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TRINITY REP ANNOUNCES LOCAL PELL AWARD HONOREES

TICKETS ON SALE FOR 23rd ANNUAL PELL AWARDS GALA ON JUNE 3, 2019

PROVIDENCE, RI – Trinity Repertory Company announced today that three area residents will be honored at its 2019 Pell Awards Gala on Monday, June 3, 2019 in Providence. Storyteller **Valerie Tutson** will receive the **Rhode Island Pell Award for Excellence in the Arts**. Central Falls High School teacher **Deloris Davis Grant** will receive the **Charles Sullivan Award for Distinguished Service in the Arts**. The **Pell Award for Outstanding Leadership in the Arts** will go to **Rosanne Somerson**, President of the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD). Additional honorees will be announced at a later date.

Trinity Rep's 2019 Pell Awards Gala will be held the evening of Monday, June 3, 2019 at the WaterFire Arts Center in Providence. The annual fundraising event is co-chaired by **Sally Lapidés and Art Solomon and Alison and Larry Eichler**.

The creative black-tie event will begin at 6:00 pm with a VIP cocktail reception. The awards ceremony and seated gourmet dinner will begin at 7:00 pm. Guests will enjoy mixing and mingling with artists, business, political, and social leaders; catering by Russell Morin Fine Catering; and unforgettable moments as the theater honors individuals who are committed to bettering the world through art, education and activism.

Tickets for Trinity Rep's Pell Awards Gala are \$500 (VIP) and \$250. Tables, sponsorships and event program ads are also available. All proceeds benefit Trinity Rep's artistic programs. For more information or to purchase tickets, sponsorships or ads, visit www.trinityrep.com/pell or call (401) 453-9237.

"I am thrilled to be honoring Val, Deloris, and Rosanne at this year's Pell Awards," said **Curt Columbus**, artistic director of Trinity Rep. "Not only are each deserving for their years of work and dedication to the arts and community efforts alone; even more importantly, they exemplify what it means to be a woman in leadership. Their impact is worldwide, but we are so lucky to count them among our neighbors. It is with great pleasure that we honor these three extraordinary women for their voices, visions, and service to Rhode Island."

Trinity Rep's Pell Awards were established in 1997 to honor the legacy of **Senator Claiborne Pell** (D-RI) and recognize artistic excellence in Rhode Island and the New England region as well as on the national level. Between 1961 and 1997, Senator Pell held influential Senate posts in the fields of human resources, education, arms control, health, human rights, foreign relations, the environment, and the arts and humanities. Throughout his life, Senator Pell worked to support the arts and provide new opportunities for artists. He was the principal sponsor of landmark legislation that established the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities in 1965, and chaired the Senate Education and Arts subcommittee. He also took a lead role in eliminating barriers to higher education with his legislation creating the Basic Educational Opportunity Grants, which Congress named "Pell Grants" in 1980.

Past Rhode Island Pell Award for Excellence in the Arts honorees include 2018's winner Morris Nathanson, as well as John Benson, Howard BenTré, Dan Butterworth, Len Cabral, Charlene Carpenzano, John Chan, Bob Colonna, Robert Coover, Umberto "Bert" Crenca, Richard Cumming, Ruth Frisch Dealy, Tony Estrella, Richard Fleischner, Peter Geisser, Malcolm Grear, Michael Harper, Bunny Harvey, Dorothy Jungels & the Everett Dance Theatre, George Kent, Eugene Lee, David Macaulay, Salvatore Mancini, Dave McKenna, Barbara Meek, Denny Moers, Timothy Philbrick, Ricardo Pitts-Wiley, Duke Robillard, Thomas Sgouros, Sr., Consuelo Sherba, Gretchen Dow Simpson, Maria Spacagna, Judith Lynn Stillman, Chris Van Allsburg, Paula Vogel, Keith and Rosmarie Waldrop, William Warner, Rose Weaver, Steven Weinberg, and Toots Zynsky.



