

## Gulfshore Playhouse sees \$14 million additional philanthropic support

**Gulfshore Playhouse** continues to garner support for its state-of-the-art Cultural Campus with numerous new multimillion gifts for the Capital Campaign.

Destined to be an iconic landmark at the gateway to downtown Naples, the new Baker Theatre and Education Center on the Gulfshore Playhouse Cultural Campus will feature two new state-of-the-art theaters — a 350-seat Mainstage Theatre and a 125-seat Studio Theatre — and spur more than \$20 million annually in anticipated economic activity within the City of Naples. Eight donors have committed more than \$14 million to the Capital Campaign, bringing the total raised to date to just over \$33 million.

Steve and Jane Akin recently publicly announced a transformational gift of \$5 million in support of the theater and education center. Chairman of the Gulfshore Playhouse Board of Directors and co-chair of the Capital Campaign Committee, Mr. Akin, along with his wife, Jane, a former professional opera singer, have been dedicated to expanding access to the arts for nearly three decades. Along with their lead support of the Boston Lyric Opera, the Akins have also supported the development of numerous artists through the BLO Emerging Artist Program. Former president of Fidelity Personal Investments, Mr. Akin also served on the Board of Trustees of the New England Conservatory and was president of the Kansas City Lyric Opera, and Mansfield Ohio Symphony.

Rich and Glenda Struthers have pledged \$2.5 million to the Capital Campaign. Gulfshore Playhouse board member and co-chair of the Capital Campaign Committee, Mr. Struthers is the chairman and CEO of Clearwater Capital Management LLC of Naples. Rich and Glenda, a former docent at the Minneapolis Institute of Art, have been longtime advocates for health care, education and the arts, supporting numerous nonprofit organizations including the Struthers Parkinson's Center, the Guthrie Theatre and the Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis.

Announcing their commitment of \$1 million, Susan Regenstien and Barry Frank have been loyal and generous supporters of Gulfshore Playhouse since 2010. A member of the Gulfshore Playhouse board of directors, and co-chair of the Capital Campaign Committee, Ms. Regenstien has served on the board of the Lincoln Park Zoo for more than 20 years, and is the longest serving member of the executive committee. An active philanthropist, Ms. Regenstien is also dedicated to cultivating leading health care solutions. She served on the board of the Epilepsy Foundation of Philadelphia for 15 years, including five as president, is a former board member of Lurie's Children's Hospital, and is a life member of the Shirley Ryan Ability Lab. In addition to her involvement with The Shedd Aquarium, the Chicago Botanic board, and The Shelter for Abused Women and Children board, Ms. Regenstien along with Mr. Frank, have a passion for education and environmental stewardship, supporting the Conservancy of Southwest Florida and the Joseph Regenstien Jr. School of the Botanic Garden.

Ardent supporters of arts and education, Dr. David and Jane Wilson have announced a commitment of \$1 million. A member of the Gulfshore Playhouse board of directors, Dr. Wilson serves on the board of trustees of Johnson & Wales University, where he and his wife, Jane, have been providing needs-based scholarships for students for more than 25 years. Dr. Wilson also served as former managing partner and national director of professional development at Ernst & Young, visiting professor at Harvard Business School, lead director of CoreSite Realty,



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A modern and intimate setting welcomes donors and patrons in the private Founder's Lounge, which includes a refreshment area, private restrooms and comfortable gathering spaces available to host receptions as well as private parties.



The new, state-of-the-art theater and education complex will include a 350-seat preeminent main stage theater, with comfortable seating, and handicapped-accessibility.

and board member of Barnes and Noble Education.

The John and Carol Walter Family Foundation has pledged \$1 million. The Walter family is known for its commitments to the importance of early childhood learning, the performing arts and cultural institutions. Mr. Walter serves as board of trustees for Steppenwolf Theatre, Northwestern University, the Conservancy of Southwest Florida and The Naples Children & Education Foundation; he also previously served on the board of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. In addition to her local involvement with the Sustaining Leadership Council at The Naples Botanic Garden, the Naples Children & Education Foundation and the Conservancy of Southwest Florida, Mrs.

