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Contact: Dani Barlow

Tel: 646-524-2226

dbarlow@sdcfoundation.org

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**EMILY MANN TO BE PRESENTED WITH
STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS FOUNDATION (SDCF)
GORDON DAVIDSON AWARD**

**FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AND DISTINGUISHED SERVICE IN THE
NATIONAL NOT-FOR-PROFIT**

(New York, October 21, 2021) Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation (SDCF), the not-for-profit foundation of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC), has named director and playwright **Emily Mann**, the former artistic director of the McCarter Theatre, as the recipient of its annual Gordon Davidson Award. Named in honor of the founding artistic director of Los Angeles's Center Theatre Group and one of the visionary leaders of the resident theatre movement, the Gordon Davidson Award recognizes a director or choreographer for lifetime achievement and distinguished service in the national not-for-profit theatre. The award will be presented to Mann at a virtual ceremony in winter 2021.

The selection committee met in September and was chaired by Associate Artistic Director of Center Theatre Group in Los Angeles **Neel Keller**. "Emily Mann is a perfect fit for the Davidson Award," Keller stated. "She is an inspiration and shining light in our field. Her work as a director, playwright, artistic director, and mentor over the last four decades has changed thousands of lives. She has created wonderful work and shone a light on so many, many emerging talents. Through her 30-year stewardship of the McCarter Theatre Center, she demonstrated how vital a theatre can be to the field, to the social discourse of the country, and to its specific hometown. In everything she has done she has furthered the principles held so passionately by Gordon Davidson. The committee is very happy to be able to shine some light back on Emily and present her with the Davidson Award in recognition and heartfelt thanks for her lifetime contribution to American theatre."

"It is one of the great honors of my life in the theatre to be awarded a lifetime achievement award in Gordon Davidson's name," said Mann. "Gordon is one of my heroes in the American theatre, a rare leader who stayed true to his vision, a vision we shared. We both believed that theatre could make a difference in the national conversation. We were drawn to plays of substance

concerning political and social issues that mattered most to our time. We were both drawn to direct and produce new work (though I also love the classic repertoire) and we were always drawn to writers who dared to tell the hardest truths. Gordon supported my work as a director, as a playwright, and as an artistic director, and it was one of the great joys of my life (usually over post-theatre drinks) to argue passionately with him about politics, the theatre, the production we were working on, or the human condition at large. We shared a lot of laughter and a lot of tears over many decades. I extend my deepest gratitude to the Davidson family, SDCF, and the committee for thinking of me for this award. I will cherish it always.”

Keller was joined on the selection committee by **Sheldon Epps**, SDCF Trustee and Artistic Director Emeritus of Pasadena Playhouse; **Tom Moore**, who was mentored by Davidson and directed shows at the Mark Taper Forum and Ahmanson Theatre; **Laura Penn**, Executive Director of SDC; **Lisa Peterson**, Resident Director at the Mark Taper Forum from 1995 to 2005; and **Warner Shook**, who directed Davidson’s final Taper production.

The Gordon Davidson Award has previously been presented to Oskar Eustis (2018), Lisa Peterson (2019), and Seret Scott (2020).

BIOGRAPHIES

Emily Mann is a multi-award-winning director, playwright, and screenwriter. In her 30 years as Artistic Director and Resident Playwright at McCarter Theatre Center in Princeton, New Jersey, she wrote 15 new plays and adaptations, directed more than 50 productions, produced 180 plays and musicals, supported and directed the work of emerging and legendary playwrights, and received the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre. She has directed world premieres by Ntozake Shange, Edward Albee, Christopher Durang, Ken Ludwig, Nilo Cruz, Danaï Gurira among others, and is known for her productions of Williams, Chekhov, Shakespeare and Ibsen. On Broadway she directed *Execution of Justice*, *Having Our Say*, *Anna in the Tropics*, and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Her plays include: *Having Our Say*, adapted from the book by Sarah L. Delany and A. Elizabeth Delany with Amy Hill Hearth; *Execution of Justice*; *Still Life*; *Annula, An Autobiography*; *Greensboro (A Requiem)*; *Meshugah*; *Mrs. Packard*, and *Hoodwinked (a Primer on Radical Islamism)*. Adaptations: *Baby Doll*, *Scenes from a Marriage*, *Uncle Vanya*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *A Seagull in the Hamptons*, *The House of Bernarda Alba*, and *Antigone*. Currently in development for Broadway: her adaptation of *The Pianist* and a new musical adapted from the Kent Haruf novel *Our Souls at Night*, with composer Lucy Simon, lyricist Susan Birkenhead and director Victoria Clark. Her play, *Gloria: A Life* about the legacy of Gloria Steinem, ran Off-Broadway and aired on PBS’ Great Performances. Awards: Peabody (for her teleplay of *Having Our Say*), Hull Warriner, NAACP, 6 Obies, Guggenheim; Tony, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, WGA nominations; Princeton University Honorary Doctorate of Arts; Helen Merrill Distinguished Playwrights’ Award; Margo Jones Award; TCG Visionary Leadership Award; Lilly Award for Lifetime Achievement. She was recently inducted into the American Theater Hall of Fame.

Gordon Davidson (1933-2016) was the founding artistic director of Los Angeles's Mark Taper Forum, which he led from 1967 to 2005, as well as artistic director of the Ahmanson Theatre from 1989 to 2005. In 2004 Davidson produced the inaugural season at the Kirk Douglas Theatre. Under his leadership, numerous works were developed or made their premieres in Los Angeles, including *Zoot Suit*, *Angels in America*, *The Shadow Box*, *The Trial of the Catonsville Nine*, *In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer*, *Jelly's Last Jam*, and *Children of a Lesser God*. The Taper received the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 1977, and Davidson received the Tony as Best Director of a Play for *Children of a Lesser God* in 1980. He was inducted into the Theatre Hall of Fame in 2000. He began his career as a stage manager and briefly served as managing director for the Theatre Group at UCLA.

Founded in 1965, **Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation (SDCF)** celebrates, develops, and supports professional stage directors and choreographers throughout every phase of their careers. SDCF works to build a theatrical community that reflects the cultural, racial, and gender diversity of our nation by creating opportunities for artists of all backgrounds to bring their full, authentic selves to their work as creative leaders in the theatre. SDCF's goals are to provide opportunities to practice the crafts of directing and choreography; to gather and disseminate craft and career information; to promote the profession to emerging talent; to provide opportunities for exchange of knowledge among directors and choreographers; to increase the awareness of the value of directors' and choreographers' work; and to convene around issues affecting theatre artists. sdcfoundation.org.

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