

Dudley Memorial Lecture

John Troutman

Hellhounds and Salty Dogs:
Building Restorative Blues
History at the Smithsonian

John Troutman is Curator of Music and Musical Instruments at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History, and is the museum's chair of the Division of Culture & the Arts. He is the project director and lead curator of *Entertainment Nation*, the museum's award-winning permanent exhibition on the history, power and politics of entertainment in the U.S.. In 2023, Troutman edited music researcher and folklorist Robert "Mack" McCormick's manuscript, *Biography of a Phantom: A Robert Johnson Blues Odyssey* and co-curated the exhibit on McCormick's legendary archive at the museum. He co-produced a six-LP box set from the field recordings of McCormick, released on Smithsonian Folkways. For this project, Troutman received two 2024 Grammy nominations for "Best Album Notes" and "Best Historical Album."

His book *Indian Blues: American Indians and the Politics of Music, 1879-1934*, won the Western History Association's biennial 2011 W. Turrentine Jackson Prize for a first book on the American West. His book *Kikā Kila: How the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Changed the Sound of Modern Music*, won five book awards, including the Organization of American Historians' Lawrence W. Levine Award for the "Best Book in American Cultural History," the IASPM-US Woody Guthrie Award for the "most outstanding book on popular music," and the American Musicological Society's Music in American Culture Award. Troutman served as a consultant on *American Epic*, a PBS/BBC documentary on American music, and is featured on the prize-winning *Rezolution Pictures* documentary, *Rumble: the Indians Who Rocked the World*.



Corcoran

2024 Dudley Memorial Lecture

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Wednesday, April 17th
Flagg Building
Hammer Auditorium
6:30 PM



John Troutman

Troutman was raised in Dothan, Alabama. He studied anthropology at Emory University, and earned a master's degree in American Indian Studies from the University of Arizona. He earned his PhD in history from the University of Texas at Austin. A semi-professional musician on pedal steel and guitar, he contributed steel guitar to the album *Grand Isle*, by Steve Riley and the Mamou Playboys, which was nominated for a 2012 Grammy Award for "Best Regional Roots Music Album." He has performed with numerous musical luminaries including CC Adcock, Elvis Costello, Robert Plant, Dr. John, Willie Nelson's Band, David Hidalgo, Ani DiFranco, and Florence Welch.



Robert Whittier Dudley & Argentina Copello Dudley

Robert Whittier Dudley was born in Hanover, NH. He attended the University of Wisconsin as an undergraduate and earned his law degree from the University of Michigan. After serving in the Navy, he married Argentina Copello de Soto. A native of the Dominican Republic, Argentina arrived in Washington when her father was named ambassador to the United States, and it was here where she and Robert eventually met and fell in love.

During their 37-year marriage, they lived in Spring Valley, where they raised six children. As an expression of her passion and love of art, Argie, as her friends knew her, dedicated her time and energy to the Corcoran. A leader in establishing the volunteer docent program, she quickly became one of the Gallery's champions. She viewed art and art education as illuminating forces that enable people to experience the world and each other with greater understanding. Argentina shared her knowledge and motivated others by training dozens of docents and giving hundreds of gallery tours to children and adults.

Bob also valued education, believing it to be a priceless gift that could amplify potential and impact. Steadfast and gentle as a husband and father, he modeled living by one's principles both at home and as CEO of United Masonry and Consumers Gas, Board President for the House of Mercy, Trustee for Holton-Arms School, and as an advisor to many other organizations.

The Corcoran is fortunate to be the recipient of the devotion and talent of this very gracious couple.

Selected Past Dudley Memorial Lectures

2023

Valerie Cassel Oliver
Curator of Modern & Contemporary Art,
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

2018

Wendy MacNaughton
Illustrator and Graphic Journalist

2009

Art Spiegelman
Author and illustrator

2005

James Cuno
Director, Art Institute of Chicago

2000

Elizabeth Catlett
Sculptor, printmaker, educator

1999

Robert Hughes
Author and illustrator

1988

Vincent Scully
Art History Professor, Yale University

About the Program

The Dudley Memorial Lecture is an annual lecture series established at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in 1984 by Argentina's husband, Robert Whittier Dudley, and their six children to commemorate and perpetuate her life's work and interests. The Dudley Memorial Lecture provides memorable and enriching cultural experiences through talks given by a notable artist, curator, critic or educator in the arts.

The Corcoran welcomes gifts to the Dudley Endowment Fund. For more information, please contact Sveta Wilkson at swilkson@gwu.edu

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