

Society of American Magicians  
Magic Endowment Fund  
Annual Report | 2024



## MEF Trustees, 2024

Nancy Anderson  
Richard Bowman, Treasurer  
Richard Dooley, Chair  
Tom Gentile  
Jann Goodsell, Secretary  
Robert Kirkpatrick, \* Vice Chair  
Eric Lampert  
Bruce Lish \*  
Michael Miller  
Trudy Monteith  
George Schindler \*  
Steven Spence  
Joel Zaritsky

\*Houdini Fund Trustee

# The Magic Endowment Fund

The Society of American Magicians (S.A.M.), founded in 1902, holds the distinction of being the world's oldest fraternal magic organization. From its earliest days, charitable giving has been woven into the fabric of its mission, reflecting a deep commitment to supporting the magic community and preserving its legacy. Through benefit performances, innovative fundraising initiatives, and the upkeep of memorials and gravesites for magicians, the Society has honored the art and those who dedicate their lives to it.

In 1986, the S.A.M. established a separate 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the **Magic Endowment Fund (MEF)**, as a dedicated charitable foundation. Its mission is to advance the art of magic through philanthropy and support. Over the years, the MEF has awarded more than \$600,000 in charitable contributions.

The MEF operates through two arms:

- 1) The **General Fund** which provides competitive grants to initiatives that foster the art of magic
- 2) The **Houdini Fund** which provides financial assistance to magicians and allied performers who are facing financial challenges due to illness or injury.

## Fellow Magic Enthusiasts:

It is my pleasure to share with you the S.A.M. Magic Endowment Fund's 2024 Annual Report - a reflection of another year of meaningful impact and a benchmark for the work still ahead.

Over the past year, the MEF distributed over **\$33,000 in General Fund grants** supporting a range of powerful initiatives that foster the art of magic: scholarships for young magicians to attend camps and conventions; funding for community programs that bring magic into hospitals and schools; and support for ground-breaking projects that will inspire new work in the field. Additionally, the **Houdini Fund** quietly and compassionately provided nearly \$5,000 of emergency financial assistance to magicians and allied artists facing unexpected medical challenges - providing a crucial safety net when it is needed the most.

In 2024 we grew the overall Magic Endowment Fund to nearly **\$2.5 million** through donations and investment returns. We are setting our sights on a major milestone to grow the General Fund portion of the MEF to \$1 million in 2025. Reaching this goal will allow us to increase our General Fund annual grants from \$35,000 to \$50,000, ensuring even greater support for magicians and magic-centered projects for years to come.

If the MEF's work has inspired you, I hope you'll consider joining each of the MEF's Trustees and many others as a donor. Every gift, no matter the size, helps sustain the art we love and people who bring it to life. Thank you for believing in the power of magic to transform, connect, and inspire.

# A Note from the Chair



**Richard Dooley**  
Chair

# The General Fund

The Magic Endowment General Fund distributed over \$33,000 during the past fiscal year to applicants who completed the competitive grant application process through the MEF's website. This year's grants supported:

## Scholarships for Tannen's Magic Camp

Tannen's Magic Camp, hosted at Bryn Mawr College near Philadelphia, unites young magicians aged 11 to 20 from around the world. In 2024, the MEF awarded four full scholarships, enabling aspiring magicians to forge lifelong friendships and develop their skills in a supportive community. Learn more about the magic camp at [www.tannens.com](http://www.tannens.com)



## *I See You* by Kristin Bedford

A photography book celebrating the history and contributions of women magicians, featuring portraits of historic and living performers born before the 1950s from the USA, UK, and Germany. Subjects include trailblazers such as Francis Willard, Dorothy Dietrich, Fay Presto, and Fee Elisa. Learn more about Kristen's work at [www.kristinbedford.com](http://www.kristinbedford.com)



