



# Creative Class in Tampa Bay

## Step Up, Lead or Get Out of the Bay

By Malcolm A. Teasdale



Whether you've lived in the area for two days or twenty years, there's a lot to discover about Tampa Bay. Both sides of the bay are reinventing themselves. From the Riverwalk in downtown Tampa, with planned museums that will be magnificent, to the west side of our bay with the fabulous Museum of Fine Arts and the new Chihuly Museum, notable area women are at the helm with many developing initiatives. Among our great community women is Beth Morean, a local philanthropist. Ms. Morean donated over \$10 million to make the Chihuly Museum possible. She has an extreme passion for the arts and consistently gives back to the community. Hooray for her!

Let's take a journey over the bridge to visit Mayor Pam Iorio and all that she's doing for the arts in Tampa. Her vision and leadership will create dynamic opportunities for many people and generations to come. Take a look at the incredible work that Judith Lisi, president of the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center, has done. She has pioneered the movement for theater to thrive in Tampa and has been involved in getting top New York City Broadway shows and Opera series to play at our Tampa performing arts center - the leading performing arts center south of Washington, D.C. These are women with uncommon vision, strength and courage to step out and take the arts to a higher level in the Tampa Bay area.

Today this market is changing like at no other time. No matter what corner of Tampa Bay you may find yourself in, there is a significant movement in arts and culture. I for one am sick and tired of the traditional faction of small minded, geo-centric people, who continue to sabotage progress by insisting on bridges being walls, and effectively short-sighting the Tampa Bay area for its greatness and its potential. We desperately need politicians, councils, galleries, curators and a myriad of organizations to rise up and lead by example. That includes all seven counties that make up Tampa Bay. To lead by example, we need to start at the highest level in government, specifically in our

major markets: St. Petersburg, Tampa and Clearwater.

When Tampa Bay wins, we all win. Beyond our civic leaders, the more leaders in business who step out, set an example as innovative people thinking outside of the lines, the more innovative, energetic and successful our area will be. Every corporation has a lot to gain and a lot to lose with the outcomes of culture in our market. I want to encourage every business executive to set their example by getting involved and helping us to unite the Bay Area.

Just recently, the Tampa Bay partnership completed a scorecard for Tampa Bay focusing on six vital dynamics and compared those to other similar sized metropolitan areas. We were ranked at the bottom for innovation. Innovation can mean many things to many people, but at the end of the day it's about thinking outside the lines and raising the stakes. Tampa Bay, needs executives who aren't afraid to be innovators and lead. If you don't step up and lead, rest assured, another competitive market will. This place we call home is in the midst of unprecedented growth; growth that's going to change the look and feel of our neighborhoods, skylines, activities and our lives.

Leading by example - and putting my actions where my mouth is, I have formulated a non-profit organization, entitled Arts Movement - Bridging the Bay, dedicated to bridging and eliminating the outmoded, geo-mental gap and creating new opportunities for art in Tampa Bay. Arts Movement - Bridging the Bay is about highlighting talented local artists of all genres; the organization's members educate and encourage our community of the arts. Its leaders aim to spotlight and showcase Tampa Bay's talents worldwide.

Another project is a "Big Thinkers Artist Association." This is a collection of artists, galleries and businesses that will allow connectivity and resources to abound. Big Thinkers will be a resourceful organization developing and creating opportunities to invigorate the artistic community with, for example, events, workshops and a health insurance program. This will be a fabulous environment to bridge business and the arts.

Through a separate business unit, Malcolm Out Loud Productions, we are actively promoting art and culture through philanthropic events with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity and National Society for Hispanic MBAs (NSHMBA), among others.



*The walls of Teasdale Worldwide are filled with a collection of multimedia artwork entitled The Esque Collection, by six Tampa Bay artists: Anne Kavanaugh, Taylor Ikin, Todd McDonald, Kellee Suarez, Joseph Rotella and Gustavo Briceño. Each piece in The Esque Collection is for sale, and a portion of the proceeds go to the Arts Movement - Bridging the Bay.*

As a leader, I've been able to incorporate art and culture in my own endeavors, but also influence others to do the same. From the creation of Arts Movement - Bridging the Bay, The Esque Collection, my television show Arts Movement with Malcolm and the efforts through philanthropic events of Malcolm Out Loud productions, I am passionate about creating a solid foundation to not only spark awareness but educate the community about the arts. It's up to the leaders of Tampa Bay, at all levels and in all sectors, to offer opportunities to the public and show the capabilities of what art can do for our community.



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