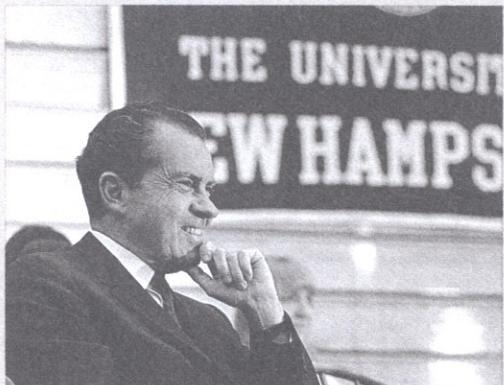




*Photogene*, circa 1950-65, by Lotte Jacobi. This photograph is part of the state's Percent for Art Collection. Percent for Art began with legislation enacted in 1979.

## Signs of the Times 1971~1981



President Richard Nixon at UNH in Durham. (Photo courtesy of UNH Instructional Services.)

**1971** Apollo 14, commanded by Alan Shepard, Jr. of Derry, lands on the moon... NH doctors express concern that a “hippie caravan” of 10,000 plans to invade northern NH... NH Senate votes to keep “Live Free or Die” motto on license plates... A Constitutional Amendment lowers the voting age to 18... President Nixon pledges to keep the Portsmouth Navy Yard open... Bombing in North Vietnam... Dartmouth votes to admit women, shattering a 200-year-old tradition... **1972** Nixon is the first U.S. President to visit China... The Oscar goes to *The Godfather*... Sylvia Chaplain runs for Congress, but loses the Democratic nomination... Carlton Fiske of Keene is named “Rookie of the Year” in American League... Watergate burglary at Democratic campaign headquarters... **1973** Meldrim Thomson sworn in as new NH Governor... Millions watch televised Congressional hearings on Watergate... Vice President Spiro Agnew resigns, Nixon appoints Gerald Ford to replace him... Peace pacts signed in Paris, officially ending Vietnam war... Senate probes into 1969-70 secret bombing raids in Cambodia... Aristotle Onassis visits NH to discuss plans for an oil refinery at Durham Point... NH poet Maxine Kumin wins Pulitzer for *Up Country*... Pablo Picasso dies... **1974** Senate begins impeachment hearings... Nixon resigns, Ford succeeds to Presidency and Nelson Rockefeller becomes Vice President... Patty Hearst kidnapped... **1975** U.S. civilians evacuate Saigon as communist forces complete takeover of South Vietnam... Hearings

*The State of New Hampshire, in recognition of its responsibility to encourage and stimulate the work of artists, especially New Hampshire artists, to preserve its cultural heritage, and to provide a source of artistic enjoyment to its residents and visitors, hereby declares that a percentage of all appropriations for capital construction, reconstruction, and renovation and the planning therefor be set aside as a fund to be used for the purchase of works of art and objects of historical significance for state buildings and facilities.*

*New Hampshire House Bill 430*

# Experimenting with Light and Shadow



Poet Maxine Kumin at her Warner, NH, farm. (Photo by Gary Samson.)

When fiscal year 1972 began, the hard work of the New Hampshire Arts Commissioners and Executive Director Bravar paid off with the doubling of their original state appropriation to \$15,000. This still came short of the \$1 for \$1 match required by the NEA, so NHCA found creative ways to qualify for its block grant. Bravar explains:

“In order to make maximum use of (our) resources, we have developed inter-agency cooperation on a state level. Thanks to the assistance of Dr. Alice Baumgarner, arts consultant for the Department of Education; Richard Tapply, director of Community Recreation Services; and Frederick Nader, deputy director of Juvenile Affairs, the Commission is able to direct its attention to some of the broader social problems confronting arts development in the state.”

An example of NHCA’s efforts to connect the arts to some of issues of the day comes from its 1970-71 annual report:

“One of the Commission’s more important efforts...has been the

support of the multiracial Community Relations Group of Portsmouth. More than 165 junior high and high school students, many of them blacks, have enrolled in dance and music groups... The young people who join work out a program with their instructor and carry it out as a community effort. This represents for the Commission a step in alleviating, through the arts, some of the tension so common in cities today.”