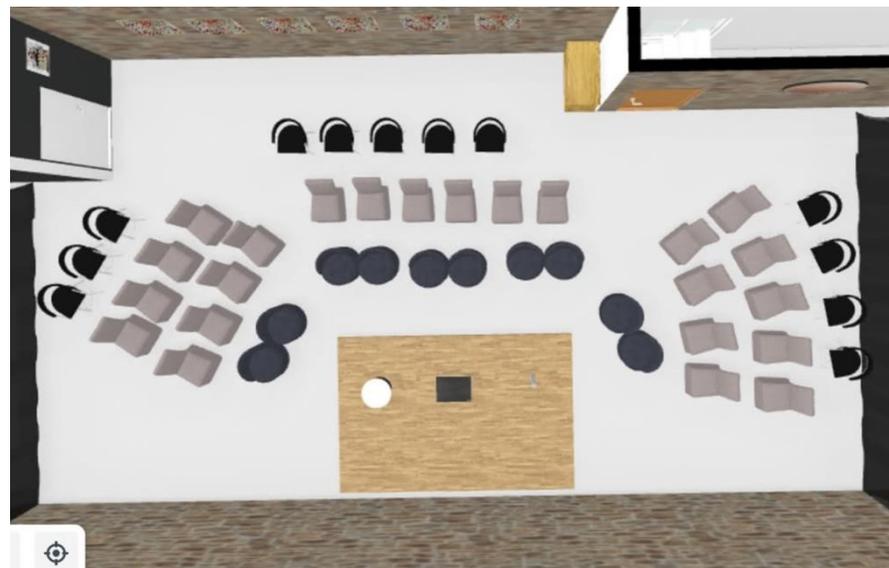
## **Magic Texas 2024**

A joint gathering of the Society of American Magicians, the Texas Association of Magicians, and FISM North America was held from August 30 to September 4, 2024 in Dallas. The MEF sponsored the S.A.M. Youth Academy, the Stars of Tomorrow Show, and the Brad Jacobs People's Choice Contest.

---

## **Magic Institute - Cosmic Underground Theater**

Kayla Drescher and Harrison Lampert's new magic venue in Chicago will not only host magic performances but also serve as the home for a groundbreaking adult magic training program focused on inclusivity, creativity, and building strong foundations in magic. Learn more at [www.cosmicundergroundtheater.com](http://www.cosmicundergroundtheater.com)





*“I was privileged to be the recipient of a Harry and Trudy Monti College Scholarship through the Magic Endowment Fund. The scholarship helped me further my education in magic and business, leading to a career in the performing arts. The MEF has also provided scholarships to my compeers to assist in their growth as young adults and provide a foundation in the wonderful world of magic. I encourage all to donate to the MEF to help grow the art of magic. Thank you.”*

**Shin Lim**

Shin Lim is a two-time winner of America’s Got Talent competitions: in 2018 and 2019. Shin Lim has a long-term residency in Las Vegas, headlining his own show at The Venetian Resort.

# The Houdini Fund

The Houdini Fund has its roots in Harry Houdini's early efforts to provide financial assistance to magicians in need. Over the years, this fund has flourished thanks to the ongoing support of S.A.M. members and other generous donors. Recognizing the importance of sustaining this vital resource, MEF trustees have prudently invested the generous contributions, allowing the fund's assets to grow and to expand the Houdini Fund's ability to help those in need.

Today, the Houdini Fund offers confidential grants to magicians and allied performers in need—such as clowns, ventriloquists, face painters, storytellers, jugglers, and stilt walkers—who are facing financial challenges due to illness or injury. **These grants are gifts, not loans,** and are available to both S.A.M. members and non-members. While insurance or Medicare often cover primary medical expenses, the Houdini Fund helps bridge the gap and can cover out-of-pocket costs like co-pays, medications, wheelchairs, oxygen, and other medical essentials. Applications are made through the MEF's website and are reviewed in confidence by a subset of MEF trustees.

The Houdini Fund provided **\$4,750 in grants** during the past fiscal year and has provided over **\$154,000 in assistance since 1987**. This enduring legacy of compassion continues to honor Houdini's vision, supporting those in the magic community when it matters most.



Harry Houdini and Alexander Heimbürger, 1903  
Courtesy of the New York Public Library

In 2025, the Magic Endowment Fund aims to reach a significant milestone: growing our General Fund to \$1 million. Reaching this milestone will enhance our ability to sustainably **increase annual general grant distributions from approximately \$35,000 to \$50,000**, allowing us to make an even greater impact on the magic community.

This growth of the General Fund will enable us to expand support for aspiring magicians, preserve the art's rich history, and provide greater outreach to those who need magic the most. With your generosity, we can ensure the MEF continues to transform lives and strengthen the magic community for years to come.

Join us in making this vision a reality—every gift brings us closer to our goal.

# Growing Our Impact



The MEF proudly supports the S.A.M. Magic in Hospitals program.

