

# The Josephine Margetts Award

## 2011 OUTSTANDING ARTS ADVOCATE

### **Art Bonito**

A selfless, dedicated and deeply caring individual who uses his talents and resources to promote and advocate for the arts in Jefferson Township, Art Bonito has been a formidable force for cultural life in the western part of Morris County.

During a 40-year career as a studio engineering supervisor at NBC-TV, Art began volunteering with Jefferson Highlights Community Television, a nonprofit local cable organization that has produced over 4,000 weekly shows uninterrupted since its inception in 1984. As president since 1992, Art uses student and adult volunteers to produce the shows, many of which feature local arts events such as concerts, plays and the annual summer township festival.

When Jefferson Township purchased Camp Jefferson, Art focused his creative energies on building a dedicated TV studio in one of the cabins, where shows are now taped. He then designed and built a small movie theatre in another cabin, for community use.

After his retirement from NBC, Art undertook a 2-summer's long renovation and upgrade of the crumbling camp and amphitheatre, mobilizing dozens of volunteers from Jefferson Highlights and many other township organizations to make the venue a superb 500+ seat facility for summer kids' camp and family concerts, offering top quality professional entertainment at bargain prices. Events in the amphitheatre have included Beatlemania Again, the Nerds, and tribute concerts to such

performers as Bon Jovi, Johnny Cash, Bruce Springsteen and Queen, among others.

Although he would never admit it, Art has invested many thousands of his own dollars into these ventures to bring the arts to the community at prices everyone can afford. Because of him, people have enjoyed film, dance, theatre, and music spanning the wide spectrum of tastes. What better way to advocate for the arts than to make them accessible to everyone and to provide a steady diet of fine quality offerings to the community?

Art Bonito has volunteered his time, efforts and spirit to a myriad of arts related activities in Jefferson Township. He has received wide recognition and numerous awards for his work. And, in 2010, he was awarded the prestigious New Jersey State Governor's Jefferson Award, established "to honor ordinary people who, through public and volunteer service, do extraordinary things for other people, their community, the nation or the environment without expectation of reward." Of the 450 nominations for this award, only 20 individuals/groups were selected in 2010 and, among those 20, only four were chosen to represent New Jersey at a national ceremony in Washington DC. Among those four was Art Bonito.

Therefore, for his dedication of time and resources, his tireless efforts on behalf of the arts, and his clear commitment to bringing top quality arts to his community in an affordable way, the Arts Council of the Morris Area is honored to award the 2011 Josephine Margetts Award for Outstanding Arts Advocate to Arthur Bonito.

**NOTE:**

[Ask Mr. Bonito to come up for presentation of the award; afterward you can offer her the opportunity to speak]

May 12, 2011