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OLD GLOBE'S FOUNDING DIRECTOR CRAIG NOEL **TO RECEIVE NATIONAL MEDAL OF ARTS**

San Diego – The Tony Award-winning Old Globe is pleased to announce that **Founding Director Craig Noel will be a recipient of the 2007 National Medal of Arts**. The awards will be announced by President George W. Bush on Thursday, November 15 and presented to this year's nine honorees by the President and Mrs. Laura Bush in an East Room ceremony at the White House.

Craig Noel's contributions to the American theatre – both locally and nationally – are legion. He has enriched the larger community through his support and encouragement of playwrights, actors and artists and through the nurturing of an entire generation of citizens who have become today's theatregoers and arts supporters. He is considered one of the “deans” of the regional theatre movement and took the lead in a significant revival of American interest in Shakespeare, having launched San Diego National Shakespeare Festival in 1949. He also established the first full Actors' Equity company in California and was one of the original developers of a comprehensive arts education program.

Craig has been associated with The Old Globe since its inception and has guided the organization through its metamorphosis from a community theatre to one of the nation's most successful not-for-profit arts organizations. At age 92, Craig's tenure and directorial credits at the Globe represent a milestone not yet achieved by any other living director in United States history. He has helmed more than 225 productions at the Globe, including the world premieres of Lillian Garrett-Groag's *The White Rose* and Reuben Gonzalez's *The Boiler Room*; along with American premieres of Alan Ayckbourn's *Mr. A's Amazing Maze Plays* and *Intimate Exchanges*. Most recently, he directed *Over the River and Through the Woods* and worked with Tony Award-winner John Rando on the 2006 production of *Moonlight and Magnolias*. Under his leadership, he oversaw the expansion of the Globe to a three-theatre complex and played an instrumental role in the careers of many directors – including three-time Tony Award-winner Jack O'Brien, whom he brought on board as Artistic Director in 1981. Scores of great American actors, such as Marion Ross, David Ogden Stiers and Kelsey Grammer, have worked with Craig and are indebted to him. His passion for arts education fueled many innovative programs, including the Globe Educational Tours in 1974, the renowned Master of Fine Arts graduate acting program, in conjunction with University of San Diego in 1987, and Teatro Meta, which began in 1983 and went on to become an award-winning, bilingual playwriting program that has served thousands of young people in the San Diego region.

Craig has been dubbed “the Father of San Diego Theatre,” in recognition of the fact that he has been a guide, mentor and ally to virtually every professional theatre endeavor in this community. His many honors include the California Governor's Award for the Arts; the San Diego Union-Tribune's list of 25 persons who shaped the city's history; and San Diego's Living Treasure Award. In addition, the San Diego Critics Circle named its annual honors the “Craig Noel Awards for Excellence in Theatre.” Noel remains active and continues to enrich the theatre community through his unflagging support of playwrights, directors, actors and theater artisans, along with his ongoing efforts to encourage each new generation to become lifelong theatregoers.

“We are so proud that Craig has been recognized with this tremendous honor,” said Globe Executive Director Lou Spisto. “Craig has guided this institution from its beginnings as a community organization to national renown as one of the top producing theatres in the country. Although his career was focused mainly in San Diego – a city he loves deeply – Craig is now known nationally for his devotion to theatre and the development of artists and audiences of all ages. He is the guiding light of the Globe and we are forever indebted to him for his generous spirit and unique vision. This medal honors San Diego and California as well. It is a testament to the tremendous support that Craig was able to develop for theatre, for the Globe and for all of the arts in our region.”

The National Endowment for the Arts manages the National Medal of Arts nomination process and notified the artists of their selection to receive the medal, the nation's highest honor for artistic excellence.

“These individuals have all made enduring contributions to the artistic life of our nation,” said National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Dana Gioia “Whether by composing profound choral works, or creating paintings of both beauty and unease, or giving us wonderful stories steeped in Native American traditions, their work has enriched our national culture.”

The 2007 National Medal of Arts Recipients include **Morton Lauridsen**, composer; the **Lionel Hampton International Jazz Festival**, music competition and festival; **N. Scott Momaday**, author, essayist, poet, professor, painter; **R. Craig Noel**, Founding Director, The Old Globe; **Roy R. Neuberger**, art collector; **Les Paul**, guitarist, inventor; **Henry Steinway**, arts patron; **George Tooker**, painter; **Andrew Wyeth**, painter. Also at the awards ceremony will be **Erich Kunzel**, conductor of the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra and a 2006 National Medal of Arts recipient who was not able to attend last year's event.

The National Medal of Arts, established by Congress in 1984, is awarded by the President and managed by the National Endowment for the Arts. Award recipients are selected based on their contributions to the creation, growth, and support of the arts in the United States. Each year, the Arts Endowment seeks nominations from individuals and organizations across the country. The National Council on the Arts, the Arts Endowment's Presidentially-appointed and Senate-confirmed advisory body, reviews the nominations and provides recommendations to the President, who selects the recipients.

The National Endowment for the Arts gratefully acknowledges The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities for its support of the 2007 National Medal of Arts.

The internationally-acclaimed, Tony Award® -winning Old Globe is one of the most renowned regional theatres in the country and has stood as San Diego's flagship arts institution for over 70 years. The Old Globe produces a year-round season of 15 plays and musicals on its three stages, including its highly-regarded Shakespeare festival. The Globe has become a gathering place for leading artists from around the world, such as Tom Stoppard, Daniel Sullivan and Chita Rivera, among many others. Numerous Broadway-bound premieres and revivals, such as *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *The Full Monty* and *Damn Yankees*, have been developed at The Old Globe and have gone on to enjoy highly successful runs in New York and at regional s across the country.

Highlights of the Globe's 2007/2008 Season include the world premiere musical, *A Catered Affair*, written by Harvey Fierstein and John Bucchino, the West Coast Premiere of Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt's *Oscar and the Pink Lady*, the 10th Anniversary production of Dr. Seuss' *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*, *In This Corner*, by Steven Drukman, Howard Korder's *Sea of Tranquility*, as well as the world premieres of *Dancing in the Dark* and *Beethoven, As I Knew Him*. Under the leadership of Executive Director Louis G. Spisto, Artistic Director Jack O'Brien and Resident Artistic Director Jerry Patch, the Globe is at the forefront of the nation's leading performing arts organizations, setting a standard for excellence in American Theatre.