



THE CARBONELL AWARDS
SOUTH FLORIDA'S THEATER & ARTS HONORS

The Carbonell Awards Welcome Four New Judges

(South Florida – November 27, 2023) The **Carbonell Awards**, South Florida's most highly coveted recognition of theatrical and performance excellence, today announced four new judges. They will bring the total number of Carbonell judges to 42, including 15 in Broward County, 11 in Miami-Dade, and 16 in Palm Beach County. Collectively, they will see and evaluate nearly 100 different productions at more than 35 professional theaters. The current theater season runs between September 1, 2023, and August 31, 2024.

The four new Carbonell judges are:

+ **Jason Fisher** (*West Palm Beach*), a former Carbonell panelist (7 years) who has 20 years of theater experience, including as an actor, stage manager, and arts journalist.

+ **Luis Roberto Herrera** (*Miami*), a South Florida based Colombian American playwright. A judge for the South Florida Theatre League, he is a graduate of University of Florida (BFA in Theatre Performance) and the New School for Drama (MFA in Playwriting/Screenwriting). His play *As I Eat the World* recently opened in New York City.

+ **Jerry K. Jensen** (*Hallandale*) is Treasurer of the Board of the South Florida Theatre League, and former Executive Director of the Wichita Center for the Arts. He has extensive experience both on-stage and backstage.

+ **Ali Tallman** (*Pembroke Pines*), an experienced director, movement coach/director, dramaturg, and playwright. She is a graduate of the University of Georgia (BA in Theatre). She serves on the review board of Florida Intimacy Professionals and the board of Swing Out, South Florida. She recently directed and movement directed *XOXOLOLA* at LakehouseRanchDotPNG in Miami. She was a member of the Association of Mental Health Coordinators' 2022 Artistic Mental Health Practitioner

Training cohort. In addition to the roles already listed, Ali has extensive experience as an actor, producer, movement artist, designer, and Founding Artistic Director of both & Sons Theatre (Santa Fe, NM) and UGA's Children's Theatre Troupe.

The four additions will join the current team of Carbonell judges:

From Broward County:

+ **Jerry Abella** (*Wilton Manors*) has been an actor, playwright, and arts journalist, and has served as a volunteer at both the Broward Center for the Performing Arts and Island City Stage.

+ **Noah Cuellar** (*Fort Lauderdale*) was a former member of the Chicago Latino Theatre Company. Both an actor and director, he has worked at such venues as the Court Theatre, Drury Lane Dinner Theatre, Opera Factory, Remains Theatre, and Stage 11; film/TV credits include *Chicago*, *Losing Isiah*, and *Above the Law*.

+ **Mary Damiano** (*Oakland Park*) is the former Managing Director of the Carbonell Awards, as well as an award-winning writer, editor, and theater critic who has covered the South Florida arts scene since 2000. She has had more than 2,500 articles published in dozens of publications, including the *Miami Herald*, *Sun-Sentinel*, *New Times*, *South Florida Gay News*, *She Magazine*, *The New Pelican Newspaper*, *BroadwayWorld.com*, and *MiamiARTzine.com*, of which she is the founding editor and shepherded the online arts magazine through its first 100 issues. She is currently the theater reviewer for *The Palm Beach Daily News*.

+ **Mark Demeter** (*Davie*) is a Producer/Director for BECON-TV and volunteers for ACT of Davie as a lighting designer. He has directed and produced the popular local TV shows *On Stage with Iris Acker* and *Spotlight on the Arts*, both focused on the South Florida theater scene.

+ **Donna Horkey** (*Davie*) has performed many roles from actor, props master, and make-up artist to stage manager and director, including a two month stint traveling the south in a summer stock production of *Godspell*. She and her husband are avid theater goers and supporters.

+ **Mike Jeknavorian** (*Tamarac*) has written for Aetna Insurance, *Creative Loafing*, *FloridaArmenians.com*, *Hot Spots Magazine*, *OutClique Magazine*,

Sarasota Magazine, Tampa Bay Scene Magazine, The Oracle, The University of South Florida, The Woodlands Country Club, and UWire. Acting theater credits include Alice's Fourth-NYC (Strutters, a Gospel Musical), Alley Theatre (Jekyll and Hyde), Busch Gardens (various productions), CGMC Productions (Out! The Musical; Harvey and Friends, with Harvey Fierstein), Connecticut Cabaret (Barnum; Carousel), and Thomaston Opera House (My Fair Lady). Other theater credits include Busch Gardens (assistant stage manager), Hartford Stage Company (wardrobe assistant), Roundabout Theater Company (dresser), and Stage Works (costume designer).

+ Larry Jurrist (*Hollywood*) was a teacher in Dade County Public Schools for 36 years and was International Baccalaureate Coordinator at North Miami Senior High School for 11 years. He has performed in numerous South Florida theatrical venues over the past 35 years and also serves as a screener for the South Florida LGBT Film Festival.

