

For Immediate Release

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Harris-Stowe's Don & Heide Wolff Jazz Institute Inducts Honorees to the St. Louis Jazz Hall of Fame at the 16th Annual Alumni Gold Gala

ST. LOUIS, MO (October 21, 2014) – Harris-Stowe State University is proud to announce the first-ever induction ceremony of the Don & Heide Wolff Jazz Institute St. Louis Jazz Hall of Fame to take place at the 16th Annual Alumni Gold Gala Sunday, October 26, 2014, at 5 p.m. in the Emerson Performance Center.

This year the HSSU Alumni Association has partnered with the Don & Heide Wolff Jazz Institute to induct this year's honorees: Don Cunningham, Marion Miller, Jeanne Trevor, Hugh "Peanuts" Whelan, Gene Lynn and Trio Tres Bien featuring Jeter Thompson.

"Every major city in the United States can boast about their local musicians that have lived and worked in the area during most of their careers – and St. Louis is no exception," stated Ronn Nichols curator for the Don & Heide Wolff Jazz Institute at HSSU. "Countless individuals have been entertained and influenced by local performers who have elected to stay in the St. Louis area and it's time we honor their contributions to the great culture of our city."

Don Cunningham was born in St. Louis, Missouri on January 14, 1931. Trained on a number of instruments, including the alto saxophone, he embarked on a career as a professional musician. Cunningham's quartet, which also showcased his talent as a vocalist, played mostly in and around St. Louis at such locales as the Crystal Palace until the 1970s when he migrated to Los Angeles, Calif.

Marion Miller has performed as a jazz pianist and composer for many years in and around the St. Louis Jazz scene. Born and reared in Kinloch, he has been making beautiful music for more than half a century and provides a musical service from a large repertoire. Once known as the "Piano Man," he played for many years at the Nordstrom Department Store in West County Shopping Center tinkling out contemporary classics near the escalators on the first floor. He is a former member of the St. Louis quartet that included Manny Quintera, Don Cunningham and Alicia Cunningham. Miller has been a huge influence on contemporary jazz music and its interpretation in the Midwest region.

Jeanne Trevor has been compared to jazz icons such as Billie Holliday and Ella Fitzgerald and has been dubbed the "First Lady of St. Louis Jazz." In the 1960s, she was considered one of the best vocalists in St. Louis, especially in the Gaslight Square district. Trevor continues to be a staple in St. Louis entertainment.

Hugh “Peanuts” Whelan played at Carnegie Hall and toured with the Lionel Hampton Band. He relocated to St. Louis and continued to work as a musician, playing solo piano at hotels as well as the saxophone with the likes of Myles Davis. In the 1950s, he joined the Jeeter Pillars Band where he got the chance to play with Nat King Cole.

Gene Lynn started performing professionally in the 1960s. He worked in clubs in and around Gaslight Square and performed internationally. Lynn used his passion for music to create other business ventures and opened the Gene Lynn Club in June 1971, where it featured such music pioneers as Nancy Wilson, Joe Williams and Lou Rawls until its closing in the 2000s.

Trio Tres Bien featuring Jeter Thompson was initially a St. Louis based jazz quartet founded in the 1960s. The group is now composed of brothers Jeter (piano), Harold (bassist) and Howard Thompson (drums). The trio still performs in the St. Louis area.

The St. Louis Jazz Hall of Fame will be housed at the Don & Heide Wolff Jazz Institute at HSSU and serve as a way to build friend raising and fund raising opportunities while acknowledging the musical contributions of great musicians to this area.

Additionally, this year’s Gold Gala is celebrating the graduating classes of 1949, 1954, 1959, 1969, 1974, 1979, 1984, 1989, 1994, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014 and the fifty-year gold class of 1964. Entertainment will be provided by the DNA Band, Jeffrey Hardin Group and a musical selection from each honoree following the induction ceremony.

Tickets are \$40 per person. All proceeds benefit scholarships for deserving HSSU students. For more information about the 16th Annual Alumni Gold Gala or for tickets contact Shirley Brown at (314) 367-8739. Tickets can also be purchased with a credit/debit card through the Alumni Association’s website via Pay Pal at www.hssuaai.com.

For more information about the St. Louis Jazz Hall of Fame or the Don & Heide Wolff Jazz Institute contact curator Ronn Nichols at (314) 340-5773 or via email at NicholsR@hssu.edu.

Harris-Stowe State University, located in midtown St. Louis, is a fully accredited four-year institution that offers 14 degree programs in the areas of teacher education, business and arts & sciences. In 2013, HSSU ranked No. 1 in the state in degree production of African-Americans in mathematics (Missouri Department of Higher Education). The university, which has been in existence for more than 150 years, offers the most affordable bachelor’s degree in the state of Missouri.

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