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Contact: Theresa Kennedy
716-829-1158 | 716-803-4281 (cell)
tkennedy@sheas.org

Shea's Performing Arts Center Honors Doris Collins with The Michael Shea Lifetime Legacy Award

Collins Has Led Shea's Buffalo Theatre Restoration for 30 Years

Shea's Performing Arts Center has named Doris Collins the 2025 recipient of The Michael Shea Lifetime Legacy Award. Doris came to work at Shea's in 1995 as Shea's Historic Restoration Consultant, bringing her expertise and passion for preservation to every project.

"Over the last 30 years Doris has been the driving force behind every perfectly matched crystal, paint, and fabric here at Shea's," **said Brian Higgins, President & CEO of Shea's Performing Arts Center.** "Her recruitment and expert training of restoration volunteers and students has saved Shea's millions of dollars. Thanks to the meticulous efforts of Doris over the last three decades visitors today step into this theatre as it was - or I would argue even better than it was - 100 years ago."

In recent decades, over \$15 million has been invested into restoring Shea's interior and exterior, with Doris leading the effort. She researched Shea's history and worked with suppliers and restoration companies to ensure exact materials, patterns, and colors, from carpeting to wall fabrics, were reintroduced to the theater.

Doris also shares her expertise with the next generation of restoration leaders, working part-time for the last 15 years as a teacher in Villa Maria College's Interior Design Program.

Additionally, Doris independently created and led a restoration volunteer program, training and guiding over 200 volunteers over the years. Their work ranged from plaster repairs, to wall painting, and stenciling, completing nearly 7,000-square-feet of intricate, decorative patterns throughout the theater's lobbies and stairwells.

Prior to her tenure at Shea's, Doris spent seven years as a restorationist with Fiske and Sons based in Erie, Pennsylvania, where she was responsible for the interior restoration work at Our Lady of Victory Basilica in Lackawanna.

Doris was presented with The Michael Shea Lifetime Legacy Award at the 2025 Shea's Gala on June 6, 2025, a date which also marked the 70-year anniversary of Doris' arrival in the United States from her home country of Austria.

The award is named for Shea's Buffalo Theatre founder, Michael Shea. Born on April 1, 1859, in St. Catharines, Ontario, to Irish immigrant parents, the Shea family moved to the United States when Michael was a young child and settled in Buffalo's Old First Ward. At just 12 years old Michael started working on the Buffalo River docks, later became an ironworker, and eventually opened a saloon, which helped him save for his ambitions in the entertainment industry. Over time, Michael Shea operated 12 theaters in Western New York, with Shea's Buffalo Theatre standing as his crowning achievement.

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Additional Resources:

Video: [Doris Collins 2025 - Final.mp4](#)

Photos:

[3-11-21 - Doris - Wall Sconce Located in Box -Photo - Steven D. Desmond.jpg](#)

[8-4-16 Doris painting Grand Lobby Ceiling](#)

[IMG_1705.JPG](#)

[Painting 2.jpg](#)

[Doris Collins.jpg](#)