In the fall of 1971 James Bravar moved north to Alaska to become the first director for its new arts agency. Before leaving, he urged the director of Project TRY to take on the leadership of New Hampshire’s agency. His choice was a good match, because the next Executive Director, John Coe, stayed with the Commission for 11 years.

Throughout the ‘70s, funding opportunities opened up at the NEA so that, in addition to block grants, states could compete for funding in special new categories from arts education to design arts. One of Coe’s first jobs was to hire a coordinator for the newly funded Artists-in-the-Schools (AIS) program. He chose a poet, Marie Matthews (later Harris), who had recently moved to New Hampshire. She launched the artist residency program with Poetry-in-the-Schools. Some of the first poets to go into the schools were: Elizabeth Prevear, Dudley Laufman, and Anselm Parlatore.

The residency program proved popular with schools all over the state and it continued to grow with increased NEA funding. Film residencies came in ‘73. Visual arts, crafts, and dance in ‘76. And, in 1977, Architecture and Folk Arts came along. In 1975-76, the program was contracted out to the Arts Exchange of Hanover and managed by Clint Baer and Kathy Hammer. They added another component, the annual Fall Conference, giving artists and teachers time together for planning and exchanging ideas. In 1977, the program came back to the Commission when Barbara Abendschein was hired as the full-time AIS Coordinator.

Other specialized NHCA programs, such as Dance on Tour managed by Richard Rein or City Spirit coordinated by Louisa Young, took hold in the ‘70s. New Hampshire’s programs were often led into being by the expansion of programs at the NEA which continued to flourish under Nancy Hanks’ leadership. She enjoyed support from both Congress and Presidents Nixon and Ford. President Nixon summed up the national climate for public arts funding in the ‘70s:

“The important thing now is that government has accepted support of the arts as one of its responsibilities — not only on the

on proposed construction of Seabrook nuclear plant... 15-million-dollar surplus in state treasury.... US and USSR go on joint space flight... *Saturday Night Live* premieres on late night TV... *M\*A\*S\*H* and *All in the Family* are most watched TV shows... Oscar goes to *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*... 1976 Tall ships in New York and Boston harbors highlight America's 200th Birthday... Seabrook Nuclear Plant is constructed... Patty Hearst trial... Jimmy Carter campaigns in NH for Presidency... NH boasts a record number of new businesses creating 6000 new jobs... Digital Equipment Corporation breaks ground in NH for new headquarters... The Oscar goes to *Rocky*... 1977 Jimmy Carter sworn in as President... Sadat of Egypt and Begin of Israel hold peace summit... Carter pardons most Vietnam era draft evaders... Record-breaking audience tunes in to tv mini-series *Roots* ... Oscar goes to Woody Allen's *Annie Hall*, Grammy for top album goes to Fleetwood Mac for *Rumors*... 1978 NH gets federal disaster relief for worst blizzard in years... gas lines and high inflation... 90 people taken hostage from American Embassy in Tehran by Ayatollah Khomeini followers... Hugh Gallen, a Democrat from Littleton, wins election for NH Governor... 1979 Three Mile Island nuclear accident... Seabrook protests... Congress bails out Chrysler from bankruptcy... 1980 Soviets invade Afghanistan... Carter retaliates with wheat embargo on Russia... 8 Americans die in ill-fated Iran hostage rescue attempt... Mt. St. Helens erupts, killing hundreds... In a sweeping victory, Ronald Reagan defeats Carter in Presidential election... Former Beatle John Lennon shot and killed outside his New York apartment building... Ted Turner launches all news cable channel, CNN... 1981 52 Americans held hostage for 444 days in Iran are flown to freedom... Congress passes Reagan's tax cut legislation... Unemployment hits record high in NH... Henry Fonda and Katherine Hepburn win Oscars for acting in *On Golden Pond*... Grammy for best album goes to John Lennon and Yoko Ono for *Double Fantasy*...

federal level, but on the state and local levels as well. And increasingly, governments at all levels see this not only as a responsibility but also as an opportunity — for there is a growing recognition that few investments in the quality of life in America pay off so handsomely as the money spent on the arts.”

New program demands led NHCA to look for a bigger space in 1973. Its small operating budget also required that the rent be low. Coe found the perfect spot at 40 North Main Street in Concord: an old, vacant building known as Phenix Hall. A news report at the time records his find:

“I went inside and looked around. I had to climb a ladder because there was no staircase...I went up to the third floor and whammo! There was a huge hall.’ In his mind’s eye, he saw office, studio, and exhibit space. He talked to landlord Jacob Ciborowski about renovating the building and the ball was rolling.”

