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Natasha Parsons Honoured with Leonard McHardy and John Harvey Award

Toronto, June 2, 2010 – The **Leonard McHardy and John Harvey Award (LMJH Award)** was inaugurated in 2008 and recognizes the important work of theatre, dance and opera administrators. Recipients of the LMJH Award have at least 10 years of demonstrated commitment to the performing arts, in addition to having made an impact on the industry in Toronto. The Award is named after **Leonard McHardy** and **John Harvey**, the celebrated owners of Toronto's Theatrebooks, which they co-founded in 1975, and now stands as one of the longest surviving independent bookstores in the country.

This year's recipient is **Natasha Parsons**, a diligent, warm-hearted individual who, in her 16 years working in the Box Office and Front of House at Tarragon Theatre, has become a beloved staple of both Tarragon and Toronto's theatre scene, leaving her mark on casts, crews and audiences alike.

Natasha Parsons began working at Tarragon Theatre as a co-op student in 1994, and immediately surpassed all expectations. The following summer, she was hired as Assistant Manager of the Box Office and Front of House, and was promoted to full-time manager shortly thereafter. She hasn't written a resume since.

Throughout her career with Tarragon, Natasha has managed two leadership transitions, installed a new ticketing system, boosted the theatre's presence on the web and social media, trained countless part-time staff and provided guidance to everyone lucky enough to ask. Producers, casts and crews across Toronto have warm memories of their dealings with Natasha.

But it's in her relationships with audiences that Natasha truly shines. Since she began at Tarragon, Natasha has served as the theatre's well-known friendly face. She takes the time to develop personal relationships with each and every subscriber, treating them with respect, politeness and professionalism. And it shows: Subscribers always stop to say hello to Natasha before a show, often ask for her advice when purchasing tickets, and aren't afraid to tell her what they think of the show afterwards. As such, Natasha has become an earpiece for the theatre, helping administrators make producing decisions based on audience reactions. Natasha has built a level of trust with audience members that has benefitted not only Tarragon, but the entire theatre community.

The previous winners of the LMJH Award are Jim Lefrancois and Naomi Campbell. The LMJH Award is administered by the Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts (TAPA). LMJH Award potential recipients are nominated by TAPA members and then reviewed by a committee. Chaired by Sandy Tulloch, the LMJH Selection Committee is Derrick Chua, Leonard McHardy, Jacoba Knaapen and Jim LeFrancois. The award winner receives a plaque and a cheque for \$1,000 through the generous sponsorship of Elizabeth Comper.

*TAPA is an arts service organization that represents nearly 200 professional theatre, dance and opera companies in the City of Toronto, and works to create an environment in which the performing arts may flourish. In addition to the Dora Mavor Moore Awards, programs and services offered by TAPA include: **T.O. TIX - Toronto's One-Stop Ticket Shop** at Yonge-Dundas Square and online at www.totix.ca; **The 5 Star Experience Theatre & Dining Packages**, **Toronto's Official Theatre Guide**; and **hipTIX**. For more information visit www.tapa.ca.*