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William Vareika Receives Award For Lifetime Humanities Achievement

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — On September 22, Newport gallery owner William Vareika was honored by the Rhode Island Council on the Humanities with the “Honorary Chairs’ Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Humanities” at the tenth annual Celebration of the Humanities event.

The Lifetime Achievement Award is presented to an individual or group “whose career achievements demonstrate humanities excellence, reflect the Humanities Council’s mission and core values, and enrich public life in Rhode Island.” Established in 2004, the award is given on behalf of the Council’s Honorary Board Chairs, the current seated US Senators of Rhode Island. Vareika was honored for “his lifetime dedication to the preservation and appreciation of

historic art and architecture in Rhode Island.”

Official congratulatory citations were presented to Vareika by the Honorary Chairs, US Senators Jack Reed and Sheldon Whitehouse, and by R.I. Governor Lincoln Chafee, R.I. US Congressmen James Langevin and David Cicilline, R.I. House Speaker Gordon Fox and Providence Mayor Angel Taveras.

In Vareika’s acceptance remarks, he recognized the late US Senator Claiborne Pell from Rhode Island as a mentor during the art dealer’s early career. Pell, the 2005 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient, was the “father” of the National Endowment for the Arts and the Humanities.

In the spring of 1974, Vareika, a recent Boston College graduate, abandoned law school plans to move to Newport to volunteer to



William Vareika receives the Lifetime Achievement in the Humanities Award from Rhode Island Council on the Humanities Board member Kate Kilguss.

—Jori Ketten photo

lead an effort to save an endangered historic church building that had been decorated by the famed Nineteenth Century American artist John La Farge.

His first jobs after college were as a janitor and picture installer at the Newport Art Museum and as an “art picker.” In 1987, he and his wife Alison established

William Vareika Fine Arts Ltd on historic Bellevue Avenue. Over the past 25 years, this business has grown into one of the largest and most respected galleries in the country, specializing in the purchase and sale of Eighteenth–early Twentieth Century American works of art, with an emphasis on the important artists who were attracted to the Newport region.

The gallery has also been recognized for presenting benefit exhibitions that have raised public awareness and millions of dollars for a variety of charitable causes in the areas of the arts, education, the environment, health care, animal welfare, social services and historic and cultural preservation.

For more information, contact the gallery at 401-849-6149 or www.vareikafinearts.com.