

# GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DOWNLOAD EVENT IMAGES [HERE](#)

**“BACKSTAGE AT THE GEFFEN” RAISES \$1 MILLION TO BENEFIT ARTS AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND NEW PLAY DEVELOPMENT**

**SHERRY LANSING AND RITA MORENO WERE HONORED AT THE GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE ANNUAL FUNDRAISER**

**\$25 MILLION ENDOWMENT CAMPAIGN ANNOUNCED AS PART OF THE THEATER’S 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

**SURPRISE CELEBRITY GUEST APPEARANCES INCLUDED GEORGE CHAKIRIS, GINNIFER GOODWIN, HELDER GUIMARÃES AND KUMAIL NANJIANI**

LOS ANGELES (June 6, 2022) – Geffen Playhouse celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and raised \$1 million for the theater’s education, community engagement and artistic initiatives at its signature *Backstage at the Geffen* annual fundraiser held June 4, it was announced today. **UCLA Chancellor Gene Block** presented the Distinction in Service Award to pioneering studio executive and philanthropist **Sherry Lansing**, and **Lily Tomlin** presented the Artistic Impact Award to EGOT award-winning actress **Rita Moreno**.

Geffen Playhouse Executive Director Gil Cates Jr. and Artistic Director Matt Shakman also announced the establishment of the newly created Fund for the Future, the Geffen’s \$25 million endowment initiative. To date, \$12.5 million has been raised in private funding and the campaign is now entering its public phase. The Fund for the Future unveiling included a special video presentation commemorating the Geffen Playhouse 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, produced by Barbara Schroeder and narrated by Geffen alum Bryan Cranston, who recently headlined the theater’s production of *Power of Sail*.

Fund for the Future will make certain Geffen Playhouse can continue to produce provocative classic and world premiere productions, share vital education and community engagement programs, and invest in the next generation of audiences, playwrights, actors and theatrical professionals.

The evening of unscripted, unannounced storytellers and performers was hosted for a second consecutive year by comedian, actor, writer and producer **Tone Bell** and featured personal behind-the-scenes anecdotes from a lineup of surprise celebrity guests including **George Chakiris**, **Ginnifer Goodwin**, **Helder Guimarães**, who also performed a once-in-a-lifetime, exclusive illusion for the *Backstage at the Geffen* audience, and **Kumail Nanjiani**.

The evening opened with a bespoke tap dance created and performed exclusively for *Backstage at the Geffen* by three-time Emmy nominated choreographer **Christopher A. Scott**. The lineup of surprise performances also included a rousing musical theater medley performed with piano accompaniment by **John Glaudini**.

*Backstage at the Geffen* recognizes the accomplishments of leaders in the artistic community, supports the theater's mission to produce original, quality work and raises funds for its education and community engagement programs, which bring live theater to more than 15,000 youth, seniors and veterans in communities across Los Angeles.

### **Sherry Lansing – Distinction in Service Award**

During almost 30 years in the motion picture business, Sherry Lansing was involved in the production, marketing, and distribution of more than 200 films – including Academy Award winners *Forrest Gump*, *Braveheart*, and *Titanic*. Throughout her film career, Lansing earned a reputation as a trailblazer, a visionary leader, and a creative filmmaker. In 1980, she became the first woman to head a major film studio when she was appointed President of 20th Century Fox. Later, as an independent producer, Lansing was responsible for such successful films as *Fatal Attraction*, *The Accused*, *School Ties*, *Indecent Proposal*, and *Black Rain*. Returning to the executive ranks in 1992, she was named Chairman and CEO of Paramount Pictures and began an unprecedented tenure that lasted more than 12 years (1992 - 2005).

The Sherry Lansing Foundation (SLF), a nonprofit organization dedicated to cancer research, health, public education, and encore career opportunities, was formed in 2005. Among the SLF's initiatives is the EnCorps STEM Teachers Program, founded by Lansing to transition corporate professionals and military veterans into top quality California public school math and science teachers. Lansing is also a co-founder of the Stand Up To Cancer initiative, which funds collaborative, multi-institutional cancer research "Dream Teams."

In addition, she serves on the boards of the Broad Museum, the Carter Center, the Entertainment Industry Foundation, the W.M. Keck Foundation, the Lasker Foundation, the Pacific Council on International Policy, and the Scripps Research Institute – as well as the Advisory Board of the Y&S Nazarian Center for Israel Studies. She is also a trustee of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Los Angeles, where she co-founded the Scholarship Fund. Lansing served on the University of California Board of Regents from 1999 – 2022.

She graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Science Degree from Northwestern University in 1966.

### **Rita Moreno – Artistic Impact Award**

Rita Moreno has won all four of the most prestigious awards in show business: an Oscar, a Tony, two Emmys, and a Grammy. Her countless credits span more than seven decades, beginning with her Broadway debut at age 13. Moreno has starred on Broadway and London's West End, appeared in more than 40 feature films, and countless television shows, and has performed in numerous regional theaters including her one woman show, *Life Without Makeup* at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre. She continues to headline as a guest artist with symphony orchestras as well as performs lectures and speaking engagements around the country.

Most recently, Moreno co-stars and is an Executive Producer of the Steven Spielberg remake of *West Side Story*, which released worldwide this past December. She also stars in the upcoming feature film, *The Prank*, due to be released in 2022. Her documentary "*Rita Moreno: Just a Girl Who Decided to Go*

*For It*”, for American Masters Pictures had its world debut at Sundance Film Festival last year. The film then had its TV debut on PBS under the American Masters umbrella and is now available to stream on Netflix.

Prior to that, Moreno co-starred in the critically acclaimed Latinx reimagining of Norman Lear’s classic sitcom, *One Day at a Time*.

Recipient of the Peabody Career Achievement Award and the Kennedy Center Honor for her lifetime contributions to American culture, she was also honored by her peers as the 50th recipient of the Screen Actors Guild Life Achievement Award. She recently served as Grand Marshal of the Rose Parade and the National Puerto Rican Day Parade.

Moreno’s first ever all-Spanish language album, *Una Vez Más*, was produced by her good friend, Emilio Estefan and she is a *New York Times* bestselling author with her first book, *Rita Moreno: A Memoir* published by Celebra Books.

Moreno has received the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President George W. Bush and the National Medal of Arts by President Barack Obama.

UCLA Health served as Title Sponsor for *Backstage at the Geffen*, marking its second sponsorship for the theater’s annual fundraiser.

Presenting sponsors included City National Bank and The Adi and Jerry Greenberg Foundation. Loretta Everett Kaufman and Victor Kaufman, and Linda Bernstein Rubin and Tony Rubin served as Gold Sponsors.

Event Co-Chairs included Victoria Alonso, Merle Dandridge, Adi Greenberg, Loretta Everett Kaufman and Linda Bernstein Rubin.

Serving as Honorary Co-Chairs were Kate Capshaw and Steven Spielberg\*, Mellody Hobson and George Lucas, Cindy and Alan Horn, Gloria Calderón Kellet and David Kellet, Lyn and Norman Lear, Fay and Frank Mancuso\*, Bruce\* and Madeline Ramer, Jazmyn Simon and Dulé Hill, and Rita Wilson and Tom Hanks.  
\*Founding Trustees.

*Backstage at the Geffen* was produced by Gil Cates, Jr. and Jeni Pearsons.

The pre-show reception and dinner featured spirits sponsored by House of Suntory.

A silent auction was held and included unique one-of-a-kind items and experiences, as well as hotel packages provided by *Backstage at the Geffen* supporters Four Seasons Resort Maui, Fairmont Scottsdale Princess and Carillon Miami Wellness Resort.

### **ABOUT GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE**

Geffen Playhouse has been a hub of the Los Angeles theater scene since opening its doors in 1995. Noted for its intimacy and celebrated for its world-renowned mix of classic and contemporary plays, provocative new works and second productions, the not-for-profit organization continues to present a body of work that has garnered national recognition. Named in honor of entertainment mogul and philanthropist David Geffen, who made the initial donation to the theater, the company was founded by Gilbert Cates and is currently helmed by Executive Director Gil Cates, Jr., Artistic Director Matt Shakman

and Board Chair Adi Greenberg. Proudly associated with UCLA, the Geffen maintains extensive education and community engagement programs, designed to involve young people and the community at large in the arts. [www.geffenplayhouse.org](http://www.geffenplayhouse.org)

### **ABOUT UCLA HEALTH**

UCLA Health is among the world's most comprehensive academic health systems, with a mission to provide state-of-the-art patient care, train top medical professionals and support pioneering research and discovery. It includes four hospitals on two campuses — [Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center](#), [UCLA Mattel Children's Hospital](#) and the [UCLA Stewart and Lynda Resnick Neuropsychiatric Hospital](#) in the Westwood area of Los Angeles, and [UCLA Santa Monica Medical Center](#) – and more than 250 community clinics throughout Southern California. UCLA Health also includes the [David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA](#). UCLA Health hospitals ranked #1 in Los Angeles, #1 in California and #3 in the nation in the 2021-22 Best Hospitals assessment by *U.S. News & World Report*.

