

For Immediate Release—March 26, 2008

Local Nonprofit Receives Major Funding Toward Construction of New Performing Arts Center in Asheville

ASHEVILLE, NC, March 26, 2008 — The Asheville Area Center for the Performing Arts (AACPA) has received a \$1,000,000 grant from the Susanne Marcus Collins Foundation in Atlanta, toward the planning and construction of a new performing arts center in Asheville. The AACPA is a local not-for-profit spearheading the drive.

To receive the grant, the AACPA had to show by December 31, 2007 that three conditions had been met: 1) Asheville City Council formally agreed to support proceeding with the design of the facility; 2) Buncombe County Commissioners formally agreed to financial support; and 3) AACPA raised \$3,000,000 in gifts and pledges. On December 20, AACPA submitted documentation to the Foundation showing that all three conditions had been achieved.

More than 200 local benefactors gave or pledged \$3.28 million to meet the Foundation's challenge. "These gifts—even before a site is secured—speak to local donors' strong conviction that Asheville needs and deserves a new performing arts center to replace the aging and inadequate Thomas Wolfe Auditorium," says AACPA President Joyce Dorr.

"The Thomas Wolfe Auditorium has served our community well for many years," says Frosene Zeis, AACPA Board member, who with her husband Steve recently increased their pledge to over \$500,000. "I remember fondly my mother taking me to performances there. But now our area, with its richness of performing arts, really needs a hall that will showcase our local talent." Dr. Karl Quisenberry agrees. "We need superb acoustics, uninterrupted sight-lines, adequate restrooms and parking, and the stage and technical capacity to host our wonderful Asheville Symphony Orchestra as well as touring shows and other visiting performing artists. That's why Shirley and I have pledged \$250,000."

"Securing the grant is a significant milestone for us," says Dorr. "With this grant, the total we have raised since we began approaches \$5 million, and now this dream is becoming a real project!" The Board's next steps will be to secure a site and to begin preliminary design work while continuing to raise money. AACPA's Board of Directors is committed to locating the performance center downtown, says Dorr. "It will be a signature building for Asheville, and a gathering place for the community, one that the entire community will be proud of."

About The Susanne Marcus Collins Foundation

The Susanne Marcus Collins Foundation has been a major philanthropic force in Western North Carolina and in the Boston, MA area. In the Asheville area, the Foundation has supported numerous arts organizations and events, as well as environmental and social service organizations. The Foundation's headquarters are in Atlanta, GA.

About The Asheville Area Center for the Performing Arts

Incorporated as a 501(c)3 not-for-profit corporation in 2004, the AACPA Board is spearheading the drive to build a new performing arts center in Asheville. The current Board president is Dr. Joyce Dorr. *For more information about AACPA, see the backgrounder on the next page, and visit the AACPA website at www.theperformancecenter.org.*

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