

Professors Honored with Druid Arts Awards

Four College faculty members were honored at the Arts and Humanities Council of Tuscaloosa County's 19th Annual Druid Arts Awards, which acknowledges those who contribute to the arts in Tuscaloosa. The College of Arts and Sciences was given a special award for efforts in 2011 toward expansion of the arts.

The special award recognizes an individual or organization that has positively impacted the arts in the community. The College was noted for its five nationally recognized fine and performing arts programs: visual art and art history, creative writing, music, dance, and theatre. These programs "offer the South's most comprehensive arts education programs,...infusing our community with talent and creative enthusiasm."

Dr. John Ratledge, in his sixth year as conductor of the University Singers and director of choral activities in the School of Music, was recognized as the 2011 Musician of the Year. He has conducted two performances at Carnegie Hall, sold out Atlanta's prestigious Spivey Hall nine times, conducted in South Korea and with the Shorter Chorale, and conducted major premiers of choral works in Europe.

Associate Professor **Craig Wedderspoon** of the Department of Art and Art History was honored as the 2011 Visual Artist of the Year. His work has been included in public and private collections throughout the United States. His large outdoor pieces have been exhibited in Miami, Huntsville, and Montgomery. He helped plan an arts trail for the Tuscaloosa Riverwalk on the Black Warrior River and engineered the project that turns Coleman Coliseum pink for breast cancer awareness.



John Ratledge, Craig Wedderspoon, Andy Fitch, and Seth Panitch. Photos by Porfirio Solorzano

Associate Professor **Andy Fitch** of the Department of Theatre and Dance was recognized as the 2011 Theatre Artist of the Year. Fitch has designed sets, lights, and other visual elements for many of the stage productions for Theatre Tuscaloosa, The University of Alabama at Birmingham Red Mountain Theatre, and the Alabama Shakespeare Festival in Montgomery. These include *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying*, *The Music Man*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Moon over Buffalo*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, and *Cats*. His former design students are at work in theaters across the United States, including New York City.

Assistant Professor **Seth Panitch**, also in the Department of Theatre and Dance, was named the 2011 Theatre Educator of the Year. He heads the graduate and undergraduate acting programs in the College and has directed *Into the Woods*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Fifth of July*. He has directed plays in Cuba, worked off-Broadway and in regional theaters across the country, and received critical acclaim for his plays in their New York and Los Angeles productions. *A*