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Dallas Theater Center Names Shawn Brentham and Catherine Hopkins Project Discovery Distinguished Educators of the Year

DALLAS (May 8, 2014) – Dallas Theater Center announced today the two recipients of the 2013-2014 Project Discovery Distinguished Educator of the Year Award. Shawn Brentham from Irving High School and Catherine Hopkins from W. H. Adamson High School are the first ever co-recipients of the award. The educators have been involved with Project Discovery for five years and together have brought 2,500 students to 28 productions at DTC.

"Mr. Brentham and Ms. Hopkins exemplify the best of what is possible in arts education within our schools," said Mara Richards, DTC's Manager of Education Programs. "They continue to develop their own art forms bringing real-world experience, energy and enthusiasm to their students each day. Their commitment to creating strong theater programs in their respective schools and to cultivating young artists and creative thinkers is unparalleled. We are thrilled to call them partners and honor their contributions to their schools and to their communities."

The Distinguished Educator of the Year is chosen by DTC's Education and Community Programs department. The department considers how long educators have been teaching, their dedication to Project Discovery and advocacy for the program, their commitment to arts education and their creativity in incorporating DTC's productions into their curriculum.

"Students that have been through Project Discovery have learned to be artistic contributors in their circle of influence, and they exhibit a higher understanding of the humanities compared to their peers," said Brentham. "Project Discovery is hands down the best artistic opportunity for our students. I am so grateful to be a part of Project Discovery and I am humbled to have been named as a Distinguished Educator."

"It has been an extraordinary year for Project Discovery and I have been so honored to be a small part of this extraordinary program," said Hopkins. "My students have gained immeasurably from the experience and many have since gone on to study theater at the university and community college level. Without Project Discovery, my students would be swimming in a vacuum of mediocrity ---without access to professional artists and performances that have taught them to work with one another while respecting and exploring other points of view. Perhaps most importantly, Project Discovery has opened their minds to what hard work, talent and relentless dedication to the arts looks like in a professional setting."

DTC's Project Discovery program is in its 27th season. This year, the program was one of 12 to receive the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award from the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. As part of the program, DTC provides transportation, a pre-show workshop and tickets to its productions to area high school students at no cost to the student or the school. This season, 38 schools received approximately 1,000 tickets to all DTC mainstage productions. Partner schools are chosen via an application process that includes a review of a school's title one eligibility. DTC is accepting applications for the 2014-2015 season now through August 1.

SHAWN BRENTHAM is a director, actor, playwright and teacher. Shawn received a BFA in Acting from the College of Santa Fe, while working with former DTC Artistic Director Mary Sue Jones. He then moved to New York where he worked as an actor for ten years. While in New York, Shawn studied acting with Seth Barrish and Terry Schreiber where he appeared in over 20 Off-Broadway shows. He was a member of the Red Light District Theatre Company in New York, and has also worked in Boston and toured the country as a performer. Shawn has since shifted his focus to directing, teaching and writing. His play, *Pompeii*, was chosen out of 550 scripts to be part the PlayLab series for the 2013 Great Plains Theatre Conference. Shawn is currently the Director of Theatre at Irving High School, where his students are proud to be part of Dallas Theater Center's Project Discovery program. He also served for the past year on the Project Discovery Advisory Council, where he assisted in determining ways to expand the reach of this nationally honored arts education program. Shawn, a native Texan, loves Dallas Theater Center and all it has done for the students of Irving High School.

CATHERINE HOPKINS is a professional director and the proud theatre teacher at W.H. Adamson High School. She has directed over 45 productions during her six years in DISD. Some favorite student productions include: *The House of Bernarda Alba*, *It's a Wonderful Life*, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Macbeth*. Prior to being an educator, Catherine managed several theatre spaces and directed professionally in Panama and London before returning to her native Dallas. Her professional directing credits with her company PublicWorks in Dallas include *The Lord of the Flies* (Dallas Children's Theater), *Lower Ninth* and *Frankie and Johnnie in the Clair de Lune* (Dallas Hub Theater). She has been part of Project Discovery for

the past six years and was honored to be able to accompany her student, who was chosen as the Project Discovery student ambassador, to Washington this past November and be part of the exciting White House awards process. Catherine has also served for the past year on the Project Discovery Advisory Council, helping to devise new ways to further enrich this powerful arts program.

ABOUT DALLAS THEATER CENTER:

One of the leading regional theaters in the country, Dallas Theater Center (DTC) performs to an audience of more than 120,000 North Texas residents annually. Founded in 1959, DTC is now a resident company of the AT&T Performing Arts Center and presents its Mainstage season at the Dee and Charles Wyle Theatre, designed by REX/OMA, Joshua Prince-Ramus and Rem Koolhaas and at its original home, the Kalita Humphreys Theater, the only freestanding theater designed and built by Frank Lloyd Wright. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Kevin Moriarty and Managing Director Heather M. Kitchen, DTC produces a seven-play subscription series of classics, musicals and new plays and an annual production of *A Christmas Carol*; extensive education programs, including the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award-winning Project Discovery, SummerStage and partnerships with Southern Methodist University's Meadows School of the Arts and Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts; and community outreach efforts including leading the DFW Foote Festival and recent collaborations with the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas Public Library, Dallas Holocaust Museum, North Texas Food Bank, Dallas Opera, and Dallas Black Dance Theater. Throughout its history, DTC has produced many new works, including *The Texas Trilogy* by Preston Jones in 1978, Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men*, adapted by Adrian Hall, in 1986, and recent premieres of *FLY* by Rajiv Joseph, Bill Sherman and Kirstin Childs; *Fly by Night* by Kim Rosenstock, Michael Mitnick and Will Connolly; *Giant* by Michael John LaChiusa and Sybille Pearson; *The Trinity River Plays* by Regina Taylor; the revised *It's a Bird... It's a Plane... It's Superman* by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa, Charles Strouse and Lee Adams; *Give It Up!* (now titled *Lysistrata Jones* and recently on Broadway) by Douglas Carter Beane and Lewis Flinn; *Sarah, Plain and Tall* by Julia Jordan, Laurence O'Keefe and Nell Benjamin; and *The Good Negro* by Tracey Scott Wilson.