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WOMEN'S THEATRE FESTIVAL OF MEMPHIS ANNOUNCES AUGUST DEBUT

(Memphis, TN)--Women's Theatre Festival of Memphis (WTFM), City of Memphis and the Memphis Convention and Visitors Bureau participated in the announcement of the creation of a new and innovative event during a press conference on World Theatre Day, Tuesday, March 27, 2012. The Women's Theatre Festival of Memphis is a three-day event specifically designed to give more exposure to women in the arts and has the potential to bring world-wide exposure to the City of Memphis. During the press conference, WTFM also announced the honorees for the Gyneka Awards, an award which will be given to 12 women who have made significant contributions to the world of theatre and the Greater Memphis area theatre community. Mary Cashiola spoke on behalf of The Honorable A C Wharton, Mayor, City of Memphis; Calvin Taylor, Memphis Convention & Visitors Bureau and Jackie Nichols of Playhouse on the Square also made remarks. The press conference took place at 10:00 a.m. in the Playhouse on the Square Café at 66 S. Cooper Street.

The Women's Theatre Festival of Memphis will debut August 2 - 4, 2012. It was founded by seasoned playwright Ruby O'Gray and director/event planner Karen Moore. WTFM's mission is to provide educational opportunities and performances that represent women on a broader scale and bring recognition to women who have contributed to the theatre over the years. It will showcase the talents of women playwrights, directors, producers, etc. in more than 20 performances, workshops and readings at The Circuit Playhouse, Playhouse on the Square and TheatreWorks in the Midtown Memphis Theatre District. An event of this nature has never been done before in this area of the country. The founders are delighted that their hometown is supporting their efforts.

"Having the support of our City solidifies the impact that the Women's Theatre Festival of Memphis can have. It is our pleasure to spotlight the contributions of women in theatre. This will be an annual event, and we anticipate that it will draw people from all around the world. But, its sustainability depends on the support of our City, its businesses and its citizens," says O'Gray.



On August 2nd, WTFM will kick off the festival with the Gyneka Awards, a gala night of performances in tribute to the 12 women selected for awards. Gyneka is the Greek word for Woman and since Grecian women were denied the right to perform in theatre, this award represents barrier breakers and strong women who never gave up their God ordained talent.

“We wanted to make sure that this event not only spotlights women in theatre but honors their achievements. The women chosen exemplify excellence in their theatrical disciplines and have spent years perfecting them, some are even innovative pioneers. Not all of the women chosen work in the theatre, some women are huge theatre supporters and long term volunteers,” says Moore.

The honorees for the Gyneka Awards 2012 are:

Gloria Baxter	Playwright/Director/Retired Educator
Sue Binnie	Volunteer/Playhouse on the Square Board member
Tania Castroverde Moskalenko	Executive Director of Germantown Performing Arts Center
Erma Clanton	Director/Retired Educator
Deborah Glass-Frazier	Founder of Blues City Cultural Center
Pam Goss	Retired Set Designer
Dorothy Kirsch	Philanthropist
Rebecca Powell	Costume Designer
Marguerite Piazza	Opera Vocalist
Florence Roach	Actress/Director/Retired Educator
Maxine Strawder	Retired Dancer
Bennie West	Founder of Memphis Black Arts Alliance

The Host Committee spearheaded by Beverly Robertson of the National Civil Rights Museum includes: Howard Eddings, Charles Ewing, Renee' Frazier, Claudia Haltom, Carolyn Hardy, Jackie Nichols, Kathy Moore Cowan, State Representative Charles Antonio Parkinson, Eric Robertson, Howard Robertson, Nicky Sparrow, Calvin Taylor, and Angela Watson.

Women's Theatre Festival of Memphis (WTFM) is a sponsored project of Women of Style, Spirit and Success, Inc. (a 501 (c) 3 not-for-profit charitable organization).

For more information, visit <http://www.womenstheatrefestivalofmemphis.org> or contact Karen Moore at Karen@womenstheatrefestivalofmemphis.org or call 901.213.7566.

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