

inpire

CINCINNATI

January/February 2007



Inspiring Men 2007

ISSUE 5.01 \$3.50



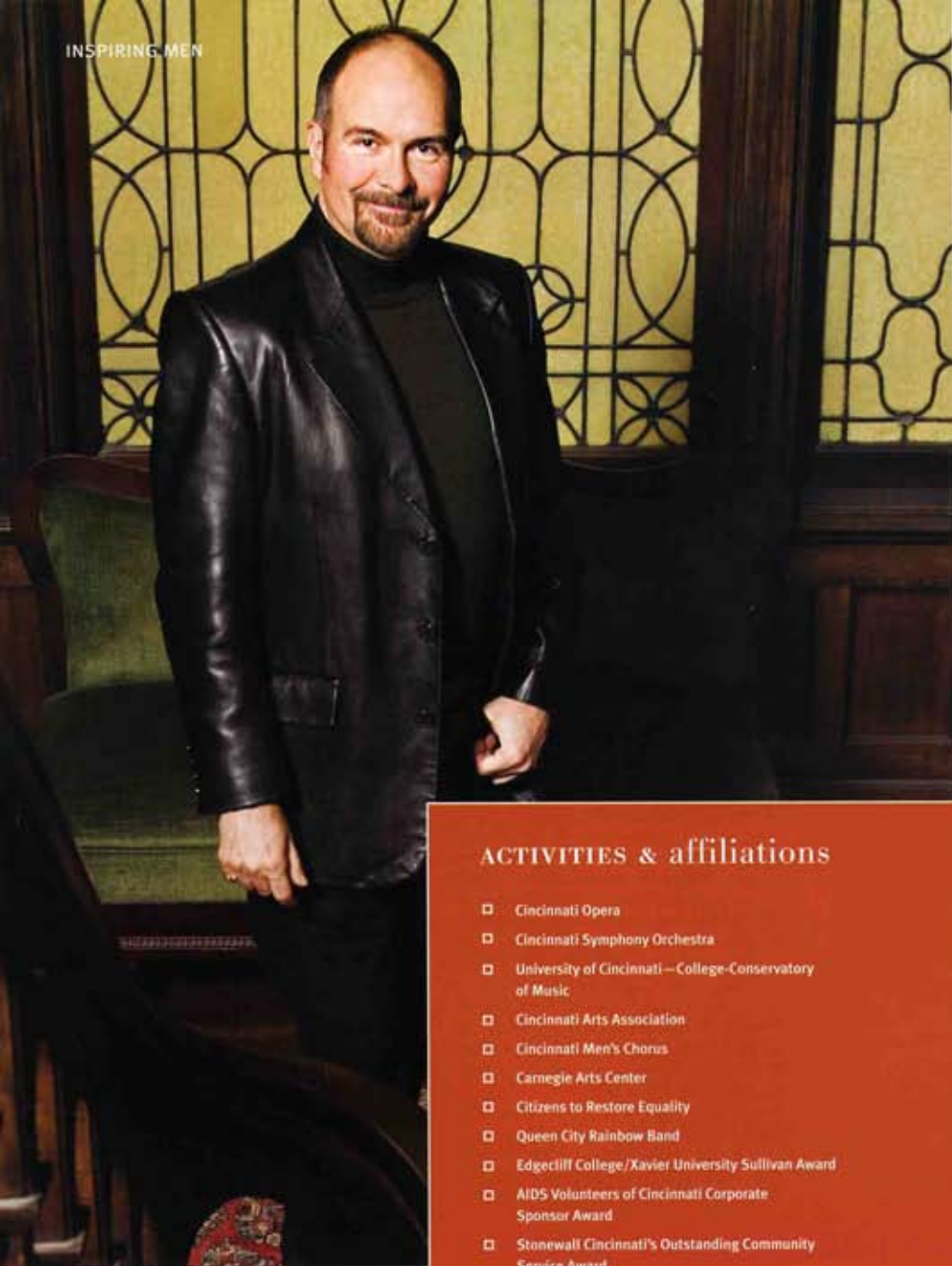
7 25274 57342 4

INSPIRING men

BY STEPHANIE A. CREECH

PORTRAIT PHOTOS BY PETER MUELLER | GROUP PHOTO BY DEOGRACIAS LERMA

There are people in this world whose passions and acts inspire all of us to give more; to do more; to step up. Greater Cincinnati is blessed with a great many such individuals. For the first time, *Inspire* presents eight great men whose lives make all of us want to do more. From ensuring basic human rights to bringing about an urban Renaissance, these men are making things happen. »



FRED martens

“TAKE RISKS. STICK YOUR NECK OUT. MAKE THINGS HAPPEN. YOU’LL HAVE FUN.”

