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THE GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE HONORS
ROBERT A. IGER, PRESIDENT AND CEO,
THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY AND
AWARD-WINNING ACTRESS ANNETTE BENING
AT ANNUAL 'BACKSTAGE AT THE GEFFEN' GALA

***Star-Studded Evening Recognizes Leadership in the Theater Community
and Raises Funds for Geffen Playhouse Education Programs***

March 17, 2008

LOS ANGELES, January 22, 2008 — This year's 'Backstage at the Geffen' honorees include **Robert A. Iger**, President and CEO, The Walt Disney Company, and multi-award winning actress, **Annette Bening**, who will be recognized at the playhouse's annual gala on March 17. Mr. Iger will receive the Geffen's *Distinction in Service* award for his continued commitment to children and the arts. The Walt Disney Company has been instrumental in revitalizing American theater to a new generation and has made generous contributions towards positively impacting the lives of children and families. Internationally acclaimed actress and activist Annette Bening will receive the Geffen's *Distinction in Theater* award in recognition of her seemingly inexhaustible vast commitment to the arts both on and off stage.

Mr. Iger's award will be presented by theater/film director **Julie Taymor**, who garnered two Tony Awards for her work on the Disney theatrical production of *The Lion King*. Presenting Ms. Bening's award is fellow actress and activist **Angelica Huston**; the two women co-starred in the 1990 film *The Grifters* for which they both received Academy Award nominations.

Mr. Iger and Ms. Bening join an elite group of Geffen honorees including Helen Mirren (presented by John Lithgow in 2007), HBO President Colin Callender (presented by Annette Bening in 2006) and Karl Malden (presented by Tom Hanks 2005), who have each been celebrated at the *Backstage at the Geffen* gala, an event that has become known throughout the city as a "must-attend" night at the theater.

Producing Director Gil Cates guides an audience of theater lovers on a virtual backstage tour through a collection of intimate performances and behind-the-scenes stories told by some of LA's most prominent performers. This year's performances will be announced shortly, but

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previous artists who have shared their backstage stories include: Jason Alexander, Debbie Allen, Sally Field, Carrie Fisher, David Hyde Pierce and Rita Wilson.

The evening raises funds for the Geffen's *Stage for Any Age* programs, which help bring the excitement of live theater to nearly 24,000 families and community members each year. The proceeds from *Backstage at the Geffen* help underwrite low ticket admissions to *Saturday Scene*, the popular theater performances for children; fully support the *Geffen School Tours Program* that takes theater to participating elementary and middle-schools that have little or no resources for the performing arts; and benefit CREATE (Community Representatives Engaged in Active Theater Education), a season-long, interactive exploration and analysis of live theater for community and social service groups, deemed a model program by the City of Los Angeles.

BACKSTAGE AT THE GEFFEN GALA

Distinction in Service Award – Robert A. Iger, President and CEO, The Walt Disney Company
Distinction in Theater Award – Annette Bening

March 17, 2008

Geffen Playhouse

10886 Le Conte Avenue,
Los Angeles, CA 90024

TICKETS

For tickets and more information, please contact the Geffen Playhouse Director of Development, Regina Miller at 310.208.6500

ABOUT THE GEFFEN PLAYHOUSE

Awarded the *Preservation Award* by the Los Angeles Conservancy, the *Award of Excellence* from the Society of American Registered Architects, and the *Architectural Award of Excellence* by the Los Angeles Business Council for its acclaimed 2005, \$19 million renovation, the Geffen Playhouse begins its 12th season in 2007/2008, enjoying its stature as a leading West Coast theater company and the crown jewel of Los Angeles theater. Noted for its intimacy and celebrated for its eclectic mix of classic and contemporary plays, provocative new works and musicals, the Geffen continues to present a body of work that has garnered national recognition. Named in honor of entertainment mogul and philanthropist David Geffen, who donated one of the largest gifts ever made to an already-constructed theater, the company is headed by Producing Director and President of the Board Gilbert (Gil) Cates, Artistic Director Randall Arney and Managing Director Stephen Eich, and has produced eight world premieres, four Tony, four Pulitzer, and seven Obie-award winning shows in its 12 season history. Proudly associated with UCLA, the Geffen welcomes an audience of more than 130,000 each year, and maintains an extensive education and outreach program, designed to engage young people and the community at large in the arts. For more information, please visit geffenplayhouse.com.