



PARAMOUNT THEATRE

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For Immediate Release

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PARAMOUNT THEATRE'S "ACT 2" CAMPAIGN GETS \$250,000 BOOST FROM IDEA HATCHED MORE THAN 25 YEARS AGO



Click [here](#) to download renderings of the new John C. Dunham Aurora Arts Center and Paramount School of Performing Arts. Please credit interior renderings by Vara Design.

AURORA, IL, March 2, 2018 – Following the recent announcement of Paramount Theatre's major "Act 2" capital campaign launch, the fundraising effort has received another huge shot in the arm from its endowment fund.

Created in 1983 by Anne Goldsmith, Ed Schmitt and other community leaders, the Paramount Arts Centre Endowment (PACE) has supported the theater annually using investment income from the \$2 million fund. The annual donation, totaling approximately \$80,000, depends on PACE's investment results, but with the outstanding stock market returns recently, an exceptional gift has been earmarked for the theater's new Act 2 Capital Campaign: a grant of \$250,000.

Paramount's Vice President of Development Katie Arko said, "This significant award will go a long way in helping us reach our goal of \$4.5 million. Combined with the Dunham Fund's \$2.5 million grant, announced last month, we're more confident than ever that this campaign will exceed its initial estimations."

More about the Paramount Arts Centre Endowment

The PACE grant is the result of a vision conceived more than 25 years ago by a community member and volunteer extraordinaire, Anne Goldsmith. Goldsmith recruited other prominent and hardworking volunteers in Aurora, including Ed Schmitt, to work with her to create an endowment fund to provide a perpetual stream of income to the Paramount. Through Goldsmith's efforts and those of the board of directors she assembled, \$2 million was raised through sheer determination and unwavering certainty in the importance of the Paramount Arts Centre.

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Three years after the endowment was created, Schmitt joined the Paramount's board of directors where he served for more than 26 years before his recent passing. Goldsmith continued her work on behalf of the endowment fund in addition to enlisting new board members for PACE to ensure its longevity.

"Anne was a unique and brilliant person," said Arko. "The first time I met her, I felt I was in the presence of someone extremely intelligent, driven, decisive and maybe even just a tiny bit stubborn, but in a good way! I knew in short order why she was so successful at raising funds. She had a conviction for the cause that shone through and a determination which would have made it difficult for anyone to say no."

Now presiding as co-chairs on the PACE board are Dick and Arlene Hawks, who hope to continue Goldsmith's legacy by raising additional funds to support the theater. "As lifelong arts advocates, Dick and I are happy to continue our support of the Paramount through our service on the PACE board," Arlene Hawks said. "We are thrilled to see the far reaching creative genius the Paramount displays in its theatrical seasons and in the arts education world. Anne would be proud!"

Dick Hawks also served on the Paramount's board of directors for years, alongside Ed Schmitt. "When Ed decided to support a project, he was all-in, one hundred percent," Hawks recalled. "This was certainly the case at the Paramount both through his wise leadership and generosity. It is a privilege to help further the Paramount's recent successes and vision for the future. But I also know without the visionaries of the past, namely Anne Goldsmith and Ed Schmitt, all of today's achievements would not have been possible."

Ed Schmitt's legacy at the Paramount began with the endowment fund but quickly shifted to a passion for helping to guide the future of the theater. Schmitt's enthusiasm, determination and keen business sense made him a tremendous asset to the Paramount board for more than a quarter of a century, but his knowledge and sound advice never overshadowed his kind generosity. Notably, during the recession, the Paramount board and staff were facing a difficult decision to cancel the annual volunteer usher holiday party due to budget constraints. Schmitt and wife Marie Claire were adamant that this gesture of thanks to the theater's beloved volunteers not be canceled or scaled back in any way. Instead, they volunteered to fund the celebration that included a prime rib dinner.

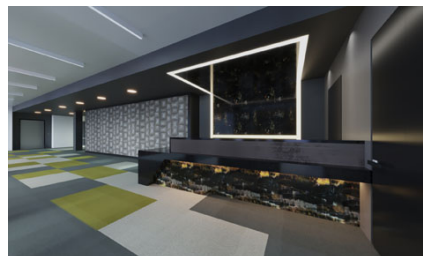
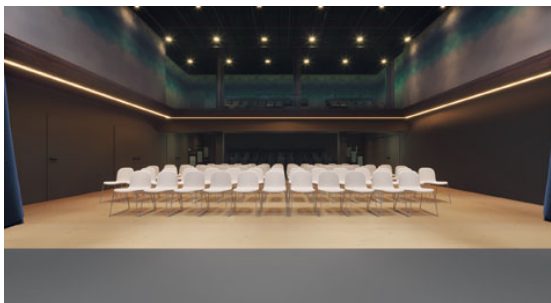
In memory of Anne Goldsmith and Ed Schmitt, their respective sons Bruce Goldsmith and Ed Schmitt, Jr. have been named Honorary Co-Chairs of the Act 2 Campaign and are both serving on the committee to help raise funds for the future success of the Paramount Theatre.

"My father was a huge supporter of the Paramount, and prior to his recent passing, he was thrilled with the prominence it was achieving. He always said that the Paramount was key to the success of Aurora and its downtown. On behalf of my brother Richard and myself, we are happy to honor his memory by serving as honorary co-chairs of this important campaign," said Schmitt, Jr.

“My mother grew up with a great appreciation of music and the arts. Her dream was to see a vibrant Paramount Theatre in downtown Aurora. She also wanted to promote a younger audience so that there would be new generations of theater lovers. This fundraising drive is part of that legacy,” said Goldsmith.

Act 2 Chairman and former Aurora Mayor Thomas Weisner said, “I cannot think of a better way to honor and remember two remarkable individuals who cared so deeply for Aurora and the Paramount. We are grateful for the continuation of support from the Goldsmith and Schmitt families through this next generation.”

About the Act 2 Capital Campaign



Click [here](#) to download interior renderings of the Paramount School of the Arts.

Please credit renderings by Vara Design.

The Act 2 Capital Campaign will support three major areas of expansion and improvement. The first is the creation of the Paramount School of the Arts soon to be located in the new John C. Dunham Aurora Arts Center, directly adjacent to the Paramount Theatre.

Secondly, all 1,888 original seats that have served more than eight million visitors since the theater opened in 1931 will be replaced starting summer 2018.

Lastly, Paramount’s 173-seat sister stage, the Copley Theatre, located in the North Island Center directly across the street from the Paramount, will undergo a complete modernization.

With this \$250,000 grant and the \$2.5 million donation previously received from the Dunham Fund, Paramount’s Act 2 Capital Campaign is closing in on the \$4.5 million goal. To close the gap, the Paramount staff, along with a volunteer committee led by Thomas Weisner, is calling on patrons, community members, foundations and corporations to support the important work being done by the theater. For information on how to contribute, contact Katie Arko, katiea@paramountarts.com or (630) 723-2484.