Pell Award/Charles Sullivan Award for Distinguished Service in/to the Arts honorees include: 2018's winner Jane S. Nelson, as well as Elizabeth Z. Chace, Mayor Vincent A. Cianci, Jr., Martha Douglas-Osmundson, Sally and Joe Dowling, Adrian Hall, Mary Paula Hunter, P. William Hutchinson, Virginia Lynch, Lowry Marshall, Elaine Foster Perry and Julie Adams Strandberg.

Past Pell Award for Outstanding Leadership in the Arts honorees include: 2018's winner Jeannine Chartier, as well as Joseph A. Chazan M.D., Mihailo "Misha" Djuric, Michael Gennaro, Roger Mandel, Senator Claiborne Pell, J.L. "Lynn" Singleton, and George Wein.



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2019 Charles Sullivan Award for Distinguished Service in the Arts

Deloris Davis Grant

Photo: Courtesy of Deloris Davis Grant

Deloris Davis Grant is dedicated to academic excellence in all forms of communication in the high school classroom. She has worked with underserved children and their families for more than 35 years.

Dr. Grant is an alumna of Central Falls HS and Rhode Island College with a BA in English and Master of Arts in Teaching English. She is also an Honorary Doctor of Education and an experienced AP English and Drama teacher at Central Falls High School (CFHS). In addition, Dr. Grant is the troupe leader of the CFHS International Thespian Society and a member of the English Speaking Union, which sponsors the National Shakespeare Oration Competition, and has written three adaptations of Shakespeare plays to be performed in one hour.

Dr. Grant's training in speaking and listening, as well as in language arts, spans years of experience. She is also a part of the Rhode Island College/Central Falls (RIC/CF) Innovation Lab, a unique, first-in-the-nation collaboration with the potential for state and national replication, providing a PK-12 and post-

secondary urban education model offering a new paradigm of graduating self-sufficient, highly skilled, ambitious individuals and nurturing an increasingly prosperous and sustainable community through a forward-thinking institution of higher education, dedicated community leaders, including teachers, and the members of the Central Falls community.

Dr. Grant currently serves as a clinical teacher and supervises student teachers from several of the local colleges and universities. She also collaborates on theater projects with many local theaters to develop speaking and listening skills in her classroom; her specialty is creating confident students who are able to adapt their communication skills for the 21st century. Her participation in the arts is emblematic of her personal dedication to the theater arts which has been recognized by the RI Film Commission; she has also received the Young Dreammaker Award for her work with student artists, and is one of the recipients of the 2017 YWCA Women of Achievement Award.

Dr. Grant has traveled to more than 70 countries and enjoys learning about cultures and peoples from around the world and has donated her time and effort to help the children of Cambodia and Myanmar. She has been involved with the theater all of her life, touching the lives of countless students, families, and colleagues.



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2019 Pell Award for Outstanding Leadership in the Arts

Rosanne Somerson

Photo: Courtesy of RISD

A designer, professor and academic leader, President Rosanne Somerson has been advancing art and design since she was a student at Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) in the 1970s. She returned to the College in the 1980s to teach, and in 1995 founded the Furniture Design Department before serving as Provost and chief academic officer. As RISD's 17th president she is committed to expanding inclusion, equity, and access in order to enhance a genuinely rich learning environment that consists of diverse experiences, viewpoints, and talents.

President Somerson also maintains a creative practice, designing and creating furniture for exhibitions and commissions, and frequently speaks and writes about the power of critical thinking and making, underscoring the value of art and design to advancing life in the 21st century.

She earned her BFA in Industrial Design in 1976, focusing on furniture within the ID department two decades before RISD had a freestanding Furniture Design department. In 1978, Somerson established her own studio to focus on designing and making furniture full time. In 1985, she returned to RISD and went on to run the graduate furniture program in Industrial Design for 10 years before helping to conceive of and found the Furniture Design department. In 1995 she assumed the top leadership role in the new department, overseeing both the BFA and MFA programs and helping to establish its solid reputation for educating exciting new innovators in the field.

