

NEWS RELEASE

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**WHAT: The 17th annual Friends of the Fine Arts Center Gala and Auction
Puttin' on the Ritz: A Salute to Hollywood**

WHEN: Saturday, February 4, 2006 at 6:30PM

**WHERE: Murray D. Lincoln Campus Center Auditorium
University of Massachusetts
Call 1-800-999-UMAS or 545-2511 for tickets**

(UMass Fine Arts Center goes Hollywood at 17th Annual Gala)

Lights, Camera, Action! **The Friends of the Fine Arts Center host the 17th Annual Benefit Gala and Auction** on Saturday, February 4, 2006, at (Club Casablanca, the Murray D. Lincoln Campus Center Auditorium), University of Massachusetts. Hollywood sets the tone as the entire lower concourse of the Campus Center and ballroom become Sunset Boulevard, Rodeo Drive, and the famed Kodak Theater where the stars (patrons) will be able to walk the red carpet, dodge paparazzi, sip on specialty drinks and indulge in feasting, dancing, bidding, and entertainment all night long.

The stage is set for great dancing and entertainment with Boston's only New York style show band, The Hip Pocket Orchestra. This group serves up real arrangements, real horns, and real talent. With a sophisticated lineup of three lead vocalists backed by a great dance band, this band has been making waves all over New England. They play everything from popular dance tunes, disco, funk, classic ballads, Latin, smooth jazz and Swing.

Chairing the event is JoAnne Finck, FAC Board member, Northampton Chamber Board member and partner of Finck and Perras Insurance. And who better to consult on Hollywood than Honorary Chair Michael Haley. Haley is a producer, assistant director and actor with 60 feature films and 18 movies for television to his credit, including five-time Golden Globe nominee *Closer* and the seven-time Emmy Award winning HBO miniseries *Angels in America*. Haley held auditions for nearly 30 UMass theater students to play the parts of fans, agents, paparazzi, stars and interviewers a la Joan Rivers so that patrons will really get the feel of Hollywood as they walk the red carpet.

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There'll be more than an Oscar trophy to take home because the silent auction will be busting with over 100 treasures of fine arts, original creations, getaways, catered parties, vacation homes, and more from local businesses. Live auctioneer Kathy Kingston returns to lend some style to the bidding. Highlights include a Yale Genton Wardrobe Makeover (including a \$2500 shopping spree, limo, and dinner for two), South African Photo Safari, Tuscan Villa, Newport timeshare, Basketball with the Chancellor, Dinner or lunch with President Jack Wilson at the UMass Alumni Club in Boston, 18-holes on 3 golf course for four and more to come.

Proceeds from the Gala will benefit the restoration of George Trakas' Isle of View, located behind the Fine Arts Center. The Fine Arts Center will also take this time to honor George Trakas with the 2006 Artist of the Year Award. The "Isle of View" was commissioned and designed by Trakas in 1980 and is a seminal art work from that time period. It functions as a short cut between the predominantly residential east side and academic west side of the campus. A constant stream of students, faculty, local school groups, as well as area residents and regional visitors cross its bridges and visit the picturesque island. In need of critical repair, erosion of the banks, disintegration of wood and metal, shifting of rock, - all have contributed to its current neglected state. The national organization SOS (Save Outdoor Sculpture), a division of American Heritage Preservation, has listed it as one of the more important works in the U.S. in dire need of repair. SOS put the sculpture on an urgent "alert list" some years ago. With the Gala proceeds the Fine Arts Center has an opportunity to secure a National Endowment for the Arts matching grant in order to complete the restoration.

Ticket price is \$100 per person. Individual sponsor tickets are available at \$150 and includes a ticket to the event and program recognition. There is reserved seating for all and complimentary garage parking. Corporate sponsorships are available starting at \$500. For more information, please call the Friends of the Fine Arts Center at 413.545.3671. For tickets to the event, call the box office at 413.545.2511 or 1.800.999.UMAS.

Lead sponsor for the Gala is Northampton Cooperative Bank. Supporting sponsors include Borawski Insurance, Jefferey and Mary Ellen Anderson, Applied Mortgage Services, Banknorth Massachusetts, Chicopee Savings Bank, Finck & Perras Insurance, Florence Savings Bank, Greenfield Savings Bank, PeoplesBank, , Realty World Sawicki, Sovereign Bank and Upton Massamont Realtors Sustaining sponsors include Bank of Western Massachusetts, Bulkley Richardson & Gelinias, Connecticut Valley Oral Surgeons, Hunt & Piech Dental Group, Jones Town & Country Realty, Les Campbell's Skymeadow Gallery, Lynn Griesemer & Bryan Harvey, The Lift and Whalen Insurance. In-kind sponsors include UMass Catering and the Campus Center Hotel, LHSD Advertising, The Daily Hampshire Gazette, Tiger Press and WEIB 106.3 Smooth FM and Yale Genton.

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