

2025 Walks of Life Honoree

Patricia Gaul



Patricia Gaul's expertise and knowledge as Chief Operating Officer and General Counsel of Cleveland's Playhouse Square has made the Playhouse unique among America's performing arts groups.

Cleveland Playhouse is one of the world's premier arts districts—operating 11 downtown performance spaces with an annual operating budget of \$115 million and more than 350 employees. The theaters entertain more than one million guests annually.

During the last 40-plus years, she has helped the entertainment center to expand by using historic tax credits to enhance the value of surrounding properties. Thanks to her expertise in complex real estate law, the theater group now encompasses more than one million square feet of real estate.

She has helped maintain a balanced budget for the organization, making Playhouse Square one of the few performing arts centers in the country to consistently remain in the black. Her financial management has changed the face of Playhouse Square to include theater renovations, the Idea Center, the Crowne Plaza Playhouse Square Hotel, and the 36-story, 318-apartment Lumen apartment tower.

One of eight children of Joseph and Joan Gaul, Patricia grew up in Fairview Park, where her father served as mayor for 12 years during the 1980s and 1990s. Though she now lives in Rocky River, she remains a member of St. Angela Merici Catholic Church in Fairview Park.

She is a 1980 graduate of Georgetown University and received a law degree from Cleveland-Marshall College of Law in 1993. She also is a Certified Public Accountant as well as a member of CFO Arts, an industry group representing the disciplines of ballet, orchestra, opera, and museums and entertainment centers.

Patricia joined Playhouse Square in 1984 following work in the United States Senate offices of Senators Edward Kennedy and Bill Bradley.

In 2008, she was named Crain's Cleveland Business CFO of the Year for Nonprofits: Philanthropy/Arts & Culture, and in 2014 the publication named her General and In-House Counsel of the Year for Nonprofits. CREW (Commercial Real Estate Women) Cleveland presented her with its 2021 Economic and Community Improvement Award.

She serves as Treasurer of the Georgetown Alumni Club of Cleveland and is a member of the Audit and Finance Committees for Downtown Cleveland Inc. Patricia also is a board member of the Irish Good Fellowship Club and of Willowood Manor, a senior living community in Fairview Park. She was a member of the 2012 class of Leadership Cleveland and a Life Member of the Ohio Eighth Judicial District Conference.

Patricia expects to retire from Playhouse Square later this year.