



Ethnic Heritage Council

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Ethnic Heritage Council announces 2019 Recipients of Pulakis and Tracie Memorial Awards. University of Washington President to receive “Spirit of Liberty” Award

The Ethnic Heritage Council (EHC) is proud to announce this year’s award recipients to be honored at the Annual Meeting Dinner and Awards Ceremony on Sunday, May 19, 4-7 p.m. at Washington Hall, 153 14th Ave, Seattle, WA 98122. Tickets are \$50.00, available now at www.ethnicheritagecouncil.org

Ana Mari Cauce, Ph.D. President of the University of Washington, will receive the “Spirit of Liberty” Award, established in 1986 and given to a naturalized citizen who has made a significant contribution to his or her ethnic community and ethnic heritage, as well as to the community at large.

Edith Christensen, Ed.D., President of the Northwest Danish Association, is the recipient of the 2019 Aspasia Phoutrides Pulakis Memorial Award, established in 1983 for significant contributions to an ethnic community and to the community at large. The award is named for a revered founding member of EHC who exemplified the organization’s mission.

Ben Hunter and Joe Seamons of the American roots music band, Ben and Joe Band, will receive the 2019 Gordon Ekvall Tracie Memorial Award, established in 1990 for excellence in ethnic performance and leadership in the community in the traditional cultural arts. It is named for a musician and documentarian, who devoted four decades to the study, performance and promotion of Nordic traditional music and dance. The Gordon Ekvall Tracie Music Library is located in the Nordic Museum of Seattle.

See Biographies below



Ana Mari Cauce, Ph.D.



Edith Christensen, Ed.D.



Ben Hunter and Joe Seamons

BIOGRAPHIES

Ana Mari Cauce, Ph.D.

University of Washington President Ana Mari Cauce's dedication to inclusion and education may have its roots all the way back to kindergarten. Her family had settled in Miami before the majority of Cuban immigrants arrived in the **U.S.**, so her teacher made Ana Mari cultural liaison, translating for immigrant children and parents. When people applaud her skill in bringing people together, she says it comes in part from helping her parents understand the American culture. Her father had served as minister of education in Cuba, but in America both parents held working class jobs, including work at a shoe factory.

President Cauce's Ph.D. in psychology, with a concentration in child clinical and community psychology led to a focus on diversity concerns. She is a professor of Psychology and American Ethnic Studies, with secondary appointments in the Department of Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies and the College of Education. Her research and teaching have prepared her for the cultural divides in the U.S. today, especially as they result in inequities in access to education. Almost a decade before she became president, she was instrumental in launching the [Husky Promise](#), which guarantees full tuition for eligible Washington students who otherwise could not attend college. She meets with students on a regular basis, pointing out to the community at large that higher education credentials are increasingly important for entry into middle class professions.

Her parents never returned to Cuba, but Cauce has returned several times, including a trip on the inaugural flight of Alaska Airlines to Havana in 2017.

"I feel incredibly fortunate," she says, "to be able to help build the connections that will surely grow between the city and country of my birth and Seattle and the state of Washington, which is now my home."

Edith Christensen, Ed.D.

“Edith came in like a storm,” says Eva Bryce, a fellow member of the Northwest Danish Association, describing the impact of Edith Christensen’s leadership skills. “In the past eleven years she has served as president, manager, property manager and event coordinator to keep the Danish Community in the Puget Sound Region connected.”

Born in a Danish enclave in Montana and speaking only Danish until school entrance, Edith moved with her family to Seattle as a child. Their first apartment was a block from Washington Hall, where her father continued his membership in the Danish Brotherhood and her mother the Sisterhood. Their deep involvements are the seeds that blossomed as Edith’s cultural passion.

Originally educated as a pharmacist, Edith founded Evergreen School for Gifted Children in Shoreline in 1963. Bob Fuller, former board member of The Evergreen School calls her a “fiscal conservative,” whose methods put her creativity at full throttle. She started with six students and today Evergreen has more than 470. She took no salary for the first 14 years and was aided in the financial planning by her very committed husband, Frank, a CPA. While teaching and running the school she earned both a master’s degree and a doctorate in education. Alfred Yi, now enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania, credits Edith’s teaching and the school for giving him direction early in life. “Coming from a family who speaks Korean in the house and with no experience navigating higher education, Dr. Christensen helped facilitate my learning and growth to become a successful student.” The last two years of their Evergreen experience, seventh and eighth grade students prepare for an overseas trip through language, culture and history sessions, a program begun by Edith and a teacher many years ago.

“When Edith sees a problem, she will find a solution,” says Sonja Kromann, NWDA board member. “Under Edith’s leadership the Danish Association’s building stays fully rented. There is a library, a monthly gathering at a Danish café, countless fundraising events from live auctions and aquavit tastings to online fundraising, and special focus on youth with the Dane Camp and a young Danish parents child group. The NWDA has taken on the leadership, administrative, and financial support of two major programs in the Pacific Northwest Danish American community: the Danish American Cultural Retreat now in its 41st year, and the Himmelbjerget Danish Camp for tweens and teens. Both these programs take place at the Menucha Retreat and Conference Center in Corbett, Oregon. Edith’s impact in partnership with the Danish Community in the Northwest has indeed been felt far beyond Seattle. Edith can be reached at seattle@nwdanish.org

Ben Hunter and Joe Seamons

Ben Hunter and Joe Seamons of the Ben and Joe Band are researchers and performers of African American folk music and other American roots styles, particularly from the early 1900s, when thousands of immigrants arrived in the Northwest for farming, logging, fishing and coal mining. On May 19 at the Annual Dinner Meeting and Awards Ceremony of the Ethnic Heritage Council, Ben and Joe will perform in Washington Hall, where many ethnic communities of the early 1900s held their events before building their own halls and churches.

Hunter, born in the African nation of Lesotho and raised in Phoenix, Arizona, is a classically trained violinist who studied music around the world. Seamons, raised in the backwoods of Northwestern Oregon, plays the banjo and is devoted to Northwest American folk music. He is the executive producer of the new Smithsonian Folkways album, "Roll Columbia: Woody Guthrie's 26 Northwest Songs."

Hunter and Seamons are nationally and internationally acclaimed, winning the International Blues Challenge in 2016. Their local impact is profound. When Ben and Joe invited Sidney Deering of the Radost Folk Ensemble to do a dance workshop, they offered an amount lower than she usually charges. "But when I got to their Hillman City Collaborative space," says Deering, "and saw what they were doing, I said 'Keep your money. You guys are saving the world through folklore.'"

"Ben and Joe are pillars in the South Seattle community," says Beth Fortune, Director of Orchestras at Seattle's Washington Middle School and now at Ballard High School. She is also Director of Education for Wintergrass Festival, where Ben and Joe have been instrumental in the teen programming as educators and performers. "They mentor and impact students not only in the learning of music, but also in the making of positive life choices. They open people's eyes to pressing issues involving the underrepresented."

Professor Patricia Campbell of the University of Washington Music Department invites Ben and Joe to her classes as artist-teachers. "Their presentations are so impressive," says Campbell, as they artfully deliver the essence of their accumulated knowledge of music, education, and culture to music students who are preparing for work in schools and the community."

Ben and Joe bring the past to life with music and storytelling to show how the past still lives in the present. This mission will live on in their dedication to the restoration and reopening of Black and Tan Hall, an integrated nightclub in Hillman City, where blacks and whites mingled and performed together beginning in the early 1900s. Ben and Joe can be reached at BenandJoeBand@gmail.com