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## Phil Hanes dies at 84

Ken Keuffel Jan 16, 2011



Phil Hanes, 2002

Journal file photo

Phil Hanes, an unstoppable force for developing the local and national arts scene for more than 50 years and a champion of downtown Winston-Salem, died Sunday morning at the age of 84.

City leaders mourned his passing.

“I have known Phil Hanes almost my entire adult life, and he has been a dear friend, mentor, professional associate and confidant,” said Milton Rhodes, the president and chief executive of the Arts Council of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County, which Hanes had loyally supported since the early 1950s. “I will miss him, and I cannot imagine Winston-Salem without him ... Phil cared more about this city and worked harder for its betterment than anyone else I have ever known.”

A private reception in honor of Hanes will be held at 5 p.m. Sunday. It is not open to the public, as previously reported.

Christine Belcik-Griffith served as Hanes’ executive assistant in an office on Fourth Street for about 10 years, helping him with many an arts- or entertainment-related project in the city’s downtown. She likened Hanes to her tough Zen master.

“He made me a better person,” she said. “There will never be another like Phil. We are so lucky to have had him. His legacy is legion.”

Ralph Philip Hanes Jr. was born in Winston-Salem on Feb. 25, 1926, growing up in a cultured environment amid wealth and privilege. He attended Woodberry Forest School, a prep school in Virginia, and in 1949, after attending UNC Chapel Hill for a time, earned a bachelor’s degree in English from Yale University.

Hanes began developing an interest in the arts at Yale, and he sang in the glee club there. Soon after returning to Winston-Salem to work for his family’s Hanes Dye and Finishing Company, which eventually named him its chairman, he also dedicated himself to supporting the arts behind the scenes during spare hours after work.

Hanes theorized that a business dies if it doesn't give young people a shot at the presidency. So six months before his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, he resigned the presidency at Hanes to promote the arts full-time. At that point, he had already turned over management of the company's day-to-day operations to a team of young and innovative people so that he could do the "fun job" of deciding which artistic or environmental causes the company should champion.

In advocating for the arts, Hanes would wear many hats, including those of philanthropist, board member, founder, consultant, art collector, publicist and policymaker. His legacy is felt most strongly on the revitalized streets of downtown Winston-Salem, at the UNC School of the Arts and at arts councils in Winston-Salem and around the country.

In addition to his work in getting Piedmont Opera and the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art get off the ground in the 1950s, Hanes helped found and donated millions to UNC School of the Arts, including pledges to the school's endowment of \$1 million in 1997 and \$1 million in 2000. (The school began operating as N.C. School of the Arts in 1965. It was renamed UNC School of the Arts in 2008.) The 1997 donation, which went toward special programs and student needs, was the largest individual gift in the school's history when it was made.

"Phil Hanes was one of our founding fathers," said John Mauceri, the chancellor of UNC School of the Arts. "That alone would make his passing terribly sad, but the fact that he continued to be integrally involved in and contribute to the well-being of this institution throughout his life makes this particularly sobering. His transformative actions in building and protecting the School of the Arts, and in creating the City of Arts and Innovation, is the legacy we all will share."

Hanes was instrumental in raising money for the renovations that transformed the Carolina Theatre into the Stevens Center, which is UNCSCA's principal performance venue on Fourth Street.

"Phil was an idea person and a visionary," Rhodes said. "The Stevens Center is good evidence of that. He proposed the restoration and pursued it doggedly."

Hanes also lobbied for naming the center after Roger Stevens, the esteemed Broadway producer who became chairman of National Council on the Arts, later renamed the National Endowment for the Arts.

"Naming it for Stevens ... was brilliant," Rhodes said. "(Hanes) corralled luminaries such as Isaac Stern, Gregory Peck, Gerald Ford and others for the stellar opening."

The cremated remains of Phil Hanes will be housed in an on-campus sculpture called “Conversations, ” created in 2006 by artist Richard Hunt. School officials say that no other educational institution in the United States has campus artwork that eventually will be used for interment.

The installation of “Conversations” came about because government regulations were amended. Hanes had advocated for sculpture on UNCOSA’s campus for many years. He said he hoped that others would commission pieces like “Conversations” so that they could enjoy them during their lifetimes and have a final resting place among those who love the arts. A student commons on UNCOSA’s campus is named for Phil and Charlotte Hanes.

Phil Hanes’ involvement in the beginnings of UNCOSA has become the stuff of legend. In the early 1960s, Winston-Salem was vying with several other cities in the state to become the site of what would become the first state-supported, residential school of its kind in the nation. Specifically, the aim was to win over a board of advisers for the arts school, which would recommend to the late Gov. Terry Sanford a site for the school. Hanes played a key role in doing just that. Over two days in April 1964, he led a “Dial for Dollars” campaign that resulted in more than 5,000 people pledging more than \$850,000. A grant of \$350,000 from Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation was added to that amount. The money underwrote the construction of two dormitories and the renovations that transformed the old Gray High School building into the arts school.

If all this sounds more than a little incredible, it isn’t to Rhodes. He has put in two stints as the arts council’s president and chief executive: from 1971 to 1985 and beginning in 2004. So he’s had many years watching how Hanes operated.

“When Phil came up against a wall, he would figure out a way to go over it, under it, around it or through it,” Rhodes said. “He was an early supporter of the Creative Problem Solving Institute in Buffalo and enjoyed handing out a sticker that read, ‘Let’s find at least one good reason why it can be done.’”