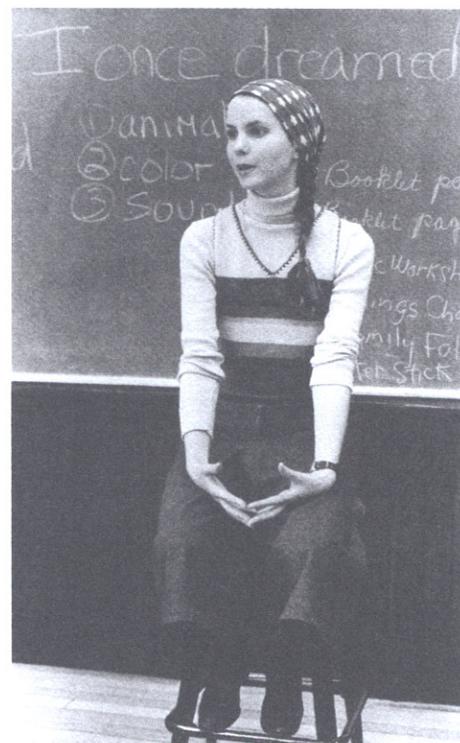
Over the next year and a half, Ciborowski spent about \$100,000 on renovations. On February 7, 1974, there was a grand opening which was heralded in the *Concord Monitor*:

“Phenix Hall...where Abraham Lincoln once made a speech, couples danced the night away, and boxing fans once gathered for prize fights, is making a comeback...There may be the accompaniment of an occasional hammer pounding or saw buzzing as renovations continue, but tomorrow the NH Art Association will open its exhibit, “Art in New Hampshire” and the NH Bicentennial Commission will meet with artists from throughout the state at Phenix Hall to discuss art events for the Bicentennial...When all the renovations are completed, the whole building, except for the first floor storefronts, will be devoted to the arts.”

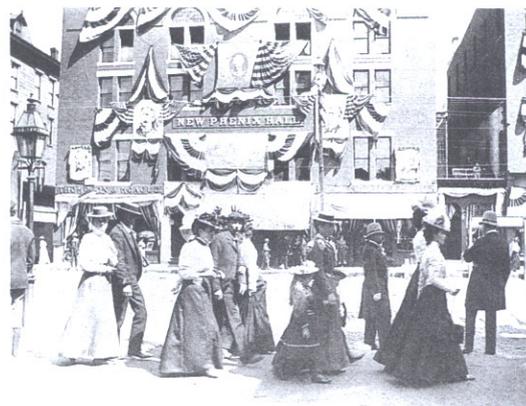
Arts organizations that joined the Commission at Phenix Hall for a time were: Van McLeod’s Higate Productions, the NH Arts Education Alliance and, later, Suzanne Hayles’ Dance Company. Phenix Gallery held a string of changing exhibitions from 1974 to 1986. There was one in 1981 that is still vivid for John Coe:

“I’ll never forget the February Flamingo Show held at the Phenix Gallery one bitter winter. It was nuts, but it engaged amateur and professional artists from all over, prompted several store window displays of the tropics, and encouraged staff member Susan Taylor to add a contemporary work made of a half-empty Pepto-Bismol bottle on a stool.”

The year 1974 turned out to be as auspicious for state funding as it was for housing the Commission. The FY74 state appropriation placed New Hampshire in 28th place for per capita arts funding in the 50 states. This would be the highest the state has ever ranked in its 30-year history. Yet the memory that most people carry from that year has nothing to do with Phenix Hall or where NHCA ranked in state funding. What most people remember is what happened when a



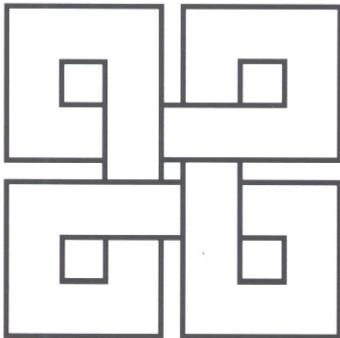
A student shares the poem she composed during an Arts Commission Poets-in-the-Schools residency. (Photo by Mark Abramson.)



