

## **Goodspeed's Price and Classic Cinemas' York Theatre Honored - National board directors also named -**

**(July 23, 2014)** Michael Price, Executive Director of Goodspeed Musicals, and Chicago-area movie theatre chain Classic Cinemas received awards from the national organization The League of Historic American Theatres (LHAT) for their excellence in preserving, restoring and sustaining historic theatres. Close to 400 historic theatre operators were in attendance at the LHAT National Conference in New York City.

**Michael Price** (East Haddam, CT) was presented the Outstanding Individual Contribution Award for his lifetime of achievements in theatre and arts management. Goodspeed productions have garnered 13 Tony Awards, 33 Tony nominations and Goodspeed itself was honored with two special Tony Awards. Dedication to preserving the historic Goodspeed Opera House led Mr. Price to be one of the founders of the League of Historic American Theatres.

He is also a founding member of the National Alliance for Musical Theatre, vice president of the American Theatre Wing and a member of the Tony Awards Management Committee. Mr. Price is the recipient of honorary Doctorates in Fine Arts, honoris causa, from Connecticut College and the University of Hartford. He is also a recipient of the State of Connecticut Arts Award for service to the arts. Mr. Price is a graduate of Michigan State University and received a Master of Arts degree from the University of Minnesota and a Master of Fine Arts degree from Yale School of Drama.

**Connecticut Governor Dannel P. Malloy** said of Price, *"Through Michael's hard work and dedication, the Goodspeed Opera House was listed as a national historic landmark and also recognized as a state landmark by the Connecticut Antiquarian and Landmark Society. Millions in supportive funding has been raised to maintain the opera house in its original historic condition."*

**York Theatre** (Elmhurst, IL) was given the Outstanding Historic Theatre Award for demonstrated excellence through community impact, quality of programs and services, and quality of the restoration and rehabilitation of its historic structure. **Ken Stein**, League Executive Director, reported, *"The York Theatre is an amazing example of how a small theatre can partner with an entire community to bring about a positive economic development for its community."* For several years the York has donated a significant amount of its upstairs real estate to LHAT's sister organization, the Theatre Historical Society of America, for use as its home office. *"It is always great to see that level of commitment to historic preservation in a small for-profit company,"* commented Stein.

Nominated by past League Board President **Dulcie Gilmore**, the York is part of the Classic Cinemas chain owned and operated by **Willis and Shirley Johnson**, who were present to receive the award. Gilmore, who is currently Director of the Arie Crown Theater in Chicago, stated, *"The Johnsons entered the movie business with no direct experience. What they brought to the enterprise were solid business practices that have been lost along the way of film exhibition over the past forty years. They engaged in*

*an old-style showmanship method of operation that put the patron first. This included showing respect for the historic building and its significance to the community.”*

The awards were presented at the League’s 2014 conference, which took place in New York City, July 16-19, with more than 370 people attending, including more than 200 representatives from historic theatres throughout the country and 140 representatives from service provider and supplier firms, as well invited guests.

In addition to the awards, the League also nominated and elected two members to begin board of director terms in January 2015. **Kelly Updike**, Executive Director of the Embassy Theatre Foundation in Fort Wayne, IN, was nominated for a second three-year term on the board where she serves as Chair of the Membership Programs and Services Committee. **Bill Register**, Vice President of Operations for the Nederlander Organization in New York, was nominated as a new board member after serving for the past year as a member of the NYC conference host committee.

*“Our board members are active volunteers in the League as well as strong champions for the valuable role historic theatres can play in the life of their communities. The League is fortunate to have their experience and leadership,”* said **John Bell**, LHAT President and President and CEO of the Tampa Theatre in Florida.

The League of Historic American Theatres was founded in 1976 by 42 theatres and has more than 300 theatre and service provider members across the United States and Canada. A nonprofit membership organization, the League’s mission is to champion the preservation, restoration and operation of historic theatres. Information is at [www.lhat.org](http://www.lhat.org) or contact Ken Stein, Executive Director, [kstein@lhat.org](mailto:kstein@lhat.org) or 512.789.2087.

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