



# MoNA

Museum of Northwest Art

## **Erik Benson**

Erik Benson was born and raised in Skagit Valley at the intersection of Benson and Avon Allen roads in Bow. Erik was raised in a musical family of four boys who played together as the Benson Brothers String Quartet back in the 1980s. His late father Jerry was a crop farmer with Knutzen Grain and his mother Sharon (Bakke) ran the Country Kids Preschool and Benson Farmstead B & B. After graduating from Burlington-Edison High School, Erik matriculated to Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, followed by Harvard Business School in Boston. In 1998 he joined Seattle-based venture capital firm Voyager Capital, where he has been a managing director for the last 26 years, working with dozens of technology startups at the board level. One of his best companies is at the intersection of AI and agriculture called Carbon Robotics.

Erik has been on several non-profit boards previously including Pacific Lutheran University and the National Nordic Museum. Erik and his wife Jenny have enjoyed collecting art from Northwest Artists for many years with their first piece being from the late Joel Brock's studio in Edison. Their art collection today of more than 150 pieces range from Max Benjamin to Terry Turrell, Meg Holgate, Larry Heald, Paul Havas and Dassy Shellenberger. The Benson's split their time between homes in Seattle and La Conner. Erik was attracted to join the board of MoNA after attending their art auctions for years where he met executive director Stefano Catalani and board president Gretchen McCauley.