Historic Phenix Hall, photographed in 1899 during NH’s first Old Home Week, became home to the growing Arts Commission in 1974. (Photo courtesy of the Concord Public Library Downtown Images Collection.)



African-American dancer Arthur Hall began doing residencies at New Hampshire schools in the early '70s. Still an active roster member in the '90s, he has worked with thousands of children.



The official logo for the Arts Commission during the Coe years.

certain grant recommendation went before Governor Meldrim Thomson and the Executive Council for their approval.

On May 1, 1974, the Governor and Council reviewed a list of NHCA grant recommendations. Among others, they approved a grant of \$750 to *Granite Magazine*, a small-press literary publication. They had second thoughts. Governor Thomson, in a letter to John Coe, explained:

“After we had adjourned and while still in the room a so-called poem — an item of filth — appearing in the magazine you submitted was brought to the attention of the Councilors. We immediately reconvened, reconsidered the item and disapproved the request.

“I am appalled that you would send us a request for taxpayers funds to subsidize the publication of obscenities. I would appreciate some assurance from you and the Art Commission that you will not bring to Governor and Council requests for further grants similar to the one involving *Granite Magazine...*”

Coe responded in part:

“...The issue of obscenity is a difficult one which has historically been controversial and never satisfactorily resolved. What is considered obscene or profane by one person may have an entirely different connotation by another....In our culture it took a Supreme Court decision to resolve the issue of Joyce’s *Ulysses*, now considered a classic. How people react to so-called controversial words or suggestions or thoughts is a very personal thing. Matters political, religious and moral constantly create debate....

“Personally, I do not think either of us can make a definitive judgment regarding this poem (“Castrating the Cat” by Michael McMahon). If it is legally obscene or pornographic, it seems to me that ruling should come from the Attorney General or from the courts....

“That Art need not always be pleasant is axiomatic. If it can awaken our senses and open our minds, if it can improve life, even if it means we must squirm, I am sure you would agree that it is the better course.”

In fact, this issue did go to court in a case titled, NH Arts Advocates vs. Thomson. The Governor and Council’s decision was not affected, however, because the case floundered in legal technicalities.

About a year later, a similar question arose on the national level. Senator Jesse Helms questioned Nancy Hanks on the appropriateness of a 1973 NEA grant to Erica Jong who wrote *Fear of Flying* during her fellowship year. The novel became a bestseller in 1974 and many noticed in Jong’s introduction a thank you to the NEA. Headlines screamed that the government was funding “smutty” books. Helms pursued the issue for a few months, but got distracted by other legislative demands.

These controversies were forgotten in the nation's excitement over celebrating its 200th birthday. In 1976, NHCA was so successful in competing in specific NEA grant categories, some of which were created just for the Bicentennial, that special project grants totaled more than its basic state block grant. Coe, while lamenting the slowness of the state to match the national funds, noted increased media coverage of the arts, more funding from town governments, and more legislators speaking out in favor of the arts. The arts in New Hampshire also would benefit from new regional and national organizations that began that year: the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) and the Institute for Museum Services (IMS).

With new NEA money pumping into the state, 1977 seemed a perfect time to seek an increased state appropriation to support grants, not just administration. Representative Rebecca Gould sponsored House Bill 521 to increase the arts line item from about \$65,000 to \$200,000 per year in the 1978-79 biennium. The bill attracted 25 other sponsors. A new ad hoc group, NH Citizens for the Arts, organized favorable testimony, but when the bill got to the House Appropriations Committee, it was tabled. The final appropriation was about \$95,000 per year, for administration only, but with more positions funded by the state.

In October of 1977, Nancy Hanks sent her resignation to the new President, Jimmy Carter. During her time at the NEA, funding increased by 1,400%. NHCA Chairman R. Alden Burt wrote to her:

“...As you know the growth of the arts in New Hampshire has been predicated upon a growth in federal funding. The arts in New Hampshire have indeed grown. Most of our major arts institutions today did not exist when you took office. Their growth and artistic achievement are far better testimony to your leadership than any words from us.”

