



BACKSTAGE bulletin

Big things are happening because of donors like *you*

A NOTE FROM PARAMOUNT'S CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER



Dear Friends,

As seasons come and go, I tend to get sentimental in autumn. Fall is my absolute favorite for many reasons—college football, cooler temperatures, and...of course...a new slate of shows to enjoy. We've only just started the 2023 - 24 Broadway Series season, and yet our announcement for the next season is right around the corner. We can't wait to reveal the magical memories we'll share together in 2024-25.

Just a couple weeks ago, we hosted our first gala in many years which raised over \$280,000 featuring the talents of Brian Stokes Mitchell and Sutton Foster. I'd like to express my heartfelt thanks to the Dunham Foundation and Jonathan and Amber Hylton for inspiring so many folks to support us that evening with their matching contributions.

Not only was the event a philanthropic success, but it also introduced a new generation of friends and donors to Paramount while providing needed funds to support our artistic and community engagement endeavors. And, so much of it was made possible by our committee who worked to create a magnificent evening for the benefit of our community.

Inside this issue of the *Backstage Bulletin* are more stories that I hope you find inspiring as we look back on the success you've helped create this year. On October 2 we won two Jeff Awards. The School of the Arts increased enrollment by 50% this fall. And new audiences are joining us for performances all year long. This activity created more than \$30 million in local economic impact last year alone.

As impressive as that may be, the theater industry faces profound challenges, many of which have been outlined in publications across the country. Paramount is not immune from the obstacles faced by other institutions in our artistic community. However, your steadfast investment in our organization continues to propel us into the future.

As we head into the season of gratitude, I am humbled to have your support and dedication to Paramount. Big things are happening because of donors like you.

Gratefully, *Jonathan Jensen*

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

NOV. 8, 2023 - JAN. 14, 2024
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory
Paramount Theatre

NOV. 17 - DEC. 23
The Second City's
Holiday Revue
Copley Theatre

NOV. 17 - DEC. 24
Christkindlmarket
RiverEdge Park

NOV. 28
Giving Tuesday



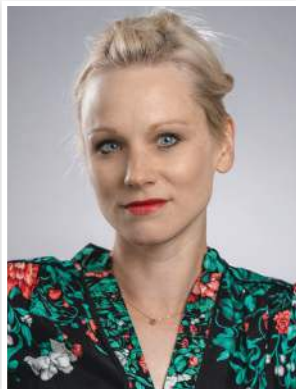
PARAMOUNT
THEATRE

PARAMOUNT SPOTLIGHT

INTRODUCING KARA DAVIDSON



We are excited to introduce you to Kara Davidson, Paramount's new Director of New Works and Associate Artistic Producer. She comes to Paramount with over 15 years of professional experience in the field including acting, playwrighting, directing, teaching, arts administration and theater management. Kara holds an MFA in playwriting and screenwriting from the University of Nebraska at Omaha and a BA in Theatre Performance from University of Nebraska, Lincoln. She has worked in theaters throughout the Midwest and Great Plains at various capacities. What drew her specifically to Paramount was the position our theater has to cultivate new works and the commitment it has made to support playwrights, artists and accessibility.



So what does a New Works Director do? Well, Kara considers herself a shepherd. She is responsible for making connections with playwrights and creating opportunities for them to showcase their works and ushering them through different stages of the creative process. In short, Kara helps to bolster and support the artists and thus elevate the artistic community experience as a whole.

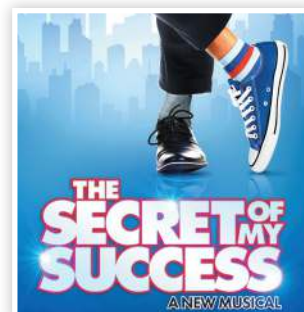
For Kara creating a new work is very similar to the application of the scientific method; one starts with an idea and goes through a lot of trial and error before it's ready to take stage. New works take years of development and with Kara's appointment she is excited to pull back the curtain and invite the public into the process. This means there will be future opportunities during which you, our audience, will be invited to readings and showcases so that you can follow along with us from the inception stages of a new project.

For her first year at Paramount, Kara is focused on developing relationships with the local and national artistic community to help create a pipeline of projects at various stages of development which need further support—that's where Paramount comes in, to provide that support through our expert staff and facilities. New works will focus on art that reflects our cultural moments and to help support and cultivate artists who tell these vital stories.

