

Donald and Barbara Jonas

The nursing profession is both an art and a science. We have long relied on science to determine our decisions and our actions, and have developed the art of our discipline through personal experience and strong guidance from our mentors.

Art is skill, applied to a profession, or in the fine arts where imagination and unique perspective are joined in the creation of beautiful paintings or sculpture or music.

Today we honor two unique individuals: Barbara and Donald Jonas. They pursued separate careers – Barbara in social work and psychotherapy, and Donald as a businessman and corporate leader. But they came together in their love for modern art and in their many philanthropic activities that have spanned medicine and the arts, education and economics, local and international causes. Quintessential New Yorkers who have long been avid and knowledgeable art connoisseurs, they have contributed to their community in warm and generous ways for many years.

Loving art as they do, it is extraordinary that they recently parted with a large share of their precious art collection to fund a foundation devoted to nursing in New York. The Jonas Center for Nursing Excellence was founded to advance professional nursing through programs that promote nursing recruitment and retention, increase racial and ethnic diversity, advance innovative practice models, and improve practice environments.

Their art is being transmuted into a highly active and engaged philanthropy, already benefitting young researchers with grants and fellowships for students. We want them to know that this transformative gift is deeply appreciated by all of nursing in New York, and today by all of Columbia.

Please join me in honoring Barbara and Donald Jonas with the Second Century Award for Excellence in Health Care.