

FAAA Recommended Office Candidates 2012- 2014

Chair: Fran Wilson

As I assume the chair of Friends of African American Arts, (FAAA) my vision includes:

- strengthening FAAA's foundation by increasing and energizing the membership
- fundraising; grow the Jacob Lawrence funds
- educating the public about art
- acquiring African-American Art for the Telfair's permanent collection
- promoting collaboration with the other auxiliaries

The implementation of my vision will be in concert with FAAA's mission - to promote art by African Americans through public awareness, education, and exhibitions while supporting the mission of Telfair Museums. The attributes I bring to FAAA include the following, but are not limited to:

- administrative and leadership skills
- informing other of the importance of collecting African-American art.
- an experienced docent at Telfair and Temple Mickve Israel museums
- CEO of Fran's House of Art
- over 25 years of professional experience as a clinician who has integrated art as a treatment modality

Vice Chair: Gilbert Walker

Walker is an artist that works in several mediums, with a focus on blacksmithing. He found that his art as a blacksmith satisfied his love for African-American history and his passion as an artist. He is inspired by artists Phillip Simmons of Charleston, SC, and John Boyd Smith of Savannah, GA. History tells us that Africans were imported to the Americas beginning in 1619 as slaves. Some of these African slaves were trained as blacksmiths and they became an important part of the economics and growth of America. Blacksmiths on the plantations were sometimes hired out by their masters to do work for other farms in the area. Some of these slaves were allowed to keep part of their earnings and pay for their freedom. As an artist blacksmith, Walker is able to tell his story and theirs in art through custom-designed ironwork with stone specializing in functional gates, furniture, sculptures and wall accessories.

Walker is enthusiastic about becoming Vice-Chair of FAAA and being part of the prestigious Telfair Museums. He will work to maintain the mission and goals of the organization.

Program Chair: Tina A. Brown

Tina A. Brown is an award-winning veteran journalist, multi-media consultant, lecturer and author of *Crooked Road Straight: The Awakening of AIDS Activist Linda Jordan* (TAB Brown Publishing 2007). An avid collector of African-American fine art, Brown started her collection in the late 1980s. Fine Art Dealer Cheryl Sutton (Cheryl Sutton & Associates, Cary, N.C.) was attending the National Association of Black Journalists convention and encouraged Brown and her peers to begin purchasing original and limited-edition works of art by Harlem Renaissance artists and emerging artists of the day. Her collection is diverse and includes historical photographs by Gordon Parks, the limited-edition works of John Biggers, Jacob Lawrence, Elizabeth Catlett, James Denmark, Benny Andrews, Paul Goodnight and Jim Allen. Her African masks from the Gabon and Benign people and Shona sculptures decorate her residence and office space and complement her 18th-Century Chinese Country Furniture collection. She

holds membership in The Amistad Foundations, Juneteenth Committee, the National Association of Black Journalists and The Greater Hartford Chapter of The Links, Inc.

As Program Chair of the Friends of African American Art, Brown plans to help produce quality events that make it possible for our group to continue investing in significant pieces created by African-American artists. She hopes collecting museum quality pieces will continue to be a fun and enthusiastic hobby for our members in Savannah and the Low Country.

“It’s important to know what we are buying.” said Brown. “I was taught by a fine art dealer who encouraged me to learn the historical significance of my pieces. She directed me to books, national fine art shows and festivals so I could learn more. I would like to create programs so FAAA members and friends can meet artists and develop relationships with them and the experts who knew them. “

Membership Chair: Marguerite T. Birt

Friends of African American Arts is sustained by dedicated, active members who value the enduring history and works of art created by African Americans. As membership chair of FAAA, I am committed to:

- promoting more personal contacts with current and incoming members.
- engaging members to value, and participate in programs and events sponsored by Telfair Museums and FAAA.
- promoting strategies to increase FAAA membership.
- promoting strategies to increase revenue for FAAA.

Marguerite is retired educator, having been an Assistant Professor at York College in Jamaica, NY and Queens College, Flushing, NY; an Adjunct at Armstrong-Atlantic State University and Savannah State University. She is an active board member for Savannah Youth Futures Authority and a recognized self published author. Her works include: *Perfect Connections: Memoir of an A.M.E. Minister's Wife* (2003); *Foolish Pleasures* (2008); *Mockingbird, Is That You?* (2009) and *Teacher's Manual* (commissioned by Charles Fuller, Pulitzer Prize Winner, *A Soldier's Story* (2010)

Recording Secretary: Samantha Claar

My vision for FAAA includes an enhanced presence of African American related art in the Telfair collection. I see FAAA continuing to incorporate new members into the organization. I see those members willing to work on our Education, Fundraising and Exhibit efforts in order to provide funds for African American Art and to write the AA experience back into the visual history that a museum encompasses.

I have submitted a major educational, fundraising, history lesson, art exhibit idea that I think we can profit handsomely from and be many steps closer to a viable acquisition fund.

The exhibit, *Gullah Faces and Gullah Places*, gives a large, multicultural segment of artists the opportunity to contribute to a Telfair-related project. The experience of the gallery tour will educate many people to the significant, but often overlooked, contributions of AA in the building and success of Savannah. The publicity for this show will highlight FAAA and our commitment to building a First Class African American collection for our community, within the Telfair.

I am an artist and a storyteller. My paintings now center on the *The Gullah Living Series* which depict Gullah women in traditional activities. The paintings tell the stories that the women I paint have told me. I retired to Tybee Island in 2002 from Atlanta, expecting a laid back existence after 30 years in the construction industry. I am now so busy it makes my former life seem like a vacation. I believe there are no coincidences and therefore I was led to FAAA as part of what I am supposed to be doing right now. I have always been a warrior for all women's rights.

I view this artistic pathway of education and communication around race and class issues to simply be a continuance of why I am here in this lifetime. I plan to do good work and have great fun with all of you while accomplishing our goals.

Historian: Historian- Sallie M. Williams

My goal is to preserve the history of FAAA which will enhance appreciation for the creativity and beauty of African American art by present and future generations.