

Cade Tompkins Projects
198 Hope Street Providence Rhode Island 02906
www.cadetompkins.com cadetompkins@mac.com
Telephone 401 751 4888



Artist Julie Gearan chosen to paint R.I. Governor Chafee's official portrait

by Randal Edgar
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PROVIDENCE, R.I. — Governor Chafee no doubt has many tasks to complete before he leaves office, but there's one that may force him to sit still: posing for his official portrait. State law calls for a portrait to be painted of each governor before the state's chief executive leaves office, and the state Council on the Arts announced last week that Chafee has chosen Providence artist Julie Gearan to create his portrait.

Gearan, who teaches at the Rhode Island School of Design and Roger Williams University, said she is excited to "be a part of this historic tradition in portrait painting" and called it "a wonderful opportunity."

"I look forward to working with the governor to capture his unique character as well as his specific place in Rhode Island history," she said.

Gearan was chosen from 124 people who responded to the council's call for artists. The Rhode Island Gubernatorial Portrait Commission narrowed the field to 14 and presented those names to Chafee, a Democrat who is not seeking reelection.

Gearan, winner of a 2007 Merit Award Fellowship in Painting from the arts council, will be paid \$15,000 — the same fee paid to the artists who painted portraits of former governors Donald Carcieri and Lincoln Almond.

The arts council hopes the painting is finished by the end of the year so it can be unveiled just after Chafee leaves office in January.