



The San José Arts Commission and the Office of Cultural Affairs are pleased to announce the recipients for the 2022 Cornerstone of the Arts Awards Program. Building on the legacy of previous years and in recognition of the wide range of important contributions to arts and culture in San José.

Chike Nwoffiah, Cornerstone of the Arts Honoree

Founding Director of Silicon Valley African Film Festival Chike Nwoffiah is the recipient for the 2022 Cornerstone of the Arts Award. The Cornerstone of the Arts award pays tribute to those who have provided effective leadership over time, leading to the betterment of San José's arts community and the quality of life for our citizens.

Chike has been a bona fide staple in the San José Silicon Valley arts and culture ecosystem for the last 25 years. In 2010, Chike created the Silicon Valley African Film Festival (SVAFF) and presently serves as its founding director. SVAFF is an annual festival, at the Hoover Theater in San José, including filmmakers, film enthusiasts, curators, students, academics, celebrities, government officials and community members in a shared appreciation of Africa. As the only film festival in California focused on films from Africa and its diaspora, SVAFF has become a magnet for African and African ancestry people in San José and Northern California.

A leader and a respected voice in the local, national, and international creative industry scene and a fierce advocate for the arts, he has testified several times before the California State legislature in support of funding for the creative sector. He served eight years as a Trustee and Grants Committee Chairman of the Arts Council Silicon Valley (now SVCCreates) and had oversight for the annual distribution of more than \$1 million dollars to artists and arts organizations in Silicon Valley. In 2013, he was appointed by the California Superintendent of Education to serve on the California Blueprint for Creative Schools Task Force. Chike is a founding board member of the Alliance for California Traditional Arts. He presently serves on the President's Community Advisory Council of the Silicon Valley Community Foundation,

Equity Advisory Council of SVCreates, and board of Pavillion Afriques at the Cannes Film Festival.

Chike has taken arts and culture practice into spaces that hitherto would be considered incompatible. His corporate communication and team-building workshops using drumming as a metaphor have been embraced by Silicon Valley's high-tech companies. A Class XXI senior fellow of the American Leadership Forum Silicon Valley, Chike created and presented a program he called "Cross-Cultural Communications in Drums" to his classmates to demonstrate how the metaphors of community drumming can be applied to daily work life.

Chike was a founding member of First Voice South Bay, an alliance of multicultural leaders in the Silicon Valley arts and culture ecosystem that was formed in the early 2000s and met monthly to network, explore shared opportunities and solutions to common challenges. He has always sought ways to build bridges between people and communities of various backgrounds. When our country witnessed a reckoning with its dark history of racial injustice which exploded with the murder of George Floyd, Chike quickly used his arts practice to animate conversations on social justice issues. When the infamous devastating earthquake of January 12, 2010 hit Haiti, Chike reached across to all communities, rallied Silicon Valley artists and successfully directed the first and only Silicon Valley Artists for Haiti Relief Concert. 100% of the proceeds were donated to the Haiti Relief Fund. From 1998 to 2008, Chike created the Silicon Valley Diversity Youth Forum, a full day annual gathering for Silicon Valley high school students, teachers and administrators to engage each other on issues of race, ability, gender, and creed.

He has won several awards and recognition for his work, including the 2019 Cultural Icon Award by Poppy Jasper International Film Festival, several Congressional and California Legislature certificates of recognition, San Jose / Silicon Valley NAACP Freedom Fighter Award, and Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Community Service Award. Chike was a 2021 Creative Ambassador for the City of San José and was inducted into the Silicon Valley Black Legends Hall of Fame Class of 2021 for a distinguished and outstanding career in the arts, music, theater, television, and movies and enhancing the lives of people in the Black Community. The San José /Silicon Valley NAACP best summarized what Chike means to our community: "Prior to Chike Nwoffiah, there was a void in this community of real, educational, entertaining, informative African culture."

Mosaic America, Creative Impact Honoree

Mosaic America, will receive the Creative Impact Award which is in recognition of a cultural or artistic project or special event that has made a significant impact on the community.

Mosaic Festival Silicon Valley premiered on October 2, 2021, as a free, full-day community-focused celebration of diverse artistic forms and disciplines led by artists and culture bearers from more than 20 distinct communities in San José and Silicon Valley. The festival brought together more than 50 partners to create a day of experiential arts engagement for more than 1,500 community members, featuring 28 performances from distinguished local artists and culture bearers, panel discussions, workshops, visual arts, food, and handicrafts at the School of Arts and Culture at Mexican Heritage Plaza in San José. Mosaic America's continuing outreach

and engagement work enrich community ties and guarantee that the Mosaic Festival Silicon Valley will remain relevant and reflective of all who live in and around San José. For more details on Mosaic America, visit <https://mosaicamerica.org/>

Rotary Club of San Jose, Community-Based/Business Support for the Arts Award Honoree

Rotary Club of San Jose, will receive the Community-Based/Business Support for the Arts Awards. This award recognizes a community-based or business that has made a significant impact in strengthening the vibrancy of San José through their leadership and support for the arts.

The Leigh Weimer's Emerging Artists Awards (LWEA) is a program of the Rotary Club of San José. The awards were established to honor the legacy of Leigh Weimers,- a lifelong champion of the arts, a 40-year columnist/reporter for the San Jose Mercury News, and longtime Rotary Club member. Leigh's column ran in the San Jose Mercury News for more than 40 years, and he was an eloquent supporter of the arts in Silicon Valley. A mention in his column could catapult an actor, singer or painter into the "talk of the town" and launch a career. He and his wife Geri were ubiquitous at the theater, ballet, symphony, art gallery openings, fundraisers, and literary events. For a more complete overview of the LWEA, visit <https://www.weimersawards.com/>

The 2022 awards will be presented at the Cornerstone of the Arts Awards event on October 21, 2022 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Hammer Theatre Center. Also at this event, the City of San José Office of Cultural Affairs 2021-2022 Cultural Funding Portfolio grantees will be recognized for their valued contributions to San José's cultural life.

Congratulations to the recipients for this year's Cornerstone of the Arts Awards!