



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**RI Council for the Humanities Celebration Raises Funds for Public Humanities  
and Honors Community Connectors**

**Pawtucket, RI** – The Rhode Island Council for the Humanities honored **Roger Mandle**, art historian, curator, and former president of the Rhode Island School of Design, **Consuelo Sherba**, co-founder and artistic director of Aurea, **Rhode Island's Shellfish: An Ecological History - University of Rhode Island**, and **Matthew Lawrence**, writer, editor, curator, and founder of Not About the Buildings at the **Celebration of the Humanities on Thursday, October 8, 2015** at the **Center by the Blackstone** in Pawtucket. Hundreds of community and business leaders, scholars, artists, and Rhode Islanders gathered to raise **over \$65,000** to support the public humanities including culture, history, heritage, and civic education in our state. Marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the **Pell Humanities Initiative** was also featured, honoring the role of Senator Claiborne Pell in the founding of the NEH and showcasing the vital contributions of the humanities in our society today.

With the theme of *Connect*, the Celebration highlighted the power of the humanities to create meaningful connections across disciplines, communities, and arenas for action. The honorees demonstrate how the humanities inspire creativity, bridge academic and public life, foster community, and help us address in meaningful and thoughtful ways the key challenges we face as a society today. The Pell Humanities Initiative, a collaboration between three Rhode Island institutions which carry the legacy of Senator Claiborne Pell—the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities, the Pell Center at Salve Regina University, and the University of Rhode Island Libraries—also builds connections. Marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Pell Humanities Initiative creates a network of imaginative and compelling public humanities programs at colleges, universities and cultural and historical institutions across the state and gives them visibility both in Rhode Island and nationally.

RI Council for the Humanities Executive Director, **Elizabeth Francis**, remarked, “The Council connects through our grants to the amazing people and organizations who are committed in so many ways to the importance of the humanities for our everyday lives, problems, and dreams. We also connect through dynamic projects and partnerships. “Connect” is all of you tonight, who support the humanities and their many voices and expressions.”

The *Lifetime Achievement Award* was presented to **Roger Mandle** for his leadership in the field of education in the arts and humanities and his lifelong dedication to cultural preservation and development in Rhode Island and worldwide. The *Tom Roberts Prize for Creative Achievement in the Humanities* honored **Consuelo Sherba** for her innovative, cross-disciplinary work with Aurea, a performance ensemble that inspires diverse audiences through imaginative concert programming and educational workshops. The *Innovation in the Humanities Award* went to the **University of Rhode Island's Coastal Institute, Coastal Resources Center, and RI Sea Grant** for

their powerful use of the humanities to connect cross-sector stakeholders including the RI Department of Environmental Management and Coastal Resources Management Council in the process of designing RI's Shellfish Management Plan, by examining shellfish as resources interwoven with our state's identity and history. The *Public Humanities Scholar Award* was presented to **Matthew Lawrence** for his work to enrich our state through unique and lively literary events and publications that connect diverse people, organizations, and ideas.

*Biographies of awardees are included below and event photos are attached. For more information, contact Adrian Moore at [adrian@rihumanities.org](mailto:adrian@rihumanities.org) or (401) 273-2250 x204.*

#### *About the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities*

The Rhode Island Council for the Humanities seeds, supports, and strengthens public history, cultural heritage, civic education, and community engagement by and for all Rhode Islanders. As an independent, nonprofit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Council has provided over \$7.4 million in grants to support more than 550 organizations throughout the state of Rhode Island, as well as independent researchers, filmmakers, scholars, and oral historians, since its founding in 1973.

#### *Awardee Biographies:*

**Roger Mandle** began his career as Associate Director of the Minneapolis Institute of Art before serving as Director of the Toledo Museum of Art and Deputy Director and Chief Curator of the National Gallery of Art.

In 1993, he became President of the Rhode Island School of Design, where he supported the growth of the college's endowment and the creation of new academic and museum programs, including a joint degree program with Brown University. After 15 years at RISD, Dr. Mandle became Executive Director and Chief Museums Officer of Qatar Museums Authority, where he oversaw over twelve museums and cultural institutions.

Dr. Mandle has served on the boards of nonprofit cultural and for-profit organizations, and has taught museum studies and art history at Williams College, Brown University, and RISD. He received his Ph.D. from Case Western Reserve University and his M.A. from New York University. He has been awarded eight honorary degrees.

Dr. Mandle is currently President and CEO of Roger Mandle Associates LLC, a consulting firm that assists museums and universities in strategic planning, important transitions, and board and senior staff development, and is a leader in the creation of alternative models of art and design education.

**Consuelo Sherba**, violist, is a graduate of LaGuardia School for the Arts in NYC and City College of NY, and is artistic director and a founding member of Aurea. Since 2004, she has performed with Aurea at the Chicago Humanities Festival, NYU Humanities Festival, FirstWorks Providence, Pawtucket Arts Festival, Maverick Festival and throughout New England. Consuelo was chosen Person of the Year by the Pawtucket Foundation in 2007, and was awarded the Rhode Island Pell Award in 2008. She has been on the applied music faculty at Brown University since 1986 and teaches and performs with the RI Philharmonic/Music School, The Vermont Symphony and Buzzard's Bay Music Festival. She has performed with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony, Boston Pops, Grand Teton, Carvalho, Aspen, and Colorado Music Festivals, Atlanta Chamber Players, Atlanta Chamber Orchestra, Atlanta Ballet Orchestra, West Virginia Symphony, and was The Charleston String Quartet Violist from 1983-2000, in residence at Brown University.

Humans have harvested shellfish from Narragansett Bay and Rhode Island's coastal salt ponds for at least 2,700 years — nearly 2 million tidal cycles. ***Rhode Island's Shellfish: An Ecological History*** turns back these tides, peering into shellfisheries of years past and bringing to light not only the enduring importance of shellfish to Rhode Island, but also the ways in which the human relationship with these resources has changed through time. The book, written by Sarah Schumann and sponsored by the Coastal Institute, the Coastal Resources Center, and Rhode Island Sea Grant, all at the University of Rhode Island, with support from the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities, grew out of the 2014 R.I. Shellfish Management Plan, which was the first such plan created for the state under the auspices of the R.I. Department of Environmental Management and the R.I. Coastal Resources Management Council.

**Matthew Lawrence** is a writer, editor, independent curator and literary event planner. In 2006 he launched Not About The Buildings, initially a photography project designed to draw attention to a public library crisis in Providence. Since then, Not About The Buildings has grown into a dynamic literary project, with events ranging from whirlwind memoir writing workshops and marathon readings of very short novels to an all-ages spelling bee that is now in its ninth year.

Additionally, Matthew is one of the founding editors of the queer visual art magazine Headmaster, and he also edits Law and Order Party, a curated events calendar for arts and cultural happenings in the greater Providence area.

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