

ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

Molly Smith Artistic Director Edgar Dobie Executive Producer Zelda Fichandler Founding Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ARENA STAGE AND THE FICHANDLER FAMILY HOST A CELEBRATION OF LIFE FOR ZELDA FICHANDLER AT THE MEAD CENTER FOR AMERICAN THEATER

Open reading of her words on Sunday, October 23 from 2:00-7:00 p.m.
Public Memorial Service on Monday, October 24 at 2:00 p.m.

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage's Co-Founder and Founding Artistic Director Zelda Fichandler passed away July 29, 2016, at the age of 91. She was a trailblazer who transformed American theater through her vision, artistry and mentorship. Arena Stage Artistic Director Molly Smith and Executive Director Edgar Dobie, along with Zelda's family including sons Mark and Hal Fichandler, will host two public celebrations of Zelda's life on October 23 and 24, 2016 at Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater (1101 Sixth St., SW).

The Words of a Visionary

Sunday, October 23

2:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.

The Molly Smith Study

Zelda had a gift with words—she inspired thousands with her ideas. As a director, she knew how to help guide a working playwright and bring the text to life for her actors and audiences. As a pioneering theater leader, the speeches she gave and letters she wrote literally shaped the landscape of what would become the regional theater movement. She empowered others to lead, think, act, dream and ultimately create communities of high-quality theater outside of New York City. Theater is for everyone, and her words always echoed that. During this time, the public is invited to read from, listen to and reflect on some of Zelda's most memorable speeches during her career.

Smith and Dobie will be joined by artistic leaders from the arts community to take part in the event, including former Studio Theatre Artistic Director and Founder **Joy Zinoman**, Artistic Directors **Michael Kahn** (Shakespeare Theatre Company), **Howard Shalwitz** (Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company), **Eric Schaeffer** (Signature Theatre) and **Paul Tetrault** (Ford's Theatre), as well as **Peter Marks**, chief theater critic of *The Washington Post*, among others.

Public Memorial Service

Monday, October 24

2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.

Fichandler Stage

A celebration of Zelda Fichandler's legacy, life and accomplished career featuring special performances and remarks from a number of her esteemed colleagues, students, family and friends. The service will be followed by a reception in the Grand Lobby. For those not able to attend, HowlRound will be livestreaming the event at <http://howlround.com/tv>.

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Page 2—Details for Zelda Fichandler memorial events announced

Zelda dedicated her early career to the establishment of America's resident theater movement. When she co-founded Arena Stage in 1950, there were few non-commercial theaters in the United States; now there are more than 1,500. Zelda and Tom Fichandler worked patiently to build the fledgling theater into a diverse, multifaceted, internationally renowned institution. When Zelda retired after 40 years in 1990, she had achieved the longest tenure of any non-commercial producer in the annals of the American theater. She continued to serve as Chair and Artistic Director of NYU Tisch School of the Arts' acclaimed Graduate Acting Program, from 1983-2008, and served as Artistic Director of The Acting Company from 1990-1993. She received the George Abbott Award, The Acting Company's John Houseman Award, the Margo Jones Award and the National Medal of Arts, and in 1999 she became the first artistic leader outside of New York to be inducted into the Theatre Hall of Fame. In 2009, the Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation created The Zelda Fichandler Award to recognize directors and choreographers who have made significant contributions to the field.

To read more about Zelda's career, groundbreaking milestones, awards and honors, visit arenastage.org/zelda.

The events are free and open to the public, but reservations are requested through e-mail to zelda@arenastage.org or by calling the Sales Office at 202-600-4013.

Zelda is survived by her sons Mark and Hal, as well as her sister Joyce Simons, and two grandchildren, Matthew and Emily.

In lieu of flowers or gifts, donations may be made to Arena Stage's Allen Lee Hughes Fellowship Program or the Tom Fichandler Award. Donations may be sent to Arena Stage's Development Office by mail at 1101 Sixth Street, SW, Washington, DC 20024 or by calling 202-600-4177.

For those who would like to share memories and/or images of Zelda, please e-mail them to zelda@arenastage.org.

Arena Stage has also dedicated the 2016/17 Lillian Hellman Festival to the memory of Zelda Fichandler.

Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater, under the leadership of Artistic Director Molly Smith and Executive Director Edgar Dobie, is a national center dedicated to American voices and artists. Arena Stage produces plays of all that is passionate, profound, deep and dangerous in the American spirit, and presents diverse and ground-breaking work from some of the best artists around the country. Arena Stage is committed to commissioning and developing new plays. Arena Stage impacts the lives of over 10,000 students annually through its work in community engagement. Now in its seventh decade, Arena Stage serves a diverse annual audience of more than 300,000. arenastage.org

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