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INFO PAGE: <https://ASF.net/GretaLambert>

Media & Public Relations contacts:

Layne Holley, Director of Marketing & Communications

[LHolley@asf.net](mailto:LHolley@asf.net) | 917-750-8430

[www.asf.net](http://www.asf.net)

## Alabama Shakespeare Festival announces Greta Lambert Retirement

***Birmingham, Ala., native Greta Lambert to retire from staff position at ASF in 2023***

MONTGOMERY, Ala., (Feb. 10, 2023) — After nearly 38 years at Alabama Shakespeare Festival as an actor and staff member, Deputy Artistic Director and Education Director Greta Lambert is retiring from her staff position. Fittingly, said Lambert, she will depart her staff role during ASF's production of Shakespeare's [The Tempest](#) (Feb. 23–Mar. 12, 2023), in which she leads the cast in the role of Prospero. Widely considered to be Shakespeare's final play, Lambert said it's a fine farewell for this stage of her career.

Several celebratory activities are planned around Lambert's retirement from her staff position. Information is available at [ASF.net/GretaLambert](https://ASF.net/GretaLambert).

**Feb 16 (deadline): Playbill messages to Greta Lambert** — donations to ASF for your message in the playbill at [ASF.net/GretaLambert](https://ASF.net/GretaLambert)

**Feb. 24, 8:30 p.m.: Public toast** for ticketholders for [The Tempest](#)

Lambert came to ASF in 1985 in the theater's premiere production in its Montgomery, Ala. Home, the Carolyn Blount Theatre. Lambert debuted at ASF as Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to a packed house of state and national government leaders and celebrities, including Tony Randall and Olivia De Havilland. Lambert quickly established herself as an asset to the theater on and off the stage.

Lambert has performed in nearly 100 productions, but in her various staff roles, she has also served as coach, director, and educator. As a member of ASF's first resident company, she coached graduate performance students and young professional company members, directed 17 MFA and ASF Fellowship productions, taught countless adult and youth acting classes, and supervised performance and technical theatre camps and classes.

"Greta's artistry, skill, and generosity as an actor, director, and educator seem to know no bounds," said ASF Artistic Director Rick Dildine. "We'll definitely miss her presence in the

building on a daily basis, but we look forward to having her perform in many more productions here at ASF — and to following her as an actor wherever she may be performing.”

“Greta is a creative tour de force,” said ASF Executive Director Todd Schmidt. “She brings excellence and a spirit of cooperation to everything she does, and we’ll miss her tremendously as a part of our everyday artistic endeavors.”

Lambert, a native of Birmingham, Ala., said she never dreamed of a career as a staff member at a theater in Alabama. “Like most young people, I didn’t know where life would take me. I thought success would be Broadway, film, and TV. The last place I wanted to go was Alabama. It took me so many years, by way of D.C. and then New York, and then the first offer I got was to audition at ASF for 10 weeks? I just took it because I wanted to pay an agent a commission. I came here for roles and discovered that that’s really what success was to me: playing great roles where I grew and learned, and I came back as many years as I could. And then I became more than an actor: I became part of this wonderful team of theatremakers.”

Lambert is as much a local and state institution as is ASF, which holds the designation as The State’s Theatre. Her distinguished career and dedication to ASF, Montgomery, and Alabama has earned her high esteem.

“Whether on or off the stage, Greta Lambert has been a leader in the advancement of the arts in Alabama for over 35 years,” said Alabama Governor Kay Ivey. “Not only has her career at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival bolstered Alabama’s theatre program and brought educational opportunities to our K-12 students, but Greta has provided lively memories, joy, and inspiration for Alabamians, along with visitors from across the nation. I wish Greta the best of luck off the stage and a ‘break a leg’ as she continues her acting career.”

