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**SEATTLE CHILDREN'S THEATRE ANNOUNCES SINGLE LARGEST PHILANTHROPIC GIFT**

(Seattle, Wash.) Seattle Children's Theatre is honored to announce the receipt of our largest single gift in the organization's history, \$5.9 million dollars from the Adrienne Peter Maud Fund. Marilyn Dillard, former SCT Board Member, created the fund to honor her late grandparents and daughter.

When a nonprofit organization receives a legacy gift, it is a testament to the value and mission of the organization and the role it played in someone's life, in this case, a mother and daughter, Marilyn Dillard and Adrienne Coons. Tragically, Adrienne died young, but her short life was deeply touched by the joy, creativity, and inspiration provided by the performing arts. Her mother had a strong influence on Adrienne, bringing her to study at SCT's Drama School, and together, they enjoyed seeing many SCT mainstage performances.

This gift is the result of the tremendous impact theatre can have in the lives of young people and their families, and is a testament to the work of generations of theatre professionals and educators at SCT. Adrienne Coons found inspiration from the productions on our stages and blossomed through the opportunities offered through our Drama School. In addition, her mother, Marilyn, who served for six years on SCT's Board, found a community that offered her life a special creative connection and access to a group of like-minded individuals who cared passionately about theatre for young people.

**History of Marilyn Dillard & Adrienne Coons**

Young Adrienne Coons first started performing as part of the Bellevue School district theatre program. Adrienne quickly fell in love with acting and in 1983 began to participate in Drama School at SCT. Adrienne's determination and dedication were an inspiration for the faculty and students alike.

In 1984 at the age of 11, Adrienne died suddenly of an asthma attack. Marilyn recognized the joy that participating in theatre provided Adrienne and wanted others to share that experience. In 1985, she established the Adrienne Coons Memorial Fund to honor her daughter. SCT was the recipient of generous annual gifts that allowed many others to experience the joy of theatre and arts education.

Marilyn Dianne Dillard was born on July 7, 1940, in Norfolk, Virginia. She was the daughter of Thomas Ortman and Sally Ruth (Wallerich) Dillard. She graduated from Seattle's Queen Anne High School, started as a student at UCLA and concluded her studies with a Bachelor in Business Administration with honors at the University of Washington in 1962, where she was a proud member of UW Alpha Phi sorority. Marilyn was a model, dancer, ballet instructor, property manager, and an interior designer. She was named Miss Greater Seattle in 1964, served on the board of the Junior League of Seattle, and was a charter member National Cowgirl Hall of Fame. She served on the SCT Board from 1984 to 1990, and in 1987, she began assisting in lighting SCT's main stage plays. This was unusual not only because trustees rarely worked "behind the scenes," but because climbing ladders and working with lighting equipment was not work typically done by women in 1987. Marilyn was truly incredible, surprising, and dedicated.

In the Spring of 2022, the Adrienne Coons Memorial Fund at the Seattle Foundation was dissolved with the proceeds of \$347,000 given to Seattle Children's Theatre. This substantial gift has been earmarked with \$250,000 in an endowment to provide annual funds for Drama School Scholarships

and the remainder has supported our facility upgrades to Studios A and B, where most students take their first drama classes at SCT. In September 2022 SCT received \$5.9 million, the remainder of the funds from the Adrienne Peter Maud Fund account. Twenty percent of these funds were invested in SCT's ongoing COVID recovery efforts and the remaining eighty percent was placed in secure, short-term investments as we finalize our multi-year Strategic Plan. The gift was announced to the public at our 2023 Fueling Transformation Luncheon, where we are also honored to have raised \$169,656 for our ongoing operations. With the support of our current funders and this incredible philanthropic gift, we look toward achieving long-term sustainability, ensuring that SCT can continue offering the kinds of transformational experiences Marilyn and Adrienne enjoyed.

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With our 2022-23 Season, Seattle Children Theatre's celebrated its 121<sup>st</sup> World Premiere since 1975. SCT is a leading generator of new works, providing youth of all ages access to professional theater and theatre education. Under new initiatives, SCT for All provides low-cost and free tickets to young people and families. In addition, every first and fifth grade classroom in Seattle Public Schools can receive free tickets under One&Five. Learn more information about both of these programs at [sct.org](http://sct.org).

The 2022-2023 season is supported by generous contributions from season sponsors Microsoft, ArtsFund, and The Shubert Foundation, which will help the organization serve 130,000 annually and provide more than 60,000 free or significantly reduced tickets to children in the Puget Sound area.