

Texas Association for Symphony Orchestras

Texas Association for Symphony Orchestras (TASO) is composed of 23 member organizations. Volunteer member organizations enjoy privileges, which include a communication network, information clearinghouse, a unified voice for arts advocacy and an annual student concerto competition.

The idea for TASO was originally conceived in 1965 at the Women's Association for Symphony Orchestras (WASO) meeting in New Orleans. The Texas delegations decided it would be beneficial to have such an organization at the state level. The next year the first Conference of the Women's Committees of Texas Symphony Orchestras was held and Mrs. Henry S. Miller of Dallas was elected President. The name was changed to the Texas Association for Symphony Orchestras in 1984. Our Abilene Philharmonic Guild has had four members serve as TASO presidents (Patty Taliaferro in 1975, Portia Moore in 1986, Micki Wright in 2006 and Jan Woodward in 2016).

TASO Board meetings are held in the summer, fall, and winter. Member organization groups send in educational, fundraising, and service projects as well as nominating a legislator, patron, business, and volunteer for the Awards of Excellence. These winners are recognized at the spring conference. TASO has honored several Abilenians with these prestigious awards (Bob Hunter with the Legislator Award in 1997, Congressman Charles Stenholm with the Legislator Award in 2005, Dian Graves Owens Stai and Harlan C. Stai with the Patron Award in 2009; Susan Lewis King with the Legislator Award in 2014, and First Financial Bank with the Business Award in 2018).

Approximately 150 delegates attend the annual spring conference to gather information and network with their colleagues. These delegates include presidents, presidents-elect, and volunteer leaders from each organization member group, as well as symphony orchestra managers and staff.

A different member city serves as host for this conference. Educational workshops are led by well-known speakers, annual awards are presented, and entertainment has no limit. The conference this year is scheduled for March 21-22, 2025 in Waco, Texas.

In 1997 TASO initiated a statewide concerto competition with piano, strings, winds-brass divisions to choose an outstanding high school musician. The winner receives a cash award and the opportunity to perform the winning concerto with a symphony orchestra. The Juanita Miller Concerto Competition was named for TASO's founder. This year's competition is set for January 5, 2025 on the campus of Southern Methodist University in Dallas.

Visit the website (www.tasovolunteers.com) for more information on the organization. Amos Davis, Joanne Vaughan and Jan Woodward are the Philharmonic Guild's TASO representatives.