+ Jeff Kiltie (*Wilton Manors*) is the General Manager of Aventura Arts & Cultural Center. A stage manager, producer and member of Actors' Equity Association, he has more than 30 years of experience in all aspects of the performing arts industry and previously served as President of the Carbonell Awards Board of Directors.

+ Jill Kratish (*Fort Lauderdale*) is the Director of Programming for the Broward Center for the Performing Arts and has extensive experience in the areas of Production and Programming. Her focus at BCPA is on programming a season of Broadway and Off-Broadway performances, concerts, comedy, family and educational performances, as well as special events for the Broward Center and its affiliate venues. A native of South Florida, Kratish served eight years as President of the Florida Professional Presenters Consortium, is a Broadway League member and a Tony Voter. Jill is a proud recipient of a Silver Palm Award for Outstanding Contribution to South Florida Theater. She holds a B.A. in theater from the University of Florida.

+ Lynne Schaefer (*Tamarac*) has many years of experience working as Production Manager/Assistant Stage Manager for numerous shows at Zoetic Stage (*I Am My Own Wife, Moscow, The Santaland Diaries, Frankenstein*), and prior to that worked fulltime on various Broadway productions (*Working, Da, The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*), and in

video production/script development for Sony/BMI for Billy Joel, Kiss, The Gypsy Kings, and Fresh Prince.

+ **Greg Schuh** (*Tamarac*) is an actor, director, teacher, dance and choreographer who has worked from California to New York, including directing shows for Playwrights Center of San Francisco, California Conservatory Theatre and the Palo Alto Players. He holds an MFA Degree in Acting from the University of Connecticut and attended the Lincoln Center Theatre's Directors Lab-West.

+ **David Simson** (*Pompano Beach*) is a veteran director with a passion for theater. He has directed multiple musicals (*Chicago, Pippin, West Side Story*), plus plays like *Endgame, The Shadow Box, and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* at Lake Worth Playhouse's black box theater, *A Class Act* at the Mizner Cultural Arts Center, and the sold-out *Casa Valentina* at Empire Stage.

+ **Gilda Steiger** (*Hallandale Beach*) is a communication and marketing professional with over 20 years of experience in multi-media marketing for hospitality and hotel clients. A life-long lover of theater, she has served as executive assistant to author and playwright Norman Shabel since 2021, responsible for producing his six plays and publishing eight mystery novels.

From Miami-Dade County:

+ **Al Alschuler** (*Miami*) served sequentially on the Boards of Directors of the Players Repertory Company and of its successors (Players State Theatre and Coconut Grove Playhouse)as well as the New Theatre, City Theatre and short-lived Skyline Theatre Company. A journalist specializing in the arts, travel, interior design, and architecture, he was also an editor and elected president of both the Interior Design Guild and the South Florida International Press Club.

+ **Nancy Doyle Cohen** (*Miami*) is the Assistant Director of Museum Operations for the Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU where she oversees the day-to-day operation of the museum, including programming, marketing, and membership. She is the former director of group sales for Broadway Across America at the company's Fort Lauderdale headquarters and is an avid theatergoer and arts patron.

+ **Christine Dolen** (*Davie*) was theater critic for the *Miami Herald* 1979-2015 and continues to cover culture for ArtBurstMiami.com. Her stories and reviews also have appeared in the *SunSentinel*, *New Times*, *Inspicio*, and other publications. In 2011, she was named one of a dozen of the country's most influential theater critics by *American Theatre Magazine*. Dolen is a recipient of a Silver Palm Award, the South Florida Theatre League's Remy Award, and the Carbonell's prestigious George Abbott Award in both 2001 and 2023.

+ **Nancy Duerr** (*Miami*) is an actor, spokesperson, TV host, and voice over artist who works TV, film, commercial, and theater contracts across the country. She has served on National and Local Boards of SAG and SAG-AFTRA for the last 25 years and was a member of the G1 team that merged the two unions.

+ **Isadora Zia Hernandez** (*Miami Beach*) is employed by the New World School of the Arts – Theater Division, where she coordinates meeting and travel, maintains the division calendar, and assists visiting guest artists.

+ **Marjorie O'Neill-Butler** (*Miami Beach*) has previously served as a Carbonell judge for six years and twice co-directed the annual awards ceremony. In addition, she has worked as a playwright and theater critic, and is currently a member of the Dramatists Guild, AEA and SAG-AFTRA.

+ **Ileana Oroza** (*Miami Beach*), who, after a career as a lecturer at the University of Miami's School of Communication and at *The Miami Herald*, where she served as both Arts Editor and Assistant Managing Editor, is now an independent editor with a special focus on cultural issues.

