



ARTS & CULTURE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES

Please take a moment to answer the DACAC Arts & Culture Questionnaire for City Council Candidates. Be as thorough as possible as these responses will be shared not only with the general membership, but also with the public and posted in its entirety online at DallasNeedstheArts.com. Provide your answers in the space indicated; space will automatically adjust to accommodate your complete answers.

Please return these completed questionnaires to AVD@ArtsDallas.org as soon as possible. Thank you!

#DallasNeedstheArts #ArtsVoteDallas #TXArtsMatter

YOU AND THE ARTS

Give us a sense about your relationship with the arts.

QUESTIONS: Is there an arts genre or form you particularly enjoy, and what is it? What arts and cultural events or performances have you attended in the last year? What arts organizations or commissions have you supported as a Board member, volunteer, contribution or season ticket holder. Please list cultural groups and experiences, even if not in Dallas.

My father Philip Miller was president of The Dallas Opera when he was President of Neiman-Marcus from 1977-1983. This gave me a lifelong appreciation and love for opera. My husband and I will see our favorite opera, La Boheme, on March 29 at the Winspear. Broadway shows are my favorite cultural pastime – I never go to NYC without seeing at least one play, and when I miss them in NYC, I go to them in Dallas-Fort Worth when the shows travel. I love musical concerts, especially the music I listened to in college. Our area is fortunate to have great concert venues of all sizes; I recently discovered the Arlington Music Hall, a renovated movie theatre in downtown Arlington, that was the perfect place to hear Firefall, one of my favorite rock groups from the 1970s. The Kessler Theatre in Oak Cliff is also a gem, and where I like to hear Karla Bonoff, a classic folk singer from the 1970s also.

ADVOCACY

The role of an elected leader is in large part being a cheerleader for the City of Dallas and the things that make our city special. Dallas mayors such as Annette Strauss and Mike Rawlings, and former Councilmember Veletta Lill understood the importance of the arts to the city’s economic development, tourism, vibrancy, cultural brand and quality of life. (See attached one-pager.) They made the arts a centerpiece of their agenda and legacy.

QUESTION: What role do you envision for yourself as an elected Dallas leader when it comes to the arts? Where will arts and culture fit within your priorities? And what are the ways you would advocate for the arts in and out of Dallas?

I also understood the great importance of creating a vibrant arts and cultural community when I was Mayor of Dallas from 2002-2007. The best evidence of the success the arts bring to a community is our 69-acre Arts District in downtown Dallas – the country’s largest and most impressive – filled with museums, concert halls, an opera house, and an award-winning arts magnet high school (which my daughter attended). When I was Mayor, I often trumpeted a 2002 study entitled “Domestic Market Report: Top Tourism Drivers” from the U.S. Travel Association when I was Mayor. It concluded that “Cultural tourists spend more, stay longer, and travel more frequently” than any other type of tourist. Specifically, cultural tourists out-numbered tourists who came to cities for amusement parks, sports and Olympic events, golf, car and boat shows, camping, nature, hiking or biking. When I traveled with the Dallas Convention and Visitors Bureau as Mayor, or went abroad to Canada, Argentina and Japan on city business, or welcomed conventioners to Dallas, our city’s vibrant and varied arts offerings were top of the list for discussion. The opening of the Nasher Sculpture Center, shortly after I was elected Mayor, prompted me to create the Inside the Loop Committee, chaired by Belo Chairman Robert Dechard and comprised of the key downtown property owners. Ray Nasher had implored me to enliven downtown, which at the time was quite moribund. The ITL Committee morphed quickly into an



aggressive downtown parks initiative, which continues to be spearheaded by Decherd, and has resulted in the construction of new, public-private parks all over downtown. Arts and culture are the soul of a successful city. I know this firsthand.

EQUITY

The 2018 Dallas Cultural Plan – just approved **unanimously** by the City Council – placed Equity at the top of priorities for the arts. This includes equity in funding, providing cultural experiences in underserved parts of our city, supporting both the new and emerging arts community as well as our historic institutions. Additional resources will be required to reach this goal.

QUESTION: Given the many needs of the city, how will you support the goal of sustaining and growing the City's current investment in the arts, and ensure the Cultural Plan does not gather dust on the shelf?

As I always have – by supporting continued funding, attendance and political support for the arts.

HOTEL OCCUPANCY TAX

To help fund its implementation, the Cultural Plan calls for an increase in the arts portion of the City's Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) to align with peer cities. HOT funds are paid by tourists, not Dallas taxpayers. Currently, 2.6% is dedicated to the arts (about \$1.6M.) Houston is 19%, San Antonio is 11%, Austin is 15%.

QUESTION: Would you support a *significant* increase of the arts portion of the HOT to create and sustain a major cultural tourism marketing program, repairs and maintenance of neglected cultural venues, and increased support for arts programs that add to the cultural vibrancy and attractiveness of Dallas as a destination?

I do not know what the impact would be on non-arts initiatives if we *significantly* increased the arts portion of the HOT tax. I am happy to explore this as a council member.

ARTS IN YOUR DISTRICT

Name three areas of your council district where you think arts and cultural programs and experiences are most needed and would be welcomed the most.

Preston Center – The Northwest Highway and Preston Road Area Plan, which I helped fund and create, envisioned a privately funded public park as the centerpiece of Preston Center. I plan to pursue this key recommendation if elected. Rotating arts events in the park would be a wonderful, new neighborhood amenity that would be enjoyed by residents and nearby office workers.

Vickery Meadow – this diverse apartment community lacks many amenities enjoyed by more affluent areas of Dallas. The new library in the neighborhood provides opportunities for small arts performances of all kinds.

District 13 City of Dallas Recreation Centers – Opening our recreation centers to more arts performances would make it easier for residents of all ages to access performances they might not otherwise attend.

Laura Miller District 13
Received 3/15/19



Laura Miller, candidate for District 13, Dallas City Council

Please return completed questionnaire to AVD@ArtsDallas.org as soon as possible.

Join us for a Candidate Reception for all Mayoral and City Council Candidates at The Perot on 4/29 from 6:30 – 8:30 PM