

THE UNIVERSITY of  
**MISSISSIPPI**

**20th Anniversary Gala**  
featuring  
**Marilyn McCoo**  
& **Billy Davis, Jr.**  
Saturday, Mar. 25  
7:30 p.m.

**2022-23**  
**SEASON**

**FORD  
CENTER**

**20**  
TH

ANNIVERSARY



# Greetings from the Director

## A Season to Celebrate!

We are excited to announce our 20th Anniversary Season

for 2022 – 2023. It is hard for me to believe that twenty years have passed since I was watching my students perform on March 28, 2003 to celebrate the opening of the Ford Center. So many wonderful events have graced the main stage and studio theatre since that occasion. Just as they planned the first Gala, Sam and Mary Haskell have put together another stellar evening to celebrate our 20th year. Be sure to look at page 6 to view the exciting list of stars who will appear on Saturday, March 25, 2023!

We are back in full swing with a wide variety of shows that are sure to appeal to everyone. Our **Ford Series** offers classical and popular music with superb artists in every presentation. The **Broadway Series** features Disney at its best, the Queen of Soul, and a Gilbert & Sullivan operetta that appeared on Broadway and many know from the movie with Linda Ronstadt as Mabel. The **Artist Series**, selected by a committee of faculty and staff, includes one of our alums, comedian Jay

Jurden, a swashbuckling play, internationally known brass and string musicians, and the professional touring step show, Step Afrika!. I am proud to bring back the **Family Friendly** show, *Artrageous*, that delighted our audience in 2017. It is a unique and memorable arts experience for the whole family!

We are grateful for the support from Nancye B. Starnes and Joc and Leigh Anne Carpenter to fund the **Daytime School Series** for public school children. Early exposure to a live theatrical performance can change lives!

**THANK YOU** to Chancellor Emeritus Robert C. Khayat for his vision, and the Gertrude C. Ford Foundation for the means to bring this performing arts facility into existence. We are the beneficiaries of your extraordinary commitment to the arts!

It is a privilege and honor to serve as Director of the Ford Center. I work with a wonderful staff, supportive university administration, a fantastic Advisory Board, and have the opportunity to visit with our **Friends of the Ford Center** who give their time and treasure to the Ford Center. Thank you for helping the arts thrive in Oxford!

— Julia Aubrey

## Join the Friends of the Ford Center

In addition to the satisfaction of helping bring excellent programming to the Ford Center, members will receive a variety of benefits according to their giving level including:

- ◆ One Reserved Parking Pass for Season Ticket Holders
- ◆ Guaranteed Seat Selection
- ◆ Ford Center Cloisonné Ornament
- ◆ Early Order for Series Tickets
- ◆ Listing in Event Program and Lobby Friends Roll

Friends' benefits apply for the entire 2022-23 season.

Join online at [fordcenter.org/support](http://fordcenter.org/support).

For questions, contact Kate Meacham at **662-915-6502** or [kmeacham@olemiss.edu](mailto:kmeacham@olemiss.edu).



*“A solo recital that shimmers with  
Mr. Levingston’s mastery of  
color and nuance.”*

– The New York Times



## **Dawn of the Arts with Pianist Bruce Levingston and Special Guest Artists**

*Celebrating the UM Institute for the Arts  
Art & Art History • Music • Theatre & Film*

Thursday, Sept. 22 • 7:30 p.m.

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### **A virtuoso celebration of the creative arts at the University of Mississippi and beyond!**

Join internationally acclaimed pianist Bruce Levingston and distinguished University of Mississippi artists as we proudly announce the UM Institute for the Arts through an exciting evening of music, poetry, film, and art. We will celebrate the dawn of this new era in our arts programs with performances of Handel, Schubert, Chopin, Bizet, Debussy, Rachmaninoff and more!

This new organization will highlight and support the university’s outstanding departments of Art & Art History, Music, and Theatre & Film, and showcase the University of Mississippi as the paramount place to study and explore the arts in the state.



