

TOM HANKS and RITA WILSON Give Significant Gift to Great Lakes Theater Festival Propelling Fundraising Campaign to Successful Conclusion

Robust community support enabled GLTF to meet the terms of The Kresge Foundation's Challenge Grant garnering a \$1M gift from the foundation to complete the Festival's fundraising campaign.

CLEVELAND, OHIO (January 27, 2010) - Great Lakes Theater Festival (GLTF) alumnus, and two-time Oscar award-winner, **Tom Hanks and his wife Rita Wilson made a significant gift to the Festival** over the holidays **enabling the company to successfully achieve its *Re-Imagine a Classic* fundraising goal.** Hanks has served as the Honorary Chair of the fundraising efforts to 're-imagine' the Hanna Theatre as the new home for the Festival and to establish an endowment for the classic theater company since 2008. Although the amount of the gift is confidential, **the donation will be used to create a permanent endowment to support Festival artists called *The Tom Hanks and Rita Wilson Fund for Artists.***

With Hanks' and Wilson's gift, GLTF successfully raised \$18,293,926, meeting the terms of its Kresge Foundation Challenge Grant. Pending a review of a final report, **The Kresge Foundation will award the Festival a \$1M gift to complete its fundraising effort.** To date, over 700 donors have made gifts to the campaign which was launched in the fall of 2007.

Tom Hanks encouraged Northeast Ohioans to join him in supporting the Festival. "Now it's your turn to give a gift to this gem of a theater by introducing a new theater-goer to the joy of the **Great Lakes Theater Festival at the Hanna:** gift some tickets to a college student, bring a grandchild, organize a birthday trip," urged Hanks in a recent statement. "Buy season tickets here in your own backyard to experience as great a moment in the theater as I've had anywhere in the world."

"We are truly grateful to our good friends Tom Hanks and Rita Wilson for their immense generosity in helping bring our campaign to its successful completion," said **Charles Fee, GLTF's Producing Artistic Director.** "For sharing his valuable time with us, for continually demonstrating his commitment to the classics in Cleveland, and for his grand efforts to help his home theater grow...all of us at the Festival and in Northeast Ohio say thank you Tom!" Fee continued, "I know Tom and Rita are standing with all of us at the Festival -- from our remarkable Board of Trustees, our visionary staff and artists, our partners at PlayhouseSquare—to give a well deserved ovation to the generous supporters across our region who have helped write this extraordinarily successful chapter in Great Lakes Theater Festival's history."

Tim Pistell, GLTF's campaign chair and Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of Cleveland-based Parker Hannifin Corporation echoed Fee's sentiments. "What a tremendous achievement to reach our goal and secure The Kresge Foundation's Challenge grant. The fact that we accomplished this successful outcome in an economic downturn exemplifies the commitment and hard work of GLTF's staff, benefactors and audience. This is a big win for Great Lakes Theater Festival, PlayhouseSquare, the performing arts and the residents of Northeast Ohio. If you haven't yet experienced the re-imagined Hanna Theatre, we invite you to stop by for a visit to see the most exciting new performance space in Ohio."

Great Lakes Theater Festival opened its permanent, new home at the Hanna Theatre, PlayhouseSquare (designed by Cleveland-based architectural firm **Westlake Reed Leskosky**) on September 20, 2008. The company will conclude its second full season in the space this spring.

Honorary Campaign Chair
Tom Hanks

Campaign Chair
Timothy K. Pistell

Vice Chairs
W.B. Doggett
Natalie Epstein
Samuel Hartwell
John E. Katzenmeyer
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Great Lakes Theater Festival

The mission of Great Lakes Theater Festival, through its main stage productions and its education programs, is to bring the pleasure, power and relevance of classic theater to the widest possible audience.

Since the company's inception in 1962, programming has been rooted in Shakespeare, but the Festival's commitment to great plays spans the breadth of all cultures, forms of theater and time periods, and provides for the occasional mounting of new works that complement the classical repertoire.

Classic theater holds the capacity to illuminate truth and enduring values, celebrate and challenge human nature and actions, revel in eloquent language, preserve the traditions of diverse cultures and generate communal spirit. From the historic Hanna and Ohio Theatres in PlayhouseSquare and through community outreach, the Festival seeks to create visceral, immediate experiences for participants, asserting theater's historic role as a vehicle for advancing the common good, and helping people make the most joyful and meaningful connections between classic plays and their own lives. The Festival wishes to share such vibrant experiences with people across all age groups, creeds, racial and ethnic groups and socio-economic backgrounds.

The Festival is dedicated to the highest standards, to creative problem solving and to innovation in all areas of its operation, including theater production, education, outreach, management and governance.

The Kresge Foundation

The Kresge Foundation is a \$2.8 billion private, national foundation that seeks to influence the quality of life for future generations through its support of nonprofit organizations in six fields of interest: health, the environment, community development, arts and culture, education and human services. The foundation is headquartered in metropolitan Detroit, in the suburb community of Troy, Michigan. In 2008, The Kresge Foundation awarded 342 grants totaling \$181 million.

Created by the personal gifts of Sebastian S. Kresge, The Kresge Foundation supports communities by building the capacity of non-profit organizations. The foundation's primary grantmaking tool is its Challenge Grant Program which is designed to assist nonprofit organizations as they work to strengthen leadership and financial support through challenge grants for capital projects.

PlayhouseSquare

PlayhouseSquare is a not-for-profit performing arts center whose mission is presenting and producing a wide variety of quality performing arts, advancing arts education and creating a theater district that is a superior location for entertainment, business and housing, thereby strengthening the economic vitality of the region.