

## NEWS RELEASE

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### Hardin Center to Unveil Outdoor Bronze Sculpture

GADSDEN, AL: A memorable event will take place on Saturday, August 17 at 5 pm underneath the giant gold and white cylinder on the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and Broad Streets as three bronze figures will be unveiled outside the Hardin Center for Cultural Arts. The public is invited to attend.

The three bronze figures form one sculpture by Alabama artist Casey Downing, Jr. called "After Classes." The sculpture is a gift from Dr. and Mrs. Elias Ghafary. They commissioned three realistic student-size bronze sculptures representing an impromptu performance after lessons in music, art, and dance at the Hardin Center. These art objects will convey to the public the function of the Mary G. Hardin Center for Cultural Arts as a place for fostering the arts through education and performance.

This tribute will be cast in the permanence of art grade bronze and cast in America using high standards. While proposals were sought from across America, the project is an all-Alabama project. Sculptor Casey Downing, Jr. is from Mobile and the figures were cast in Fairhope by the Fairhope Foundry.

When asked what drew them to the project, Dr. Ghafary said:

Since we moved to Gadsden in 1976, we have supported the arts, starting with the Gadsden Symphony, even before the Center for Cultural Arts was built. The Hardin Center for Cultural Arts' programs have improved our community and brought it to a higher level of education and refinement. Art, music, and dance are the cornerstone of downtown Gadsden. We want to recognize the Hardin Center by showing to the community the services that it offers. We built our life in Gadsden and this city has been good to us. We want to give back to the community that adopted us. We believe that art is the backbone of the community and is the polish that makes it shine. We decided that an art project will represent our way of thinking and would help to beautify downtown Gadsden.

Bobby Welch, Executive Director of the Gadsden Cultural Arts Foundation, said that the project began in early 2019 and it has been one of the most enjoyable learning experiences of his life. "It was a great learning experience but most of all it warmed my heart to see such

generosity. To see the love for Gadsden by such passionate and generous art supporters is inspirational. I hope that others will follow their lead.”

Downtown Gadsden, Inc. Director Kay Moore said, “We are excited that the Hardin Center continues to bring art and cultural to our historic downtown! As the center of the Main Street district, the Hardin Center represents the heart of downtown Gadsden. Downtown Gadsden, Inc. is proud to support the efforts of the Mary G. Hardin Center for Cultural Arts and is very enthusiastic about this new sculpture.”

The Gadsden Cultural Arts Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit and is a public/private partnership with the City of Gadsden. The Foundation operates the Mary G. Hardin Center for Cultural Arts, Imagination Place Children’s Museum, the Gadsden Community School for the Arts, the Downtown Dance Conservatory, the Etowah Youth Orchestras, and provides numerous concerts and cultural and educational programs. In 2018 more than 1,000 programs were provided to on-site visitors and to the community through its outreach programs at area schools, day care centers, and churches.



Dr. and Mrs. Elias Ghafary

More info on sculptor Casey Downing, Jr.: <http://caseydowningart.com/>  
The Fairhope Foundry <http://www.fairhopefoundry.com/>

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