



# Discover the magic of the collective arts

**Building a culture of ideas**

“Everything looks just the same as it did when I was a student!”

So said Eva Marie Saint '46 following her 2001 benefit performance of *Love Letters* at BGSU. Although Saint made the statement fondly to her audience, for Dr. Donald Nieman, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, it was a call to action.

Nieman says, “When I became dean in summer 2000, one of my highest priorities for the College of Arts and Sciences was to create new facilities for the Department of Theatre. The department had been constrained for some time by its building’s size and resources, and Eva Marie Saint’s comment underscored just how outdated the facilities had become.” He continues, “I absolutely believe that discovering the magic of the arts is one of the most important contributions the University makes to our students and surrounding community.”

In response, BGSU will break ground for a new arts center. This top-notch facility will provide a richly deserved home to BGSU’s numerous high quality art productions and, in keeping with the University’s academic plan that recognizes “Embracing the Arts” as critical to student development, it will help advance artistic literacy for all students.

During the past five years, the Department of Theatre has witnessed dramatic changes. The number of undergraduate theatre majors has doubled to more than 100 and there also have been steady increases in the master’s and doctoral programs. In 2003, the department merged with film studies to become the Department of Theatre and Film. In addition to undergraduate and graduate theatre degrees, it now offers a bachelor’s degree in film with two tracks of film production and film studies. Nationally recognized film professionals Daniel Williams and Jose Cardenas joined the department to lend their expertise to a model curriculum that combines film theory with practical application.

Dr. Ronald Shields, chair of the department, states, “The new center will allow the Department of Theatre and Film to take its place on campus both symbolically and spatially and will provide a facility that is truly worthy of the stature the department has attained.”

Senior film student Jay Ellison explains, “When I was a freshman, there were no film production classes or equipment available to shoot film. Since then, the department has purchased film equipment, including three film-editing stations, and recruited additional faculty. I already see significant improvements to the great film being created here. I can’t even imagine how amazing the films will be when students have access to updated technical and creative facilities.”

Shields adds, “However, the new building will do far more than house the growing Department of Theatre and Film. The shared

vision is for the facility to become a collaborative center for *all* arts across the University—from live theatrical performance to computer animation and puppetry, from opera and musical theatre to film. Imagine an interdisciplinary arts center where the energy and creativity fostered by working together allows us to become more than the sum of our collective departments, and positions the arts as key to the BGSU experience.”

Interdisciplinary effort is the defining element of the center. Students and faculty are excited about the expanded opportunities to work together that will result from being in the same physical space. The new facility is expected to form part of the thoroughfare along the newly proposed University entryway through Ridge Street and will place the arts physically and symbolically at the heart of the BGSU campus.

“The new synergies created by collaborative efforts provide an important opportunity for BGSU to stand out as a leader not just in education, but as a model for the new entrepreneurial, creative economy,” explains Dr. Katerina Rüedi Ray, director of the School of Art. “By adopting an academic plan that focuses on ‘Embracing the Arts’ and ‘New Media and Emerging Technology,’ the University has made a commitment to graduating the students of tomorrow.

As more research emerges about the link between economic revitalization and a climate of creativity, it is clear that we need a creative and educated population that is technically savvy. BGSU’s commitment to building a culture of creativity both on and off campus is exemplified in the center. With the well-designed physical space and latest technological advances, the building offers enormous potential for interdisciplinary art forms across many majors and departments, in-



Dr. Ronald Shields



Dr. Katerina Rüedi Ray

“If students at Bowling Green State University enjoy a superior education in music, it is due in large measure to the support of our alumni and friends. I cannot overstate the importance of external support for BGSU at this crucial stage. As state funding for instruction has dropped steadily over the years, it is the external support that has allowed us to offer quality above and beyond a basic education.

Two recent examples of gifts that have made a difference for our students were given by Dorothy Mackenzie Price and Norm Nitschke. Last fall, our instrument budget was far short of the funds needed to purchase a new grand piano for Bryan Recital Hall. Dorothy Mackenzie Price stepped forward and provided the additional dollars that allowed us to purchase the new piano. This outstanding Steinway concert grand piano will contribute to every guest, faculty and student recital and have a tremendous effect on the quality of music study and performance at BGSU.

Norm Nitschke and his family provided funding for the violinist Midori to appear at our Festival Series in February. Not only did Midori perform for students, faculty and the community, but she also presented a public master class for our violin students. It was an experience that our students will remember for a lifetime.

There are many other examples of donors who have made a difference for our students. These are just two recent gifts that exemplify the quality opportunities that our friends provide. As we recognize the difference between opportunities at Bowling Green State University and opportunities elsewhere, we thank all of those friends and neighbors who have made this possible.”

Dr. Richard Kennell, dean,  
College of Musical Arts