

Marlene Smith 2009 Silver Ticket Award Winner for Outstanding Contribution to the Development of Canadian Theatre

One of the country's major contributors to Canadian theatre, long-time producer Marlene Smith, was presented with the Silver Ticket Award at the 30th Annual Dora Mavor Moore Awards, held Monday evening, June 29, 2009 at Toronto's Winter Garden Theatre.

Since 1980, the Silver Ticket Award has been bestowed upon an individual who has excelled in their own career while also nurturing the development of Canadian theatre. Presented by the Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts (TAPA), the Silver Ticket Award winner is selected by a committee of previous winners and entitles the recipient to a lifetime of theatre tickets to any TAPA member company production.

Marlene Smith has been producing and co-producing live theatre in Toronto for the last 40 years in almost every conceivable venue.

She initiated and co-produced the first "mega-musical" to play in Toronto with an all-Canadian cast and production team: the long-running *Cats*, thus signaling the rise of a new commercial phase in the life of Toronto theatre. *Cats* ran for an unprecedented five years, first at the Elgin Theatre, then on tour as the first major tour of a Canadian show before returning to Toronto's Massey Hall. She then co-managed the historic Elgin/Winter Garden Theatre complex through its inaugural five years of operation.

Her showbiz career began as Director of Group Sales for Hair at the Royal Alexandra Theatre. After working as publicist and company manager for the legendary *Godspell* (starring Andrea Martin, Martin Short, Gilda Radner, Eugene Levy, et al), she co-produced her first show (with Susan Rubes), *What's A Nice Country Like You Doing in a State Like This?* for Theatre in the Dell.

She has produced or co-produced such productions as *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *I'm Getting My Act Together and Takng it on the Road*, *Piaf*, *Tomfoolery (The Ports)*, *Damn Yankees* (Royal Alexandra Theatre), *Arsenic and Old Lace* (Hart House Theatre), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Crest Theatre), *Side by Side by Sondheim* (Elgin Theatre), *The Wizard of Oz* (Elgin Theatre), *Napoleon* (Elgin Theatre) and *The Complete Wrks of Wilm Shkspr (Abridged)* (Bathurst Street Theatre).

Smith has also given much to both the theatre and larger communities, serving on numerous boards and advisory groups, including those of the St. Lawrence Centre

for the Arts, the Shaw Festival and the Toronto Hospital Board. She currently sits on the Boards of Hart House Theatre, Theatre Museum of Canada, Performing Arts Lodges (PAL) and Studio 180.

She has also produced important fundraisers such as the star-studded *It's Always Something* which raises money for Gilda's Club of Greater Toronto, named in honour of the late comedienne Gilda Radner; and *DQ*, a fundraiser for Casey House, the most prominent Aids Hospice in Canada.

Smith has been married to Dr. David Smith for 52 years, has four children and ten grandchildren.