“For nearly 40 years, Greta Lambert has been a pivotal part of the art, entertainment and unrivaled experiences that embody the Alabama Shakespeare Festival,” said Montgomery, Ala., Mayor Steven Reed. “Her time, talent and dedication have helped position ASF as one of the South’s premier cultural experiences. On behalf of our entire community, we thank Greta for her service and wish her all the best!”

Lambert’s colleagues from the stage and her time as a director and coach have also generously lauded her.

Emmy Award-winning actor Michael Emerson came to ASF and met Lambert as a graduate student: “My first impression was of a warm and sociable person, gentle and funny, a good hostess who welcomed us into what was her home and took care of the people around her. And as time went on, it turned out that this is what she offered to an audience, as well — a warm invitation into the world of the play where you would be looked after, put at your ease, entertained. It’s a world where you’re in good hands since Greta has such a formidable set of actor tools: her natural beauty, her lovely voice, command of movement, intelligence, timing, humor, heart, and mystery, empathy, a true mastering of a difficult craft.”

Emmy Award-winning actor and director Carrie Preston recalls how Lambert shaped her understanding of success as an actor and director: “You’ve heard of Alexander the Great, the Great Wall of China, Catherine the Great, Great Gatsby, even the Great Outdoors ... Well, ever since I was a teenager, in our house, it was always and will forever be the Great Greta Lambert. When I was a kid, I knew I wanted to be an actor, but I didn’t know until I saw Greta Lambert onstage that I wanted to be *that* kind of actor,” Preston said.

“Seeing Greta in Hedda Gabler, with her every restless move, her command of the language and stage was something I’d never seen before [and] how that could be crafted and executed, almost like a dance, that a character could and should be constructed like a house, from the foundation up. I didn’t know how to do that, but I knew I wanted to try.”

Preston’s time as a student, co-star, and director working with Lambert has solidified what success in the craft means to her: “Our job is to take humanity plus words plus emotions and distill them down into laser-focused moments that allow an audience to experience the human condition in a way that resonates with them, and then repeat. Greta repeats and repeats and repeats. Always striving to rise up to her own level of expertise — and beyond.”

Former ASF acting company member Greg Thornton said, “Superlatives abound and where to begin? Luminous, inspiring, heart-rending, a shining presence, the best of stage partners. It was and continues to be a privilege to stand in the room and on the stage with Greta. You know at every turn, she will deliver the goods, and then some. How lucky are we to be in her company.”

“When I first met Greta, she was rehearsing Kate in *Taming of the Shrew*,” said former ASF acting company member Steven David Martin. “I was playing Tranio, so I didn’t really have any scenes with her, but I was smitten from the start. I can truthfully say, I have never worked with a more talented actor. Greta is an intoxicating mixture of intelligence, beauty, instinct, wit, sensuality, and heart. On stage she is always present, always engaged, always giving of herself for the good of the play. Offstage she is a complete, delight, warm, funny, generous to all. She is a gift to the theatre, and I count my blessings that I had so many opportunities to work with her and learn from her.”

Asked what she’ll miss most about her time on the ASF staff, Lambert said, without hesitation: “The people. ASF is a great hive, with everyone buzzing around to make beautiful theatre. From our artists to artisans, our administrative teams, the people who sell the tickets and hand out the playbills, I’ll miss seeing all of my fellow worker bees in the hive every day.”

[Alabama Shakespeare Festival](#), the State’s theatre, builds community by engaging, entertaining, and inspiring people with transformative theatrical performances and compelling educational and community programs. From its founding in a high school auditorium in Anniston in 1972 to its designation as the State Theatre of Alabama in 1977 to the stunning \$21.5 million performing arts complex in Montgomery (built in 1985), ASF has been a leader in the performing arts throughout the state, region, and country. As a beloved Alabama arts

institution, ASF broadens the cultural identity of the South by producing classics, Shakespeare, contemporary plays, musicals, theatre for young audiences, and exciting new works. Since its inception, ASF has provided education programs to more than one million students; annually, SchoolFest, a student-matinee program, presents high-quality theatrical experiences to nearly 35,000 students.

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