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**McQUAID JESUIT TAKES A BOW ON GEVA'S WILSON STAGE IN  
"THE STAGE DOOR PROJECT: *PRIVATE LIVES*"**

**Rochester, N.Y., March, 8 2017** – One of the highlights of the Rochester theatre season will be Geva's production of *Private Lives*. To accompany this production, Geva, Rochester's leading professional theatre has invited McQuaid Jesuit to participate in "**The Stage Door Project: *Private Lives*."** Noël Coward's most popular play was written in 1930 and is considered one of the most sophisticated and entertaining comedies ever written.

Geva's mission has always placed its work at the crossroads of artistic excellence and community engagement. One of the most unique education programs the theatre offers for emerging young artists in the Rochester area is the Stage Door Project. This program gives area high schools students the rare opportunity to explore the entire process of theatrical production with a nationally recognized, regional theatre. It offers an unparalleled professional experience fostering a deeper understanding of dramatic literature, the theatre industry and the process of bringing literature to life on the stage.

For this year's Stage Door Project, Geva approached McQuaid Jesuit with the idea of a partnership around Noël Coward's classic comedy. For their production of *Private Lives*, McQuaid Jesuit cast six young actors from the High School and eight young ladies from other area high schools including Our Lady of Mercy, Allendale Columbia, Pittsford Mendon, Pittsford Sutherland, The Harley School and Webster Thomas, as well as a number of McQuaid Jesuit students interested in design, technical theatre and marketing to join a creative team that mirrors Geva's. The director of the McQuaid Jesuit production, Pam Stoffel, is acting as the Assistant Director for Geva's production. The design and production students from McQuaid Jesuit have had several opportunities to meet with and shadow Geva's professional designers and in-house production staff and a student marketing team has worked with Geva's Director of Marketing and Communications Manager. The cast and creative team have had the unique opportunity to sit in on Geva's rehearsals and to work with Geva's acting company of professional actors. In a nutshell, students are following the entire process of putting on a show at Geva Theatre Center.

The Stage Door Project: *Private Lives* culminates in a unique and rare opportunity. After rehearsing the show independently at their school, the team of students will perform their own version of *Private Lives* in the Wilson Stage on the set of Geva's production of *Private Lives* for a special one-night performance on **Monday, April 3 at 7:00pm.**

For Geva Theatre Center and its professionals, it is an opportunity to share the wonder and creativity of students. The theatre acknowledges their roles as theatre stewards by interacting with this younger company and thanks them for the privilege of learning with them and from them.

The Stage Door Project: *Private Lives* is supported in part by the Joseph & Irene Skalny Charitable Trust.

**Tickets for the April 3<sup>rd</sup> performance of *Private Lives* are \$16 and can be purchased online at [gevatheatre.org](http://gevatheatre.org) or through the Geva Box Office: (585) 232-4382.**

**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 522-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 Hornet's 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.

#### THE STAGE DOOR PROJECT

In 2007 Geva collaborated with Brighton High School for a shadowing project of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*. The Brighton High School cast of the show and their director (who served as the assistant director for the Geva production) met with their professional counterparts in the Geva cast of *Our Town* to share their thoughts and examine the creative process while both productions rehearsed. At the conclusion of the project, the high school cast performed their production on the Geva Mainstage set. This joint venture paved the way for the first Stage Door Project, *Almost, Maine* in 2010 which welcomed nine area high schools into every step of our production process resulting in a public performance of *Almost, Maine* on the Geva Mainstage. In 2011, the Stage Door Design Project centered on the Geva production of *Over the Tavern*, where 14 area high school students were selected as scenic, lighting, sound and costume designers each responsible for the exploration and creation of some design element of the *Over the Tavern* script. In 2012, Geva offered a similar experience with *A Raisin in the Sun*. In 2013, Geva selected 16 area high school students to meet as a collective to discuss storytelling through design, observation, interpretation, choice and the function of design with our professional designers from *The 39 Steps*. They discussed concept and text with directors and examined how research affects design with our dramaturgs. They sat in on technical rehearsals and visited Geva's shops to explore the build process. In 2015, Geva partnered with Rush-Henrietta High School for "The Stage Door Project: *Little Shop of Horrors*" and in 2016 with School of the Arts for *To Kill a Mockingbird*. For Geva Theatre Center and its professionals, it is an opportunity to share the wonder and creativity of students. The theatre acknowledges their roles as theatre stewards by interacting with this younger company and thanks them for the privilege of learning with them and from them.