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POP MUSIC LEGEND

**GLADYS KNIGHT**

**TO PERFORM AT BENEFIT THE BARD FUNDRAISER, AUGUST 19 @ 8 p.m.**

**Presented by WIND CREEK HOSPITALITY and the ALABAMA SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL**

**MONTGOMERY, AL** (April 26, 2017) Seven time Grammy Award winner **Gladys Knight** will take the Midnight Train to Georgia with a stop at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival for its *Fourth Annual Benefit the Bard* fundraiser on Saturday, August 19, 2017 at 8 p.m. This special event is made possible by **Wind Creek Hospitality** and ASF to support the State Theatre of Alabama's cultural programming and educational efforts.

Limited general public seating is available. Single ticket prices range from \$99 to \$125 and may be purchased by calling **800.841.4273**, on line at [www.asf.net](http://www.asf.net) or by visiting the box office at 1 Festival Drive in Montgomery's beautiful Blount Cultural Park. Sponsorship packages are available through Lindsey Jinright, 334.271.5343.

The "Empress of Soul," **Gladys Knight**, has generated chart-topping songs across the spectrum of popular music as a solo artist and as the lead singer for **Gladys Knight and the Pips**. Her most famous songs include *Midnight Train to Georgia*, *I Heard It Through the Grapevine*, *Friendship Train*, *If I Were Your Woman*, *I Don't Want to Do Wrong*, *Neither One of Us* and *You're the Best Thing That Ever Happened to Me*.

Her unforgettable teaming with Elton John, Stevie Wonder and Dionne Warwick for the song *That's What Friends Are For* won a Grammy and served as an anthem in support of those afflicted with AIDS.

Among her multiple accolades, **Gladys Knight** has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and she is a member of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Entertainment network VH1 ranked her on the list of the 100 Greatest Women of Rock and *Rolling Stone* magazine listed her as one of the Greatest Singers of All Time.

The Society of Singers honored **Gladys Knight** with an ELLA award in 2007, at which time she was declared the "Empress of Soul."

"The name **Gladys Knight** immediately brings to mind a beautifully distinctive voice and seemingly endless list of engaging melodies," said ASF interim executive director **Michael Vigilant**. "What a gift it is to have someone of her talent in our theatre's intimate setting."

ASF's chairman of the board **Dr. Laurie Weil** added, "*Benefit the Bard* has become a signature event for the theatre and we will continue to show our heartfelt thanks to **Wind Creek Hospitality** and our generous supporters by producing world-class theatre and making outstanding educational opportunities available to Alabamians across our state."

(more)

The Alabama Shakespeare Festival is the State Theatre of Alabama. In addition to producing the highest level of professional theatre, ASF operates Schoolfest, a student matinee program that exposes 40,000 students each year to the theatrical arts. The theatre also conducts multiple camps and classes for children and adults throughout the year. ASF's Southern Writers' Project Festival of New Plays focuses on the creation of new Southern-themed works, many of which have had their world premieres in Montgomery and then becoming sought after productions for regional theatres across the country. To keep ticket prices as affordable as possible, over half of ASF's budget must come from contributions and special events such as *Benefit the Bard*.

ASF has approximately a \$20 million economic impact on the River Region and responsible for the creation of about 1,000 jobs.

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