Somerson served as Furniture Design department head from 1995–2011, with a brief hiatus to step in as interim associate provost from 2005–07. In 2011 she was invited to become interim provost and the following year earned the provost's position after emerging as the top candidate in an international search. RISD's Board of Trustees appointed Somerson RISD's 17th president on February 18, 2015 after conducting a comprehensive international search during which she served as interim president from January 1, 2014 until her permanent appointment.

Somerson's work is featured in numerous books and publications, and has been exhibited throughout the US and internationally, including at the Musée de Arts Decoratifs at the Louvre in Paris. Her furniture is represented in private, corporate and museum collections, most notably at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the Fuller Craft Museum, the Huntsville [AL] Museum of Art, the RISD Museum, the Smith College Museum of Art, Yale University Art Gallery and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



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2019 Pell Award for Outstanding Leadership in the Arts

Valerie Tutson

Photo: Courtesy of Valerie Tutson

Valerie Tutson graduated from Brown University with a self-designed major, *Storytelling as a Communication's Art*, and a Masters in Theatre Arts. She received an Honorary Doctorate in Fine Arts from Rhode Island College. Since 1991 she has traveled the country and world teaching and sharing stories and songs. Her repertoire includes folktales, and personal and historical stories with an emphasis on black traditions. She has also developed a reputation for her style of re-telling age-old Bible stories and works with churches and interdenominational conferences across the country.

In addition to storytelling Valerie taught drama at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP) for over 10 years and hosted the award-winning *Cultural Tapestry* for COX 3 for 13 years, providing a forum for members of the cultural communities in Rhode Island to share their stories and traditions. She served on the staff of the International Theatre Festival of Tolerance in Terezin (The Czech



Republic) for 12 years, working with young people to make intercultural connections as they learned about and creatively interpreted the history of that World War II Jewish Ghetto.

She is a founding member and Executive Director of RIBS (Rhode Island Black Storytellers) and the director of FUNDA FEST: A Celebration of Black Storytelling. She served on the Board of Directors for the National Association of Black Storytellers (NABS) for eight years, twice serving as Co-Festival Director, including bringing the NABS Festival and Conference to Rhode Island.

Valerie has been featured at the NABS Storytelling Festival and Conference and at the National Storytelling Festival in Jonesboro, TN as well as regional festivals and conferences nationwide. She has performed and taught internationally in South Africa, Ghana, Senegal, Germany, The Czech Republic, Canada, Columbia, and Peru. In 2009, Valerie was a Rhode Island Foundation Non-Profit Fellow. In 2010 she received a Member Grant from the National Storytelling Network. Valerie has also received the Legacy Award from Big Brothers and Big Sisters of the Ocean State and the Public Humanities Scholar Award from the Rhode Island Council on the Humanities. She served on the Board of DARE, the Johnnycake Storytelling Festival, FirstWorks, and on the Brimstone Award Committee for the National Storytelling Network. Currently she serves on the boards of the Southside Cultural Center of Rhode Island, BioBuilder, and is a 2018/19 Intercultural Leadership Fellow.

ABOUT TRINITY REP

Rhode Island's Tony Award-winning theater, Trinity Rep has created unparalleled professional theater for and with its community since its founding in 1963. Trinity Rep strives to facilitate human connection and has been a driving force behind the creativity that fuels and defines the region for more than 50 years.

Trinity Rep is committed to reinventing the public square and inspiring dialogue by creating emotionally-stimulating live productions that range from classical to contemporary and innovative education programs for all ages and abilities. Its annual production of *A Christmas Carol* has brought



families together for more than four decades and made memories for over a million audience members. It will return again in 2019 for its 42nd year.

The 2019-20 Season features the world-premiere of *The Prince of Providence* by George Brant, based on the book *The Prince of Providence* by Mike Stanton, *Fade* by Tanya Saracho, August Wilson's *Radio Golf*, *A Tale of Two Cities* by Brian McEleney, based on the novel by Charles Dickens, *Sweat* by Lynn Nottage, and *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* with music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim and book by Hugh Wheeler.

For more information, call the box office at (401) 351-4242 or visit www.TrinityRep.com.

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