

JANE GOLDEN

Executive Director, City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program

Since the Mural Arts Program began in 1984 as a component of the Philadelphia Anti-Graffiti Network, Jane Golden has been the driving force, overseeing its growth from a small city agency into the nation's largest mural program, a catalyst for positive social change and a model for replication across the country and around the globe. Golden, a young artist initially hired by former Mayor Wilson Goode to help combat the graffiti crisis plaguing the city, reached out to graffiti writers to help turn their destructive energies into creative ones. In the process, she recognized the raw artistic talent among the graffiti writers as she began to provide opportunities for them to channel their creative forces into mural-making. The murals themselves transformed city neighborhoods suffering from years of neglect and hardship. In 1996, the Mural Arts Program was reorganized under the City of Philadelphia Department of Recreation and Golden was put in place as its director, at which time she established the Philadelphia Mural Arts Advocates, a nonprofit organized to raise funds and provide support to the program.



*Photo by Shea Roggio courtesy of
Philadelphia Magazine*

Under the direction of Golden, the Mural Arts Program has become a successful hybrid of a city agency and nonprofit organization, creating innovative works of public art in partnership with various community stakeholders, public schools, local nonprofits and city agencies, and educating over 20,000 underserved youth in its first 25 years. In that time, the Mural Arts Program has created more than 3,000 murals—including an extant collection of more than 1,500 that are an integral part of the civic landscape and a source of inspiration to the thousands of residents and visitors who encounter them each year, earning Philadelphia international recognition as the “City of Murals.” In addition, Golden has developed art education and workforce development programs that serve youth and adult offenders at area prisons, detention centers, and residential placement facilities, utilizing the power of art to break the cycle of crime and violence in Philadelphia’s communities and sparking a national dialogue based on the concept of restorative justice.

In addition to leading the Mural Arts Program, Golden has been an adjunct professor at the University of Pennsylvania since 2004, where she teaches a course on the historical and contemporary significance of mural-making in Philadelphia and beyond. Beginning in 2011, Golden will be a guest instructor at Princeton University. From 2000 to 2003, she held a position as an adjunct instructor at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art.

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* recently described the Mural Arts Program as, “by far, the most important, prolific and successful public art project in the nation. And that is because of Jane Golden. The artist, a woman of remarkable intensity, drive and heart, took what might have remained a minor city program aimed at eradicating graffiti and turned it into a force for beauty, redemption and hope. Golden is a singular force who helps make Philadelphia distinctive.”

Sought after nationally and internationally as an expert in urban transformation through art, Golden has received numerous awards for her work, including the Philadelphia Award, the Girl Scouts of America Take the Lead Award, the Moore College of Art Visionary Woman Award, an Eisenhower Exchange Fellowship, the Award for Social Justice from the Philadelphia Alliance, and recognition as a Distinguished Daughter of Pennsylvania from Governor Edward G. Rendell. Golden has also been honored with the LaSalle University Alumni Association's Signum Fidei Medal and accepted, on behalf of the organization, the Adela Dwyer/St. Thomas of Villanova Peace Award. In September of 2007 the *Philadelphia Daily News* and the Philadelphia Eagles named Ms. Golden one of the *75 Greatest Living Philadelphians*. In February of 2009, Golden was the recipient of the prestigious Hepburn Medal from the Katharine Houghton Hepburn Center at Bryn Mawr College. Most recently, she was named one of the most influential people in the city by Philadelphia Magazine.

Golden holds a Master of Fine Arts from the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University, and degrees in Fine Arts and Political Science from Stanford University. In addition, Golden has received honorary PhDs from Swarthmore College, Philadelphia’s University of the Arts, Widener University, and most recently, Haverford College and Villanova University.