

Nominee Bio

Dr. Ruth Tan Lim, MD, has been practicing medicine in the Valley for over 35 years. A devoted arts advocate, donor & volunteer, (detailed in the nomination), she is also a passionate advocate, board member and volunteer for organizations addressing health care for uninsured children, the homeless, migrant workers and advocacy for non-violence. She has participated in 20+ medical missions to 10+ countries. Awards: Woman of Distinction Award from Soroptimist International, Mesa (1994), Hon Kachina Award for volunteerism (2001), Mesa's Woman of the Year (2011), and Heroes of Education Award from Mesa Community College (2015).

She serves/has served on dozens of boards across the Valley, including Mesa Arts Center Foundation, i.d.e.a. Museum, Mesa Sunrise Rotary, Health Care Consortium of Arizona, Parenting Arizona, Starlight Foundation and Children's Benefit Foundation (which she founded), as a member of the Chandler Domestic Violence Commission, and the Development Board of MCC. Dr. Lim has chaired the Task Force for Week Without Violence, and taught for decades in the Community Education Department at MCC. In 1991, Dr. Lim served in Operation Desert Storm and retired from the active air reserves in 2003.

Despite the demands of her full-time medical practice and board work, Dr. Lim gives hundreds of hours each year as an active volunteer usher & docent for several Valley arts organizations. Her \$50,000 gift created the Ruth Tan Lim Special Projects Room at MAC's Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum and her lead gift of \$1,000,000 helped build the new MCC Performing Arts Center in 2015.

Describe the contributions the nominee made to the development and growth of the arts in Arizona

Perhaps Dr. Lim's biggest contribution to the development and growth of the arts in Arizona is the way she exemplifies, in every way, what advocacy for the health of the whole person looks like—and unequivocally shows that, in her worldview, the arts belong squarely at the heart of a healthy life. As a doctor who actively helps the less fortunate rise above challenges to pursue good health, her support of the arts reflects the important value she places on broad access to quality arts for all people, especially children and young adults. She speaks passionately about what music does for brain development, and takes joy in bringing a wide array of arts learning opportunities to children.

She is also an amazing example of what it means to be an arts advocate in every way possible: known within her broad circles for outspoken support for the arts, she woos the participation of almost everyone she knows and then seeks to bring them closer to the organization and its mission. She leads by example, as an active member of arts organizations from the Symphony to Chandler Center for the Arts to the Heard, where she is a long-term member of the Guild. She shows the value of every kind of support, from volunteering to significant capital gifts, and across disciplines. When people see Dr. Ruth giving so much of herself to the arts, it sends the message to everyone else that, surely, they can do something to make a difference.

Why does the nominee merit the award?

Dr. Ruth Tan Lim merits this award because she embodies the defined criteria. She has been a leader, serving multiple terms on the MAC Foundation board and now also on the i.d.e.a. Museum Board. She integrates her other leadership roles, in health and non-violence with her arts family, encouraging cross-sector support. She is a full-time doctor, actively involved on multiple committees, and yet can be seen often volunteering at MAC, where she has ushered more than 2,700 hours over the past 11 years. She ushers/has ushered for Arizona Opera and Chandler Center for the Arts, and last year joined the docent corps at Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum, where one of the five galleries bears her name due to a major capital campaign gift.

Dr. Ruth's dedication is best illustrated by example. Last year, Dr. Ruth joined MAC's Street Pianos Task Force, and personally committed to a Street Piano Sponsorship, a \$2,000 commitment. She also asked how smaller donors would be recognized, recognizing the value of small donors, and wanting to ensure they would be acknowledged, but also wanting to invite a large circle of smaller donors to participate in this community project. Within days, she called to seek assistance with how MAC might bill these donors, because she had created a second "Dr. Ruth Tan Lim & Friends" sponsorship and had obtained so many donations of various sizes that she had already exceeded the minimum amount of the sponsorship. Her plan was to plant seeds of philanthropy in younger people with less money by encouraging them to make an investment, however small, and ensuring that they felt appreciated.

Describe the breadth of the nominee's support of various arts activities in the community and the state

Consider the incredible breadth of Dr. Ruth Tan Lim's arts support:

VOLUNTEERING: Ushering at Arizona Opera, Chandler Center for the Arts, Mesa Arts Center, and MCA Museum Docent.

LEADERSHIP: She served two terms, 2005-2011, on the MAC Foundation Board, returning in 2013 to a new term for which she is now in the third year. She joined the i.d.e.a. Museum (Imagination. Design. Experience. Art) board three years ago. She has also provided leadership that integrated arts, children and peace. Dr. Ruth founded COOL (Choice of Optimum Lifestyle) Hands, a program that teaches children American Sign Language and helps them create performances using ASL, performing at festivals, senior homes and other groups. For Week Without Violence, Dr. Ruth created a Peace Poster Poetry Contest.

MEMBER: Dr. Ruth is a member of many organizations, including MAC, Chandler Center, Phoenix Symphony, Arizona Opera, Orpheum Theater.

FUNDRAISER: In addition to serving on MCC's Development Board, Dr. Ruth has been active in fundraising at MAC for 11 years. She is also an active fundraiser on the i.d.e.a. Museum board.

DONOR: She was a donor to the Adopt a Seat campaign at Chandler, AZ, and has given generous annual and project gifts to a variety of arts organizations across the Valley. At MAC, her giving outside the capital campaign is well into the five figures.

MAJOR DONOR: \$50,000 for the new MAC to name the Ruth Tan Lim Special Project Room in MCA Museum, which enables artists to propose widely varying and often innovative or experimental installations; \$1,000,000 lead gift for the Performing Arts Center at Mesa Community College.

Describe in-depth one personal major engagement the nominee has had with the arts in Arizona

The most significant in-depth engagement Dr. Ruth has had with the arts is unquestionably with Mesa Arts Center. Prior to opening the new campus in 2005, Dr. Ruth was involved at the MAC's prior location in a former elementary school, where from 2001-2004 she volunteered as a pianist accompanying music classes. Prior to the new campus opening, she pledged \$50,000 for the MCA Special Projects Room, making a lead gift to the capital campaign.

This lead gift was not made in isolation, as she has continued to support the work of MCA throughout the last 11 years, and has now expanded that relationship to being a docent. In 2005, she joined MAC's board, and has been actively engaged ever since as a volunteer, fundraiser, leader, donor and participant. She seeks to expand relationships for the center, and has used her contacts at Rotary and other groups with which she is affiliated to assist fundraising for youth arts engagement programs.

Dr. Ruth tells everyone that ushering at MAC events clears her mind, allows her to refresh and recharge. For any person, but especially someone of advanced years, it is incredible to devote the time, energy and money to an institution in the thoroughly invested way Dr. Ruth does it. She has more energy than most people half her age, she has no barriers of ego or hierarchy that keep her from doing any job. How many full-time physicians volunteer literally hundreds of hours each year as an usher, in addition to being a board member and docent? She brings everything she's got to the institutions she supports. There are no half measures with Dr. Ruth.