The partnership between the College of Arts and Letters and Grand Hotel goes back more than 20 years, when owner Dan Musser II and his wife Amelia got involved with former CAL Dean John Eadie and his newly formed Dean’s Community Council. The purpose of the council was to increase awareness of the College and its outreach activities. Mr. Musser volunteered to host the College and allow it to showcase its students and faculty at what became Arts Weekend.

Upon the death of the family patriarch in 2013, his son, Dan Musser III, created a scholarship to support Arts and Letters students who want to explore creative endeavors as part of their academic career.

“One of the most important things to my family was my mother Amelia’s involvement on Dean Eadie’s Community Council, which helped found Arts Weekend,” said Dan. “Her love for art and the written word helped shape the direction of the hotel as well as our family as a whole.”

“The partnership with Grand Hotel and our annual Arts Weekend there allows students and faculty the opportunity to showcase various artistic and creative performances and projects with which they’ve been involved,” said Karin Wurst, then Dean of the College of Arts and Letters. “We are so appreciative of the Musser family and the many ways they support MSU.”

This year’s Arts Weekend, held June 27-29, 2014, was the 20th anniversary of the partnership. The weekend featured the MSU Department of Theatre doing two performances in partnership with The Williamston Theatre: a staged reading of “Love Letters,” an evocative and touching piece comprising letters exchanged over a lifetime between two people who grew up together, went their separate ways, but continued to share confidences; and a sneak preview of the high-energy musical, “The Big Bang,” an outrageous musical comedy highlighting two wanna-be tycoons who are desperate to line up funding for their new project, “The Big Bang.”

Guests also heard from Department of Art, Art History and Design faculty as they gave informative talks about paintings on display from the private Manoogian Art Collection, and they learned about the exciting and innovative world of three-dimensional graphic design.

Throughout the weekend, guests visited an open exhibit hosted by recent Arts and Letters alumna Tatum Walker, who was recently appointed as interpretive specialist, digital media at the Detroit Institute of Arts. This exhibit, done in conjunction with the College of Arts and Letters Creativity Exploratory, highlighted student research on the history of Grand Hotel as seen through the lens of food, historic menus and cultural influences.

“The Musser’s gift and their support of Arts Weekend allows us to provide financial support to students interested in the arts, and give them an opportunity to showcase their work in one of the most beautiful places on earth,” said Dean Wurst.

“We want as many Arts and Letters students as possible to participate in creative activities both in their classes and outside of the classroom,” says Dan. “We want to reward students who want to enrich their lives through the arts and creativity.”