



THE GAGE-MSALL AWARD

for Outstanding Civic Contribution by a Chicagoan

AWARD HISTORY

In keeping with the civic commitment and vision of both its founding president, Lyman J. Gage, and the president who reinvigorated the organization for the 21st Century, Laurence J. Msall, the Civic Federation annually presents the Gage-Msall Award for Outstanding Civic Contribution to individuals who have consistently demonstrated dedication to civic concerns in the Chicago area.

Lyman J. Gage (1836-1927) was born in upstate New York. He moved to Chicago as a young man and began working for The First National Bank, where he rose from cashier to bank president. In 1889, when Chicago's City Council launched a bid to host a World's Fair, Gage was one of 100 prominent citizens appointed to a committee to promote Chicago's bid. At the time, public opinion was mixed on the wisdom of investing in such an extravagant undertaking. However, Gage saw the proposed Fair as an opportunity to showcase Chicago as a world-class city and led a \$10 million fundraising drive to build the World's Columbian Exposition. Although cynics predicted disaster, the 1893 Exposition was a great critical and financial success. More than 27 million people visited the Fair during its six-month run, and it provided an important source of jobs during a time of national economic depression.

In the wake of the Fair, Chicago confronted serious economic challenges compounded by widespread corruption in city government. In response, Gage helped to organize a series of conferences to address the problems of rampant poverty, gambling and prostitution. At one of the conferences, the featured speaker was journalist William T. Stead, author of the muckraking book, *If Christ Came to Chicago*. Stead's speech so electrified the audience that they resolved to join together to address Chicago's urgent need for reform. That group became the Civic Federation, which was formally incorporated in February 1894. Gage was elected president of the Civic Federation at its incorporation, Bertha Palmer was elected vice president, and Jane Addams served as a trustee.

Laurence J. Msall (1962-2023) was born in Chicago, attended St. Ignatius High School and Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois, and later earned his Juris Doctorate from Loyola University School of Law, Evening Division. After attending Knox College he worked for then-Illinois Governor Jim Thompson at the Department of Commerce and Community Affairs,

and in 1990 joined the staff of the Commercial Club of Chicago as vice president, where he worked with the CEOs of some of Chicago's largest corporations promoting regional economic development strategies and special projects. He returned to Illinois government in 1999, when then-Governor George H. Ryan appointed him Senior Advisor for Economic Development, a position in which he oversaw eleven of the state's economic development and infrastructure-related agencies.

In 2002 Laurence was named president of the Civic Federation, a post he would hold for 21 years until his unexpected passing on Feb. 4, 2023. Msall made immeasurable contributions during his tenure at the helm of the Federation, transforming and expanding the organization's work and influence. He was long respected and admired on both sides of the political aisle for his government finance expertise, his wise and generous policy counsel, his warm and friendly nature and his one-of-a-kind sense of humor. While Msall was the Civic Federation to so many in the community, his real legacy was in helping to make the Federation the indispensable voice for fiscal responsibility throughout the state of Illinois, and that mission will go on through the outstanding staff that Laurence developed.

Msall both loved and played an instrumental role in expanding the Annual Civic Awards into the much-anticipated event it is today. It is particularly meaningful to the Federation to honor Msall by renaming this award as the Gage-Msall Award beginning in 2024.

2023

Richard S. Price

2020

David R. Casper

2017

Ilene S. Gordon

2014

Ann Lurie

2011

John A. Buck

2008

John W. Rowe

2005

W. James Farrell

2002

Andrew J. McKenna

1999

Ruth M. Rothstein

1996

Henry Hyde

1992

Robert W. Galvin

1989

Frank W. Conside

1986

John E. Swearingen

1983

Donald Regan

2022

William J. Brodsky

2019

Samuel C. Scott III

2016

John Canning

2013

Harrison I. Steans

2010

John F. Sandner

2007

Patrick G. Ryan

2004

Lester Crown

2001

John H. Bryan

1998

James J. O'Connor

1995

Hillary Rodham Clinton

1991

Stanton R. Cook

1988

James F. Beré

1985

Philip M. Klutznick

1982

Alan Greenspan

2021

Maurice Smith

2018

Norman R. Bobins

2015

Tyrone C. Fahner

2012

Thomas J. Wilson

2009

Richard L. Thomas

2006

John W. Rogers, Jr.

2003

William A. Osborn

2000

Clark Burrus

1997

Daniel E. McLean

1993

William L. Weiss

1990

Richard M. Morrow

1987

Edward A. Brennan

1984

Lavern W. Kron