### **ABOUT CITY NATIONAL BANK**

With \$90.9 billion in assets, City National Bank provides banking, investment and trust services through 74 branches, including 22 full-service regional centers, in Southern California, the San Francisco Bay Area, Nevada, New York City, Nashville, Atlanta, Washington, D.C. and Miami\*. In addition, the company and its investment affiliates manage or administer \$80.6 billion in client investment assets. City National is a subsidiary of Royal Bank of Canada (RBC), one of the world's leading diversified financial services companies. RBC serves more than 17 million personal, business, public sector and institutional clients through offices in Canada, the United States and 27 other countries. For more information about City National, visit the company's website at [cnb.com](http://cnb.com). *\*City National Bank does business in Miami and the state of Florida as CN Bank.*

### **ABOUT ADI AND JERRY GREENBERG**

Adi Greenberg joined the Geffen Playhouse Board of Directors in 2009 and has served as Vice Chair since 2017. She became a theater actress at the age of six, appearing in numerous productions regionally and in New York. After completing her B.A. in theater at Barnard College, Columbia University, she moved to Los Angeles where she pursued a successful career in television and film. In addition to the Board of the Geffen Playhouse, Ms. Greenberg serves on the Board of No Limits for Deaf Children and Families, a nonprofit that teaches underserved deaf children and their families the skills to succeed in school and in life through its after-school educational centers and distinguished theater arts program, promoting advocacy and awareness worldwide. A mother of three, Ms. Greenberg currently resides in Santa Monica, CA with her husband and children.

### **ABOUT LORETTA EVERETT KAUFMAN AND VICTOR KAUFMAN**

Loretta Everett Kaufman joined the Geffen Playhouse Board of Directors in October 2012. Born in New York, she has Masters' degrees in both Journalism and Liberal Studies from NYU. She has written several books including: "Going Back to Work, A Survival Guide for Comeback Moms" and "And What Do You Do? When Women Choose to Stay Home." She is a former Trustee for several organizations including Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, Americans for the Arts, Autry Museum of the American West, Environmental Media Association, American Museum of the Moving Image and the George Gustav Heye Center in New York. She is married to Victor A. Kaufman, who is Vice Chairman of IAC and is a director of the Company. Mr. Kaufman was the founding Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Tri-Star Pictures, Inc. as well President and Chief Executive Officer of Tri-Star's successor company Columbia Pictures Entertainment, Inc. In 2020, he was awarded Ph.D. from UCLA in Social Psychology.

### **ABOUT LINDA BERNSTEIN RUBIN AND TONY RUBIN**

*American* (2018). She is currently represented on Broadway with *HADESTOWN*, *COMPANY* and *The Lehman Trilogy*. Previously on Broadway *Network*, starring Bryan Cranston. Linda is a producer on the Olivier award winning production of *Get Up, Stand Up! The Bob Marley Show* at the Lyric Theatre on London's West End. An Executive Board Member of The Geffen Playhouse, Linda was a Producing Partner on *Ruth Draper's Monologues*, performed and directed by Annette Bening. She produced the recently completed independent feature *88* (working title *The Blueprint*) starring Brandon Victor Dixon premiering at the Tribeca Film Festival in June 2022. Linda is a Chairman of the Board of Directors of VIP and a board member of H.E.A.R.T, a support group of Violence Intervention Program-USC, the first Family Advocacy Center in the U.S. which protects and treats all victims of violence. Linda is a founding member of The Everychild Foundation and has been a longtime member of the Board of Overseers of the LA Phil. She is also on the Board of Councillors of USC's School of Drama. Linda is a graduate of NYU Gallatin and resides in Los Angeles with her husband Tony. They have two children, Jacob & Gena.

###

### **MEDIA CONTACT**

Zenon Dmytryk

Geffen Playhouse

[zenond@geffenplayhouse.org](mailto:zenond@geffenplayhouse.org)