



## **Arts Advocates Fact Sheet**

*Inspiring, educating, and connecting people to the arts for over 50 years*

**artsadvocates.org**

### **Who We Are**

Arts Advocates is a membership organization dedicated to inspiring creativity, advancing education, and connecting the community to the arts. We do this through sponsoring creative educational and cultural programs, and awarding scholarships to students pursuing careers in the arts.

### **History**

Arts Advocates, formed as The Fine Arts Society of Sarasota, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit, held its first organizational meeting on April 24, 1969. By the first official meeting, October 23, 1969, there were 57 members. Arts Advocates now has nearly 250 members who participate in luncheons with notable speakers, workshops, educational tours, and other activities that support the arts.

### **The Sarasota Artist Colony**

Over the years, the organization has assembled a renowned collection of paintings and sculpture from the Sarasota Artist Colony – artists who migrated to Sarasota from the 1930s to the 1970s. Represented in this collection are artists such as Syd Solomon and Ben Stahl. They were inspired by Florida's natural beauty and the circus, which provided an abundance of subjects. Many began their own schools of art, helped found Ringling College, and made Sarasota an epicenter for the arts. The collection is on display at the Arts Advocates Gallery and in the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall.

### **Art Collection – Docent Tours**

In 1970, the Fine Arts Society purchased its first piece of art: Hilton Leech's watercolor painting, "Descending Yellows." By August 1970, works by Jerry Farnsworth and Charles McCurry had been acquired, and the collection now contains over 50 pieces representing a wide range of media and styles.

The exhibit at the gallery is open to the public every Saturday from 2:00-4:00 pm with free docent-guided tours at 3:00 pm. No appointment is required. Written information is available for self-guided tours.

Group and special tours can be arranged through Stephenie Frasher, docent team leader, at [stephfrash@comcast.net](mailto:stephfrash@comcast.net) or by calling 443-454-2206.

### **Scholarship Program**

The scholarship program offers tuition assistance to Sarasota and Manatee county resident students and is based on need, academic achievement, and artistic talent. Since 1969, over \$1,000,000 has been awarded to students whose studies include visual arts, dance, creative writing, music, theater, and architecture. Grant recipients have attended Berklee School of Music, Pratt Institute, Ringling College of Art and Design, and many others.

### **Arts Advocates Membership**

Membership dues start at \$55 annually for an individual. Other membership levels can be viewed online at [artsadvocates.org/join](http://artsadvocates.org/join).