+ **Ellen Rusconi** (*Miami*) currently works at the Arsht Center for the Performing Arts and previously spent more than 20 years working both on Broadway and Off-Broadway for both nonprofit and commercial theaters. In addition, she is the former Producing Director of the Stage Directors & Choreographers Foundation.

+ **John Soliday** (*Miami*) is a Carbonell Award nominated "Best Director." Six of the 75-plus color-blind-cast productions he directed set box office records, including at Miami's Coconut Grove Playhouse; and he directed Broward Center's first Shakespeare: *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *The Tempest*. Dr. Soliday is University of Miami

Associate Professor of Cinema and Theater Arts; directs Europe's 31-year-old Czech National Film School English program in Prague, Vienna, Berlin, Munich, and Salzburg. His alumni work from Broadway to Hollywood, Chicago to Miami, across Asia, Russia, Europe, and the Americas; is a member of the Society of Stage Directors, past member of Actors Equity; recipient of The Tyrone Guthrie Award, The English-Speaking Union International Award, various acting, directing, speaking, and teaching awards, and the National Communication Association's Lifetime Achievement Award for Artistic Scholarship and International Leadership.

+ **Pauline Winick** (*Miami Beach*) is a leader in the local arts community after serving as Chairman of the Cultural Councils of Miami-Dade County and the City of Miami Beach. She studies the Meisner method, performed in college, and continues to study plays and the technical requirements of stagecraft.

From Palm Beach County:

+ **Dr. Lhisa Almashy** (*Lake Worth*) is an award-winning educator who spent the last 28 years working with the School District of Palm Beach County, most recently directing the strategic initiative on equity, access, and cultural competency. She earned her B.A. in Theater and History and a Master of Arts degree from the University of San Francisco, and a doctorate in Leadership and Learning in Organizations from Peabody College at Vanderbilt University. Dr. Almashy founded film and theater organizations in California and Michigan, worked with the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, and has even judged high school thespian competitions. A distinguished keynote speaker and panel moderator, she has also facilitated cultural competency and diversity workshops.

+ **Barbara Bradshaw** (*Delray Beach*), a 17-time Carbonell Award nominee and four-time winner, has been a professional actress for more than 50 years. She also is the recipient of the Carbonell's Bill Hindman Award (2020), FPTA Lifetime Achievement Award (2019), and Best Actress Award winner for Los Angeles Dramalogue and the Silver Palm Awards.

+ **Cheryl Dunn Bychek** (*Royal Palm Beach*) served as PR/Marketing Director for the BoarsHead Theatre in Lansing, Michigan before filling the same role for the Theatre Club of the Palm Beaches, later promoting road shows at the Duncan Theatre in Lake Worth. She has been with the Carbonells since she was first recruited by Jack Zink in 1994.

+ **Elizabeth Dashiell** (*Jupiter*) is both Carbonell Coordinator and a judge, as were her predecessors Kent Chambers-Wilson and Mary Damiano. A longtime theater insider, Dashiell has been Co-Producer of the Palm Beach Shakespeare Festival since 2013 after serving 10 years as the annual event's PR/Marketing Director. For the last decade, she has also produced the annual indie film festival *swede fest palm beach*[™], managed multiple PR and promotional projects for the Kravis Center for the Performing Arts and Howard Alan Events, continues to be a board member of the Palm Beach County Attractions Committee, and is an adjudicator for The Pathfinder Awards/Theater.

+ **Hap Erstein** (*West Palm Beach*) was theater critic for *The Palm Beach Post* 1994-2008 and was previously theater critic for *The Washington Times* 1982-1994, where he won many awards and was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in Criticism. For many years, he was a judge for the Helen Hayes Awards, and continues to review theater and writes related features for *Palm Beach ArtsPaper*, an online and print magazine. In 2022, he received the Carbonell's prestigious Charlie Cinnamon Award.

+ **Sharon Geltner** (*Boynton Beach*) is an award-winning writer and multimedia communication specialist who covers travel, hospitality, arts and entertainment, Palm Beach society, and more. The author of *Charity Bashed*, a mystery satire that was a semifinalist in Amazon's Breakthrough Novel contest, she is a contributing writer/reviewer for *Palm Beach Arts Paper*.

+ **Allen H. Jones** (*West Palm Beach*) is a retired Production Designer who has worked on hundreds of TV commercials, films, and plays, and was former Resident Set Designer for The Great American Children's Theatre, a nationally recognized company associated with the Nederlander Organization.