As for the arts councils in Winston-Salem and elsewhere, Hanes’s support of them began in the early 1950s when he began raising money for the then-fledgling Arts Council of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County. This might not have happened if the late Katharine King Johnson hadn’t been able to persuade Hanes to join the council’s board.

“I said, ‘Katie, I don’t know anything about the arts,’” Hanes recalled telling her in 2007, the year she died. Johnson was undeterred. She asked Hanes whether his ignorance of cancer would prevent him from serving on a hospital’s board. Hanes said no and agreed to help the council.

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Arts councils — Winston-Salem formed the country’s first in 1949 — unite arts groups and artists in a cooperative effort to attract financial support through campaigns similar to those of the United Way. Hanes ardently supported such bodies, saying that they prevented the kind of “dog-eat-dog situation” that can result in the collapse of many arts groups chasing after limited funds.

Hanes helped start many arts councils around the country in the 1950s and ’60s. And he founded an organization to advocate for them, namely the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies.

“There is probably no arts council in the United States formed in the 1950s and ’60s with whom he did not consult by letter or telephone, but more often in person.” So wrote Rhodes in a letter sent to the National Endowment for the Arts, which in 1991 named Hanes as one of 12 artists and patrons to receive the National Medal of Arts from President George H. W. Bush.

Hanes was doing more on the national stage than helping establish arts councils outside of Winston-Salem. In 1958, for example, he became a founding charter member of the American Symphony Orchestra League, now the League of American Orchestras. He would remain in the international arts arena for more than 40 years, serving on the boards of roughly 45 national and

international arts organizations, including the National Endowment for the Arts and the N.C. Arts Council. One aim of all this service, Hanes said, was to “bring the information and the people and the resources back to Winston-Salem.”

In the 1970s, Hanes began doing just that when he started Ampersand Inc., a consulting firm aimed at helping cultural groups with planning and fund-raising activities. He would later write down lessons from a lifetime in a book titled *How to Get Anyone to Do Anything* (Ten Speed Press, 2006). By 1980, Ampersand had helped raise \$11 million for a range of arts causes and organizations.

Hanes argued that a robust, lively arts scene in Winston-Salem would help it attract future employers and/or aid current ones in recruiting talented workers. So at one point, he declared himself a one-man press corps for the city, generating a stream of mostly positive articles about Winston-Salem in such national publications as *Town & Country* and *U.S. News and World Report*. And over the last 10 years or so, working with Christine Belcik-Griffith, Hanes became one of the chief catalysts for downtown revitalization.

In Winston-Salem, that meant not only a growing Arts District and other arts attractions but also more restaurants, bars and clubs.

“He believed that an energetic, vibrant street scene would attract larger development and would break down barriers of people of different races and classes,” Belcik-Griffith said. “Downtown belongs to everybody and gives everybody a place to mingle and meet.”

Hanes and Belcik-Griffith routinely took people on tours to show off the current scene downtown and to encourage future possibilities there. Hanes helped start the Meade Willis Revolving Loan Fund to provide the last dollars needed for renovating existing establishments or starting new ones.

He became involved in a restaurant roundtable, in which restaurant owners meet monthly to share ideas for marketing themselves and pooling resources.

“We helped minimize the potential for failure,” Belcik-Griffith said. “We helped establish a tone of collaboration.”

Hanes didn’t just talk the talk of downtown revitalization; he lived it as well, residing in the years near the end of his life in a condo in Arts District, where he frequented its restaurants several times a week.

Richard Emmett is the arts council’s chief operating officer and the owner of the Garage, a club he started in the Arts District.

“Phil was a champion of the little guys, entrepreneurs and young people,” he said. “He always said that the little things add up to big things.”

Hanes was preceded in death by his first wife, Joan Audrey Humpstone, and his sister, Anna Hanes Chatham. He is survived by his wife, Mary Charlotte Metz, his sister, Martha Hanes Womble, and several nieces and nephews.

A remembrance of his life will be held at 3 p.m. Wednesday at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Winston-Salem.

Memorial contributions may be made to Grayson LandCare, c/o Danny

Boyer, PO Box 373, Independence, VA 24348; The Downtown Winston-

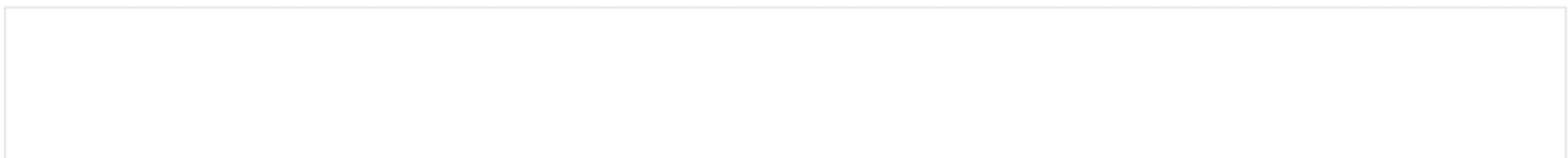
Salem Partnership Meade Willis Fund, 305 W. Fourth Street, Suite 2-

E, Winston Salem, NC 27101; and The University of North Carolina

School of the Arts, Office of Advancement, 1533 S. Main Street,

Winston-Salem, NC 27117.

[KKeuffel@wsjournal.com](mailto:KKeuffel@wsjournal.com) (336) 727-7337





Arts pulled Hanes away from family company, but not the business world  
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