

2017 MALC's Annual Champions of Artists Recipients Bios

State Representative Chris Walsh is the representative for the 6th Middlesex House District and is in his fourth term in the State Legislature. Currently he is a member of the Economic Development and Emerging Technologies Committee, Public Service Committee, the Financial Services Committee, and Vice Chair of the Joint Committee on Education. Rep Walsh is a graduate of Rhode Island School of Design, with degrees in Fine Arts and Architecture. He is the only registered architect serving in the legislature since the late 1800's and he has been a practicing architect in Framingham for more than 25 years. He has been honored by the American Cancer Association, the Metrowest Regional Collaborative and named 2015 Legislator of the year by the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission, and was awarded the Legislative Leadership Award from Arts|Learning for demonstrating distinguished leadership, support and commitment in the areas of arts.

Danielle Legros Georges is Boston's Poet Laureate, a role in which she serves as an advocate for poetry, language, and the arts. She is the author of two collections of poetry, *Maroon* and *The Dear Remote Nearness of You*, the chapbook *Letters from Congo*, and is the editor of *City of Notions: An Anthology of Contemporary Boston Poems*. Legros Georges is also the recipient of the Sheila Motton Book Prize, The Pen New England Discovery Award, and fellowships from the Boston Foundation, the Black Metropolis Research Consortium, and the Massachusetts Cultural Council. She teaches in the Joiner Institute's Summer Writer's Workshop, and as a Professor in the Creative Arts in Learning Division of Lesley University.

Ashleigh Gordon is a passionate educator and active violist with season highlight performances with Boston Modern Opera Project, A Far Cry and the Chineke! Orchestra (Europe's first majority Black and minority ethnic orchestra). She is co-founder, violist, and Artistic Director of Castle of our Skins, a concert and educational series devoted to fostering cultural curiosity and celebrating Black artistry through music. In recognition for her work, she has led workshops at the 180 Degrees Festival in Bulgaria; has been featured in the International Musician Magazine, Boston Globe and The Improper Bostonian; and was awarded the 2016 Charles Walton Diversity Advocate Award from the American Federation of Musicians. She is a 2015 St. Botolph Emerging Artist Award recipient, graduate of the International Ensemble Modern Academy, New England Conservatory and Baldwin-Wallace University, and can be heard on Mode, Siemens, BMOP/Sound, Navona and Musiques-Suisse chamber music and orchestral recordings.

Jonathan C. Rappaport is a musician, conductor, composer and Executive Director of Arts|Learning. Arts|Learning is the hub of arts education in Massachusetts and this nonprofit supports and advocates for the inclusion of a complete arts education (dance, media arts, music, drama/theatre, and visual arts) for every K-12 student in the Commonwealth. He has published 18 choral works and 5 books, and is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Friend of Arts Education (MA Art Education Assn., 2014), the Visionary Leadership Award (Administrators in Music Education, 2012), the Distinguished Service and Lowell Mason Awards (MA Music Educators, 2007, 2004), the Irene Buck Service to Arts Education Award (MA Alliance for Arts Education, 2004) and the Moss Hart Theatre Award (New England Theatre Conference, 2000). He has taught music, trained teachers nationally, presented at national and state conferences in over a dozen states, and directed choruses for 40 years.

Erin Williams is a playwright, theater director, dramaturge, Cultural Development Officer for the City of Worcester and Executive Director of the Worcester Cultural Coalition. The Coalition is a unique public private partnership which shines a spotlight on the creative activity produced in the region and supports creative placemaking through such initiatives as the WOOPass, Worcester Wayfinding signage program and #MakeArtEverywhere campaign and public events such as Out to Lunch Concert Series. Erin was the founding director and trustee of the 1794 Meetinghouse performing arts and cultural center in New Salem, Massachusetts and the founding director of the Big Small Theater in Philadelphia. She holds a Smith Scholar degree, graduating magna cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa from Smith College and she also studied as a Theater for Social Change major at the UMass Amherst. Erin currently serves on Central Massachusetts Creative Economy Network, is a founding board member of MASSCreative, and is a board member of Discover Central.