+ **Mark Keller** (*Boynton Beach*) has been a producer/presenter for numerous Broadway shows—in development: *161st Street: A New York Musical*, *Allan Carr: Can't Stop the Stories!*, *Fatly Beautiful*; as an investor: *War Horse*, *A Christmas Story: The Musical*. His Off Broadway management credits include *Oh Me Oh My Oh Youmans*, *Knitters In The Sun*, *Company*, *On A Clear Day*, *Count Dracula*, and he has presented concerts starring Lucie Arnaz, Betty Buckley, Christine Ebersole, Linda

Eder, Sutton Foster, Lorna Luft, Andrea McArdle, Donne McKechnie, Billy Porter, Faith Prince, Chita Rivera, and more). He is a member of Actors' Equity Association, Society of Arts & Letters, South Florida Theatre League, the Association of Performing Arts Presenters, and he teaches at the Plumosa School of the Arts and the Exceptional Theatre Company.

+ **Dale King** (*Greenacres*) is an award-winning newspaper reporter and critic in both Rhode Island and Florida. He currently writes for such publications as *Palm Beach Arts Paper* and *South Florida Theatre Magazine*.

+ **Christine LeShay** (*Delray Beach*) began her career in 1993 as stage manager and sound technician for the Quest Theatre & Institute in West Palm Beach, later making her acting debut under the artistic direction of Bhetty Waldron. She is a playwright and owner/artistic director of A.C.T.S. of Life Productions.

+ **Teri Mitze** (*Boynton Beach*) started her career as an Associate Producer at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. She was Founder and Producer of The Great American Children's Theatre for 22 years, eventually a program of the Nederlander Organization, where her responsibilities included producing, promoting, and touring the Equity company to 19 cities. She also produced as many as 300 national television commercials and worked as Assistant to Production Designer on several feature films; spent a year as Chief of Staff for the CEO of RKO Pictures; and produced and consulted On/Off-Broadway productions.

+ **Deborah Nix** (*Delray Beach*) is a retired high school and middle school counselor who encouraged students to enjoy and pursue the arts, as well as an 8-year judge for the "Read Together" program of the Palm Beach County Literacy Coalition. As a student at Fisk University in Nashville she performed in plays at the Little Theatre on campus. A lifelong theater student and enthusiast, she has enjoyed theater productions at the Karamu Theatre in Cleveland, the Red Barn Theater in Woodstock, NY, and the Alliance/AUC Players in Atlanta.

+ **Jeremy Quinn** (*Boynton Beach*) returned to South Florida in 2016 after working in and around NYC for 22 years, including having served as Producing Artistic Director of the White Plains Performing Arts Center (2011-2016) where he produced and directed several NY regional

premieres. He has acted in or directed over 300 theatrical productions including On and Off Broadway and three National Tours. Quinn is a member of the prestigious Lincoln Center Theater Directors Lab, was Director and Associate Director of the Broadway/Off-Broadway Theatre World Awards 2007-2016, Associate Producer for Broadway for a New America, Founder and Producing Artistic Director of the Island City Theatre Project, Founder and President of The NY Actors' Alliance, and former member of AEA and SAG. More at www.jeremyquinn.com.

+ Linda Shorrock (*Boynton Beach*) Is a South Florida resident who works both professionally and in higher education in costuming for theaters throughout the US. She is the current costumer for Palm Beach State College, and professionally works as a designer, wardrobe coordinator, and costume technician. Some of her recent shows include *Zorba* and *A Little Night Music* at Palm Beach Dramaworks, *The Fantasticks* and *Shout* at the Winter Park Playhouse, *The Devil's Music* at Arts' Garage, *Company* for MNM Productions, and *Groundhog Day* for Slow Burn Theatre Company. Other recent favorite productions include the critically acclaimed *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* for Slow Burn Theatre Company, and the Magellan Gold Award winning show *Elyria* for Celebrity Cruise Lines.

+ Jan Sjostrom (*Boca Raton*) spent 28 years as cultural editor and theater reviewer for *The Palm Beach Daily News* before retiring in 2021. She currently is a critic for the online magazine *South Florida Theater on Stage*, and also is an adjudicator for the Kravis Center's Dream Awards for high school musicals.

About The Carbonell Awards

The Carbonell Awards fosters the artistic growth of professional theater in South Florida by celebrating the diversity of our theater artists, providing educational scholarships, and building audience appreciation and civic pride by highlighting achievements of our theater community. More than 20 professional theater companies in Broward, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach Counties participate in the awards process every year. The Carbonell Awards also celebrate the accomplishments of local artistic leaders by presenting several Special Awards.

Along with New York's Drama Desk and Chicago's Joseph Jefferson Awards, the Carbonell Awards are among the nation's senior regional arts awards and predate others, including Washington, D.C.'s Helen Hayes

Awards. The Carbonell Awards are named after Manuel Carbonell, an internationally renowned sculptor, who designed the original solid bronze and marble award in 1976, the signature trophy that is given annually to Carbonell Award winners. Over the last 46 years, the Carbonell family has donated more than \$250,000 in awards. For more information, please visit www.carbonellawards.org.