



League of Historic American Theatres

PRESS RELEASE

Vince Gill and Morris Performing Arts Center among those honored at League of Historic American Theatres Annual Conference

(July 30, 2015) NASHVILLE - Country Music Legend **Vince Gill** took home another award to add to his 20 Grammy and 18 Country Music Awards when he received the 2015 Marquee Award presented by the League of Historic American Theatres (LHAT) at its Annual Conference in Nashville, Tennessee. Previous winners include actor Hal Holbrook and humorist Garrison Keillor. About 250 historic theatre operators were in attendance at the Awards Ceremony that took place at the Sheraton Downtown Nashville Hotel Ballroom. Also receiving awards were **The Morris Performing Arts Center** (South Bend, IN) and former Nederlander Vice President, **James Boese** (New York City).

Vince Gill spoke of his love of performing in the intimate and unique spaces of historic theatres as opposed to larger arenas. “These theatres are my favorite places to play,” said Gill to the crowd. “I remember your theatres especially. It’s the big arenas I tend to forget.”

Beginning in 2012, LHAT created this award to recognize exemplary artists whose names have lit up the marquees of America’s historic theatres. “We were particularly excited to spotlight Vince Gill because he has also served as ambassador for the \$10 million America's Best Communities competition, which seeks to encourage investment in rural America,” reports Ken Stein, President and CEO for LHAT. “Many of our member theatres are the catalyst for economic development in rural communities that hope to revitalize their downtown Main Streets and Squares,” Stein added.

The **Morris Performing Arts Center** located in South Bend, Indiana received the 2015 Outstanding Historic Theatre Award given by LHAT to historic theatres that have demonstrated excellence in community impact, quality of programs and services, and quality of physical restoration. Former winners include the Fabulous Fox in Atlanta, New York City Center and Playhouse Square in Cleveland to name a few.

The Morris has been named to *Pollstar* Magazine's Top 100 Theatres in the United States based on ticket sales every year since 2000 and has received the *Facilities* Magazine Prime Site Award every year since 2006.

“Since 2000 over \$25 million in renovations and restoration have occurred at the Morris,” said Stein, “and that level of commitment to the preservation of a historic landmark is extraordinary.” Morris Executive Director, and the driving force behind the theatre's success, Dennis Andres remarked while receiving the award, “Over \$8 million for those renovations was raised through private donations from the citizens of South Bend.”

Former Vice President for the Nederlander Organization in New York City and current Principal at Theater Doctors Inc., **James Boese**, received the 2015 Outstanding Individual Contribution Award. Boese, a Past President of LHAT, gave a moving acceptance speech commenting, “Some of the best moments of my life have been spent with people in this room.” Attendees were treated to a brief story of how Boese raised the prospect of tearing down the Nederlander Theatre in NYC. “It was an exercise to contemplate the theatre's demise in order to make us look again, and again, and again at what was there,” recounted Boese. The theatre was eventually renovated and now is “a jewel in the crown of the Nederlander properties.” During his tenure with the Nederlander Organization, Boese oversaw the renovation of several of the Nederlander historic theatres in NYC and consulted on renovations for the Nederlander properties in Los Angeles and Chicago.

The awards were presented at the League's 39th Annual Conference, which took place in Nashville, July 19-22, with more than 280 people attending, including representatives from nearly 150 historic theatres throughout the country and 70 service provider and supplier firms, as well as invited guests.

Nashville's Belcourt Theatre served as the official host.

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 organization, the League's mission is to champion the preservation, restoration and operation of historic theatres.

Information is at www.lhat.org or contact Ken Stein, President and CEO, kstein@lhat.org.

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