



West Virginia Folklife Announces 2017-2018 Master Artists & Apprentices

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Charleston—The West Virginia Folklife Program, a project of the West Virginia Humanities Council, announces the first class of master artist and apprentice pairs in the West Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship Program. The Apprenticeship Program offers up to a \$3,000 stipend to West Virginia master traditional artists or tradition bearers working with qualified apprentices on a year-long in-depth apprenticeship in their cultural expression or traditional art form. These apprenticeships aim to facilitate the transmission of techniques and artistry of the forms, as well as their histories and traditions.

The 2017-2018 master artists and apprentices:

Genevieve Bardwell & West Virginia native Susan Ray Brown, both residents of Mount Morris, PA, will lead an apprenticeship in salt-rising bread with apprentice Amy Dawson of Lost Creek, WV. Bardwell and Brown opened Rising Creek Bakery in Mount Morris in 2010 and have documented and taught the Appalachian tradition of salt-rising bread baking across West Virginia. Dawson, a native of Harrison County, is a baker, cook, and farmer at Lost Creek Farm, a farm-to-table traveling kitchen.

Doris A. Fields of Beckley will lead an apprenticeship in blues and black gospel music with apprentice Xavier C. Oglesby of Huntington. Fields, who performs as Lady D and is known as West Virginia's First Lady of Soul, has performed original and traditional blues, gospel, R&B, and soul across the state, region, and country, including for a President Obama Inaugural Ball. Oglesby grew up singing in black Pentecostal churches and has performed in local a capella and theatre groups.

Marion Harless of Kerens in Randolph County will lead an apprenticeship in green traditions with Kara Vaneck of Weston. Harless is a co-founder of the Mountain State Organic Growers and Buyers Association and the West Virginia Herb Association, and has taught widely on medicinal herbs, edible landscaping, and native plants. Vaneck is the owner of Smoke Camp Crafts and has served as vice president and treasurer of the West Virginia Herb Association.

John D. Morris of Ivydale will lead an apprenticeship on old-time fiddling, focusing on the traditions of Clay County, with Jen Iskow of Thomas. Morris is an acclaimed West Virginia fiddler and tradition bearer who has been honored by the Augusta Heritage Center, the West Virginia Music Hall of Fame, and the West Virginia Fiddler Award for his role in sustaining the tradition. Iskow, a West Virginia University alumni and marketing assistant at the Augusta Heritage Center, is an old-time fiddler who has studied with numerous masters of the tradition.

Doug Van Gundy of Elkins will lead an apprenticeship on old-time fiddling with apprentice Annie Stroud of Morgantown. Van Gundy, an eighth-generation West Virginian, apprenticed with fiddler Mose Coffman through the 1993 Augusta Heritage Apprenticeship Program. Stroud is a Greenbrier County native who plays fiddle with the Allegheny Hellbenders string band and is a member of the Morgantown Friends of Old-Time Music and Dance.

The apprenticeship program grants are administered by the West Virginia Folklife Program at the West Virginia Humanities Council in Charleston and are supported in part by an Art Works grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. West Virginia Folklife is dedicated to the documentation, preservation, presentation, and support of West Virginia's vibrant cultural heritage and living traditions. For more information on the West Virginia Folklife Program, visit wvfolklife.org and <http://wvhumanities.org/programs/west-virginia-folklife-program/> or contact Emily Hilliard at hilliard@wvhumanities.org or (304)346-8500.

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The West Virginia Humanities Council is a nonprofit corporation governed by a board of directors whose members are drawn from all parts of West Virginia. It is the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, supported by the NEH, the State of West Virginia, and by contributions from the private sector. The purposes of the West Virginia Humanities Council are educational, and its mission is to support a vigorous program in the humanities statewide in West Virginia.