

CONNIE BONFY

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY and CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- Results driven leader with more than **40+ years** of creating multi-faceted arts leadership and varied grant development and management including **\$44 million+** in higher education, arts, and other grant monies between 1993 and 2025.
- Nonprofit Leadership Strengths: strategic planning, community-based program development, budget management, national best practices, innovative solutions, consensus building, marketing, and fund development/grant writing (see partial grant list on page 3). A few summaries:
 - Commissioned/produced two symphonies performed on the Cowley County prairie with Grammy Award winners **Eugene Friesen** and **The Paul Winter Consort** (*Grasslands: Prairie Voices* 1997, featuring **Wes Jackson** as narrator, and *Carl's Sandburg's Prairie*, 2001) and one chamber music work by Grammy-nominated pianist **Philip Aaberg** (*Headfirst into the Blue Fields of Grace*, 2005)—all with community-based residencies, performances, workshops, and educational services—designed to explore the sense of place and ecology of the Tallgrass Prairie. Advisor for **Symphony in the Flint Hills**, launching their first Kansas City Symphony concert in 2006 featuring a reprise of Friesen's *Grasslands: Prairie Voices*.
 - Kansas Governor's Arts Award for Arts Advocacy Leadership, 2001
 - Gordan W. Evans Arts Award for Leadership, Wichita Arts Council, 2019
 - Kansas Governor's Arts Award—*Kansas Arts Legacy Award*, 2025

EDUCATION

- **M.A. in Art Education**, Wichita State University, 1986. Thesis: *Community Arts and Public Interest in Kansas*
- **Graduate studies in Painting**, Wichita State University; and **Printmaking** with Kathleen Shanahan
- **Graduate studies in Art Education**, Oklahoma State University
- **B.A. in Art - Drawing & Painting/Art History and Psychology**, Emporia Kansas State University

EXPERIENCE

- Currently: **Executive Director** for the **Arts Council**, Inc. in Wichita, KS
 Grant Writer/Program Advisor for Wichita Art Museum and Ballet Wichita.
 Author—*Grant Writing in 5 Simple Steps*, 2023; *Grant Writing for Creatives in 5 Simple Steps*, 2024
- 2008-2024 **Grant Writer for Ramona Munsell & Associates Consultants, Inc.**
- 1986-2025 **Instructor: Butler College**, Andover, Kansas (2005-2008, 2010-2015, Online 2018 to present); formerly **WSU Tech** (2010-2011); **Cowley College**, Arkansas City, Kansas (1986-1989) (2000-2006); **Wichita State University** (1986-1989), **teaching Art Appreciation, Art History, Humanities, Film History, Creativity, Pop Culture**
- 2020-2022 **Project Manager** for *Flint Hills Counterpoint*, a riparian forest and prairie reclamation arts event with Marion County, KS sponsored by Prairie Muses.

- 2019-2020 **Kansas Rural Center, Executive Director** statewide agency to promote the long-term health of the land and its people through research, education and advocacy that advance an economically viable, ecologically sound, and socially just food & farms.
- 2017-2019 **Project Manager, VibrantICT**, a John and James L. Knight Foundation project—Downtown Wichita), and *Jump!Star*, a two-year artist/community National Endowment social engagement project with Harvester Arts and Symphony in the Flint Hills)
- 2008-2010 City of Salina, Salina Arts and Humanities Commission and Foundation, **Executive Director** Salina, KS—public art coordination + board, staff, development, membership and budget (\$2 million+) management, and festival oversight
- 2007-2009 Butler Community College, **Director Resource Development**, El Dorado, KS—grants leadership, writing, compliance, and staff supervision
- 2005-2007 Ballet Wichita, **Executive Director**, Wichita, Kansas—strategic planning, organizational development, board, staff, and volunteer management
- 1994-2005 Cowley College, **Director of Institutional Grants/Arts Programming**, Arkansas City, Kansas—grants leadership, writing, compliance; arts strategic planning, program creation for professional exhibitions, world-class performance presenting, and festival development, staff and volunteer management
- 1991-1994 Salina Arts and Humanities Commission, **Program Coordinator of Education**, Salina, Kansas—arts infusion education program development with USD 359, grants, implementation, and supervision + volunteer leadership, and festival development
- 1989-1991 The Santa Fe Desert Chorale, **Executive Director**, Santa Fe, New Mexico—organizational development, board, staff, and volunteer management
- 1976-1989 Arkansas City Arts Council, **Executive Director** – strategic planning and organizational development, grassroots fundraising, grants, festival and program growth

AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS, PROFESSIONAL AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP (selected)

- Kansas Governor’s Arts Award—*Kansas Arts Legacy Award, 2025* for a lifetime of long-standing, significant impact on the arts in Kansas and/or beyond, enriching the cultural landscape through artistic achievements, leadership, and advocacy over many years.
- *Gordan W. Evans Arts Award for Leadership*, Wichita Arts Council, 2019.
- *Climate Reality Leader* certification by Vice President Al Gore, 2013
- Presenter, “Playing for Change” St. Louis Regional Arts Council’s “At the Crossroads: A Community Arts & Development Convening,” 2010
- National Institute of Staff Development Award of Excellence in Education, 2009
- *Award of Distinction*, Butler Community College, 2008
- Community Cornerstone Award for *Outstanding Cowley County-wide Leadership*, 2005
- Kansas Governor’s Arts Award—*Art Advocacy*, 2001
- Board member, Arkansas City Diversity Board, 2000-2002
- Presenter, “Arts Infusion,” National Association of Local Arts Agencies, 1994 and Kansas Association of School Boards, 1993
- Presenter, National Art Education Association, 1992
- Exhibition Publications Assistant, New Mexico Museums, Santa Fe, NM, 1990-1991