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For more information, contact:

Nichole Cooper, Vice President-Marketing & Public Relations
262-373-5034 | ncooper@wilson-center.com

Margie Heyworth, Big Event Project Manager
(262) 439-5680 | mheyworth@wilson-center.com

WILSON CENTER TO HONOR DONNA AND DONALD BAUMGARTNER AT THE BIG EVENT First Stage to be recognized with second annual Educational Excellence Award



Brookfield, WI (March 2, 2016) In an evening filled with dinner, dancing, and first-class entertainment, more than 600 Milwaukee-area business and community leaders will come together to raise funds for arts education at the Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts (Wilson Center) on Saturday, June 4, 2016. As part of [The Big Event](#), Greater Milwaukee community leaders and philanthropists Donna and Donald Baumgartner and nationally acclaimed children's theatre [First Stage](#) will be respectively honored with the **twelfth annual EDDY Award** and the **second annual Educational Excellence Award**.

The Big Event serves as the major channel through which the Wilson Center raises funds for educational programming and outreach that serves more than 9,000 students each year. Single ticket prices for The Big Event are \$350-\$450 and sponsor tickets are \$3,500-\$5,500. Tickets will include valet parking; a pre-show party featuring open top-shelf bar, hand-passed hors d'oeuvres and food stations, and voice auctions; an exclusive concert from [The Hit Men](#), a group of amazing artists from the chart-busting, mega-star acts of the '60s, '70s and '80s; and a post-performance party featuring Milwaukee's own [Streetlife](#) with Warren Wiegratz. In addition, \$75 tickets are available for "[Crash the Party](#)," which provides an opportunity for emerging leaders who are 45 and under to attend The Big Event at a discounted ticket price. Tickets may be purchased online at www.wilson-center.com or by calling 262-373-5029.

The evening will include the presentation of the EDDY Award to Donna and Donald Baumgartner in recognition of their generous contributions to the quality of Greater Milwaukee's cultural life. As donors of both time and treasure to the Milwaukee Ballet Company, Donna serves as a Board Member and Artistic Co-Chair. Donald is current Chair of the Facilities Committee and a Past President of the Milwaukee Art Museum's Board of Trustees; as President of MAM and Chairman of the museum's Building Committee during the construction of the Calatrava addition, he was instrumental in bringing the Santiago Calatrava wing to life. Donald is a Life Director of the Florentine Opera Company, and in 2010, the Baumgartners sponsored the Florentine Opera's production of *Elmer Gantry*, which was recorded by Naxos Records and garnered two Grammy Awards in 2012. In addition to the Baumgartner's support of

The Milwaukee Film Festival and their sponsorship of the Spotlight Presentations program, Donna also serves on the Milwaukee Film Board of Directors.

Endowed by Wilson Center supporters Murph and John Burke, the EDDY is presented annually by the Wilson Center's Bridge Committee to an arts organization, corporation, or individual(s) whose commitment to regional collaboration has created a higher standard of excellence in arts and education. The Baumgartners will join a distinguished list of past EDDY Award honorees: **Milwaukee Youth Arts Center** (2005), **Christine Harris** (2006), **Mario Costantini** and **Danceworks** for Mad Hot Ballroom Milwaukee (2007), Marlene Kreilkamp of **Sharp Literacy, Inc.** (2008), **Skylight Opera Theatre** (2009), **Marcus Corporation** (2010), **Creativity Works!** (2011), **Latino Arts Strings & Mariachi Juvenil** (2012), **Carlene Ziegler** (2013), **Marianne and Sheldon Lubar** (2014), and **Jodi Peck** (2015).

The 2016 Big Event marks the second year for the presentation of the Educational Excellence Award, which recognizes organizational achievement of a nonprofit that exemplifies collaboration in the arts. For their national arts leadership and commitment to transforming the lives of young people and families through extraordinary theatre experiences—to include professional theatre productions, an unparalleled Theater Academy, and dynamic Theatre in Education programs—the Wilson Center is excited to announce First Stage as the recipient of this award.

The 2016 Big Event co-chairs are Carrie and Paul Matteson and Barb and Fred Syrjanen. Sponsors include Beer Capitol (Pre-Show Sponsor); Cynthia and Jeff Harris and Kate and Don Wilson (Box Seat Sponsors); Milwaukee Business Journal (Media Sponsor); Murph and John Burke, Lyle Husar, American Transmission Company, Mark and Julie Steinhafel, Lasaffre Group, Deb and Wayne Larsen, ProHealth Care, VJS Construction, Carrie and Paul Matteson, Fred and Barb Syrjanen, Johnson Controls, and WISN TV. For more information or to sponsor the 2016 Big Event, contact Margie Heyworth at 262-439-5680 or mheyworth@wilson-center.com.

About the Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts

The Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts is Southeast Wisconsin's premier non-profit, multi-disciplinary cultural arts center that presents performances by world-renowned artists and ensembles, offers arts education opportunities, and curates the Ploch Art Gallery, which features both national and Wisconsin-based fine artists. In August, the annual Wilson Center Guitar Competition & Festival celebrates the world's leading classical, rock/blues, jazz, and fingerstyle guitarists. The Wilson Center nurtures lifelong learning through innovative programs and classes for all interests, ages, and abilities in state-of-the-art studios and classrooms. Some of Southeast Wisconsin's finest arts organizations offer professional instruction at the Wilson Center, including First Stage Theater Academy, the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music, and Trinity Irish Dance.

The Wilson Center is just minutes west of Milwaukee, located in Brookfield's Mitchell Park off of Capitol Drive, just west of Brookfield Road. For information about the Wilson Center, call 262-781-9470 or visit www.wilson-center.com.

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