# Ways to Give

Online at:

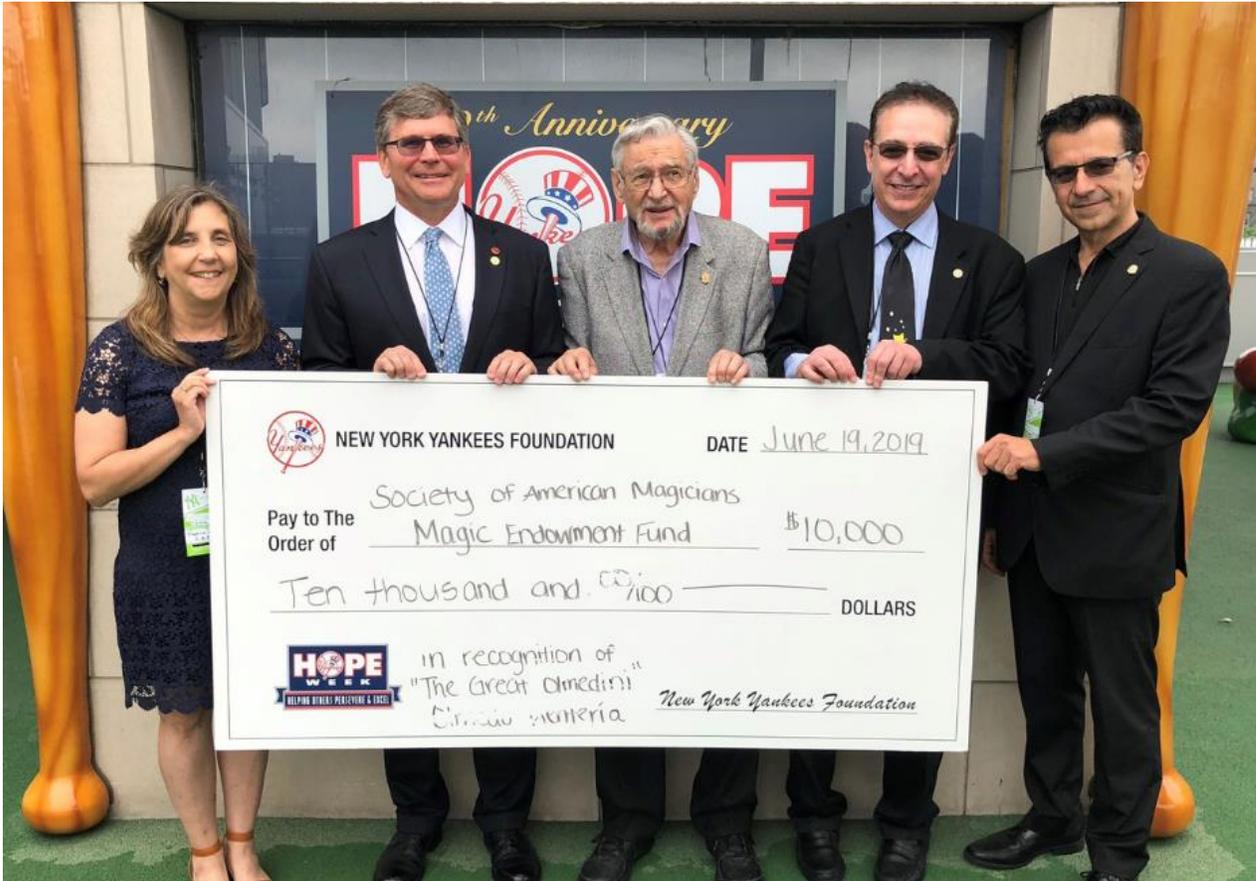
<https://sammagicendowmentfund.org/donate/>

By check payable to:

**SAM Magic Endowment Fund**

445 Brandywine Dr.

Colorado Springs, CO 80906



The M.E.F. accepts a donation from the New York Yankees Foundation.



