

WHY THEY CONTRIBUTE



Doug Arends, chairman of the Canadian Bank Note Company, is a long-time contributor to ARI. He also helped to fund the creation of The Portrait Bust of Ayn Rand, sculpted by artist Sandra Shaw, the first edition of which was recently installed at ARI (see the November 2011 issue of Impact for more on this portrait).

Impact had the chance to chat with Mr. Arends on why he contributes to ARI, the programs he's excited about and why he decided to fund a portrait bust of Ayn Rand.

On Why He Contributes to ARI

I started supporting Objectivist activities before there was an ARI. One of the earlier projects that I was involved in funding was the 1984 debate in Toronto on capitalism versus socialism featuring Leonard Peikoff and John Ridpath. I attended some of the early ARI auctions and made purchases. I didn't get involved in any consistent manner or give substantial support to ARI until about ten years ago when I started attending OCON conferences. At

In Conversation with Doug Arends

that time, I also became an *Atlantis Legacy* donor by including the Institute in my estate plans.

I give primarily because I have a selfish desire to see other people, particularly young people just starting out, experience the *Atlas Shrugged* "transformation" that I did. If enough people read the novel, I expect it will have a major impact on our culture for the better. I sincerely hope so. Ayn Rand contributed so much to my life that now that I can afford it, I benevolently enjoy sharing what I learned.

I also give to ARI because it keeps me up to date on Objectivism and in touch with other like-minded Objectivists through OCON conferences, the Ayn Rand Bookstore, the website and such. This contact with other Objectivists adds enormously to my learning and to my enjoyment. The staff at ARI work hard to keep me informed as to where my money is being spent and to convince me that it is being spent wisely. Doing so reinforces my donation decisions and keeps me giving.

On Where He Directs His Contributions

The ARI program that I value and support the most is the distribution of free copies of *Atlas Shrugged* to students through the Free Books to Teachers program. I get pleasure out of hearing other people describe the positive effect that reading *Atlas Shrugged* has had on their lives. I learned about Ayn Rand and Objectivism by reading *Atlas Shrugged*. Doing so changed my life and allowed me to achieve a great deal of success in my business life and happiness in my personal life. ARI can find a good home for a copy of *Atlas Shrugged* for less than the price it sells at bookstores, and the books distributed often get read a second time.

On Why He Helped Fund a Portrait of Ayn Rand
Back in 2008, Dr. Ridpath approached me about

getting jointly involved financially with a project to have Sandra Shaw create a bust of Ayn Rand. It took me only seconds to say *Yes*, as I considered it an honor to be asked. In 2010, when it was finished, Sandra sent me a photograph of the bust just prior to its unveiling at OCON that year in Las Vegas. Without seeing the bust, or knowing the price, I placed an order for one, as I knew there would be a lineup, once others saw it.

I received my bust in May of this year and it now resides in my apartment-office on top of a specially purchased bookcase that meets Sandra's recommendations for ideal viewing height and lighting. As I work at my desk, I only have to look up to see Ayn surveying what I'm doing. If she looks beyond me out the window, she has a gorgeous view of the lake. The bookcase contains only Objectivist books and CDs.

I'm a businessman, not an art expert, but I do know what I like and I like this bust of Ayn Rand sculpted by Sandra Shaw.

On His Initial Response to the Portrait

It sucked the breath right out of me and I had to sit down! I had never seen anything quite like it before. It was much larger than I expected and it was beautifully displayed and lighted, sitting on a pedestal at the right height for viewing and with chairs in the room so that you could sit and enjoy it for as long as you needed. I had seen a photograph before, but it didn't prepare me for the real experience. The fact that here was a bust of Ayn created by someone who cared about her as much as I did, with so much attention to detail being paid to the initial unveiling, was an experience I'll never forget. Thirty years ago was the last time I'd seen Ayn up close and I was seeing her again as one of her keenest admirers wanted her to be seen.