

Media Contacts:

For general inquiries about the Hylton Performing Arts Center:

Catherine Ferraro

(703) 993-8813 (office)

(703) 725-0416 (cell)

cferraro@gmu.edu

For inquiries about performances at the Hylton Performing Arts Center:

Jill Graziano Laiacona

(703) 993-8794

jgrazia1@gmu.edu

Hylton Performing Arts Center Background

As the first dedicated performing arts center in Prince William County, the Hylton Performing Arts Center was born out of a partnership among Prince William County, George Mason University, the City of Manassas, the Commonwealth of Virginia and individuals and businesses in the private sector.

Located on Mason's Prince William Campus, the \$46 million, 85,000-square-foot center provides a unique setting for local, national and international arts groups and performers, as well as university-related activities. The center's programs and events reflect the wide range of performing arts activities in the region and diverse interests of the community.

The center is expected to provide a much-needed economic boost to the region. In addition to creating many new full- and part-time jobs, officials expect to see an increased demand for new restaurants, stores and other local businesses, leading to a direct economic impact of nearly \$7 million annually.

The center also brings cultural benefits to the surrounding communities and is home to more than 10 local and regional arts groups including the NOVA Manassas Symphony Orchestra and the Youth Orchestras of Prince William. During the first year alone, more than 125 performances ranging from ballet to bluegrass to Broadway will take place in the venue including those by national and international touring artists such as American Voices featuring Crystal Gayle, Larry Gatlin and Andy Cooney; Dailey & Vincent; Opole, Philharmonic of Poland; the Capitol Steps; and the Russian National Ballet Theater as part of the Hylton Presents series.

In addition to the economic and cultural benefits to the region, the center has had a major impact on the academic life of Mason's College of Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA) and has provided facilities in which students and faculty can train, rehearse and perform.

The center, which is named for the Cecil D. and Irene V. Hylton Foundation of Dale City, Va., boasts several different venues under one roof.

The center's largest performance venue, the 1,121-seat Merchant Hall, is named by Carol Merchant Kirby and Peter Kirby to honor Mrs. Kirby's parents, Caton and Mae Merchant. Mrs. Kirby is a member of Mason's Prince William Campus Advisory Board, as well as the university's Board of Visitors, and is a long-time patron of the arts.

John O. Gregory, chairman of Gregory Construction Inc., which has played an important role in shaping the landscape of Manassas and Prince William County, gave a naming gift for the second venue in the center in memory of his wife, Angela, and son, Scott. The 4,400-square-foot, 270-seat Gregory Family Theater can be configured for many different types of performances and events.

The center will also partner with the Didlake Foundation, which creates opportunities for people with disabilities through services that connect them to employment, education and the community. As part of this partnership, which was made possible through the estates of Mr. and Mrs. Roger J. Costello, the center's 7,300-square-foot foyer is named the Didlake Grand Foyer. The space, with its sweeping staircase, provides an ideal setting for community, corporate and social events.

For more information, visit the Hylton Performing Arts Center Web site at:
www.hyltonperformingartscenter.com.

Editor's Note: High resolution images of the Hylton Performing Arts Center are available at http://www.smugmug.com/gallery/11355403_aD3Ma#816631693_4i4MY