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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## GEVA'S 45<sup>TH</sup> WILSON STAGE SEASON CONCLUDES WITH ***STEEL MAGNOLIAS***

***Final production in the ESL/Rochester Regional Health 2017-2018 Wilson Stage Series.  
Public encouraged to reserve tickets now as several performances are already sold out.***

**Rochester, N.Y., April 13, 2018** – Geva Theatre Center's Wilson Stage Season 2017-2018 concludes with ***Steel Magnolias***, by **Robert Harling** and directed by **Skip Greer**, in the **Elaine P. Wilson Stage** from **May 8 through June 3**.

As with this season's productions of *In the Heights*, *The Agitators* and *Erma Bombeck: At Wit's End*, tickets for *Steel Magnolias* are selling quickly and several performances are already sold out.

Truvy's motto at her Louisiana beauty shop is: "There is no such thing as natural beauty." Through clouds of hairspray and over the buzz of blow dryers, six sassy southern spitfires gather every week to gossip, swap recipes and support each other through thick and thin. But those sisterly bonds are about to be tested when M'Lynn and her daughter Shelby face a life-changing event. Heartwarming and humorous, ***Steel Magnolias*** is a story of love, loss, and enduring friendship.

Playwright **Robert Harling** made his directorial debut with *The Evening Star* for Paramount, which he also wrote for the screen based on Larry McMurdy's novel. *The Evening Star* is the continuation of one of the most beloved and acclaimed movies of our time, *Terms of Endearment*. Before launching a successful stage and screenwriting career, Robert graduated from Tulane University School of Law, but instead of taking the bar exam, he opted to become an actor in New York. After years of productive work as an actor in voiceovers and commercials, Harling was inspired to write the highly acclaimed stage play *Steel Magnolias*. Immediately bridging a career from stage to screen, Harling adapted his original play into the popular film of the same title. Over the years, Mr. Harling has become a much sought-after screenwriter: other credits include *Soapdish*, which was based on Harling's acting experience, and *First Wives Club* for Paramount.

Harling based *Steel Magnolias* on events from his personal life following the 1985 death of his sister from diabetic complications. The play premiered Off-Broadway at the WPA Theatre in 1987. It transferred to the Lucille Lortel Theatre later that year where it ran for 1,126 performances. The first national tour launched in 1989, and the play made its Broadway debut in 2005. *Steel Magnolias* continues to thrive in theatrical productions throughout the world and has been translated into 17 different languages. A star-studded film in 1989 received an Academy Award nomination, two Golden Globe nominations, a BAFTA Award Nomination and the People's Choice Award for Favorite Dramatic Motion Picture.

*Steel Magnolias* features **Becca Ballenger** (Off-Broadway productions of *P\*ssy Sludge*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Absolution*) as Annelle Dupuy-Desoto; **Anna Crivelli** (*Appropriate* at Westport Country Playhouse, and *Dental Society Midwinter Meeting* and *Once Five Years Pass* at Williamstown Theatre Festival) as Shelby Eatenton-Latcherie; **Brigitt Markusfeld** (Geva productions of *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *You Can't Take It With You* and *Over the Tavern*) as Truvy Jones; **Eve Plumb** (Off-Broadway productions of *Love, Loss and What I Wore*; and *Miss Abigail's Guide to Dating, Mating & Marriage*; TV's "The Brady Bunch," "Blue Bloods," "Law & Order," and "Army Wives") as Clairee Belcher; **Sandra Shipley** (Broadway productions of *Present Laughter*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Blithe Spirit*, *Equus* and *Pygmalion*) as Ouiser Boudreaux; and **Elizabeth Ward Land** (Broadway productions of *Amazing Grace*, *Scandalous*, *Memphis*, *Passion*, and *City of Angels*) as M'Lynn Eatenton.

*Steel Magnolias* is directed by **Skip Greer**. The creative team includes **Robert Koharchik** (scenic design), **Pamela Scofield** (costume design), **Derek Madonia** (lighting design), **Dan Roach** (sound design), **Matthew Reeves Oliver** (wig design), **Gloria Biegler** (dialect coach) and **Jean Gordon Ryon** (Dramaturg).

The 2017-2018 Wilson Stage Series is sponsored by **ESL Federal Credit Union** and **Rochester Regional Health**. The Honorary Wilson Stage Series Sponsor is **Dr. Dawn Lipson**. *Steel Magnolias* is produced with support from Co-Producers **Rockcastle Florist** and **Madeline's Catering**; Associate Producer **St John's Rochester**; and Media Sponsor **WARM 101.3**.

***Steel Magnolias* begins previews on May 8, opens May 12 and runs through June 3.**

**For further information, photographs or to arrange interviews, please contact:  
Dawn Kellogg, Communications Manager, (585) 420-2059.**

## **PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE**

**Previews:** Tuesday, May 8 @ 7:30pm  
Wednesday, May 9 @ 7:30pm

Thursday, May 10 @ 7:30pm  
Friday, May 11 @ 8pm **SOLD OUT**  
Saturday, May 12 @ 2pm (Open Captioned Performance) **SOLD OUT**

**Opening: Saturday, May 12 @ 8pm (Opening Night) SOLD OUT**

**Performances:** Sunday, May 13 @ 2pm **SOLD OUT** and 7pm  
Tuesday, May 15 @ 6pm  
Wednesday, May 16 @ 7:30pm  
Thursday, May 17 @ 7:30pm  
Friday, May 18 @ 8pm  
Saturday, May 19 @ 4pm and 8:30pm  
Sunday, May 20 @ 2pm (Sunday Salon) **SOLD OUT** and 7pm  
Tuesday, May 22 @ 7:30pm  
Wednesday, May 23 @ 7:30pm  
Thursday, May 24 @ 7:30pm  
Friday, May 25 @ 8pm  
Saturday, May 26 @ 4pm and 8:30pm  
Sunday, May 27 @ 2pm (Audio Description Performance) and 7 pm  
Tuesday, May 29 @ 7:30pm  
Wednesday, May 30 @ 2pm and 7:30pm (Open-captioned performances)  
Thursday, May 31 @ 7:30 pm (ASL Interpreted Performance)  
Friday, June 1 @ 8pm  
Saturday, June 2 @ 4pm and 8:30pm  
Sunday, June 3 @ 2pm (Sunday Salon)

**Ticket Prices: Tickets start at \$25.**

**Reservations: (585) 232-Geva (4382), Website: [www.gevatheatre.org](http://www.gevatheatre.org)**

**Location: Geva Theatre Center, 75 Woodbury Blvd, Rochester, NY 14607**

\* Partial support for open captioning provided by Theatre Development Fund.

#### **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 516-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.

**\*ENDS\***