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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Alameda County Celebrates National Arts and Humanities Month of October**

#### **Alameda County Board of Supervisors recognized eight recipients of the 2016 Alameda County Arts Leadership Award on Tuesday, September 27, 2016**

(Oakland, CA) – In honor of National Arts and Humanities Month of October, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors proclaimed their support for the arts and recognized eight individuals for their achievements and contributions impacting the arts community and residents of Alameda County. The commendation event took place during the Board’s public meeting on Tuesday, September 27 at the Alameda County Administration Building, Supervisor’s Chambers in Oakland. The 2016 Alameda County Arts Leadership Award recipients who received commendations from the Board of Supervisors are: Bruce Beasley, Kathleen Breedveld, Don Lewis, Susan Longini, Ayodele Nzinga, Sergio Suarez and the team of J.K. Fowler and MK Chavez. Attending the ceremony to celebrate their achievements were appointed members of the Alameda County Arts Commission and Arts Commission staff.

The Members of the Alameda County Arts Commission selected these individuals from a group of nominees whose names were submitted by the public. Award recipients were selected based on their achievements within the arts field and their contributions to the community. This annual program recognizes individuals or teams from each of the five supervisorial districts. This year, there were two recipients in Districts 1 and 5 due to tie-votes during the selection process, and a two-person team was selected for District 3.



Pictured in photo (from left to right) -- Arts Commissioners: Eric Murphy, Anita Carr, Diane Takei Gotanda; Arts Leadership Award Recipients: Don Lewis, MK Chavez, Ayodele Nzinga, J.K. Fowler, Bruce Beasley, Sergio Suarez, Joan Brown representing Kathleen Breedveld, Susan Longini; Arts Commissioner Arthur Barinque and Arts Commission Director Rachel Osajima. Photo by Paul Kuroda.

**2016 Alameda County Arts Leadership Award** recipients' achievements and contributions are listed in the order of the five Districts of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors:

**Kathleen Breedveld** of Livermore, representing Supervisorial District One: Kathleen Breedveld is the artistic director and general production manager for the Tri-Valley Repertory Theatre located in Livermore. For twenty-five seasons, Kathleen has brought community theatre and performing arts to the greater Alameda County. This has included Main Stage productions, smaller shows in a black box theater, adult and children's chorus concerts, and kids' camps. Thousands of adult and child performers have been encouraged by Kathleen's performing arts leadership.

**Susan Longini** of Fremont, representing Supervisorial District One: Susan Longini is a professional visual artist and program manager for City of Fremont's Utility Box Art Program boxART!, a private/public project to repaint 170 graffiti-covered utility boxes throughout town. She also served on the City of Fremont's Art Review Board as a member for 11 years and as president for 4 years. Susan is a nationally recognized artist in kiln formed (pate de verre) glass, having spent nearly 40 years working in this medium. Her work is widely collected and adorns many private and public spaces nationally.

**Sergio Suarez** of Hayward, representing Supervisorial District Two: Sergio Suarez is one of the most decorated urban street dancers to come out of the Bay Area and is a member the world famous Beatz N Pieces Crew and Fresh Dynamix Dance Company. He has spent the last 10 years educating college students at Ohlone College in Fremont. Over the last 12 years, Sergio has also mentored at-risk youth at various local programs and schools such as Skyline High School in Oakland and Weekes Community Center in Hayward. In 2008, Sergio established the All The Way Live Foundation, a nonprofit organization that utilizes hip hop dance to educate, empower and support youth living in marginalized communities in Alameda County and all over the world.

**J.K. Fowler and MK Chavez (team)** of Oakland, representing Supervisorial District Three: J. K. Fowler is the founder and executive director for Nomadic Press. MK Chavez is Nomadic Press' director of creative programming. Located in the Fruitvale District, Nomadic Press is a literary and arts nonprofit organization supporting emerging and established writers and artists. As a publisher, Nomadic Press releases chapbook collections twice a year, full-length poetry and short story collections, an annual journal, and children's books. Nomadic Press also hosts weekly readings and musical performances. As an active community member, the organization provides an affordable co-working space to writers and artists, leads environmental projects in Fruitvale, acts as a fiscal sponsor to unincorporated organizations and like-minded creatives seeking grant monies, and hosts and supports emerging art organizations for people of color, such as the Association of Black and Brown Writers and the AfroSurreal Writers Workshop.

**Don Lewis** of Pleasanton, representing Supervisorial District Four: Don Lewis is a music artist and synthesizer innovator whose pioneering efforts are the subject of a documentary to be released in 2017, "The Ballad of Don Lewis." He has taught courses at UC Berkeley Extension and guest lectured at Stanford University and San Jose State University. Don has

mentored students through school programs and “Young Expressions” performances. His "Say YES to Music!" assemblies have inspired thousands of students of all ages throughout the Bay Area and beyond. During his six decade career, Don has presented concerts worldwide, including the Newport Jazz Festival at Carnegie Hall, toured with The Beach Boys, and appeared with several symphony orchestras. Don is an active member of The Rotary Club of Pleasanton participating in service projects locally and internationally.

**Bruce Beasley** of Oakland, representing Supervisorial District Five: Bruce Beasley is an established and well known artist. His sculptures are in the permanent collection of 36 Art Museums throughout the world. Bruce is a very active member of the East Bay arts and sculpture community. Educated at UC Berkeley, he started in the 60's in a small studio in West Oakland and has never left. For more than 50 years, Bruce has had a prolific career in the areas of sculpture and public art. He has also contributed to advances in the world of 3D abstract art. Bruce has made a bequest to the Oakland Museum of California of his studio complex with an endowment that will establish the future Bruce Beasley Sculpture Center in West Oakland.

**Ayodele Nzinga** of Oakland, representing Supervisorial District Five: Ayodele Nzinga is an active member of the East Bay theater community for over four decades. As the artistic director of the original Recovery Theater she directed the cult classic, *One Day in the Life*, the longest-running North American African theatre production in North America. Ayodele, described as a renaissance woman, is an actress, director, poet/lyricist, theater producer, dramaturge, author, and playwright. As the founding director of The Lower Bottom Playaz, Inc., Oakland's oldest North American African Theater Company, she and her troupe made theater history in 2016 by becoming the first theater troupe and director in the world to stage August Wilson's entire, *American Century Cycle*, in chronological order.

For more information about the program or the award recipients,  
please contact the Alameda County Arts Commission at (510) 208-9646 or by email at [artscommission@acgov.org](mailto:artscommission@acgov.org)

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