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**FLORIDA STUDIO THEATRE CELEBRATES THE OPENING OF  
THE KRETZMER ARTIST RESIDENCE**

(Sarasota, FL) — On December 4, 2017 Florida Studio Theatre held the official dedication for the opening of the Kretzmer Artist Housing Project located on Cohen Way in the growing Rosemary District. These five new townhomes help to fill the pressing need for quality housing that is safe, accessible, and within close proximity to downtown.

Project supporters, FST artists, Board members, and FST staff all gathered to celebrate the completion of this new artistic home. "This is where it all begins," said Producing Artistic Director, Richard Hopkins. "This is where the artist lives. The Kretzmer Artist Residence is the cornerstone of an artistic community; A community that will inspire collaboration among the many different artists, interns, and apprentices who work diligently and tirelessly to inspire, challenge, and entertain on FST's five stages."

Ernie Kretzmer, in loving memory of Alisa Kretzmer contributed the lead gift to this new artist housing. Along with a matching challenge made by Ed and Susan Maier, additional contributions to see the completed project were given by individual donors as well as the State of Florida (sponsored in part by the Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Council on Arts and Culture and the State of Florida), the Bank of America Charitable Foundation, and the Bank of America Client Foundation, Richardson Foundation Fund, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee.

After breaking ground on the project back in October of 2016, the structure was completed just one year later in November of 2017. "One purpose in building this building is to raise the value of art in our society," said Hopkins. "The best way to raise the value of art is to raise the value of our artist. One way we show that we value our artists is by providing them with an excellent artistic home. It's a place to think. It's a place to imagine the unimaginable. It's a place to dream what no one has dreamed."

FST Board President, Dennis McGillicuddy also adds, "We at FST have never placed buildings and other infrastructure needs ahead of our artistic mission; Just the opposite, as we have consistently made certain that our artistic requirements are what drives our capital spending. Having high quality actor housing that this project represents is another example of that principle as it is crucial to maintaining the quality of our work."

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Along with Florida Studio Theatre's tremendous growth in programming over the last 5 years, comes the growth of the artistic company and staff. FST currently houses over 100 guest artists and interns a year. These new townhomes include 20 bedrooms for visiting artists and young theatre professionals participating in the educational internship program.

According to Hopkins, "The Kretzmer Residence will take us well into the 21st Century. For that, we have Ernie and Alisa Kretzmer to thank. The future has gotten a little bit brighter today because of the lead gift of Ernie and Alisa Kretzmer, the Matching challenge of Ed and Susan Maier, and the support of the FST Family. Thank you all."

### ABOUT FLORIDA STUDIO THEATRE

Known as Sarasota's Contemporary Theatre, Florida Studio Theatre was founded in 1973 by Jon Spelman. Starting out as a small touring company, FST traveled to places such as migrant camps and prisons. The company then acquired the former Woman's Club building, becoming the first permanent venue. Shortly after Producing Artistic Director Richard Hopkins arrived, the building was purchased and renamed The Keating Theatre. In the years that followed, Florida Studio Theatre established itself as a major force in American Theatre, presenting contemporary theatre in its five theatre venues: the Keating Theatre, the Gompertz Theatre, the Parisian style Goldstein Cabaret and John C. Court Cabaret, and Bowne's Lab Theatre.

Even with its growth, Florida Studio Theatre remains firmly committed to making the arts accessible and affordable to a broad-based audience. FST develops theatre that speaks to our living, evolving, and dynamically changing world. As FST grows and expands, it continues to provide audiences with challenging, contemporary drama and innovative programs.

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