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NOMINATE AN ARTIST WHO IS TRANSFORMING REGIONAL THEATRE!

THE NOMINATION PROCESS OPENS MAY 1, 2012, FOR THE STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS FOUNDATION'S ZELDA FICHANDLER AWARD

Award Carries an Unrestricted Grant of \$5000

Honors an Outstanding Theatre Director or Choreographer Nominations Accepted Through July 2, 2012

Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation (SDCF), the not-for-profit foundation of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC), will open the nomination process for The Zelda Fichandler Award on May 1, 2012. This award presents an unrestricted grant of \$5000 to an outstanding director or choreographer making an exceptional contribution to the national arts landscape through theatre work in a region. In 2012, the award will honor achievement in the Western region, comprised of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

With this award, SDCF recognizes the profound impact and honors the legacy of the founders of regional theatre and celebrates the creativity and artistry of theatre around the country. Named after Zelda Fichandler, a founder of the American regional theatre movement, the award celebrates significant achievement in the field, singular creativity and artistry, and a deep investment in a particular region. This award is not for lifetime achievement; the intent is to honor an artist for both accomplishment to date and promise for the future.

Director Sheldon Epps, Chairman of the SDC Foundation Committee and Artistic Director of Pasadena Playhouse, says, "I had the pleasure of meeting Zelda many years ago as a senior in the drama department at Carnegie Mellon University. I have no doubt that the inspiration, wisdom, and practical advice that I have gained from an association with her then and now has in many ways helped to shape my own career in the theatre. It was her belief that great theatre could emerge not only from the commercial sector in New York City, but at theatres all over the country that dedicated themselves to genuine artistry and the richness of our art form. Our union has created this award to recognize those who, like Zelda, continue to devote their energies to the creation of great theatre as directors and choreographers in every region. It is entirely fitting that this important award should be dedicated to the vision of excellence that Zelda always espoused, which has in fact inspired some many others. The award recognizes those who keep that light alive."

The Fichandler Award is given regionally on a rotating basis. The inaugural Zelda Fichandler Award recipient was Jonathan Moscone of California Shakespeare Theater in Orinda, California. Director Moscone states, "The Fichandler Award has been the most profound honor of my professional career. Zelda was one of the first innovators in our field, and the award not only serves as an inspiration but as a challenge to continue forging the path that Zelda and her colleagues created for us in the middle of the 20th Century."

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Additional past awardees are Michael Halberstam of Writers' Theatre in Glencoe, Illinois, and Blanka Zizka of the Wilma Theatre in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Nominations will be accepted from all sources through July 2, 2012. Nominators need not be SDC Members. Self-nomination is not accepted. A short nomination form is available [here](#) and at SDCFoundation.wordpress.com. A selection committee of professional directors and choreographers will select The Zelda Fichandler Award Recipient from nominated artists. The Award will be presented in November, 2012, at a theatre within the region.

Zelda Fichandler dedicated her early career to the establishment of America's regional theatre movement. In 1950 she founded Washington D.C.'s Arena Stage and in 1968 she produced *The Great White Hope*, which became the first production to transfer from a regional theatre to Broadway, winning the Tony and the Pulitzer Prize, and launching the careers of James Earl Jones and Jane Alexander. Her production of *Inherit the Wind* toured Soviet St. Petersburg and Moscow and Arena Stage was the first American theatre company sponsored by the State Department to do so. Like many other regional theatres afterward, Arena Stage cultivated an evolving but resident company over the decades that included some of America's best actors: Robert Prosky, Frances Sternhagen, George Grizzard, Philip Bosco, Ned Beatty, Roy Scheider, Robert Foxworth, Jane Alexander, James Earl Jones, Melinda Dillon, Dianne Wiest, Max Wright, Marilyn Caskey, Harriet Harris, and Tom Hewitt. In 1975 it was the first regional theatre to be recognized by the American Theatre Wing and the Broadway League with the Regional Theatre Tony Award for outstanding achievement. When Ms. Fichandler retired as producing artistic director of Arena Stage in 1990, she had achieved the longest tenure of any non-commercial producer in the annals of the American theater. Ms. Fichandler is Chair Emeritus of New York University's acclaimed graduate acting program where she personally taught, guided, and inspired more than 500 acting students, including Marcia Gay Harden, Rainn Wilson, Billy Crudup, Debra Messing, Peter Krause, and Michael C. Hall. She has received the George Abbott Award, The Acting Company's John Houseman Award, the Margo Jones Award, and the National Medal of Arts, and in 1999 she became the first artistic leader outside of New York to be inducted into the Theatre Hall of Fame.

Founded in 1965, Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation exists to foster, promote and develop the creativity and craft of stage directors and choreographers. SDCF's goals are to provide opportunities to practice the crafts of directing and choreography; to gather and disseminate craft and career information; to promote the profession to emerging talent; to provide opportunities for exchange of knowledge among directors and choreographers; and to increase the awareness of the value of directors' and choreographers' work.

Stage Directors and Choreographers Society is a national theatrical labor union whose mission is to foster a national community of professional stage Directors and Choreographers by protecting the rights, health and livelihoods of all of its members; to facilitate the exchange of ideas, information and opportunities, while educating the current and future generations about the role of Directors and Choreographers and providing effective administration, negotiations and contractual support.

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