

The Pueblo Chieftain

April 19, 2008

Arts leader to get lifetime honor

By **PETER ROPER**
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

Since 1973, Maggie Divelbiss has been as much a part of the Sangre de Cristo Arts and Conference Center as its distinctive architecture and prominent role in the community.

"I've always thought of myself as being in sales more than the arts," Divelbiss, the longtime executive director of the arts center, said. "Fortunately, I've always had two high-quality products to sell - Pueblo and the arts center."

On May 2, Divelbiss' long career as a champion for Pueblo's arts community will be recognized when she is awarded the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation's 2008 Lifetime Achievement Award in the arts and humanities. The Denver-based foundation gives three awards each year to Coloradans for distinguished careers in community service, the arts and humanities and science and medicine.

"Colorado is home to some of the country's most accomplished and talented individuals and the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Awards recognize the Centennial State's very best," said Dorothy Horrell, president of the foundation. "We're honored to recognize Maggie Divelbiss this year for her leadership of the Sangre de Cristo Arts and Conference Center."

The foundation's other honorees this year are Harry Lewis of Denver for his years of community service, and Dr. David Wineland of the National Institute of Standards & Technology in Boulder.

The foundation was established in 1962 by philanthropist Charles Edwin Stanton, on behalf of his late wife, Mary Madeline Bonfils Stanton, the daughter of Frederick Bonfils, one of the founders of The Denver Post.

Since 1984, the foundation has recognized leading Coloradans for their careers with foundation awards.

Divelbiss is a Pueblo native whose first career was as a school teacher, working for District 60 as well as the Catholic Diocese of Pueblo. She joined the arts center in 1973, a year after it was built.

"It wasn't my idea," she laughed, saying her friends, Pat Kelly and Kathy Farley, prodded her into joining the new arts center. She's been executive director for more than 20 years.



Maggie Divelbiss' long career as a champion for Pueblo's arts community will be recognized May 2 when she is awarded the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation's 2008 Lifetime Achievement Award in the arts and humanities.

"More than anything else, I have always been blessed with a very talented staff here at the arts center, and that still holds true today," Divelbiss said.

The foundation noted that during Divelbiss' tenure as director, the arts center expanded its community programs, built a Children's Museum, and solidified its financial base.

In his comments to the foundation when he nominated her for the honor, Pueblo Chieftain Publisher Robert Rawlings said, "The entire Pueblo community deeply appreciates Maggie's leadership of the Sangre de Cristo Arts and Conference Center. Under her administration, the center has blossomed to be a Southern Colorado arts and humanities treasure."

Divelbiss has been recognized many times in her career, but she said the Bonfils-Stanton award was an unexpected honor. Along with the recognition, she also will receive a \$35,000 prize.

So, does the foundation award signal that Divelbiss is preparing to retire?

"In December 2010," she answered. "I've had a wonderful time here, but it's also time for someone new. I'm comfortable with that."

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