



Press contacts: Patti Giordano 585.276.8932 pgiordano@mag.rochester.edu
Larissa Masny 585.276.8934 lmasnya@mag.rochester.edu

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MEMORIAL ART GALLERY DOCENTS CELEBRATE 40 YEARS

Gary Graham



2008 marks the 40th anniversary of the Memorial Art Gallery docents, dedicated volunteers who collectively have led tours for more than half a million schoolchildren and adults.

The docent program began informally in the 1960s and officially kicked off in 1968 with the adoption of bylaws and institution of formal training. Over the years, the ranks have included some 400 men and women, of whom 100 are currently active. At a June 9 anniversary celebration attended by 120 past and present docents, tribute was paid to four decades of docent chairs, most

of whom were on hand, and Honey Heyer of Brighton was recognized as the only member of the first formal docent “class” who is still leading tours. There was also a round of applause for volunteer administrator Mary Ann Monley and other members of MAG’s education department, past and present.

“Docents come to the program from many walks of life,” says Susan Daiss, director of education. “Some are retired. and some juggle their docent responsibilities with their professional lives. All share a love of the visual arts and the belief that life is richer for art’s inclusion in it. And all make a major time commitment—a year of rigorous weekly training followed by frequent refreshers and a minimum 25 tours a year.”

To honor the docents and help insure the future of the program, the Gallery recently established the Docent Endowment Fund. For more information or to make a contribution, contact Barbara Stewart, 585-276-8942 (bstewart@mag.rochester.edu).

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ABOVE: Fifteen of 22 docent chairs, past and present, were on hand at the Memorial Art Gallery Docents 40th Anniversary Celebration. Pictured are Connie Klein of Rochester (2006–08), Margaret Thompson of Pittsford (2004–06), Carolyn Friedlander of Brighton (2002–04), Libby Clay of Brighton (1996–98), Joan Yanni of Brighton (1984–86), Joan Morgan of Penfield (1966–68), Virginia Skuse of Pittsford (1974–76), Germaine Knapp of Webster (1978–80), Nancy Swett of Pittsford (1980–82), Helen Williams of Rochester (1982–84), Maureen Basil of Fairport (1988–90), Heidi Friederich of Rochester (1990–92), Joan Baden of Webster (1992–94) and Barbara Flynn of Pittsford (2000–02). Not in picture: Gwynie Hunting of Brighton (1968–70). At the podium is Mary Ann Monley of Pittsford, Memorial Art Gallery administrator of volunteers and tours. *Photo by Gary Graham.*