



**OFFICE OF MAYOR JERRY SANDERS  
CITY OF SAN DIEGO**

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE** : December 15, 2009

**TO** : Council President Ben Hueso & Honorable Members of the  
San Diego City Council

**FROM** : Mayor Jerry Sanders

**SUBJECT** : Appointments to the Commission for Arts and Culture

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It is my pleasure to appoint Larry Baza and Todd Figi to the Commission for Arts and Culture, subject to your confirmation.

Larry Baza is a professional Arts Administrator with more than 32 years experience in advocating for the arts at the local, state, and national levels. Throughout his exemplary career in the arts and culture arena, Mr. Baza has served on the Boards of Directors for various non-profit arts organizations; provided his expertise as a panelist for arts commissions, foundations, and agencies; managed operations as an Executive Director for arts organizations and councils; and has worked as a Grant Writing Consultant, Marketing Director, Fine Art Consultant, and Art Gallery Owner.

Mr. Baza's professional experiences directing and managing arts organizations in the San Diego region includes serving as Executive Director for Centro Cultural De La Raza, Executive Director for the Public Arts Advisory Council for the County of San Diego, and Associate Director for Sushi Performance and Visual Art. He was also the Executive Secretary for the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of San Francisco, General Manager for the California Pacific Theatre, and Assistant Director for Community Arts of San Diego. From 2000-2007, Mr. Baza was a Public Relations/Marketing and Fine Art Consultant for the Fingerhut Gallery of La Jolla. Currently, Mr. Baza is a Partner for the Noel-Baza Fine Art Gallery in San Diego, and Gallery Management Instructor for the University of San Diego.

Mr. Baza's wealth of knowledge and experiences within the arts arena includes affiliations, consultancies, site visits, and participation with various arts organizations including the Arizona Arts Commission, California Arts Council, California Association of Local Arts Agencies, Chicano Federation of San Diego County, City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture, Kidzarts, National Association for Latino Arts & Culture, National

Performance Network, San Diego Community Foundation, and San Diego Youth & Community Services.

Mr. Baza's outstanding insight, many contributions to the arts community, advocacy and understanding of the role of arts and culture at the local, state, and national levels will be valuable additions to the Commission for Arts and Culture.

Mr. Baza was nominated by Councilmember Marti Emerald, and will replace Claire Anderson, who is termed out, for a term expiring August 31, 2011. Mr. Baza resides in North Park.

Todd Figi has a long and distinguished career and history as an arts and culture patron, advocate, entrepreneur and civic leader. In 1970, Mr. Figi established The Butcher, The Baker Candle Company in Baraboo, Wisconsin, which later became Figi/Wilson Giftware in San Diego, and evolved into Figi Graphics in 1975. Figi Graphics became one of the country's leading designers and distributors of giftware, art collections, and collectibles, and an internationally renowned supplier of gifts and stationery to more than 40 countries. Mr. Figi served as the President and CEO of Figi Graphics from 1975-1998, then sold the corporation in 1998 to Saunders, Karp, and Megrue, an investment banking firm in New York.

Throughout Mr. Figi's entrepreneurial career and success in the art, gift, and design industries, he became affiliated with and led many business associations and trade groups, and served as a member and President of the Young Presidents Organization, and member of the Chief Executives Organization in San Diego. He also chaired and served on the Board of Directors for the Atlanta and Los Angeles Gift Shows. Due to Mr. Figi's exemplary career and outstanding charitable contributions within the business and gift industries, he was named the Man of the Year by the Young Presidents Organization San Diego Chapter, and was honored by the American Foundation for AIDS Research as the 2000 amfAR Man of the Year in the Gift Industry. Mr. Figi is currently a member of the San Diego Chapter of the Chief Executives Organization and World Presidents Organization.

Mr. Figi's lifelong interest and passion for the arts led him to become an avid arts collector of Latin American paintings, drawings, and sculptures from modern master artists including Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo. His collections also include Pre-Columbian Art, African sculpture, Chinese porcelain, and works by Salvador Dali, Antonio Gaudi, Roberto Matta, Henry Moore, and Rufino Tamayo.

For many years, Mr. Figi has given his time, expertise, and treasure as a generous patron to arts institutions throughout the San Diego region, and served as a board member of the San Diego Museum of Man and Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego. He most recently served as the President of the Board of Trustees for the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego from 2008-2009.

Mr. Figi received a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Carroll College in Waukesha, Wisconsin and participated in graduate studies in Ceramics at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas.

Mr. Figi's passion, insight, and wealth of knowledge of the fine arts will be invaluable additions to the Commission for Arts and Culture. Mr. Figi was nominated by Councilmember Kevin Faulconer, and will replace Courtney Ann Coyle, who is termed out, for a term expiring August 31, 2011. He resides in La Jolla.

I ask that you confirm these appointments and join me in acknowledging Mr. Baza and Mr. Figi for their willingness to give their time, talents, and expertise to serve the City of San Diego.



JERRY SANDERS  
Mayor

JS:lg

cc: City Attorney Jan Goldsmith  
City Clerk Elizabeth Maland