

## **REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

### **HENDERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**MEETING DATE:** October 21, 2009

**SUBJECT:** Flat Rock Playhouse – Use of Courtroom

**ATTACHMENTS:** Yes

#### **SUMMARY OF REQUEST:**

The Flat Rock Playhouse has requested the Board of Commissioners consider a request for their use of the Courtroom for the production of “Twelve Angry Men”. The play is a classic piece of theater which primarily involves deliberations in a jury room, though there are courtroom scenes in the play.

The dates requested by the Playhouse are June 24, 2010 through July 18, 2010. The performances would begin with a preview performance on Wednesday, June 30, 2010 with the official opening night on Saturday, July 3, 2010. The Playhouse also requests the use of the Community Room on Saturday, July 3, 2010 for an opening night gala.

#### **BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:**

The Board is requested to approve the use of the Courtroom from June 24, 2010 through July 18, 2010, and the use of the Community Room on Saturday, July 3, 2010. The Board is also requested to authorize the Chairman to work with the Flat Rock Playhouse on specific details regarding the use of the Courthouse throughout the planning process.

#### **Suggested Motion:**

*I move the Board of Commissioners approve the Flat Rock Playhouse’s use of the Courtroom from June 24, 2010 through July 18, 2010, and the use of the Community Room on Saturday, July 3, 2010. I further move the Board authorize the Chairman to work with the Flat Rock Playhouse on specific details regarding the use of the Courthouse throughout the planning process.*



**PLAYHOUSE**  
*The State Theatre of North Carolina*

P.O. BOX 310 • FLAT ROCK, NC • 28731

828 693-0403 • FAX 828 693-6795

[www.flatrockplayhouse.org](http://www.flatrockplayhouse.org)

9/21/09

Steve Wyatt  
County Manager  
1 Historic Courthouse Sq, Suite 2  
Hendersonville, NC 28792

Dear Mr. Wyatt:

Flat Rock Playhouse is about to undergo some very exciting changes and growth. As you may know, a new Executive Director has been hired. His name is Vincent Marini and his plans for the future of the Playhouse include some new ventures that would actually take place at locations other than our facility. I am writing to you about just such a venture and hope that the idea is as potentially exciting for you as it is for us.

"Twelve Angry Men" is a classic piece of theatre that was made into a very successful film with Henry Fonda. Actually, its first inception was a teleplay in 1954. Regardless of the fact that the play (1957) is over fifty years old, the topic is incredibly relevant today. Mr. Wyatt, we would love to produce this play at the Henderson County Courthouse in the actual Courtroom. Mr. Marini and I had the pleasure to tour the building (which looks fantastic) and there couldn't be a more exciting fit. We would also love, if possible, to use the Community Room for an opening night gala.

Mr. Wyatt we believe this could be a tremendous win/win situation for Flat Rock Playhouse, the Historic Courthouse Museum as well as the merchants of Main Street. The dates we hope we could secure would be June 24 – July 18. We would begin performances with a preview performance on Wednesday, June 30 with an official opening night event in the Community Room on Saturday night, July 3.

I would be grateful for the opportunity to discuss this with you further and hope that we can arrange a conversation at some point in the near future. Any consideration on your part to help us to achieve this would be ever so appreciated. I can be reached at 828-693-0403 x204 or [scott@flatrockplayhouse.org](mailto:scott@flatrockplayhouse.org)

Thank you for your consideration,

Scott Treadway  
Associate Artistic Director



# 12 ANGRY MEN

by Reginald Rose

Produced by **FLAT ROCK PLAYHOUSE** in association with the

Henderson County Historic Courthouse Corporation







## TWELVE ANGRY MEN

*"Reginald Rose's 12 Angry Men is a penetrating, sensitive and sometimes shocking dissection of the hearts and minds of men who obviously are something less than gods. It makes for taut, absorbing and compelling drama that reaches far beyond the close confines of its jury room setting."* - A.H. Weiler, *New York Times Review*

