

Americans for the Arts, U.S. Conf. of Mayors honors New Bedford's mayor as leader in the arts

"Americans for the Arts and The United States Conference of Mayors today presented the 2023 Public Leadership in the Arts Awards to three elected officials, and Legendary Artist Awards to two artists, at The U.S. Conference of Mayors 91st Winter Meeting in Washington, DC. The honorees include:

- Dan McKee, Governor of Rhode Island, awarded the National Award for State Arts Leadership;
- David Holt, Mayor of Oklahoma City, awarded the National Award for Local Arts Leadership for cities with a population of 100,000 or more;
- Jon Mitchell, Mayor of New Bedford, Massachusetts, awarded the National Award for Local Arts Leadership for cities with a population fewer than 100,000;
- Louis "Eric B" Barrier, hip-hop artist and pioneer in the rap genre and Kool DJ Red Alert, hip-hop DJ, awarded with Legendary Artist Awards. The award honors an individual or group that has used their position to consistently advocate and support the arts and culture and/or arts education in the United States.

"The leadership of Governor McKee, Mayor Holt, and Mayor Mitchell should inspire all those serving in public office. Their belief in the power of the arts to connect people and drive civic engagement, and their unparalleled commitment to supporting arts programs exemplify how investment in the arts translates into community growth, economic prosperity, and

increased cultural funding,” said Nolen V. Bivens, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts. “We are also proud to recognize Eric B and Kool DJ Red Alert, who have contributed enormously to America’s artistic and cultural legacy, and whose achievements have no doubt helped change the future of the arts in America for the better.”

“The U.S. Conference of Mayors is pleased to recognize the exemplary work of Mayor Holt, Mayor Mitchell, and Governor McKee as they use the arts and culture to not only promote their city/state, but to grow their economies,” remarked Tom Cochran, CEO and Executive Director of The U.S. Conference of Mayors. “Mayors understand the inherent value of the arts to bring people together, promote cultural understanding, and make cities safer places to live, work, and play.”

New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell

From the first day of his administration in 2012, Mayor Mitchell has prioritized the cultivation of the city’s creative sector as an integral component of economic, social, and cultural development that enhances the quality of life for residents and visitors alike. Over the past decade, he has helped advance New Bedford as one of the most culturally unique and creative cities in America.

In 2016, he proposed a public fund dedicated to the promotion of the city’s artistic and cultural assets. With City Council and local legislative support, Mayor Mitchell established the Commonwealth of Massachusetts’ first-ever special revenue fund for the promotion of arts, culture, and tourism. During this past fiscal year alone, the \$107,600 from the fund leveraged an additional total amount of \$1,173,816 from private and public sources, such as Barr Foundation, Bristol County Savings Bank, MassDevelopment, Mass Cultural Council, New England Foundation for the Arts, and more. The establishment of the Fund led to the creation of the City’s first-ever strategic arts and culture plan published in December 2018.

As the most racially and ethnically diverse city in the region, Mayor Mitchell draws strength from all the cultures that are reflected in the region's citizenry. Through his ongoing support of the initiatives of the arts and culture plan, and his thoughtful leadership, Mayor Mitchell has provided the foundation to bring New Bedford to a position as one of the leading creative cities in America."