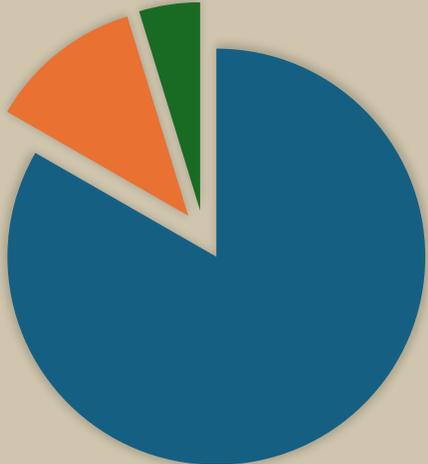
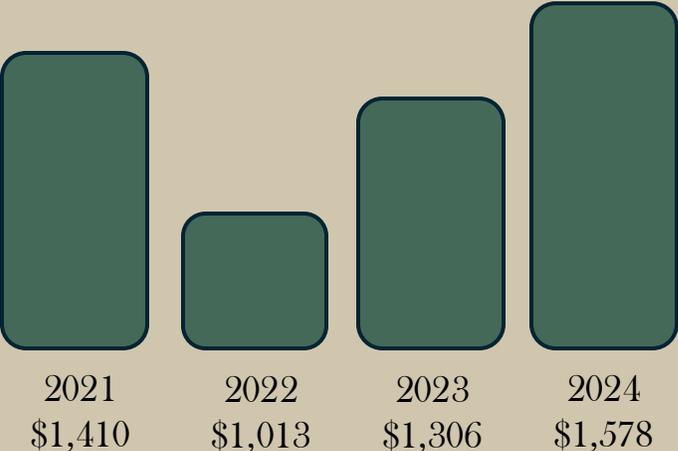
# M.E.F. Financials | FY 2023-2024\*

## MEF Assets by Fund - as of 12/31

### General Fund (\$000)



### Houdini Fund (\$000)



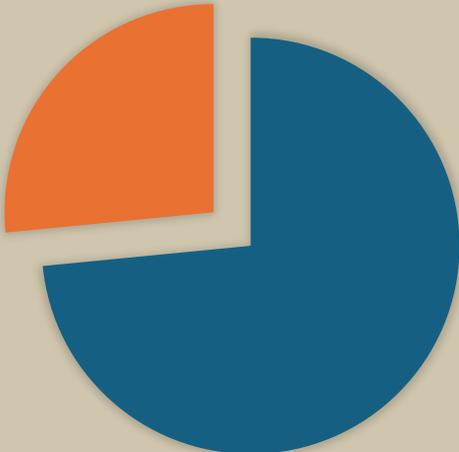
### Expenditures - \$39,682

General Fund Grants: \$33,061 (83%)

Houdini Fund Grants: \$ 4,750 (12%)

Administration: \$ 1,871 (5%)\*\*

\*\* - Administrative costs include website hosting, domain registration, postage fees, tax preparation and accounting.



### Income - \$93,578

Investment Income & Capital Gains: \$68,732 (73%)

Individual Contributions: \$24,846 (27%)

\* The MEF fiscal year begins September 1 and ends August 31.

# Donors

All gifts to the Magic Endowment Fund are invested to ensure the ongoing availability of transformative grants which are in alignment with the MEF's mission to advance the art of magic and support the magic community.

We are deeply grateful to every individual, foundation, and business whose generosity has empowered the Fund to educate aspiring magicians, preserve the history of magic, and provide critical aid to those in need.

We invite you to join our community through one-time, ongoing, and planned giving. Visit our website or contact us at [mefres@higginsmagic.com](mailto:mefres@higginsmagic.com) to discuss your gift.

Thanks to all of our donors, including those who wished to remain anonymous.

**\$5,000+** : Robert & Elizabeth Kirkpatrick, Lawrence S. Reichlin

**\$1,000+** : Richard & Janet Bowman, DeSouza Family Charitable Foundation, Richard Dooley, Brian Murphy, Mary Skrzyniarz Family Trust

**\$250+** : Nancy Anderson, Collective IMO of Dan Garrett, Thomas Gentile, Jann Goodsell, Donna & Alex Infald, Ron Ishimaru, Eric Lampert, Bruce Lish, Mike and Linda Miller, Trudy & Harry Monti, Dan and Manon Rodriguez, George Schindler, Spence Family Vision Trust, Jean Volk, Joel & Nadine Zaritsky

**\$100+** : Michael Nabel, Peter Principato, Martin J. Schwartz, Anna Vastano

This list reflects donors between July, 2023 and December, 2024. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this list. If errors or omissions have occurred please contact us so we can correct this immediately and please accept our sincere apologies.



[www.sammagicendowmentfund.org](http://www.sammagicendowmentfund.org)