fred Garcia was 31 years old he decided to trek through several African countries. This first voyage through Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana began his love affair with all things African, especially African art. He couldn't have realized back then that the first piece of African art he purchased along a roadside and squeezed into his backpack was the beginning of what would become a significant collection and an avocation as a champion of visual arts institutions.

More than a decade after that first trip to Africa, Garcia's art collection had grown considerably. He had been living in Westchester for three years before his wife, artist Laurel Garcia Colvin, finally enticed him into visiting the Neuberger Museum of Art for a lecture concerning the museum's highly regarded African Art collection. Garcia was so impressed with the Neuberger he volunteered to join the Museum's African Arts Council.

"This is such a fabulous museum, it is very current and the exhibitions are world class," says Garcia. "But unlike almost any other museum, you can't just walk by the Neuberger. You have to hear all the good things about this institution and decide to intentionally go there."

It didn't take long for his colleagues at the Neuberger to recognize Fred's special blend of talents and within a few short years he was asked to be Chairman of the Museum's Board of Directors. As friend Jim Neuberger puts it "Fred is a team builder who creates a high level of professionalism amongst his colleagues. He has a keen intellect and acts with strength, respectfulness and inclusiveness."

Garcia was Vice-Chair and later Chair of the Friends of the Neuberger during a pivotal time of transition at the museum. After the departure of the museum's previous director, the board and staff were charged with maintaining the museum's level of excellence and setting a course for the future. Garcia's professional background as the President and Founder of crisis management firm Logos Consulting Group enabled him to guide the Neuberger from a unique perspective.

"It has been so gratifying for me to see how everyone on the Neuberger's Board rolled up their sleeves and got things done. Our efforts translated into something," says Garcia. And this is no small praise from someone whose career involves advising and coaching leaders of some of the best-known companies and organizations in the world. "Board members of any organization will say they care," he adds. "The question is 'Do you care enough?' The Neuberger has those rare board members who honestly care enough to see things through."

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## Arts award.(people who contributed for arts industry are honoured)

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Jim Ormond

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ON THURSDAY, APRIL 6TH, cultural and community leaders will gather to celebrate the achievements of eight individuals and three organizations who have made outstanding contributions to the arts in Westchester. "The annual Arts Award ceremony is the Westchester Arts Council's most prestigious event," says Westchester Arts Council Executive Director Janet T. Langsam. "It gives us pleasure to spotlight the individuals and organizations that make our county such a wonderful place to live." Community members wishing to join with the Arts Council in saluting the 2006 Arts Award winners can reserve tickets to the luncheon by call (914) 428-4220 x273.

### ARTS PATRON CATEGORY

#### HELIO FRED GARCIA

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### Westchester Arts Council Announces 2006 Arts Award Winners April 6th Luncheon at Rye Town Hilton to Honor Ten Outstanding Individuals and Arts Organizations

**(February 7, 2006; White Plains, NY)**—On **Thursday April 6th** arts, cultural, and civic leaders will salute the ten winners of the Westchester Arts Council's 2006 Arts Award during a luncheon at Rye Town Hilton beginning at 11:30 a.m. The Arts Award is the Council's most distinguished award, bestowed each year on individuals and organizations that have made extraordinary contributions to the arts and the community. Tickets to the event can be purchased by calling (914) 428-4220 x 273.

The recipients of the 2006 Arts Award are:

Arts Patron: **Onyx & Matthew Lifflander** (Hastings-on-Hudson)

Arts Patron: **Helio Fred Garcia** (Chappaqua)

Artist: **Melvin Sparks** (Mount Vernon)

Arts Organization: **Caramoor Center for Music & the Arts** (Katonah)

Arts Organization: **Westco Productions** (White Plains)

Education: **Frank Ingrasciotta**, Greenburgh School District 7 (Greenburgh)

Education: **Yvonne Pollack**, Katonah Museum of Art (Katonah)

Education: **Carol Walker**, Purchase College – Conservatory of Dance (Purchase)

Community: **Anthony Fazio** (Harrison)

Community: **White Plains Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition Committee** (White Plains)

"Leadership in the arts takes many forms," says County Executive Andy Spano. "Many artists and arts organizations who make their home here have achieved national reputations. But we also have many local heroes who, although not as well known, do incredible work on behalf of their communities. The Arts Award is an opportunity for us to show our appreciation for all these leaders."

