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A fundraiser with a legal twist

Local lawyers star in a staged reading of 12 Angry Men as a fundraiser for Saint John Theatre Company

On April 21st, twelve local lawyers and one judge will get a taste of real courtroom drama when they perform on stage at Imperial Theatre in a staged reading of Reginald Rose's *Twelve Angry Men* as a fundraising event for Saint John Theatre Company.

"It's going to be a lot of fun," says Stephen Tobias, Artistic Director for Saint John Theatre Company. "The lawyers we have involved are really working hard to create a great evening of entertainment."

Twelve Angry Men is a suspense-filled drama that follows the debate of a 12-member jury deliberating the fate of a man being tried for first-degree murder. The verdict must be unanimous, and a guilty verdict carries a mandatory death penalty.

Earlier this year, Tobias contacted Nathalie Godbout from Lawson Creamer law firm and asked if she thought a group of lawyers could be persuaded to perform in the show as a fundraising event for Saint John Theatre Company's new theatre education initiatives.

"When Stephen approached me to help coordinate the event, I didn't hesitate for a moment," says Godbout. "The lawyer-actors signed up willingly and enthusiastically. This is just our humble attempt to give something back to our community."

Rehearsals have been underway for the past few weeks, working around the busy schedules of the lawyers involved. The cast members have been excited about the chance to be involved in a unique event that supports a great cause and gives them a chance to try something new.

"I got involved because SJTC makes our community a more enjoyable place to live," says Craig Wilson from Cox & Palmer. "And you don't win Tonys practicing law."

For Robert Jette from Clark Drummie, the play was an early inspiration. "It's wonderful to be involved in this presentation. As lawyers, we can't serve on juries. This is a privilege."

12 Angry Men is sponsored by Telegraph Journal, the NB Law Foundation, Stewart McKelvey, and the Hilton Hotel.

The performance will be staged for one night only at Imperial Theatre on Wednesday, April 21 at 7PM. Tickets are \$45. A VIP pass to the event is \$100 which includes a tax receipt for \$55, a ticket to the performance, plus a post-show reception featuring the Richard Kidd Combo at the Saint John Theatre Company building at 112 Princess Street. For tickets call 674-4100.

Cast members:

- Lee Bell-Smith LLB (Stewart McKelvey)
- Scott Brittain, LLB, LLM (City Solicitor's Office, City of Saint John)
- Bruce Grant, LLB (Canty Lutz)
- Robert Jette, Q.C. (Clark Drummie)
- Matthew Letson LLB (Lawson Creamer)
- Alicia Love LLB (Stewart McKelvey)
- David Lutz, Q.C. (Lutz Longstaff)
- Brian D. Munro, LLB
- Justice Bruce Noble (Court of Queen's Bench of New Brunswick)
- Drew Speight LLB (Foster & Company)

- Jake van der Laan (NB Securities Commission)
- Deborah Watton, LLB (McInnes Cooper)
- Craig Wilson, LLB (Cox & Palmer)

Sarah Dever-Letson, Stewart McKelvey (Stage Manager)
Nathalie Godbout, Lawson Creamer (Organizing Committee)
Mel Norton, Lawson Creamer (Organizing Committee)

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