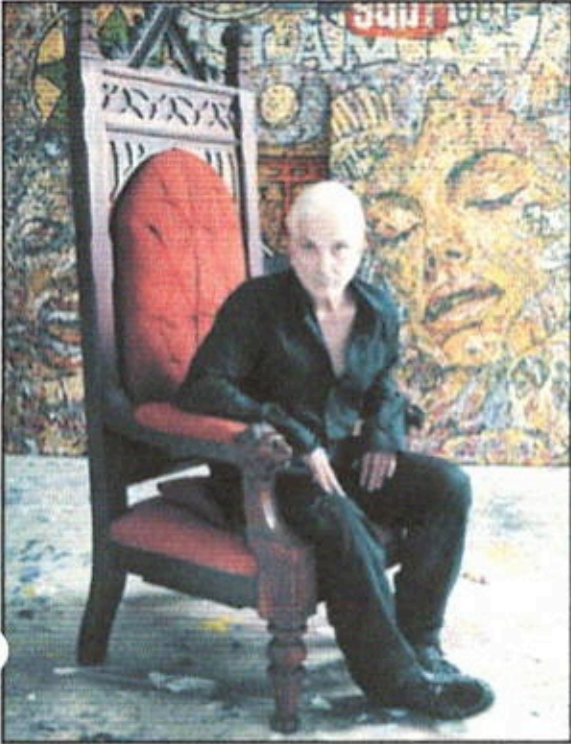


Lawrence Mayor to Present Key to the City to  
Renowned Artist and Lawrence Native,

# Giovanni DeCunto



On Friday, September 2, 2016, Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera will recognize renowned artist Giovanni DeCunto with a key to the City of Lawrence. The ceremony will take place on the first evening of the Feast of the Three Saints, Friday, September 2nd, at 8:15 pm at the main bandstand on Union and Common Streets.

Now considered one of the greatest Expressionist artists in the world, DeCunto grew up on Chestnut Street in Lawrence, and was the product of a very difficult home life in that Italian neighborhood. More interested in art and sketching than school work, he attended 12 different schools in Lawrence over eight years.

Although very ill, Giovanni's father paid for art lessons for his son. He was so talented that the Mass College of Art offered him a scholarship. But Giovanni's mother would not permit him to attend art school so he ran away from home and lived for a time in an abandoned building in Lawrence. DeCunto attended night school to get his GED and finally did attend

Mass College of Art on a scholarship. He later received a scholarship to Boston University.

Giovanni went on to The University of Padua to further his artistic skills. It was in Padua that DeCunto began to paint with his hands rather than brushes, creating his own unique signature style. Soon in demand, Giovanni DeCunto's paintings were not only commissioned by MIT, the Fogg Museum, and the Smithsonian Institute, but he was also commissioned by Barbara Bush to paint the portrait of George Bush for the Bush Library.

Now the foremost Expressionist artist in the country, DeCunto has been commissioned to paint portraits of many famous celebrities, professional athletes, and politicians. His works are exhibited in major museums throughout the world, and he has recently opened a new gallery on Lewis Wharf in Boston. Although he has achieved worldwide fame, Giovanni has not forgotten his Lawrence roots. He is a spokesman for Lawrence-based New Balance, and his intent is to give back to the city that did not abandon him. DeCunto plans to present a painting to the City of Lawrence as a token of his appreciation later this year.

Over the years, only four individuals have received a key to the City of Lawrence, making this a significant honor bestowed on natives of Lawrence. Past recipients include Conductor Leonard Bernstein, rock musician Sully Urna of Godsmack, longtime local radio personality, Bruce Arnold, and former Lawrence DPW director, Ray DiFiore.