

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, Stars & Visionaries Honored at the 21st Annual Awards for Excellence in the Arts

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 21st Annual Awards for Excellence in the Arts was a complete success! Among those honored were actor **Michael Shannon**, actress **Angela Bassett**, and alumnus **Dennis Dugan**. Upon accepting her award, Angela Bassett reflected on her conservatory training at Yale School of Drama, and underscored the importance of supporting young artists. Actor Michael Shannon dedicated the acceptance of his award to his late father, Donald S. Shannon, who had served as a long-time accounting professor at DePaul University.

Also honored at the event were **Bill Kurtis** and **Donna La Pietra** of Kurtis Productions, Ltd. (Leadership Award for Excellence in the Arts) and **Illinois Tool Works Inc.** (Corporate Award for Excellence in the Arts, accepted by **David B. Speer**, Chairman and CEO). Theatre School alumnus and actor **P.J. Byrne** served as the emcee of the evening – and showed his support for the school by starting off the live auction with a generous \$10,000 pledge.

Members of the Chicago theatre community Michael Halberstam (Writers' Theatre), David New (Steppenwolf Theatre Company), E. Faye Butler and Richard Christensen showed their support, among other industry professionals. Also in attendance were David C. Blowers (Northern Trust) and Marion Barton-Dugan, mother of honoree and alumnus Dennis Dugan. Ms. Barton-Dugan graduated from the Goodman School of Drama in 1940. The Dugans represent two consecutive generations of alumni. Numerous other VIP guests graced the event and, in total, there were over 415 people joining the evening's festivities.

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The celebration also featured a raffle, silent auction, live auction and student entertainment. DePaul's School of Music alumnus Darwin Noguera (and his Darwin Noguera Trio) provided live music throughout the evening. Many premiere theatres, dance companies, musical halls, hotels, restaurants and shops donated items to be used as prizes for the silent auction and raffle. More than \$90,000 was raised through this community support. The hottest-selling item of the night was the "Support a Raising Star" Scholarship, which endows a scholarship to support a student in his or her final year of conservatory training.

By the end of the night, the 2009 Awards for Excellence in the Arts yielded a celebrated gross profit of approximately \$376,000 for **The Theatre School Scholarship Fund**. The faculty, staff, students, alumni and community have once again been overwhelmed with gratitude for the generosity and passionate support of the arts to be found in our beloved Windy City.

The Theatre School Board Co-chairs for the event were **Joseph Antunovich**, President, Antunovich Associates, Architects and Planners; **Sondra A. Healy**, Chairman, Turtle Wax, Inc.; and **Monsignor Kenneth Velo**, Senior Executive for Catholic Collaboration, DePaul University. The Richard H. Driehaus Charitable Lead Trust and Illinois Tool Works Inc. were among the many foundation and corporate sponsors. Major supporters of the event included **American Airlines**, and **Wedgwood USA**.

More information as well as photos of the honorees, guests, and evening's events is available upon request. Contact Andrea Tichy, Manager of Public Relations and Special Events, atichy@depaul.edu.

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The Theatre School at 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.