Some of the new arts organizations helped by the Commission in the '70s were: (1970-1) Andy's Summer Playhouse; Apple Hill Center for Chamber Music; American Stage Festival; Very Special Arts-NH; Belknap Mill Society; (1973-4) AVA Gallery; Federated Arts; NH Symphony Orchestra; NH Performing Arts Center (1975-76) Frost Place; Grand Monadnock Arts Council; Arts Council of Tamworth; (1977-79) Pontine Movement Theatre; Plymouth Friends of the Arts; NH Public Radio; North Country Chamber Players; White Mountain Summer Dance Festival; Claremont Opera House; and Keene Chorale.

John Coe, reflecting on the first 10 years of public funding for the arts, observed:

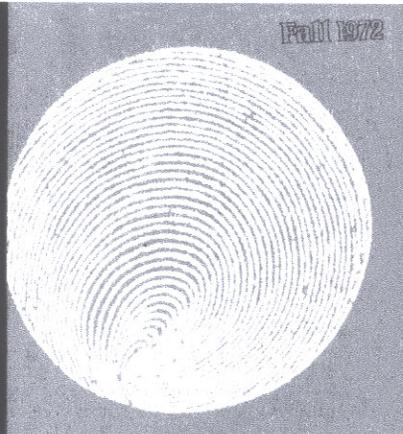
“In New Hampshire, our arts have come of age through an incredible renaissance. Without the collective energies of concerned NH citizens this second decade could witness tragic setbacks in the arts. This must be prevented at all costs.”



(L to R) Director John Coe, former Governor John King, Pastor Martelino, Paul MacEachran, Grace Casey and Jon Kimbell pose with an inflatable sculpture during a '70s Prescott Park Arts Festival. (Photo courtesy of the NH Art Association.)



Apple Hill Chamber Players, one of the first NH groups to go on the New England Foundation for the Arts roster. The juried roster, established in the late '70s, opened opportunities for performing artists to reach new audiences throughout the region.



The cover of the first issue of *Studio Potter* magazine edited by internationally renowned potter Gerry Williams of Dunbarton. (Design by Armand Szainer.)

The NEA, now under the Chairmanship of Livingston Biddle (who wrote the original enabling legislation as an aide to Rhode Island Senator Claiborne Pell), continued to bring national focus to the arts. The Carter administration was particularly concerned with insuring the inclusion of “minorities” and “the handicapped” as artists and as audience members.

The NEA launched a nationwide publicity campaign with the theme: “The Arts —That’s Where the People Are.” One public service announcement featured New York baseball’s Yankee manager Billy Martin walking through the Metropolitan Museum of Art. “The Yankees had a good year,” he says, “but we came in second to the Met.”

New Hampshire participated in other Carter administration efforts to support the arts nationally. John Coe attended the swearing-in ceremony for Joan Mondale as the Honorary Chairman for the Federal Council on the Arts. Soon dubbed “Joan of Art”, the Vice President’s wife later visited the Granite State. Also, several NH crafts people loaned works for a dinner and celebration of the arts hosted by Rosalyn Carter.

On the state level, too, visibility and communicating the “arts message” to the public became a priority. NHCA’s Public Relations person Susan Taylor kept up communications with the arts community with her monthly *Memos to Managers* and produced an arts calendar for the media. The Commission held a statewide conference at Belknap Mill to ask the question, “Can We Afford the Arts?” Representatives from the NH Charitable Fund, NH Humanities Council, and the Arts Exchange all discussed different ways to finance the arts. Major Wheelock reported that 22% of the Charitable Fund’s giving went to the arts, more than twice the national average for private foundations.

That same year, 1978, Grants Coordinator Deborah Cowan unveiled a new funding program, Small Grants, designed to increase funding for smaller groups in more isolated parts of the state, since the Grants-in-Aid program tended to favor larger, professional arts organizations. One of the first small grants went to Thorne-Sagendorph Art Gallery for a year-long exhibition rotating large-scale works by eight NH artists on a Keene billboard. Emile Birch, a sculptor on the AIS roster, offered to create a work for a business in Lebanon, Keene, or Claremont using materials from the workplace. The New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) came out with its first regional economic impact study of the arts to use as a tool with legislators and businesses. Some of these messages were getting through. At least one candidate for Governor, a car dealer from Littleton, let people know that if he were elected he would favor increased funding for the arts. In November, 1978, New Hampshire elected that candidate, Hugh Gallen, to be the next Governor.

