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# SJTC “Cornerstone Awards” to honour 5 special individuals who were vital to the growth of the SJTC.

*SJTC Birthday Celebrations Include Presentation of Cornerstone Award to Key Contributors*

SAINT JOHN –On October 1<sup>st</sup> the SJTC will be moving into its 26<sup>th</sup> season of live theatre, a milestone that may not have been possible without the valuable input of several key players who offered indispensable guidance and action at a critical point in the company’s history.

A 25<sup>th</sup> birthday party at Imperial Theatre will celebrate these honourees. Titled *Trilogy: Past, Present, Future* – the evening will be a retrospective of live music, theatre, film and photography from the past. Plans for the future will also be shared.

*“The SJTC has overcome many obstacles over the years. We will be honouring a few special contributors during our celebration including, John Irving, Gary Davis, Jackie Oland, Nada Ristich, and Jamie Grant,”* adds Stephen Tobias, Artistic Director, SJTC. *“Each of these individuals has made a significant contribution through their actions that was essential to the longevity of the company.”*

The Cornerstone Honourees have made a significant, yet unsung contribution to the development of the SJTC.

## **Gary Davis:**

Mr. Davis reached out to the company in 1992 offering a temporary home during a period when the company was on the brink of disbanding. There was no money to pay for space rental and the company was considering the disposal of all assets, set pieces, etc. Without the support of Mr. Davis, the company would surely have folded in 1992 before ever really getting started. His donation of space allowed the company time to re-group and rebuild in time for its first Imperial Theatre production in 1994.



## **Jamie Grant:**

In 1993 Jamie Grant took a chance on the company and offered it the opening slot at the Imperial Theatre for the staging of the very successful *Incredible Murder of Cardinal Tosca* in April of 1994. His continued coaching and mentorship of the board and key stakeholders helped the company organize its first subscription campaign and equipped stakeholders with the skill-sets required to manage a theatre organization.

## **Jacqueline Oland:**

In the summer of 1994, Jackie Oland called Stephen Tobias with an offer of help in securing a special guest artist to help advance the work of the company. Jackie Oland’s unsolicited help in securing guest director Tom Kerr for the SJTC production of *Macbeth* elevated the scope of the production with attendance in excess of 5,000. For two more seasons Tom worked with the SJTC on

such noteworthy productions as the acclaimed *Amadeus*. This series of projects enhanced the creative scope of the company and set the tone for many successes to come. None of this would have been possible without this timely intervention.



**Nada Ristich:**

At the launch of the SJTC Setting the Stage capital campaign a pitch was made to BMO Financial who agreed to join the campaign with a major gift contribution of \$100,000. The campaign allowed the company to develop a relationship with Nada Ristich from BMO who has continued to support the SJTC over the course of many years. Nada has gone above and beyond offering her knowledge of cultural industries across the country and providing advice and mentorship to Executive Director Stephen Tobias over the years. Nada's support and guidance has allowed the company to develop partnerships at a national level, which will facilitate the next phase of growth for the organization.

**John Irving:**

During the early days of the Princess Street production facility project, Mr. Irving toured the building, so that the SJTC teams could introduce him to the project. Upon reviewing the plans, Mr. Irving felt the company had not considered a large enough scope of work for the project, nor were there sufficient budgets contemplated. He advised the team that the project was likely to fail in its current format. Instead of walking away from the project, Mr. Irving helped the team remedy these deficiencies. He loaned the project a couple of key engineering staff who did an in-depth study of the building, and then introduced company members to a new set of contractors who went on to lead the re-development of the building. Without his advice and support at that key moment the Princess Street project may never have been successful or, if so, it would not have been the gem that it has turned out to be.

*"While many people helped grow the SJTC in many ways, we felt that it was important to share these stories of game-changing support: stories which have been mostly unknown except to those few people directly involved,"* adds Stephen Tobias.

The evening will also honour many members of the community whose love of theatre has drawn them into serving with the SJTC for decades. These individuals have worked on stage, backstage and off stage and have been critical to the growth of the SJTC over the years, recipients include: Andrea Cunningham, Bob Doherty, Sandra Donnelly, Joanna Everitt, Chris Gabriel, Brian Goodwin, Brenda McLeese, Les Terry, Scott Thomas and Dean Turner.

*Trilogy: Past, Present, Future* tickets are on sale now and are \$45 for regular seating or \$100 for VIP seating (VIP ticket also includes post show cocktail reception and a \$55 tax receipt). Tickets are on sale now at Imperial Theatre box office 506-674-4100. Funds raised will be used to support SJTC operations for the 2015-2016 Season.