NEW LONDON’S GARDE ARTS CENTER HONORED AT LEAGUE OF HISTORIC AMERICAN THEATRES 2022 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Modesto State Theatre Board Member Randy Siefkin also honored for his extraordinary contributions to the field.

Cleveland, OH (July 14, 2022) – The League of Historic American Theatres (LHAT), the nation’s leading historic theatre advocate, recognized outstanding achievement within the industry when it announced that New London, Connecticut’s Garde Arts Center is the 2022 Outstanding Historic Theatre in America. Additionally, Randy Siefkin, with the State Theatre of Modesto, California, was given the 2022 Outstanding Individual Contribution Award.

The LHAT National Conference, presented in different cities each year, is the largest gathering of historic theatre professionals in the nation. The conference took place in Cleveland’s Playhouse Square Arts District, home to five historic theatres and the biggest performing arts center in the U.S. outside of New York City. This year’s conference focused not only on the preservation, restoration and operation of historic theatres, but also the role arts organizations play in the ongoing conversations around diversity, equity and inclusion, which the conference highlighted with presentations from Cleveland Public Theatre as well as Karamu House, recognized as the oldest, producing African American theatre in the nation.

LHAT OUTSTANDING HISTORIC THEATRE AWARD

The Garde Arts Center took home the 2022 Outstanding Historic Theatre Award during the conference which was attended by over 300 historic theatre operators and service providers from across North America and the United Kingdom. In addition to receiving the award, representatives from The Garde presented Those People, an education session highlighting how the historic theatre and youth arts activists transformed the community of New London.

“The 1926 Garde Arts Center stood out among an impressive list of nominations to claim the award this year,” said Ken Stein, LHAT President and CEO, as he presented the
award to Garde Arts Center’s Executive Director, **Steve Sigel**. “While there were many reasons the Garde was worthy of the award, our judges were particularly impressed with how connected the theatre was to almost every aspect of its community,” Stein continued. Hosting 210 days of performances, film, civic events, meetings, and rehearsals, The Garde Arts Center serves as an anchor of the city, with a diverse presenting program of Broadway musicals, dance, opera, symphony orchestra, contemporary music, variety acts, school time performances and film.

The Outstanding Historic Theatre Award is given each year by LHAT to a historic theatre that has demonstrated excellence in community impact, quality of programs and services, and quality of physical restoration. “It was apparent to the League that the Garde’s impact was greater than some of the much larger organizations that were also nominated. New London is very lucky to still have its treasured historic theatre,” Stein added.

The nominating committee consisted of former LHAT Board Presidents and leaders in the industry. Nominations were accepted from across the nation, representing some of America’s finest performing arts venues and film houses. Past winners include New York’s City Center, The Fox Theatre in Atlanta, The Michigan Theater in Ann Arbor, and Cleveland’s Playhouse Square. The award has been given annually since 2003.

**LHAT OUTSTANDING INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTION AWARD**

The Outstanding Individual Contribution Award was given to Randy Siefkin, a long-time volunteer and board member at the State Theatre in Modesto, California. Given annually, this award recognizes an individual who demonstrates vision, dedication, selflessness and excellence through his, her or their contribution to historic theatres and their communities. Siefkin is credited with being a major champion for the restoration and continued success of the State Theatre.

When asked about the nomination, **Molly Fortune**, LHAT’s Board Chair, said, “It’s clear that the State Theatre has greatly benefitted from Randy’s involvement. There were numerous worthy nominees, but Randy hit all the criteria and then some.”

In addition to his financial support and his service as a volunteer board member, Siefkin started the theatre’s Cinema Club and the Modesto Film Society. Siefkin was nominated by the State Theatre’s General Manager, **Gabriela Guerrini**.

**ABOUT THE LEAGUE OF HISTORIC AMERICAN THEATRES**

The League's annual conference is the largest annual gathering of historic theatre professionals, community leaders, and service providers and suppliers, attracting participants from across the U.S., as well as Canada and the United Kingdom, for idea sharing and network building. Professionals, volunteers, and devotees join together for four days of networking and peer information exchange, tools & techniques sessions, and tours of local historic theatres, plus events, banquets and receptions.

By defining our field, creating a shared vocabulary, and identifying best practices, the educational components of the League's annual conference strengthen efforts to sustain
historic theatres of various sizes, operating structures, and programming philosophies. During theatre tours, docents emphasize how each venue has dealt with the specific challenges of sustaining their operations to serve their communities, now and in the future. The conference takes place in different locations across North America each year.

For additional information, contact Ken Stein, LHAT President and CEO, at kstein@lhat.org

You can find more information online on the award and LHAT at www.lhat.org.

Supportive, higher-resolution photography available upon request.

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Steve Sigel, Executive Director, Garde Arts Center, New London, CT
Photo credit: Don Telford, League of Historic American Theatres

Randy Siefkin, State Theatre, Modesto, CA
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