



THE SLAIGHT FAMILY FOUNDATION GIFTS \$1.5 MILLION TO THE SHAW FESTIVAL

- Repertory theatre company one of several Canadian theatre companies receiving support -

Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON (September 28, 2022) — The Shaw Festival is thrilled to be one of the recipients of **The Slight Family Foundation Theatre Initiative**. The transformational gift of \$1.5 million will further assist the Niagara-on-the-Lake-based theatre company's recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We so deeply appreciate this generous gift to The Shaw and, are even more grateful for The Slight Family Foundation's incredible support of the theatre community," acknowledged Executive Director **Tim Jennings**. "**The Slight Family Foundation** has long championed artistic practice, development and stability. While COVID continues to affect the entire industry, the Foundation, through this incredible gift, has ensured so many theatres now have the ability to survive until audiences find their way back to them."

"We are delighted to be one of the beneficiaries of this newly created initiative by The Slight Family Foundation and truly thankful for their continued support of the work created here at The Shaw," said Artistic Director **Tim Carroll**.

"The forced closure of theatres because of the pandemic has devastated the theatre industry," said **Gary Slight**, President and CEO, The Slight Family Foundation. "Even now, with audiences nervous to return since reopening, we are still seeing shows being rescheduled and cancelled, sometimes the same day. We're very happy to support these organizations so they can focus on the work of creating and bringing back audiences."

The Slight Family Foundation Theatre Initiative provides a financial safety net that will enable theatre companies to take artistic risks and reignite creative processes – both vital to bring audiences back. Over the next two years, this initiative will provide support for artist fees, production development and marketing costs.

The Slight Family's inspired leadership, as well as both collective and individual generosity, have been part of the Shaw Festival's story for decades. In addition to establishing The Academy with Artistic Director Emeritus **Christopher Newton** in 1985, **Allan Slight** served as a Board member from 1982 to 1988 and as Board Chair from 1985 to 1986. He and Mr. Newton (along with a committee of others) also founded **The Shaw Boxing Evening**, which has raised over \$11 million for the Festival. An exemplary leader and patron as well, **Ada Slight** served on the Board from 1990 to 1998 as a Governor, National Governor and Honorary Governor.

In 2009, The Slight Family Foundation invested in The Academy with a \$5 million gift over ten years that allowed for the creation of additional professional training programs for Shaw company members and a series of programs designed to inform, enrich and deepen The Shaw experience. In appreciation, The Academy was renamed **The Slight Family Academy**. In 2019, The Slight Family Foundation renewed their support for a further \$5 million over 10 years, to 2028, ensuring the continued growth of both programs and The Shaw's endowment.

Recognition and thanks are extended to the Neutral Nation, the Mississauga and the Haudenosaunee for their stewardship of these lands over millennia.

About The Slaight Family Foundation

Since 2013, The Slaight Family Foundation has funded several strategic initiatives to multiple organizations. These initiatives started with gifts to five Toronto hospitals to support priority healthcare issues, followed by programs to address global humanitarianism, the healthy development of children and youth across Canada, support for Indigenous issues, a seniors' initiative to help keep seniors in their homes and communities, supporting mental health challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and most recently support for women and girls at risk in Canada. This gift of \$15 million brings the collective support for these strategic initiatives to \$185 million.

The Slaight Family Foundation was established in 2008 by John Allan Slaight. Allan Slaight (1931-2021), known as Canada's broadcast pioneer, was a leader in the music industry and a prominent Canadian philanthropist. Through his generosity, the Foundation proactively supports charitable initiatives in the areas of healthcare, at-risk youth, international development, social services and culture. Allan's son, Gary Slaight, oversees the foundation as President & CEO, The Slaight Family Foundation.

#SlaightInitiative

About the Shaw Festival

Inspired by the spirit of Bernard Shaw, the Shaw Festival creates unforgettable theatrical encounters. The Shaw Festival is a place where people who are curious about the world gather to share the unique experience of live theatre and to create a deeper human connection with the artists, the beauty and abundance of Niagara and with each other. For more information, please visit shawfest.com.

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Media Contacts:

Ashley Belmer
Senior Manager of Communications
Mobile: 905-941-0018
abelmer@shawfest.com

Jenniffer Anand
Communications Co-ordinator
Mobile: 416-418-7415
janand@shawfest.com