January, 1979, did, indeed, ring in a new year for the arts in New Hampshire. Governor Gallen featured the arts at his inaugural events. In February, he appointed Barbara Borin Dunfey to be NHCA’s new Chairman. She responded:

“I am delighted to be able to serve Governor Gallen in this capacity. This is a propitious time for the arts. Governor Gallen considers the arts a priority and I am anxious to make the NH Commission on the Arts a vital part of his administration.”

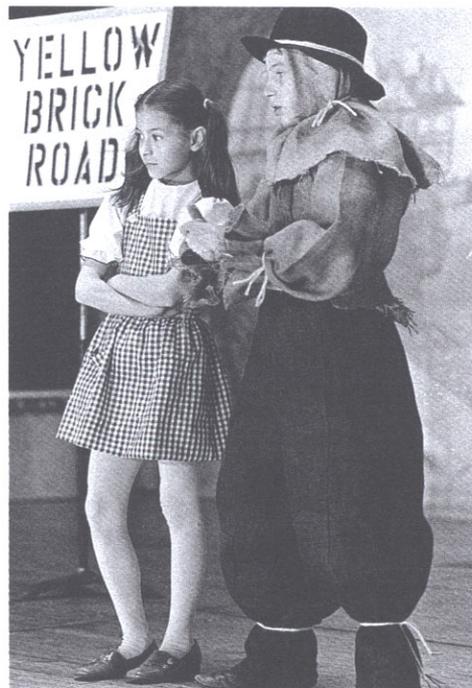
That same month, Governor Gallen included \$20,000 for each year of the biennium for program use by the Arts Commission. This was the first time any state money for grants had been included in a Governor’s budget.

The Legislature was also responsive to supporting the arts. In 1978, Representative Elaine Krasker of Portsmouth, as the delegate to the Arts Task Force of the National Conference of State Legislators, learned that a few other states had something called Percent for Art. Convinced that the arts were good for the economy and vital to the quality of life, Rep. Krasker became the prime sponsor of House Bill (HB) 430, a bill to “create a fund to be used to purchase works of art and objects of historical significance for state buildings and facilities. The fund will consist of one percent of all appropriations for new capital construction.” Over 150 people traveled to Concord to testify on behalf of this legislation.

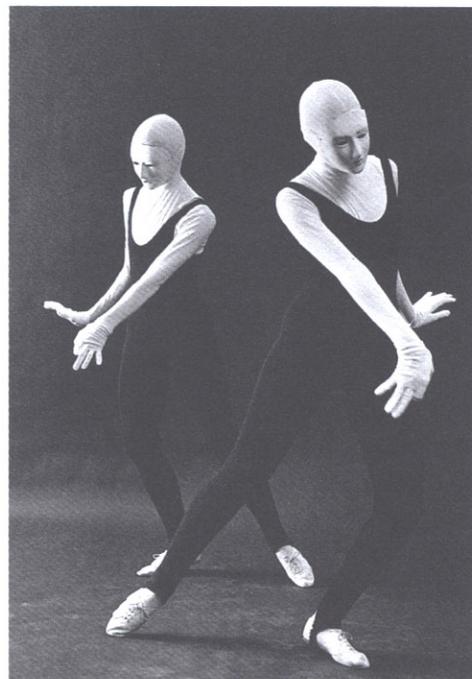
Although the bill underwent a few modifications on its way to becoming law (one percent became one-half of one percent, for example), HB 430 was signed into law that June with accompanying funds of \$24,000. On July 1, 1979, FY80 began with a total state appropriation of about \$153,000, an increase of 50%, for the Arts Commission. As it entered its 15th year, NHCA reflected on its past as it looked to its future:

“The agency which struggled modestly and mostly unnoticed for its first years, is now an established part of the state bureaucracy...Early in 1979 several political events occurred which renewed enthusiasm for the arts in the state...Never before had the arts in New Hampshire been looked on so favorably by the New Hampshire legislative and executive branches...It surely seemed that the considerable trials of the seventies were over...Of course, as President Carter attempts to balance the federal budget and Governor Gallen examines a possible state deficit, the 1979 euphoria may change to 1980 gloom...”

