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PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Ruby O'Gray @ 901.213-7566

ruby@womentheatrefestivalofmemphis.org

WOMEN'S THEATRE FESTIVAL RETURNS FOR SEASON III

Hattiloo Theatre is the venue chosen for Season III of the Women's Theatre Festival of Memphis, Inc., July 10-16. Performance, workshops, and The Gyneka Awards are the major components of WTFM, but this year, another category has been added to aid with the development of scripts that have been submitted, had potential, but were not yet stage ready. The impressive lineup includes performances from New York, Pennsylvania, Florida, North and South Carolina, Arizona, California, Nashville, The District of Columbia, and Tennessee. Since its start in 2012 to recognize the contributions of women to theatre, WTFM has held over 60 performances and workshops across the contiguous USA. With a 2014 Australian submission, the organization became an international in status. This year, the Gyneka Awards' theme is The "Teaching Artists." This event recognizes and celebrates specific women, whose contributions have made a significant impact in theatre. The three 2016 honorees will join the list of eighteen others from the past two festivals. The awards event also serves as a major fundraiser for the 501(c) (3) not for profit organization, with the "After 5" attire festivities and reception.

The Gyneka Awards honorees are longtime artists known to Memphis and the Mid-south. They are Irene Crist and Joyce Cobb who are respected artists with years of stage credits, motivation, and use of their teaching and advisory skills to help young people on their theatrical paths. The third artist is Dr. Tommie (Tonea) Stewart, whose impressive work has reached the eyes of many that include the White House. Dr. Stewart is a native of Greenwood, Mississippi, who resides in Montgomery, Alabama. She is a tenured Professor and Dean of the College of Visual & Performing Arts at Alabama State University. She has numerous theatre and TV and film credits that include critically acclaimed films *A Time to Kill*, in the role of Samuel Jackson's wife, *Mississippi Burning*, *Mississippi Damned* and a recurring role as Ms. Etta on the TV series *In the Heat of the Night*, to name a few. An Emmy Award honoree, in 2015 Dr. Stewart was also the recipient of the prestigious "Champion of Change Award" from President Barack Obama. WTFM is excited to honor these women and urges you to get tickets for the 100 seat Gyneka Awards, held on Thursday, July 14, at 5pm at the Hattiloo Theatre, 37 South Cooper. Tickets for the event are \$60, which includes a Red Carpet arrival from 4-5, a reception and ceremony, followed by the play "Come Thanksgiving" on Hattiloo's Mainstage.

Along with the Gyneka Awards, the performances and workshops will include “The Lobster & The Crab” the week before, recommended for children age 4-12 on July 8 and 9 in the Black Box of Hattiloo. For tickets to womenstheatrefestivalofmemphis.org. For more information call 901. 213-7566 for a festival guide of activities. Make plans for a great “Stay-cation,” or plan to visit Memphis for a week of theatre that you won’t forget. There’s something for everyone at the Women’s Theatre Festival of Memphis, Season III 2016! (if there are any problems, please contact me at via cell at 901.208-5786)



**The 2016 Gyneka Awards Honor
The Teaching Artists @ Hattiloo Theatre July 14, 2016**



A Director/Actress
Irene Crist

A Relentless Educator
Dr. Tommie Tonea Stewart

A Musicologist/ Singer
Joyce Cobb

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