



Ann Marie Miller

**Former Director of Advocacy and Public Policy,
ArtPride New Jersey Foundation;
Chair, Hightstown Cultural Arts Commission**

For over four decades, Ann Marie Miller has been a champion and advocate for New Jersey's art sector creating awareness about the arts' contribution to the state's quality of life and economic vitality. In December 2023, Ann Marie retired as the [ArtPride New Jersey Foundation's](#) Director of Advocacy and Public Policy, a position she held for nine years. In addition to her unparalleled accomplishments in the art sector, Ann Marie has been an important partner, collaborator and supporter of Sustainable Jersey.



Ann Marie has demonstrated her commitment to sustainability and the arts at the local level through her work in Hightstown Borough. As chair of the [Hightstown Cultural Arts Commission](#), Ann Marie and the commission implemented four [Sustainable Jersey actions](#) from the Arts & Creative Culture category that contributed 40 certification points to the silver-level [Hightstown Borough Certification Report](#). In recognition of their achievements, Hightstown Borough received the [2018 Sustainable Jersey Creativity and Innovation Award](#). Ann Marie explained, "Sustainability depends on the interdependence of the arts, economic development and environmental stewardship; as implementers at the local level, we need to move outside our organizational silos and work together as partners."



Before taking on the Director of Advocacy and Public Policy role at ArtPride, Ann Marie served 19 years as the Executive Director. In 1995, backed by the coalition of the Arts Challenge Fund, she developed a path that led the organization to become a formidable advocate for arts funding and policy.

Using emerging technologies to connect art lovers to policymakers and spearheading initiatives that underscored the socio-economic impact of the arts, Ann Marie ensured that the arts in New Jersey were supported around the state. Adam Perle, President, and CEO of ArtPride NJ, said, "Ann Marie has fine-tuned statewide arts advocacy efforts and cultivated a formidable legion of advocates. Her strategic leadership has been instrumental in producing multiple economic activity studies, underscoring the invaluable contributions of New Jersey's nonprofit arts community to towns across the state. Thanks to her perseverance, exceptional relationship-

building skills and groundbreaking legislative efforts, public support of the arts at local, state and federal levels has increased dramatically during her tenure."

Generous with her time and talents, Ann Marie serves on boards and groups throughout the state. She is Chair of the Board of Trustees for [Arts Ed New Jersey](#) and a Member of the Board of Trustees of the [Young Audiences Arts for Learning NJ & Eastern PA](#). She served on the board for the [Center for Non-Profit Corporations in New Jersey](#) and on the Executive Committee of the [State Arts Action Network of Americans for the Arts](#).

Making the Connection--Arts and a Sustainable Community: The arts, culture and historic preservation are key components to a sustainable future, and Sustainable Jersey offers points toward certification in these areas. Since 2019, Ann Marie has served on the Sustainable Jersey panel that reviews Sustainable Jersey grant applications and more recently as a reviewer for the Sustainable Jersey Arts & Creative Culture municipal action submissions. Ann Marie explained, "Serving as a reviewer for Sustainable Jersey has been personally and professionally rewarding. I get to see and share the innovative art initiatives that are happening at the local level, like in Fairlawn, Trenton, Ridgely Park and more." In 2021, Ann Marie coordinated and led the Sustainable Jersey webinar: [New Resources for Sustainable Jersey Arts & Creative Culture Actions](#). In addition, ArtPride developed the resource: [The Arts as a Partner in Creating a Sustainable Future](#). Ann Marie said, "When people ask me where to get started to develop the arts in their community, I direct them to the Sustainable Jersey Arts & Creative Culture actions as a good place to begin."

Advocate for State and Federal Funding for the Arts: Throughout her career, Ann Marie effectively advocated for increased public and private support for the arts sector.



When the New Jersey state budget proposed the elimination of arts funding in 2003, Ann Marie led the ArtPride partners and arts organizations in a statewide effort to save the state arts council and restore \$16 million in funding. The group orchestrated a grassroots campaign that created a dedicated revenue stream for future funding. The resulting New Jersey Hotel/Motel Occupancy Fee has provided stable funding to support arts, history and tourism ever since.

In 2019, Ann Marie [testified](#) with art funding budget concerns before the New Jersey Assembly Appropriations Committee and the New Jersey Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee. Ann Marie said, "It took ten hard years for the New Jersey state legislature to understand and recognize that by passing A3101 and honoring a bill passed in 2003, arts, history and tourism could boost our economy, create jobs, improve schools and revitalize downtowns. It was a great accomplishment when Governor Murphy signed this bill in 2019."

With her leadership, ArtPride became an instrumental force behind the [New Jersey State Council on the Arts'](#) ability to grant almost \$32 million annually to artists and organizations, ensuring that the arts continue to enrich lives across the state.

Hightstown Cultural Arts Commission: Hightstown Borough established the Hightstown Cultural Arts Commission per Ordinance 2014-10 to encourage artistic awareness, participation and expression and to promote the employment of artists and those skilled in the crafts. Ann Marie explained, "The goal is to promote

the Hightstown area as a cultural center, where artists are welcome and can thrive. We do this by collaborating with the council, planning board and the green team.”

The Hightstown Cultural Arts Commission has worked with the greater community to establish pop-up art galleries throughout the borough, including dramatic arts and theater performances with children of all ages at the local parks. In 2024, the commission will be offering after-school art classes for students at a low cost. For updates on their activities, visit the [Facebook page](#).



The Hightstown Cultural Arts Commission developed a [Public Art Master Plan](#) and Hightstown’s Planning Board adopted it as part of the Borough’s Municipal Master Plan. Included in the plan is a requirement that a percentage of any redevelopment efforts be dedicated to the inclusion of public art. Hightstown Borough received 40 certification points for completion of the Sustainable Jersey actions: [Establish a Creative Team](#); [Creative Assets Inventory](#); [Municipal Commitments to Support Arts and Creative Culture](#); and [Utilizing Your Creative Assets](#).

Familial Portal Mural: Ann Marie has led the effort to implement the Hightstown Public Art Master Plan recommendations. The Familial Portal Mural, located on the side of the Greater Goods Thrift Store in Hightstown, is a visible example of a public art project completed. The Hightstown Cultural Arts Commission worked with [Layqa Nuna Yawar](#), a New Jersey based public artist and multidisciplinary storyteller who was born in Ecuador, to create the mural. The painting of the mural was a week-long project of celebration and community.



Education and Career: Ann Marie received a B.S. in Art Education from the Moore College of Art and Design and taught visual art in both public and private settings. Ann Marie served as the ArtPride New Jersey Foundation’s Executive Director for 19 years, and as the Director of Advocacy and Public Policy for nine years. Prior to joining ArtPride, she was director of development at [McCarter Theatre](#), a Tony-award winning regional theatre and performing arts center, and grants coordinator at the [New Jersey State Council on the Arts](#).



More about Ann Marie: Ann Marie grew up in East Brunswick, New Jersey, with her parents and brother. Her father owned a small grocery store that offered homemade Polish specialties and her mother, a homemaker, inspired her creativity with her own love of oil painting, ceramics, needlepoint and crewel embroidery. Ann Marie first became interested in the arts thanks to the support and inspiration of two art teachers at East Brunswick High School. She has lived in Hightstown Borough, New Jersey, for over 28 years with her husband David. They have one son named Michael who is 28. She enjoys reading fiction books that she checks out of the local library and baking. She continues to pursue her own art, specializing in fiber arts, sketching and photography. Ann Marie is a lifelong Bruce Springsteen fan and has attended 12 concerts.