NHCA spun into action to turn the new funding and positive climate into meaningful programs. The first individual artist fellowships were awarded. Rural residencies, which brought artists to work in communities for one full week, were instituted. For the pilot project, poet David Coryell and corporeal mime artists Marguerite Mathews, Anne Sauve, and Ellen Brown stayed with local families in Groveton and Stratford. Under new Grants Coordinator Ellen Pope’s direction, larger grants went to arts organizations. Theater-by-the-Sea used part of its award to stage a production of Kurt Weill’s *Berlin to Broadway* and enhanced the performances with a theater lobby exhibition of Lotte Jacobi’s photographs. A new Folk Arts Program was established in partnership



A scene from Manchester Children’s Theater 1977 production of the *Wizard of Oz*. (Photo courtesy of Karl Webber.)



Portsmouth-based Pontine Movement Theatre began taking their show on the road to small, rural communities, thanks to Arts Commission funding.



Poets Donald Hall and his wife Jane Kenyon moved to New Hampshire in 1975. (Photo by Ken Williams, courtesy of the *Concord Monitor*.)

with New England College. Dr. Linda Morley was hired as its coordinator. A poster design project paired NH artists, including James Aponovich, Gary Samson, Cal Libby, and Trina Shart Hyman, with arts organizations to create 28 custom-designed posters.

In October, 1980, the first Governors Awards in the Arts was held in Manchester. Governor Gallen presented awards to: Federated Arts, NH Youth Orchestra, and Lotte Jacobi. Poet Donald Hall (who with his wife Jane Kenyon had moved to New Hampshire in 1975 to live at his grandfather's farm) gave the keynote address. An overflow crowd of 300 attended.

Three months later, NHCA presented a record request of \$1.2 million to the Governor's budget committee for FY82. Lael Wertenbaker, an author, testified:

“I beg you not to stint on an arts appropriation! You cannot put a price tag on the arts. You cannot claim that they reach every citizen nor that they take the place of food for the hungry or shelter. What they do for the state, which profits the state, is not only to attract tourists in season, but to attract the kind of people to live here who care about and support all the other basic values — charity, aid, education, conservation, and intelligent quality growth.”

In January, 1981, Governor Gallen celebrated his second inauguration by filling the State House with the arts. The NH Youth Orchestra performed in the Hall of Flags. Elizabeth Outwin performed in the House of Representatives. The design project posters filled the Visitors Center. His subsequent FY82-83 budget, however, was less festive.

Citing concerns about a state deficit in an economic climate of high unemployment, he reduced the arts line item by 35% to \$98,664. He also declined to support the establishment of new positions. On the national level the news was also glum. Newly elected President Reagan sought a cut of 50% to the NEA and NEH (National Endowment for the Humanities). An outpouring of support for the arts ensued.

Nationally, Congress settled on a 10% cut to the NEA. This reduced NHCA's basic block grant to \$282,700. President Reagan's Task Force, which included the actor Charlton Heston, recommended keeping the structure of the NEA, but changing the tax law to increase private philanthropy. President Reagan commented: “(The Endowments) have served an important role in catalyzing additional private support, assisting excellence in arts and letters, and helping to assure the availability of art and scholarship.” President Reagan appointed Frank Hodsoll as the new NEA Chairman.

On the state level, the House Appropriations Committee voted to trim NHCA's budget to \$135,000. The Senate Finance Committee voted to cut it to \$35,000. When the entire state budget came out of the Committee of Conference, the arts line item was \$50,000.

By the end of 1981, four of the 10 staff members had left NHCA. Of the

six remaining, four were paid from special NEA project funds. Director John Coe took a cut in pay. Artist Fellowships, Rural Residencies, Technical Assistance, Small Grants, Governor's Awards in the Arts, and the Poster Design Project, all were ended. The major grants program had no coordinator, the public information position was eliminated, newsletter publication ceased, and the remaining staff pitched in to do janitorial services that they could no longer afford. John Coe wrote:

“New Hampshire now has the distinction of providing the lowest per capita state support to the arts of any state or territory in the country, 5.4 cents per citizen... Nationally state agencies saw an increase of 13 percent, while New Hampshire saw a decrease of 69 percent.”



Lotte Jacobi, the first artist to be honored with a Governor's Arts Award, seen here at the 1980 Prescott Arts Festival. (Photo by Denise Fox, courtesy of the NH Art Association.)