

# The Stained Glass Association of America

## A Little History — A Lot of Future



*Church of the Resurrection, Leawood, Kansas. Combining traditional stained glass techniques with fused glass, Judson Studios has produced the largest fused stained glass window in the world. Photo courtesy of Judson Studios/Kyle Mickelson.*



From president to president, editor to editor—Von Gerichten to Connick to Judson—the Stained Glass Association of America, membership has always been an example of stained glass tradition and innovation. To understand the SGAA, you must recall the early 12th and 13th centuries in England and Europe. Those with a trade were beginning to join together for support and protection. It began with funerals—helping to bury each other and caring for widows. As towns grew, these groups developed into the guild, or gild, system. Acceptance into a group had to be earned, inherited, and/or purchased. It was considered an honor to be deemed worthy by your peers. These guilds controlled the tools, supplies, and clients of their various trades.

### Modern Day Trade Associations

The guild system in America has existed under many hats. It has sometimes been called the forerunner of the union system, but trade organizations will disagree with that, instead calling themselves independent trades persons who are protecting the rights of their art and craft against all comers, including the government.

Descriptions of modern day guilds or trade associations such as the SGAA harken back to the intent of the original guild—taking care of each other. According to current marketing research, 90 percent of consumers trust peer recommendations over any other form of advertising. The SGAA is a group of glass peers—supporting their peers, marketing their peers—and have been doing it for more than 114 years. In the grand scheme of things, that's a little history, but it supports a lot of future!

The SGAA has stayed strong through tradition, but it has survived through innovation—through its willingness to embrace change and new ideas, to open itself and its membership to new technology. Its magazine and conferences are open to manufacturers with new and improved product lines. It welcomes artists who push the boundaries of the glass arts with new concepts and commingle the various glass arts to create something unique, pushing forward into new expressions in light and glass.

### Helping Artists through the Years

From Ludwig Von Gerichten to Charles J. Connick to David Judson, the great variety included over more than 110 years by these editors of the *Stained Glass* quarterly has created the opportunity for light to shine through colored glass for all to see and read. In the years to come, by continuing to support the great variety that exists within both tradition and innovation and by celebrating the unity and the uniqueness of those within the trade, stained glass will continue. Those willing to work together, reach a little farther together, and aim toward common goals together will preserve and improve their trade and lead their art into a new generation of exploration.

The Stained Glass Association of America reaches out through the *Stained Glass* quarterly, its conferences, its accreditation, its classes, and the hand it holds out to help any glass artist it can. Visit [www.stainedglass.org](http://www.stainedglass.org) to help your fellow artists, your clients, and yourself and join a lot of future at the SGAA. **G&A**

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