



**MEDIA ADVISORY**  
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**ANNOUNCING THE HONOREES: 2023 ARTY AWARDS**  
**Annual event honoring Topeka artists scheduled for December 6<sup>th</sup>.**

**TOPEKA, KAN.** — On Wednesday, December 6<sup>th</sup> at 6p, ArtsConnect will hold the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Arty Awards. The event will be held at the Beacon, located at 9<sup>th</sup> Street & Topeka Boulevard. Tickets are \$35 for all attendees and \$20 for artists who are currently making art. All proceeds from the event support the ongoing work of ArtsConnect to stabilize and support the arts in all disciplines across Topeka. You can find more information about the 2023 Arty Awards at [www.artstopeka.org/artyawards](http://www.artstopeka.org/artyawards).

"This year's honorees really exemplify how the arts can be a source of richness in all aspects of life. They show us how we can center the arts in our conversations about history and the importance of cultural representation and understanding. They demonstrate how both arts and non-arts stakeholders can serve as critical advocates for ensuring that the arts – and artists – thrive in Topeka," said Sarah Fizell, executive director of ArtsConnect. "It is important to shine a light of gratitude and recognition on artists in our community. They are the ones who will blaze our path forward. Their success is inextricably linked to our success as a community, and it is important to take a moment to stop and recognize what that means."

**2023 Liz Stratton Arts Champion Honoree: Sean Dixon, Visit Topeka Inc.**

Sean is being recognized with the 2023 Liz Stratton Arts Champion Award for his advocacy and support of the arts in Topeka as the president of Visit Topeka Inc. Sean's understanding of the importance of the arts in promoting Topeka as a destination has not only resulted in the commission of a new and significant body of artwork in Topeka, but is part of a movement currently underway in the United States that we believe will redefine the field of community-based public art and artist-led efforts to understand complex histories and untold stories. If we are to set the stage for success in the future, we depend on leaders like Sean who are willing to take on the challenge of this work.

**Community Arts Award Honoree: Living the Dream Inc.**

Living the Dream Inc. is being recognized with the 2023 Community Arts Award for their decades of work to pay tribute to the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by supporting the development of youth artists in Topeka. By hosting their annual art, poetry and essay contests,

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students in Topeka have a unique opportunity to be recognized for their talents. Through their work, Living the Dream Inc. reiterates the critical value of the arts and the work of youth in our community, helping our young people to develop their voices so that they can lead the rest of us along the path of social justice and change.

### **Literary Arts Award Honoree: Kansas Book Festival**

Kansas Book Festival is being honored with the 2023 Literary Arts Award for their commitment to providing access to authors, educational opportunities and more that would not otherwise exist in Topeka. In 2023, the festival boasted a lineup of 50 authors representing the genres of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and children's fiction through workshops, readings, outdoor performances, a book-art exhibit, food trucks, and exhibitor tents with 35 publishers, nonprofits, and individual authors. Events like this are critical in the arts ecosphere because they give Topeka writers access to renowned authors and experiences, fostering their growth and development as writers.

### **Performing Arts Award Honoree: Dennis Rogers**

Dennis Rogers (Navajo Nation) is being honored with the 2023 Performing Arts Award in recognition of the nearly four decades that he has spent dedicated to performing, teaching and sharing Native American cultural traditions with audiences in Topeka and around the world. Dennis is a multi-talented performing artist – a master of many instruments and modalities of performance. He has also spent countless hours giving back to Topeka and other communities in Kansas and elsewhere by sharing his immense talents with students, serving on boards and committees and stepping in whenever possible to support others in their work to prepare us all for a future filled with the performing arts.

### **Glenda Taylor Visual Arts Award Honoree: Dané Shobe**

Dané Shobe is being recognized with the 2023 Glenda Taylor Visual Arts Award because of his work as a visual artist and the creation of *Sun Hero Magazine*, which provides a significant addition to the visual arts landscape by highlighting the work of other Black artists in the comic book genre, which is generally dominated by white artists and voices. Dané is also well-known for his work as an actor on stages of all sizes, his knack for teaching and his willingness to use his voice and artistic abilities to support others.

### **People's Choice Award: Alice C. Sabatini Gallery**

The Alice C. Sabatini Gallery at the Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library is home to Topeka's oldest art collection available to the public. The nucleus of this collection is focused on European art nouveau glass and ceramics acquired in 1901, having expanded since that time to include regional works alongside those from all over the world. The Sabatini Gallery hosts exhibits that are open to the public and often built for hands-on interaction.

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*ArtsConnect is the premier arts engagement organization in Topeka. Working to promote the arts through building community connections and broadening the understanding of how the arts enhance the quality of life in our community. Get more information at [www.artstopeka.org](http://www.artstopeka.org).*