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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GEVA DEDICATES ITS PRODUCTION OF *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD* TO THE MEMORY OF HARPER LEE

Rochester, N.Y., January 19, 2016 – Following the news of Harper Lee’s death, Geva Theatre Center will dedicate its production of *To Kill a Mockingbird* to her memory. The production, directed by Mark Cuddy opens officially on Saturday, February 20 and runs in the Elaine P. Wilson Stage until March 20.

“We’ve seen the huge advance sale for *To Kill a Mockingbird* here on our stage,” said Mark Cuddy. “It’s an indication of the impact that Harper Lee and her novel have made on people. I think that people will be incredibly moved by her passing and more so by coming to see the production.”

An announcement of the dedication will be made prior to the final preview performance on Friday and at the production’s official opening on Saturday evening at 8pm.

Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird* was published in 1960. The plot and characters are loosely based on Lee’s own observations of her family and neighbors, as well as an event that occurred near her hometown when she was 10 years old. Indeed, the character of Jean Louise “Scout” Finch is widely believed to be based on Lee herself. The book was an immediate success, won the Pulitzer Prize, and has become a classic of American literature. In a 1991 survey by the Library of Congress, *To Kill a Mockingbird* came second only to the Bible as the book that made a difference in readers’ lives. A mysterious figure, Lee had not granted an interview since 1964 and *Mockingbird* was her only published novel until July 2015 with the publication of *Go Set a Watchman*. *Go Set a Watchman*, which hit the top of the bestseller lists, was written in 1957 and was actually the first draft of the novel that would become *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

“I think it will be quite moving for audiences to see this production at this time,” said Cuddy. “Harper Lee was such a courageous woman and a lyrical writer.”

The 2015-2016 Wilson Stage Series is sponsored by **ESL Federal Credit Union**. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is produced with support from Lead Co-Producer **The Rochester Division of Oppenheimer Funds, Inc**; Co-Producer **Harter Secrest & Emery, LLP**; Associate Producer **SUNY Brockport** and Media Sponsors **Fox Rochester** and **WDKX. Canandaigua National Bank and Trust** is the Sponsor of the P.L.A.Y. Student Matinees and **Frontier Communications of Rochester** is the sponsor for the March 4 performance of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Attached Photo: Skip Greer as Atticus Finch and Erin Mueller as Scout Finch. Photo by Ken Huth

**For further information, photographs or to arrange interviews, please contact:
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GEVA THEATRE CENTER

Founded in 1972, Geva Theatre Center is a not-for-profit, professional theatre company dedicated to creating and producing professional theatre productions, programs and services of a national standard. As Rochester's leading professional theatre, Geva Theatre Center is the most attended regional theatre in New York State, and one of the 25 most subscribed in the country, serving up to 160,000 patrons annually, including more than 16,000 students.

The 526-seat Elaine P. Wilson Stage is home to a wide variety of performances, from musicals to American and world classics. The 180-seat Ron & Donna Fielding Stage is home to Geva's own series of contemporary drama, comedy and musical theatre; Geva Comedy Improv; Geva's New Play Reading Series and the Hornets' Nest - an innovative play-reading series facilitating community-wide discussion on controversial topics. In addition, the Fielding Stage hosts visiting companies of both local and international renown.

Geva Theatre Center offers a wide variety of educational, outreach and literary programs, nurturing audiences and artists alike. Since 1995, the organization has been under the artistic direction of Mark Cuddy.

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