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**ArtsBuild Announces Recipient of the 2020 Ruth Holmberg Arts Leadership Award
Candy Kruesi to be recognized on March 10th**

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. - Karen "Candy" Kruesi will be honored during the 2020 Ruth Holmberg Arts Leadership Award presentation on Tuesday, March 10, 2020. ArtsBuild will host the event at the Hunter Museum of American Art from 6:00-8:00 p.m.

A native Texan, Kruesi earned a BA from Sarah Lawrence College and an MA in Slavic Literature and Languages at the University of Colorado. Following graduate school, she embarked on a career in government, starting as an intelligence analyst in an organization jointly funded by the CIA, DIA and NSA, and then working as a Special Assistant at the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Moving to the private sector, Kruesi worked as a senior analyst at the Rand Corporation. During her last years in Washington, D.C., she co-founded and directed Jaaron Art Associates, which produced limited editions of original fine art prints.

Kruesi has been an active volunteer in the community for many years, giving generously of her time, expertise and resources to support Chattanooga's non-profit institutions, especially its many arts organizations. Some of her notable leadership positions include chairing the Board of Directors for the Hunter Museum of American Art, String Theory, Chattanooga Symphony & Opera, and Mark Making. She co-chaired the MakeWork Arts Grant Program, which awarded project grants to local individual artists. Kruesi served as a member of the Development Task Force for the National Arts Education Consortium at the Getty Institute of the Arts, as a panelist on the Music Grants Review Committee for the Tennessee Arts Commission, and was a fellow of the Royal Society for the Arts.

Arts organizations such as the 4 Bridges Arts Festival, Chattanooga Theatre Centre and the Southeast Center for Education in the Arts, as well as more than a dozen local nonprofits such as the Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga, College Access Center, AIM Center, and McKamey Animal Center, have been grateful recipients of her generosity and leadership. She was a recipient of the Allied Arts (ArtsBuild) Bravo Award for Fundraising in the Arts and recognized by the AIM Center with the Life Achievement Award in Mental Health. Kruesi was a founding director of CapitalMark Bank & Trust in Chattanooga before it merged with Pinnacle in 2015.

Phyllis Mescon nominated Kruesi for the award. “A respected leader, valued consultant, organized fundraiser, and philanthropist, Candy is an advocate whose work, wisdom and generosity have nurtured and sustained Chattanooga’s cultural landscape for 37 years,” says Mescon.

ArtsBuild is proud to honor Candy Kruesi as the 2020 recipient of the Ruth Holmberg Arts Leadership Award. “Candy Kruesi is an inspiring example of incredible generosity, long-time supporter of the arts, and tireless leadership in the arts in our community,” says ArtsBuild President James McKissic. “She is an outstanding arts leader and certainly deserving of this recognition.”

ArtsBuild established this annual award in 2014 as the Arts Leadership Award to recognize an individual who has made significant contributions to the arts in Chattanooga and is actively engaged in the cultural life of our community. The first award recognized Ruth Holmberg for her extraordinary support of the arts and cultural community in Chattanooga over seven decades. The award has borne Mrs. Holmberg’s name since that first year.

The 2020 Ruth Holmberg Arts Leadership Award is sponsored in part by First Horizon Bank and Chattanooga Times Free Press. Tickets for the event will be available in early February.

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About ArtsBuild

Since 1969, ArtsBuild has invested more than \$75 million to support and nurture the arts in Chattanooga. Recognized locally, state-wide and nationally as Chattanooga’s official arts agency, ArtsBuild has helped shape the arts in Chattanooga by supporting its cultural partners, creating and funding arts education programs in Hamilton County schools, developing and managing a spectrum of arts grants programs, initiating an arts leadership program, implementing a strategic planning process and marketing effort for the arts, acting as a major fundraising resource, and serving as an arts advocate. ArtsBuild’s mission is to build a stronger community through the arts.

For more information on ArtsBuild and its programs, to view information on what’s happening in the arts, and to find out how you can [give to ArtsBuild](#), visit the website at www.artsbuild.com, follow on [Twitter](#), and become a fan on [Facebook](#).