"The annual Arts Award ceremony is the Westchester Arts Council's most prestigious event," said Westchester Arts Council Executive Director Janet T. Langsam. "It gives us great pleasure to spotlight the individuals and organizations that make our county such a wonderful place to live and work."

The Arts Award is presented annually to recognize those individuals, artists, and arts organizations that have made noteworthy contributions to the arts and the community. Previous notable recipients include Richard Haas, Ruby Dee, Ossie Davis, U.S. Poet Laureate Billy Collins, Renata Scotto, as well as the Rye Arts Center and the Paramount Center for the Arts. This year the event is being sponsored by A & A Maintenance, Adelson Galleries, Tony Aiello/WCBS-TV, Citigroup Private Bank, Entergy Nuclear Northeast, Hudson United Bank, The Journal News, and Sherry & Bob Wiener.

Recipients are selected by an independent awards panel comprised of professionals in the field. This year's panel was comprised of Aaron Flagg, Executive Director of Music Conservatory of Westchester; Dare Thompson, Executive Director of Hudson Valley Writer's Center; Lucille Werlinich, arts patron; Genevieve Brown, of Genevieve Brown Associates and Board Member for Paramount Center for the Arts; and Evy Frankel, Board Member for the Jacob Burns Film Center.

Westchester Arts Council, founded in 1965, is the largest, private, not-for-profit arts council in New York State. Its mission is to provide leadership, vision, and support, to ensure the availability, accessibility, and diversity of the arts. In 1998, the Arts Council purchased 31 Mamaroneck Avenue, now known as the Arts Exchange, and has since developed the building as a multi-use resource for artists, cultural organizations, and the community.

#### WESTCHESTER ARTS COUNCIL 2006 ARTS AWARD WINNERS:

**ARTS PATRON CATEGORY:** A person who lives or works in Westchester County and has made a significant contribution to the arts through his/her extraordinary leadership, personal commitment or philanthropic activities.

**HELIO FRED GARCIA** (CHAPPAQUA) receives the Arts Patron award for his support of various local organizations in a time of need.

**ONYX & MATTHEW LIFFLANDER** (HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON) receive the Arts Patron award for their support of the Hudson River Museum and Lyndhurst, and Mr. Lifflander's leadership in developing an education program that has had a county-wide impact.

**ARTIST CATEGORY:** An individual artist who lives or works in Westchester County and whose achievements in their field are widely

recognized and have demonstrated a compelling or unique artistic vision.

**MELVIN SPARKS** (MOUNT VERNON), R&B Guitarist, has played back-up for notable musicians, and has established a solo career. He performs in Westchester as well as in New York City and beyond.

**ARTS ORGANIZATION CATEGORY:** A Westchester County arts organization that has made an important contribution to the growth of Westchester's cultural life over a significant period of time.

**CARAMOOR CENTER FOR MUSIC & THE ARTS** (KATONAH) has shown a long term commitment to providing top quality cultural experiences, making it an integral part of the cultural life of Northern Westchester.

**WESTCO PRODUCTIONS** (WHITE PLAINS) has shown a long standing dedication to introducing children to theater and providing outreach to a broad cross-section of the population including hospitals and children with disabilities.

**EDUCATION CATEGORY:** An individual, group school, district or organization that, through extraordinary vision and leadership, has enriched arts education in Westchester.

**FRANK INGRASCIOTTA**, (GREENBURGH) An Arts Educator for Greenburgh School District 7, has demonstrated high quality in his work as a teaching artist and also, as a performer and playwright.

**YVONNE POLLACK**, (KATONAH) Former Director of Education, Katonah Museum of Art nurtured the development of Katonah Museum's education program, with one result being Museum on the Go, the education center at the museum. She recently has continued her efforts by supporting the Jacob Burns Film Center, while maintaining her support for the Katonah Museum.

**CAROL WALKER** (Purchase) Dean of Purchase Conservatory of Dance, has made the Dance department at Purchase College a model for other educators, and a competitor of Julliard's. She also played a role in developing a model high school dance program in New Rochelle.

**COMMUNITY:** An artist, individual, group, organization or agency that has demonstrated extraordinary vision and leadership in using the arts to enhance community life and enrich the county's cultural heritage.

**ANTHONY FAZIO** (HARRISON) demonstrated leadership in the development of the Harrison Opera, and has helped the audience grow throughout the years and now reaches several hundred people.

**WHITE PLAINS OUTDOOR SCULPTURE EXHIBITION COMMITTEE** (WHITE PLAINS) has been successful in initiating a successful Public Art project.

Photos & Additional Information Available Upon Request

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