Walter is currently on the board of The Boy's and Girl's Clubs of Chicago, The Field Museum and The Joffrey Ballet.

Naples longtime residents, David and Vicky Smith have also committed \$500,000 to the campaign. Mr. Smith has served as a director of Naples Botanic Garden and is a life director of the Chicago Botanic Garden. A founding member of the Sustaining Leadership Council of Naples Botanic Garden, Mrs. Smith also serves on its executive committee. The Smiths' contributions can be felt throughout the community of Naples, from support of Naples Botanic Garden, Conservancy of Southwest Florida, Naples Zoo and Naples Historical Society, to a number of institutions in the arts, children's health and well-being, and education spaces.

Additionally, two anonymous couples from Naples made commitments of \$1 million and \$2 million to the capital campaign.

The campaign has also been supported by leading Neapolitans, including the East of 41 Coalition, the Naples Community Redevelopment Agency, City of Naples and various business and community executives.

"We recognize times are still difficult for many, but we believe that by continuing our efforts to bring to Naples a dynamic cultural campus for all people, we are creating a beacon of light that will be transformational for our community," said Kristen Coury, founder, CEO and producing artistic director for Gulfshore Playhouse. "The reality is as the world looks to the horizon, and re-evaluates how individuals gather, connect and engage with others, we are already at the forefront."

"This time has allowed us to incorporate a number of health and safety measures at the development stage that will carry us into groundbreaking this spring. Furthermore, our continued focus on inclusion, diversity, top-quality entertainment and life-changing theater education programs will contribute to the healing of our community and hopeful future."

"Theater enriches every life it touches,"

said Chief Advancement Officer Kimberly Dye. "It's evident by the overwhelming support from our highly philanthropic community who have stepped up in a significant way. By partnering in our vision of bringing to life a cultural gem that will enhance our vibrant community with Broadway-quality productions, individuals have a chance to be part of history. We're about two-thirds of the way to fully funding the project, and look to others who will partner with us in bringing the campaign to successful conclusion."

The theater's location, situated at the corner of 1st Avenue South and Goodlette-Frank Road, also supports the City of Naples' redevelopment plans for the East of 41 downtown area. In February, the CRA accepted Gulfshore Playhouse's valuable one-acre land donation offer for a municipal parking garage on First Avenue South, that would not only support programming at the theater but serve various retailers, restaurants and shops. The initiative was supported by a bipartisan group known as the East of 41 Coalition, led by Naples resident and business owner Michael Wynn. The growing group of coalition members recognizes the new cultural campus will help establish a vibrant destination district that will benefit existing and future businesses.

Designed by renowned architectural firm H3/Arquitectonica under the creative direction of Bernardo Fort-Brescia, the cultural campus will showcase a state-of-the-art proscenium-style theater, where large-cast musicals, classics and world premiere comedies and dramas will be presented on a grand stage equivalent to the size and scale of a Broadway theater.

The 40,000-square-foot complex will include a welcoming grand lobby, bar and café, mainstage theater, studio theater, rehearsal spaces, an outdoor rooftop terrace, Founder's Lounge, beautiful garden spaces and a dedicated education wing.

The new theater will also feature a second, more intimate, Studio Theatre where a diverse array of programming from edgier new works to Theatre for Young Audiences will be produced, as well as performances by students from the Gulfshore Playhouse Education programs. The dedicated education wing's classrooms and rehearsal spaces will host activities accessible to students of all ages and socioeconomic backgrounds. Several of the larger spaces will be available for rental to host parties, meetings and small affairs.

Gulfshore Playhouse invites individuals, businesses and families to join with others deeply committed to world-class theater and unique educational opportunities in creating something special for Naples, and for generations to come.

For more information about The Next Stage Capital Campaign and fundraising efforts, contact Chief Advancement Officer Kimberly Dye at 239-261-PLAY (7529) ext. 203 or kdye@gulfshoreplayhouse.org.

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