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## Women's Theatre Festival of Memphis Celebrates Its Second Season

(Memphis, TN)--The Women's Theatre Festival of Memphis (WTFM) is back and ready for an exciting second season, August 7- 9, 2014. WTFM is a biennial festival founded in 2012 to highlight and award the contributions of women in theatre arts and showcase performances about women, written, and directed by women. This season features over 30 original plays, workshops, and readings.

The festivities begin Thursday, August 7<sup>th</sup> with the Gyneka Awards Gala, which is the opening performance of WTFM that honors women who exemplify theatre arts in their respective areas. The Gyneka Awards Gala will take place in The Circuit Playhouse, 51 S. Cooper, Memphis, TN 38104, at 7 p.m.

WTFM founders, seasoned thespian/playwright/producer Ruby O'Gray and thespian/director/producer/event planner Karen Moore are excited about the upcoming festivities. WTFM is a sponsored project of Women of Style, Spirit & Success, Inc. (a 501 (c) 3 not-for-profit charitable organization).

"This is like watching your beautiful baby grow into a toddler. The first year was an amazing experience with some wonderfully talented women and we are looking forward to doing it again," said O'Gray. "This year's honorees are phenomenal as well as the play submissions. I know festival attendees will love seeing them come to life onstage. We have even added a children's play to this season. Anyone who loves theatre should definitely attend and help us give a well-deserved round of applause to women in theatre," said Moore.

The 2014 Gyneka honorees are:

Patricia Bogan	Volunteer/Playhouse on the Square Board member
Julia "Cookie" Ewing	Rhodes Professor of Theatre and Artistic Director of McCoy Theatre
Pat Halloran	Tony Award winner/President & CEO of the Memphis Development Foundation, which operates The Orpheum Theatre
Debbie Litch	Executive Producer, Theatre Memphis
Naomi Moody	Broadway Actress, International Recording Artist
Dorothy Gunther Pugh	Founder of Ballet Memphis
Celeste Bedford Walker	Award winning Playwright

The following two days of the festival features performances, readings, and workshops that will take place in the Midtown Theatre District, Memphis, TN which includes: The Circuit Playhouse, Hattiloo Theatre, Playhouse on the Square, and TheatreWorks. The performances will feature the works of local artists as well as those by women from Virginia, Kentucky, New York, New Jersey, and California and we are awaiting confirmation from the Australian Arts Council for a play from down under. The workshops will embrace such topics as the business of theatre, the business of acting, directing, acting, playwriting, spoken word, stage combat, and dance workshops (Hip Hop, African, Salsa, Advanced Ballet, and Jazz).

WTFM is one of two theatre festivals of its kind in the U.S. and the only one in the South. It is no secret that women are underrepresented in the theatre and media. Through this festival, educational opportunities and performances are provided that represent women on a broader scale and bring recognition to women who have contributed to the theatre over the years. This is done to encourage collaboration with theatres, artists, and other professionals in an attempt to increase opportunities for women in all aspects of the performing arts. This unique idea allows attendees to take part in the female experience in theatre and attract significant visitors to the Memphis marketplace.

The complete schedule will be available next month, for more information visit [www.womenstheatrefestivalofmemphis.org](http://www.womenstheatrefestivalofmemphis.org) .

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