How can you help support New Works at Paramount? Kara is passionate about providing a variety of developmental opportunities for creators of any age, demographic, background, and experience level. In addition to hosting readings and presentations of new plays and musicals, initiatives will also include: a Young Playwrights Festival which will support high school age playwrights by offering an opportunity to showcase their original work to the Paramount community, free workshops and educational offerings for both established and new playwrights, as well as events to build connections with local, national and international artists who are creating exciting new experiences for the stage. We're excited to have Kara join our team and to continue growing our New Works program.

NEW WORKS ON THE PARAMOUNT STAGE

The Secret of My Success and *BULL: a love story* are two examples of New Works which Paramount ushered through the creative process and onto the stage.



DONOR DIGEST

R.C. WEGMAN AND THE IMPORTANCE OF LEGACY GIVING

R.C. Wegman has been a part of the Aurora area since 1955, with over 62 years of business experience and community involvement. This family-run business has been a Paramount supporter since 2014. We recently sat down with Colette Rozanski, current president of R.C. Wegman, and former president Terry Bohr for a conversation on their family legacy and support of Paramount.

Do you have a favorite Paramount memory?

Terry: I can't really think of one favorite memory. We really love it every time we go to Paramount for a show. Probably some of our favorites have been seeing Donny and Marie, and Kenny Rodgers. My favorite Broadway show by far was *Million Dollar Quartet*. That show was outstanding.

Colette: Seeing *Rent* in the front row. The voices and set were truly Broadway-caliber and really drew me into my love of the Broadway Series. I look forward to each new series announcement.

What do you love about our work?

Terry: Two things: the variety of shows and the quality. It seems like there is something for everyone no matter your age or taste, and the quality of the sets, the music, and the talent is always extraordinary.

Colette: I love the ambiance of the theater and the detailed set design, but most of all I love the variety of extraordinary talent the Paramount casts for each show.

Your family and firm have a historic connection to Paramount. What does that legacy mean to you?

Terry: It means a great deal to me. I am very proud to tell others that our firm was involved with the historic restoration of Paramount back in the late 70s. I was a young carpenter back then and I can still show my children and grandchildren the areas I worked on at that time. The restoration was a very significant occurrence for the City, and I am very proud to have played a part in it.



R.C. WEGMAN CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

How has that investment in Paramount changed Aurora over the years?

Colette: The change has been dramatic. Paramount and RiverEdge Park are key to future development in downtown. As a child growing up in the late 80s and early 90s and attending *Downtown Alive!* and maybe one show a year at the Paramount, it went under-utilized. Now with the amazing acts and Broadway Series, Paramount truly keeps Aurora residents and visitors coming downtown year-round.

Terry: The change has been dramatic, for the better. With Paramount taking the lead, Aurora has the chance to be a very dynamic performing arts destination. I think the Paramount is the key to all future development in downtown.

What are you hoping to accomplish with your philanthropy as sponsors and individual donors?

Terry: We just want to see Paramount continue to do what it does best. Provide quality entertainment that brings others to Aurora. We want Paramount to continue to be the economic development engine that it is.

What is your dream for Paramount as we look to future generations in our community?

Colette: To be the number one theater destination in Illinois, with an equally sought-after school for the arts.

Terry: To be the leader in growing the entertainment industry in Aurora.

While Colette carries on the family business and manages R.C. Wegman's relationship with Paramount, Terry continues to enjoy showing support for Paramount on a personal level. We owe a special thanks to both for their time and continued support of our theater. We are proud to be a part of their legacy and family history.



AN EVENING OF PHILANTHROPY AND BROADWAY STARS

On Friday, October 20 we held our reimagined gala and fundraising concert, *An Evening with Brian Stokes Mitchell & Sutton Foster*. Brian and Sutton are renowned Broadway stars with two Tony Awards each to their name. Our evening started off with our gala where we welcomed guests for dinner and program before heading into the concert where we were joined by patrons from across

the Chicagoland area—including 100 local theater students who attended the show free-of-cost.

Thanks to the generosity of our guests at the gala and concert patrons we raised over \$280,000 in support of Paramount Theatre’s general operations. We owe a huge thank you to everyone who joined us and generously donated towards the cause.



SUPPORT PARAMOUNT AND ENJOY AN UNFORGETTABLE THEATER GETAWAY!

Packages include:

- Round-trip airfare
- Hand-picked hotel accommodations
- Tickets to the hottest shows on Broadway or London’s West End

Paramount On Tour dates:

- May 17 – 20, 2024, New York City
- Jun. 23 – 30, 2024, London
- Oct. 4 – 7, 2024, New York City
- Dec. 6 – 9, 2024, New York City

Don’t miss this adventure of a lifetime!
Scan QR for more information

