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## GALLERY HONORS LEADING VOICE FOR THE ARTS

## ANNE NOLAND EDWARDS GALLERY IS A CENTERPIECE OF THE TORGGLER.

by [Jim Hanchett](#) | September 20, 2021*Above: Anne Noland Edwards, © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Photo by Sandra Sellars**Read time: about 3 min*

The main exhibition gallery at the new [Mary M. Torggler Fine Arts Center](#) will honor longtime arts advocate Anne Noland Edwards.

A native of Newport News, Edwards is the daughter of the late Lloyd U. Noland Jr. and his wife Jane Noland. She grew up in a philanthropic family that encouraged her love of the arts and her interest in civic advancement. The Nolands were very active in civic and cultural life in Newport News, providing transformative support for organizations across the Peninsula. The Noland Trail at the Mariners' Museum Park and the Chesapeake Bay deep water aquarium at the Virginia Living Museum are named in their honor.

Anne and her husband Gus Edwards have served Virginia and the nation in many capacities over the years, and their support for Christopher Newport University has been unflagging. Along with George and Mary Torggler, the Edwards were founding members of the Christopher Newport Arts Foundation, established to provide direction and facilitate support for the new fine arts center as it was conceived and constructed. Following in her family's tradition of philanthropy, Anne and Gus have made a leadership commitment to the Torggler, providing critical support for exhibitions and programs in the main gallery that will be offered to the community at no charge.

"Anne's love of the arts is infectious and it's fitting that this beautiful space will forever honor one of Virginia's most knowledgeable and passionate supporters of the visual arts. Anne believes that everyone should have the opportunity to encounter art and that by encouraging creativity and self-expression, we make our world a better

place,” said Christopher Newport President Paul Tribble.

“The exhibits in the Anne Noland Edwards Gallery will be inspiring, thought-provoking and open for all to enjoy with no admission charge. This will be a place of joy and creative exploration for generations to come,” said Holly Koons, executive director of the Torggler. “Given Anne’s legacy of local philanthropy, and her national reputation as an eloquent advocate of the visual arts, it is entirely fitting that our main gallery bears her name.”

While the 8,000 square-foot gallery is framed by outer walls, it offers boundless options for configurations inside its expansive space. Edwards thinks of art in the same way. “Creative expression, whether it be in words or paint or musical composition, is about freedom, integrity, and equality. It is difficult, I think, to draw boundaries around something that is inspired by intuition and deep emotion,” Edwards observed.

“The architecture of the Torggler was carefully conceived to embrace creative expression, to uplift our human spirits, and unite us as one. The individual exhibits that will fill this beautiful space will connect viewers to what is current and challenge us all to think more creatively, to be more present in contemporary society, and more aware of one another.”

The Mary M. Torggler Fine Arts Center will open to the public at 1 p.m. on Sunday, October 31. The Anne Noland Edwards Gallery will display work from a broad variety of artists, genres and periods. Details about the first exhibition will be announced soon. Following the inaugural show, exhibitions in the gallery will change seasonally, ensuring that there is always something new and exciting to explore.

Edwards has been an art columnist and jurist, and a member of the boards of major arts institutions. She is a leading voice for the arts and arts education throughout the mid-Atlantic region. After graduating from Hampton Roads Academy and Pine Manor Junior College, Edwards attended Mills College in Oakland, California, earning a degree in art history. Her career in the arts began after college with an internship at the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum in Williamsburg. That led her to become the first full-time art critic for the Newport News *Times-Herald*.

When Gus took a position in Washington, the couple relocated to Northern Virginia, where Edwards wrote about the fine arts for the *Alexandria Gazette* and the Journal Newspapers of Northern Virginia. She became affiliated with the Corcoran Gallery and College of Art and Design in Washington, D.C., serving as a trustee and a member of the board of overseers for 15 years. She was also chair of the museum's education committee, which oversaw public outreach as well as the operations of the college.

Edwards served on the board of the Northern Virginia Fine Arts Association and was a panelist for the Alexandria Commission for the Arts. Her interest in education led to her appointment as a member of the Board of Trustees of Oldfields School in Glencoe, Maryland, and chair of the Board of Trustees of Pine Manor College in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, which awarded her an honorary doctorate in the arts and humanities in 2006. She is the author of *A January Afternoon and Other Poems*.

Today, she is a trustee of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York, and the Delaware College of Art and Design in Wilmington. In addition, she continues as a long-serving member of the Newport News Public Arts Foundation.

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