

WINTER 2024 NEWSLETTER

GRAND RAPIDS FEDERATION OF MUSICIANS AFM LOCAL 56

CONGRATULATIONS to **JAMES SAWYER**, who received our 2023 Musician of the Year award at the Local 56 Membership Meeting in November 2023! Shown here with Local 56 Board Member Christina Fong, James (Doc) Sawyer was honored and recognized by Local 56 for his 33 years of dedicated service, both as a performer and educator in our community. Well done!





MESSAGE FROM LOCAL 56 PRESIDENT BENNIE KEYS

Hello Local 56! I am happy to announce some changes to our Local Officers and Executive Board. From last fall's election results, we have some new faces.

One is our new Secretary-Treasurer, Paul Austin. We also have Robert Johnson taking over for former Executive Board Member (and Local 56 President Emeritus) Kevin Flannery. Please join me in welcoming Paul and Robert to their new positions.

We are pleased that two of our Executive Board Members have been re-elected to another term of office: Charles Johnson and Christina Fong. Christina serves as the representative for the Lansing Symphony Orchestra (LSO), and Local 56 is privileged to have the LSO musicians as members.

In addition, I am very delighted that the state of Michigan has repealed the Right to Work law. This is the best news going right now, and I am grateful that the state legislature has decided to get rid of this horrible law.

In this issue, we are announcing our Local 56 membership drive. I invite any professional musician you may know, as well as serious music students, to join our Local. Check with Paul Austin as to the amount that they will need to pay.

Finally, I am excited to see the news about the 2024 Scholarship program in this newsletter, in our work to support the next generation of musicians. I am thrilled with all of the new opportunities that are available to us here in Local 56. If you have any questions for any of the officers or Executive Board Members, please give us a call and we will be delighted to answer them for you.

MESSAGE FROM THE NEW LOCAL 56 SECRETARY-TREASURER PAUL AUSTIN

Now as I wrap up my second month as your Secretary-Treasurer, I am grateful for the support of Local 56 members as I become accustomed to the duties of this important position.

There are many wonderful things about this job, and the main one has to be getting to know our membership. Please call or stop by the office anytime if you have any questions about Local 56 or the AFM.



(616) 451-4374 is the office phone number, and our office hours are Monday 1pm-5pm, and Tuesday through Friday 1pm-3pm.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE!

Currently Local 56 is in a campaign to recruit new members, who will save \$95 if they join before March 31st! Approved by the American Federation of Musicians, both the National (\$65) and Local (\$30) Initiation Fees are waived during our Local 56 membership drive.

Should you know of any professional musicians who would benefit from AFM membership, please encourage them to join and pass along this link to the Local 56 website for more details: <https://www.livemusicgr.org/>

Questions? Contact Local 56 Secretary-Treasurer Paul Austin at (616) 451-4374

ANNOUNCING THE 2024 GRFM SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Local 56 is pleased to announce details about the 2024 GRFM Scholarships!

This scholarship program honors the memory of three former Local 56 members: music educator and conductor Donald D. Armstrong, former GRS Principal Cello Robert Madura, and former GRS Assistant Principal Bass Thomas A. Erickson.

The competition for the Thomas A. Erickson (double bass only) and Robert Madura (violin, viola, cello, harp) scholarships will be held on **Saturday, April 27th, at St Mark's Episcopal Church**, located at 134 Division Avenue N, Grand Rapids MI 49503. The Donald D. Armstrong scholarship (open to all instruments) will be determined at the Local 56 Executive Board meeting on May 14th.

The mission of the GRFM Scholarship Fund is to further the musical education of deserving young musicians by offering scholarships for summer study.

Applications for these three scholarships are available now at our website:
<https://www.livemusicgr.org/scholarships>

Note that April 1st is the deadline to apply for the scholarships.

Please consider making a donation to the GRFM Scholarship Program. There is a DONATE button at our website for your use (<https://www.livemusicgr.org/pay-member-dues-work-dues-or-donations>) or you may mail a check (payable to "Grand Rapids Federation of Musicians") to the Local 56 office (233 Fulton Street E, Suite 210-G, Grand Rapids MI 49503).

Thank you for making a donation, in any amount, to this most worthy cause, and thank you for supporting and helping to promote the Local 56 scholarship programs to honor Donald D. Armstrong, Robert Madura, and Thomas A. Erickson.

UPCOMING MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Our next Local 56 membership meeting will be 4:30pm on Tuesday, March 12th, which will be held in the 6th Floor Conference Room of the Masonic Center, 233 Fulton St E, Grand Rapids MI 49503. We hope to see you then!

AFM Local 56 2023 Musician of the Year In Action!

Inspiring music educator **James Sawyer** is shown here speaking to students last month as part of St Cecilia Music Center's Jazz and Folk In-School and In-Concert Student Experience. James (Doc) Sawyer has inspired thousands of children throughout his long and distinguished career!



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