



A Special Jeff Award will be presented to director/producer William Pullinsi at the Jeff Awards Ceremony, October 19th, in recognition of his 50 years in theatre.

Pullinsi was the founder and artistic director of Candlelight Playhouse, America's first dinner theater, which opened in Washington, D.C., in 1959 and Summit, IL in 1961. Pullinsi is widely recognized for his work as director of the American musical. He has served as Artistic Director at Theatre at the Center since 2005. He has directed and/or produced more than 400 shows in his career, receiving 18 Jeff Awards. He also produced many shows posting record-breaking multi-year-runs, including "Fiddler on the Roof," "Man of La Mancha," and "Little Shop of Horrors," which transferred to the Royal George Theatre. Highlights of his career include purchasing the Broadway set of "Company" from Hal Prince; the off-Broadway plants for "Little Shop of Horrors," and the Tony Award-winning costumes from "Nine." Pullinsi also opened the Forum Theatre in 1970 to present more serious and thought-provoking theatre, including "The National Health," "Robert and Elizabeth," and the world premiere of "Boss." Additionally, at Candlelight, he took chances on musicals considered to be artistic or commercial flops that he turned major successes in the Chicagoland area, including "Follies," "Song & Dance," and "Rags." Shows for which he received Jeff Awards for both Production and Direction include: "Follies," "Into the Woods," "Phantom," "Little Shop of Horrors," "Nine," "The National Health," and "Man of La Mancha." He directed "Into the Woods" at Marriott's Lincolnshire Theatre; and the long-running "Over the Tavern" at Northlight Theatre and the Mercury Theatre. William Pullinsi served as Associate Producer of "Trying," a new play off Broadway.

Pullinsi received his B.F.A. from Boston Conservatory, did graduate work at the Goodman School and received the honorary degree of Doctor of Humanities from Lewis University. He was named a Distinguished Artist in the Theatre by the Chicago Academy of Arts and also by the Chicago Drama League. In 1989, Pullinsi became the first American director to stage a musical in Russia with a Soviet cast and crew, directing "Man of La Mancha" during a five week visit to the Drama Theatre of Turgenev in Orel. Pullinsi is a lifelong member of Actors Equity Association and a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers.

The 41st Annual Jeff Awards ceremony will be held on Monday, October 19, at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie, 9501 Skokie Boulevard. A pre-show Appetizer Buffet will run from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., and the Awards Ceremony, directed by Michael Weber, will begin at 7:30 p.m. Advance purchase tickets, which include the ceremony and the pre-show buffet, are \$75 (\$55 for members of Actors Equity Association, United Scenic Artists, Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, and the Dramatists Guild of America). The evening is black tie optional, and the public is cordially invited to attend. To purchase tickets, visit the Jeff Awards website at www.jeffawards.org. For more information, please contact Diane Hires at equitywing@jeffawards.org.

The Jeff Awards has been honoring outstanding theatre artists annually since it was established in 1968. With up to 50 members representing a wide variety of backgrounds in theatre, the Jeff Awards is committed to celebrating the vitality of Chicago area theatre by recognizing excellence through its recommendations, awards, and honors. The Jeff Awards fosters the artistic growth of area theatres and theatre artists and promotes educational opportunities, audience appreciation, and civic pride in the achievements of the theatre community. The Jeff Awards evaluates over 250 theatrical productions and holds two awards ceremonies annually. Originally chartered to recognize only Equity productions, the Jeff Awards established the Non-Equity Wing in 1973 to celebrate outstanding achievement in non-union theatre. The next Non-Equity awards ceremony will be held at the Park West on June 7, 2010.