

TUCSON'S MOVERS AND SHAKERS

Arts and Entertainment

Movers and shakers in arts and entertainment include an architect, an artist, an author-historian, and a musician. **Josias Joesler** is Tucson's "most recognized architect," who in the 1930s and 1940s designed 400 buildings. **Ted DeGrazia**, the "world's most reproduced artist," is renowned for his western paintings and sculpture, especially colorful images of Native American children. Among more than 30 books, mostly on Southwestern history and folklore, **C. L. Sonnichsen** wrote the acclaimed definitive history of the old pueblo, *Tucson: The Life and Times of an American City*. Granddaughter of Tucson business mover and shaker, Fred Ronstadt, immensely successful popular-music singer **Linda Ronstadt**, "blessed with arguably the most sterling set of pipes of her generation," has been an "inspiration for every aspiring young singer" in our town.

Josias Joesler (1895-1956) was born in Zurich, Switzerland, educated in history and architecture in Germany and France, lived in Spain a while, and then worked as an architect in Havana, Mexico City, and Los Angeles, before coming to Tucson in 1927.

Joesler initially worked with builder John W. Murphey and his decorator wife Helen who were trying to build residential communities that would attract wealthy clients from the East "to the resort desert city of Tucson." Innovations included non-gridiron street patterns, southwestern architecture, and landscaped lots.

Many of Joesler's residential buildings are in the Catalina Foothills Estates and the Blenman-Elm neighborhood (just east of UA Medical Center) listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Most of Joesler's work reflects a Spanish Colonial Revival style. His buildings utilized traditional southwestern hand applied plaster, hand hewn beams, colored concrete floors, and decorative iron/tin work. Besides residences, memorable Joesler extant buildings include Broadway Village (Tucson's first shopping center), Saint Phillips-in-the-Hills Episcopal Church, St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church, the Arizona History Museum, Fourth Avenue Shops, Ghost Ranch Lodge, and the Hacienda Del Sol reconstruction – a true architectural legacy for Tucson.

Ted DeGrazia (1909-1982) was born Ettore DeGrazia to Italian immigrants in Morenci, Arizona, graduated from Morenci High School, eschewed a life as a copper miner, moved to Tucson in 1932, worked his way through the UA to earn Bachelor's degrees in Art Education and Fine Arts, and later went back to UA to earn a Master's degree in Art Education in 1945.

In the late 1930s DeGrazia began creating his early paintings. In 1942 *Arizona Highways* magazine started to publish his images, many based on his impressions from extensive travel throughout southern Arizona and northern Mexico. In 1942 DeGrazia went to Mexico City to work for both Diego Rivera and Jose Clemente Orozco, two of Mexico's most famous artists.

Back in Tucson in the mid-1940s, and finding that no galleries were interested in displaying his work, DeGrazia built his own small gallery in Tucson, and then in 1951 bought 10 acres of land in the foothills

east of Tucson and built his *Gallery in the Sun* [6300 North Swan], “still standing today as a testament to the man and his work.”

Other galleries finally began showing DeGrazia’s work. In the early 1950s he seriously started working on ceramics. In 1960 UNICEF chose his image of Los Ninos (the children) for their Christmas card and DeGrazia’s popularity and success exploded.

C. L. Sonnichsen (1901-1991) was born Charles Leland Sonnichsen in Fonda, Iowa, graduated from high school in Minnesota, earned a BA in English at the University of Minnesota and a Masters and Ph.D. in English at Harvard. Sonnichsen spent 41 years at the Texas College of Mines and Metallurgy as a researcher, teacher, chairman of the English Department, and dean of the graduate school, before arriving in our town in 1972, at age 70, becoming “a Tucsonan by adoption.”

Sonnichsen was Director of Publications and Editor of the *Journal of Arizona History* from 1972-1977, then Senior Editor until his death in 1991. “Dean of southwestern historians,” he combined self-taught research with an admired light-hearted writing touch in 34 books. His comprehensive history of Tucson, published in 1982, “chronicles with humor and affection the growth over two centuries of one of the region’s most colorful communities.”

Linda Ronstadt (1946-) was born in Tucson, grew up in a musical family, learned to play the guitar, attended Catalina High School, before leaving to go to Los Angeles where she became part of the Stone Poneys folk trio that released its first album in 1967. By the end of the 1960s, Ronstadt was a solo act, releasing several albums before 1974’s “Heart Like a Wheel” achieved platinum status, i.e., sold more than a million copies.

Ronstadt quickly became a musical superstar. She had success with many different styles, including rock, rock and roll, folk, country rock, jazz, Latin American, Cajun, big band, pop rock, art rock, and operetta. Her diversity led to collaborations with other musical greats including Billy Eckstine, Rosemary Clooney, Emmylou Harris, Dolly Parton, Neil Young, Johnny Cash, and Nelson Riddle. In total Ronstadt has released over 30 studio albums and 15 compilations of greatest hits, earning 11 Grammy Awards, two Academy of Country Music Awards, an Emmy Award, an American Latino Media Arts Award and numerous gold, platinum, and multiplatinum album certifications.

Ronstadt’s ties to Tucson continued over her career. She often brought recording business back to Tucson and still owns a home here, keeping in touch with childhood friends.

In 2013 Linda Ronstadt was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease, which left her unable to sing. In April 2014 Ronstadt will be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Selected Sources and Information: Josias Joesler: An Architectural Eclectic, parentseyes.arizona.edu; Ted DeGrazia Biography, degrazia-art.com; Charles Leland (C.L.) Sonnichsen Manuscript Collection, Arizona Historical Society, 2013; Linda Ronstadt biography, biography.com; *Simple Dreams*, Linda Ronstadt, 2013.