

Mary Ellen Degnan was born in Newton Highlands, Massachusetts, and after a career in fashion design in Boston, London, and New York City, moved to Dallas and then to Santa Fe. Active in civic and cultural life in Dallas, she grew a second professional life focused on non-profit management as an executive director and board memberships as a policy maker. She had her own development consulting business for 25 years.



Mary Ellen's Dallas service includes Member of the Dallas City Plan Commission; Chairman of the Dallas Landmark Commission; President of the Dallas Historic Preservation League; founding Board Member of the Dallas Area Rapid Transit, a state agency and the first in Texas for light rail public transportation. Other non-profits where she was a founder and also led are: Friends of Fair Park; Dallas Visions for a 21st Century Urban Design, a NEA/NEH funded project of the Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture; the Dallas City Center Association; and Imagine Dallas, a non-profit dedicated to growing diverse leadership in the Dallas Independent School District. Degnan also was the Urban Main Street Manager for Dallas, Texas. She is a recipient of the City of Dallas' Kessler Award, the highest honor for a lifetime of contribution to the design of the city. Degnan is also an Honorary Member of the Dallas Institute of Architects.

In Santa Fe, in addition to her current work as a board member and officer for NMC-NMWA, Mary Ellen served as Managing Director for Santa Fe Stages, Development Director for Santa Fe Recovery Center and Open Hands, and statewide Development Director for The Alzheimer Association of New Mexico. Also in Santa Fe, Degnan served as Board President of CASA, Court Appointed Special Advocates, Santa Fe.

"As an original Advisory Board member of NMC-NMWA and now a Board member I continue to be energized by the women of NMWA," says Mary Ellen, "we devote our time to raising funds to provide scholarships for New Mexico women college students seeking a future in the arts, and at the same time create programs that highlight the work of established New Mexican women artists."