FRED MARTENS BELIEVES IN GIVING BACK. A TALENTED graphic designer and owner of Martens’ Art, Fred shares his talents and time on numerous fronts. He views the opportunity to serve as “a privilege to take advantage of so many wonderful opportunities.”

His gifts and talents seem to come quite naturally. Fred’s mother was a pianist and a composer. His father was an architect and a sculptor. No surprise then that Fred should have such artistic skills. What Fred also has, however, is a drive and a focus that grew, in part, out of family hardship. When Fred was in high school, his father’s architecture firm began to suffer and had to close. Fred says, “It’s funny how things add up. Seeing parents who had difficulties and recognizing life’s problems when I was growing up helped me solidify my own goals.” Fred firmly believes that such difficulties can help create drive. “It’s something you can work with,” Fred says.

Fred says his experiences at Edgely College also helped shape him. It was at Edgely that Fred received a life-changing opportunity—a job at the LeBlond Boy’s Club in Over-the-Rhine teaching after-school and summer art classes. Fred not only admits to being scared, but also says, “They didn’t think I’d last a week.” But he did last and as a result says, “I now realize I learned pretty much all the critical tools I would need for my life during this amazing time at Edgely and at the Boy’s Club.”

After his experience with the Boy’s Club, Fred taught art for nine years at several local private Catholic schools and at Holmes High School. Fred has also served as an adjunct professor at Xavier University where he created a new three-year curriculum in computer graphics and web design. Fred says he is most proud that “during my time at Xavier, I initiated a student volunteer component in my advanced class, requiring students to cold call and volunteer their graphic gifts to a non-profit organization of their choice. I have heard from many of my graduates that they found this experience very valuable.” Now that he is focused full-time on Martens’ Art, Fred continues to support the Xavier art department by teaching summer classes and serving on a review committee.

Much of Fred’s volunteerism is devoted to human rights issues. For more than 20 years, he has volunteered his time creating logos and corporate images, designing invitations and programs and directories. Fred was active in the opening of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center having designed the invitation, event logo and program books for three of their Freedom Conductor Award galas, those honoring the late Rosa Parks, Desmond Tutu and Dorothy Height. He also served on the design committee for the opening night gala and the dedication of the Freedom Center.

Other human rights organizations Fred serves include Citizens to Restore Equality, Stonewall Cincinnati, Lavender Lights and Queen City Careers Association. Fred’s human compassion and healthcare concerns have also made him an avid volunteer for AIDS Volunteers of Cincinnati. Fred has been largely involved in the AIDS Walks and other AVOC fundraisers, such as the Diva Dazzle and Night in Bombay.

An avid musician, Fred loves performing. Fred plays clarinet and marches with the Queen City Rainbow Band. He also plays professionally with the Lebanon Symphony Orchestra and with the Cincinnati Metropolitan Orchestra, which Fred describes as “more social.” When asked what his favorite song is, the answer reflects not only Fred’s taste in music, but also his attitude toward life—Edith Piaf’s *Je Ne Regrette Pas—No Regrets*.

ACTIVITIES & affiliations

- Cincinnati Opera
- Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra
- University of Cincinnati—College-Conservatory of Music
- Cincinnati Arts Association
- Cincinnati Men’s Chorus
- Carnegie Arts Center
- Citizens to Restore Equality
- Queen City Rainbow Band
- Edgely College/Xavier University Sullivan Award
- AIDS Volunteers of Cincinnati Corporate Sponsor Award
- Stonewall Cincinnati’s Outstanding Community Service Award