

N E W S R E L E A S E

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THE THEATRE SCHOOL AT DEPAUL UNIVERSITY HOSTS STELLAR AWARDS

Artists Honored at the 20th Annual Awards for Excellence in the Arts on April 22, 2008

In a night filled with revelry, celebration, and the renewed pledge of support for the young artists at The Theatre School at DePaul University, the 20th Annual Awards for Excellence in the Arts was a complete success! Among those honored were Pulitzer Prize-winner **Tracy Letts**, actress **Sharon Gless**, and alumnus **Zach Helm**. Upon accepting his award, Zach Helm thanked The Theatre School for “the award [they] gave me 15 years ago when [he] graduated,” and **Tracy Letts** reminisced about the role The Theatre School has had on his Chicago experience.

Also honored at the event were **Lois Weisberg**, Commissioner, Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs (Leadership Award for Excellence in the Arts) and **Bank of America** (Corporate Award for Excellence in the Arts, accepted by **David J. Rudis**, Illinois President, Bank of America). Theatre School alumna and critically-acclaimed actress **Amy Pietz** served as the emcee of the evening – and even performed a musical number about her days in the hallways and classes of The Theatre School. Photos of the honorees, guests, and evening’s events are available upon request.

Many patrons of the arts graced the Grand Ballroom of the Four Seasons in support of the young artists at The Theatre School at DePaul University. In attendance were First Lady Maggie Daley, Roche Schulfer (Goodman Theatre), Steve Traxler (JAM Theatricals), Martha Lavey (Steppenwolf Theatre Company) Lou Raizin (Broadway in Chicago), Norm Bobbins (former President of LaSalle Bank), and numerous other VIP guests. In total, there were over 480 people joining the celebration.

A raffle, silent and live auctions, and student entertainment were also included in the evening’s festivities. DePaul’s Music School alumnus Darwin Noguera (and his Evolution Trio) provided live music throughout

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the event. Many premiere theatres, dance companies, musical halls, hotels, restaurants and shops donated items to be used as prizes for the silent auction and raffle. Through this support by the arts community in Chicago, more than \$30,000 was raised through the silent auction and raffle in support of the students at The Theatre School. The hottest-selling item of the night was the “Support a Rising Star” Scholarship which provides a scholarship to support a student in his or her final year of conservatory training. “Support a Rising Star” concluded the live auction, and raised \$80,000.00 (for a total of eight scholarships), with a generous leading gift of \$10,000.00 from Barnes & Noble, provoking a very spirited standing ovation particularly from the students in attendance.

By the end of the night, the 2008 Awards for Excellence in the Arts yielded a celebrated gross profit of \$470,250 for The Theatre School Scholarship Fund. The Theatre School faculty, staff, students, alumni and community have once again been overwhelmed with gratitude for the generosity and passionate support of the arts to be fond in our beloved Windy City.

The Theatre School Board co-chairs for the event were **Joseph Antunovich**, President, Antunovich Associates, Architects and Planners; **Trisha Rooney-Alden**, President, R4 Services; **Sondra A. Healy**, Chairman, Turtle Wax, Inc.; and **Monsignor Kenneth Velo**, Senior Executive for Catholic Collaboration, DePaul University. Other major supporters of the 20th Annual Awards for Excellence in the Arts included **American Airlines**, and **Wedgwood USA**. The premiere corporate sponsors of the event included **Bank of America** and **BlueCross BlueShield of Illinois**.

The Theatre School, DePaul University, educates, trains and inspires students of theatre in a conservatory setting that is rigorous, disciplined, culturally diverse and that strives for the highest level of professional skill and artistry. A commitment to diversity and equality in education is central to the school’s mission. As an integral part of the training, The Theatre School produces public programs and performances from a wide repertoire of classic, contemporary and original plays that challenge, entertain and stimulate the imagination. The school seeks to enhance the intellectual and cultural life of the university community, the city and the profession.

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