



Richard Hopkins
Producing Artistic Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Lydia Baxter
Public Relations Associate
(941) 366-9017 ext. 338
Lbaxter@floridastudiotheatre.org
DATE: March 1, 2022

FLORIDA STUDIO THEATRE UNVEILS PLANS FOR NEW ARTS PLAZA

(Sarasota, FL) — **Florida Studio Theatre** (FST) unveils plans for its largest expansion project in its 49-year history—a new, eleven-story building that will enable FST to meet its growing needs and strengthen the theatre’s role as a vital cultural and artistic resource for the Gulf Coast region. Named after **Patrick and Mary Mulva**, who made the lead gift to the theatre’s project, **The Mulva Arts Plaza** will be adjacent to the theatre’s existing Hegner Theatre Wing. FST will break ground on this project December of 2022.

“At FST, we never do anything capriciously,” said **Richard Hopkins**, FST’s Producing Artistic Director. “We make sure that we *need* to do something before we actually begin to do it. So, we find out what the community needs, what our audience needs, and what the next generation needs. And our response to these needs is the Mulva Arts Plaza.”

A key part of FST’s mission is to make theatre affordable and accessible to as many people as possible. With this objective in mind, FST has grown to become the largest subscription-based theatre in the state of Florida and among the largest in the country. Collectively, FST reaches over 230,000 attendees each year through its diverse programs. With the construction of The Mulva Arts Plaza, FST will be able to reach more people than ever before through the art of live theatre.

“Over the years, FST has grown to become one of the largest and most successful regional theatres in the country,” said Patrick and Mary Mulva. “We are excited to be part of making FST’s plans for the future a reality.”

On Monday, February 28, Florida Studio Theatre held an invite-only event, marking the official unveiling of the designs for the Mulva Arts Plaza, which will include:

- A new Mainstage Theatre to allow for expansion of FST’s Mainstage and Stage III Series
- Two new Cabaret Theatres to accommodate audience demand for FST’s most popular programming
- 55 extended stay studio apartments for FST guest artists
- 30 units of affordable housing (each unit is a two-bedroom, two-bathroom apartment) for year-round, local arts workers in Sarasota
- About 200 secure and convenient parking spaces

The lead anchor gift for the Arts Plaza was made by Patrick and Mary Mulva and the new Mainstage Theatre will be named the **Mulva Mainstage**. FST has received leadership gifts from **Ed & Susan Maier, Dennis & Graci McGillicuddy, Jack & Priscilla Schlegel**, as well as an Anonymous donor. In recognition of their gifts, The Mulva Arts Plaza will include the **Maier Cabaret**, the **McGillicuddy Residences**, and the **Schlegel Cabaret**.

“We love to continue supporting FST as it expands its presence in the community, because it continuously presents great theatre, engages people, creates community, and promotes education and cultural awareness,” said Jack & Priscilla Schlegel. “FST is a vital asset of Sarasota and the surrounding communities, and we want our name to always be connected to this.”

“Since moving to Sarasota, we have been impressed with the many professional performances at FST,” said Ed and Susan Maier. “We are especially fond of the Cabarets, and that is why we are proud to sponsor the Maier Cabaret.”

“There is a notion that Graci, my wife, and I live by in our philanthropy,” said Dennis McGillicuddy, the President of FST’s Board of Trustees. “There are many things that can catch your eye, but very few that capture your heart. *Those* are the ones to pursue and that’s why we’re at FST.”

Major gifts were made by **Les & Carol Brualdi, Joan & Larry Castellani, Wendy & Bob Grady, Robert & Bonny Israeloff, Bill & Patricia Kordis, Jonathan & Michelle Mitchell**, the **Arnold Simonsen Family Charitable Foundation, Carol B. Williams**, and the **Charles O. Wood, III & Miriam M. Wood Foundation**.

Grand gifts were made by **Gaele Barthold, Sydney Goldstein**, and **Ruth Gorton**.

Supporting gifts have been made by **Neil & Teri Comber, Carol Lee Gilbert**, and **Bernard & Gail Katz**.

FST will continue its campaign to raise the rest of the funds needed for the 28.5-million-dollar capital project. To date, just over \$17.2 million has been raised.

For more information about the Mulva Arts Plaza Campaign, visit FloridaStudioTheatre.org. Many naming opportunities are still available. Those interested in contributing to the Arts Plaza should contact **Melody Mora-Shihadeh**, FST’s Director of Individual Giving, at Melody@FloridaStudioTheatre.org or 941.366.9017 ext. 326.

ABOUT FLORIDA STUDIO THEATRE

Florida Studio Theatre (FST) is Sarasota’s contemporary theatre. Founded in 1973, FST has grown to a village of five theatres located in the heart of Downtown, Sarasota. Each theatre is small in size and large in impact—providing intimate and engaging settings for high-quality, professional performances.

Today, FST has established itself as a major force in American Theatre. FST is the largest subscription theatre in the state of Florida and among the largest in the country, serving more than 230,000 live attendees each year across its diverse programs: Mainstage, Cabaret, Stage III, Children's Theatre, The FST School, New Play Development, and FST Improv.

Even with its growth, Florida Studio Theatre remains firmly committed to making the arts accessible and affordable to as many people as possible. Under the leadership of Producing Artistic Director Richard Hopkins, FST develops theatre that speaks to our living, evolving, and dynamically changing world. Hip and historical, entertaining and challenging, we are the theatre where the street meets the elite — where everyone is welcome to engage in the art of theatre.

###