

I'm Edna Saffy.

In February of this year, I was deeply honored when President Clinton appointed me to the President's Advisory Committee on the Arts of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Jay Stein whose name was on the invitation you received also serves the President as a Trustee of the Kennedy Center. Jay, regrettably is out of town this morning and wished to express to you his disappointment in being unable to attend. We are indeed disappointed, however, Derek will be saddened to know that since he was forced to have such a late arrival last night, he not only missed the Cummer Museum Reception, but also a late supper with Jay and Cindy Stein. The Jacksonville art community is enriched by these two people, Jay and Cindy Stein.

And now let me welcome each of you here this morning. You are the cultural heart of our city. Each of you is a tireless advocate for Art Education.

We have been invited this morning to meet Derek Gordon who is the Associate Managing Director for Education of the J. F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and to join in exploring opportunities for partnerships in the arts between our community and the Kennedy Center.

Before I introduce Derek and before I tell you a story of a journey through the sunflower fields of the French countryside this August that ultimately brought us all here to the River Club in Jacksonville, Florida., I want to introduce you to two people you already know who wish to share a moment of this morning.

First, for opening remarks, let me present the foremost arts advocate, a professional, an artist, a perfectionist... the Executive Director of the Cultural Council of Jacksonville, Florida, STUART BOHANNON EVANS...

THANK YOU STUART.

And now I wish to present another artist whose creation I have most recently viewed and by which I was left in silence knowing his art had touched my heart. His is a major role on the art scene. The Dean of the Humanities Division and the Director of the Nathan Wilson Center for the Performing Arts...EARL FARRIS...

THANK YOU EARL...

Before I introduce Derek, and I promise I won't take long, gratitude must be expressed for those people who brought about this morning for us.

In August of this year, several of were on a wonderful trip in France, a journey that Jackie Cornelius had organized. At the July meeting of the Kennedy Advisory Board, Derek Gordon

and I had spoken about the possibility of his coming to Jacksonville. And it was on that bus, in early August, in the French countryside that Judy Hall of Barnett Bank, Jackie Cornelius of the Douglas Anderson School for the Arts, Carolyn Gentry of the Florida Times Union, Jean Hall Dodd of the Cummer Museum, Dorcas Tanner of Cereberel Palsy, and I began to plan this morning. When we returned home we continued to meet at the Cummer on Thursday afternoons. Stuart Evans joined us and became an integral force. We owe this morning to these women. I would ask you to stand and let us express our appreciation to you.

I want also to thank the Cultural Council, The Barnett Bank, Florida Community College, Earl Farris, and Gillian.....

And so we come together this morning to celebrate the arts, and to look to the future.

Art is the flame that lights that future

We have a National Center for the Performing Arts and we look to them in part for leadership and partnerships.

Derek Gordon is the Associate Managing Director for Education at our National Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C.

The Education Department does wonderful things!

It encompasses local and national performing arts education policy and programs; commissioning, creating, and touring of performances for students, teachers, and families; offering professional development opportunities in the arts for teachers; creating educational programs for adults using the Kennedy Center's artistic resources; developing model programs for use by other performing arts centers and schools; providing career opportunities and professional training for young artists; developing and encouraging national and community outreach programs; and serving as an information network for arts and education on a national level.

Derek has a Bachelor of Music and Master of Music from Louisiana State University. He was the executive director of the Pennsylvania State Arts Council, The Louisiana Division of the Arts, and the Arts and Humanities Council of Greater Baton Rouge, and program associate for the Texas Council on the Arts.

Ladies and Gentlemen may I present DEREK GORDON...

We each in our various fields of endeavor share a common enemy.  
That common enemy is also the only enemy of art and that enemy is ignorance.

The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be ignited.

Art is the flame of the future

The role of art is to make our world inhabitable.

Art tells us we are not alone.

Without art the reality of the world would be unbearable.