

[Print Article](#)[Print This Story](#)

Honoring a Vision: Joan Mondale salutes Winston-Salem's history of arts, innovation

By Ken Keuffel

JOURNAL REPORTER

Joan Mondale, an accomplished potter who championed fine arts while her husband, Walter, was vice president, saluted Winston-Salem yesterday for founding the country's first arts council 60 years ago. And she expressed optimism for the role that arts and innovation might play in Winston-Salem's future.

The arts-council idea, emulated in thousands of other communities, "has given you every right to call Winston-Salem 'The City of Arts and Innovation,'" she said, speaking at a luncheon in the Embassy Suites Hotel. She also praised city leaders for their role in bringing the UNC School of the Arts to Winston-Salem.

"Just because you've always been out front ... doesn't mean that you've grown complacent or that you're satisfied with your past achievements," Mondale said. "On the contrary, you're a very young 60 years, and you're full of vision."

The luncheon attracted more than 400 people, with Walter Mondale also in attendance. It was one of several performances and events in "Six Days in November," for which Joan Mondale is serving as honorary chairwoman.

The centerpiece of "Six Days," which began Tuesday and will continue through Sunday, is the Piedmont Craftsmen's Fair. Mondale will cut the opening ribbon for the fair's preview event on Friday evening for Craftsmen members. The fair will be open to the public on Saturday and Sunday at the Benton Convention Center.

When Mondale spoke of Winston-Salem's vision, she was referring to efforts to build a knowledge-based economy and the good jobs that go along with it.

She also was referring to citizen groups advocating for bridge designs that will enhance Winston-Salem's image as "The City of Arts and Innovation." Such designs would become evident over the next 10 years when 14 bridges on Business 40 and U.S. 52 will be replaced.

"Bridges are useful to drive over, provided they're strong and gorgeous and they're tested out," she said. She expressed her admiration for a neon line of changing colors that runs across a bridge on the Mississippi River, near her Minnesota home.

Several other people spoke at the luncheon as well, including Linda Carlisle, N.C.'s secretary of cultural resources; Keith Crisco, the secretary of commerce; and Gene Conti, the secretary of transportation.

Conti recalled Joan Mondale's leading role in securing funding for art and design in Department of Transportation projects during the 1970s.

"You know, probably better than anyone in the country, how well they go together and how they need to go together," he said.

kkeuffel@wsjournal.com

727-7337