*Twelve Angry Men*, by the American playwright Reginald Rose, was originally written for television, and it was broadcast live on CBS's show *Studio One* in 1954. The fifty-minute television script can be found in Rose's *Six Television Plays*, published in 1956 (out of print in 2005). Rose expanded the play for the stage, and a new version was published in 1955 (Dramatic Publishing Company; in print). Two years later, in 1957, Rose wrote the screenplay for a film version, which he co-produced with the actor Henry Fonda. The play has subsequently been updated and revived; for example, in a production at the American Airlines Theater in New York City in 2004. The play was inspired by Rose's own experience of jury duty on a manslaughter case in New York City. At first, he had been reluctant to serve on a jury, but, he wrote, "the moment I walked into the courtroom ... and found myself facing a strange man whose fate was suddenly more or less in my hands, my entire attitude changed." Rose was greatly impressed by the gravity of the situation, the somber activity of the court, and the "absolute finality" of the decision that he and his fellow jurors would have to make.





# June 30 - July 18, 2010

## Creating an "Event Atmosphere" on Main Street!

He also thought that since no one other than the jurors had any idea of what went on in a jury room, "a play taking place entirely within a jury room might be an exciting and possibly moving experience for an audience" ("Author's Commentary" on *Twelve Angry Men* in *Six Television Plays*). The result is a taut, engrossing drama in which eleven jurors believe the defendant in a capital

others to his way of thinking.

The play focuses on a jury's deliberations in a capital murder case. A 12-man jury is sent to begin deliberations in the first-degree murder trial of an 18-year-old Latino accused in the stabbing death of his father, where a guilty verdict means an automatic death sentence. The case appears to be open-and-shut: The defendant has a weak alibi; a knife he claimed



Original Movie Poster

scene. Eleven of the jurors immediately vote guilty; only Juror No. 8 (Mr.

believe beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant is guilty. As the deliberations unfold, the story quickly becomes a study of the jurors' complex personalities (which range from wise, bright and empathetic to arrogant, prejudiced and merciless), preconceptions, backgrounds and interactions. That provides the backdrop to Mr. Davis' attempts in convincing the other jurors that a "not guilty" verdict might be appropriate.



murder trial is guilty, while one juror stands up courageously for what he believes is justice and tries to persuade the

to have lost is found at the murder scene; and several witnesses either heard screaming, saw the killing or the boy fleeing the

Davis) casts a not guilty vote. At first Mr. Davis' bases his vote more so for the sake of discussion after all, the jurors must



2004 Broadway Production



# Key Dates and Information

## TWELVE ANGRY MEN

*The playhouse will create a cooperative arrangement with local restaurants for a series of special "Dinner and a show" packages.*

*The courthouse will serve as the major scenic element for the show with the Playhouse bringing in some non-intrusive theatrical lighting to create the appropriate atmosphere.*

*From the moment you walk into the courthouse, the "experience" will be like entering the courtroom of a murder trial in the 1950s. It will "feel" like patrons are going back in time.*

*The playhouse will run 7 or 8 shows per week (Tuesday - Sunday) beginning on July 30 with a special emphasis on the July 4 weekend. The schedule will likely be Tues-Sat at 8pm with matinees on Thursday and Sunday at 2pm.*

*The playhouse will need unfettered access to the courthouse for rehearsals and technical set-up beginning on June 23. The specific hours can be discussed and negotiated.*

*We will need to interface with individuals who have specific knowledge of the various rooms available to us and the electrical and HVAC mechanisms within the courthouse. We can start those technical discussions now so that we have a clear understanding of what awaits us in the historic building.*

*We are going to be seeking funding and support for the project from local, regional, county and statewide sources including private foundations, government entities and private individuals.*

*The playhouse will offer trade space for existing organizations that normally use the courthouse during the show's rehearsal and performance dates.*

For additional information about the show, please feel free to contact us to discuss how we can make this a major tourism event for Hendersonville/Flat Rock.



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