## Brass Transit The Musical Legacy of Chicago

Monday, Oct. 17 • 7:30 p.m.

Brass Transit brings together eight of the most talented and accomplished award-winning musicians for the sole purpose of paying tribute to one of the world's greatest and most successful pop/rock groups of all time, CHICAGO. With a world-class horn section, a rocking rhythm section and vocals stacked sky high, Brass Transit transports its audience back to the freewheeling days of the seventies. The band's show features all the hits from Chicago's golden age, 1969-1976 including, "Saturday In The Park", "25 or 6 To 4", "If You Leave Me Now", "Feelin' Stronger Every Day" and "You're The Inspiration".

## Nitty Gritty Dirt Band

Saturday, Oct. 29  
7:30 p.m.

With a refreshed lineup and newfound energy, The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band remains one of the most accomplished bands in American roots music. They played their first gig in 1966

in Southern California as a jug band and by 1969 had become a cornerstone of the burgeoning country-rock community. Each Nitty Gritty Dirt Band show features tight harmonies, thrilling instrumental flights, and undeniable stage chemistry. The latest Dirt Band lineup is expanded to six members for the first time since 1968 and includes founding member Jeff Hanna, harp master Jimmie Fadden (who joined in 1966), and soulful-voiced Bob Carpenter, who has more than 40 years of service in the ensemble. Those veterans are now joined by singer-songwriter-bass man Jim Photoglo, fiddle and mandolin wizard Ross Holmes, and Hanna's son, the preternaturally talented singer and guitarist Jaime Hanna.



FORD SERIES



## Mindi Abair

Thursday, Nov. 17 • 7:30 p.m.

One of the most recognized and sought-after saxophonists/vocalists in the music industry, Mindi Abair has garnered 2 GRAMMY nominations, recorded with some of the biggest names in music, and built a substantial following among jazz and blues audiences with her soaring melodies and powerhouse style.

In 2014, Mindi received her first Grammy nomination in the Best Pop Instrumental Album category for her solo LP *Wild Heart*, featuring Gregg Allman, Joe Perry, Trombone Shorty, Booker T. Jones, Keb' Mo' and Max Weinberg. In 2015, she received a second Grammy nomination for her collaboration with Dave Koz, Richard Elliot and Gerald Albright on *Summer Horns*.

In addition to her acclaimed body of solo work, Mindi has been the featured saxophonist on *American Idol*, appeared with Paul Shaffer and the band numerous times on the *Late Show with David Letterman*, sat in with The Roots on *The Tonight Show starring Jimmy Fallon* and joined rock legend Aerosmith for the band's 2012 summer tour.

## Black Violin *Give Thanks* Tour

Thursday, Dec. 8  
7:30 p.m.

Black Violin is led by classically trained string players Wil B. (viola) and Kev Marcus (violin). Joining them onstage are DJ SPS and drummer Nat Stokes. The band's *Give Thanks* Tour employs playful storytelling, whimsical string melodies, and hard-hitting beats to highlight the unifying pillars of the holiday season: Giving back to others and being wholeheartedly thankful. Fans can expect to dance along to hits from the band's Grammy-nominated *Take the Stairs* album as well as holiday favorites from their *Give Thanks* album.

FORD SERIES





## **20th Anniversary Gala featuring Marilyn McCoo & Billy Davis, Jr.**

Saturday, Mar. 25 • 7:30 p.m.

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*The STARS have aligned  
to celebrate the 20th Anniversary  
of the Gertrude C. Ford Center  
for the Performing Arts!*

The Gala evening will honor Sam and Mary Haskell with the prestigious Concerto Award, presented by the Ford Center, for their extraordinary patronage of the Center and the Arts. Sam and Mary have invited special friends from all over the country to join in this 20th Anniversary celebration! It will be a thrilling evening hosted by Oscar winner Morgan Freeman and starring Gala Headliners, eight-time Grammy Award winners Marilyn McCoo and Billy Davis, Jr. featuring selections from their newest album *Blackbird, Lennon-McCartney Icons*, as well as greatest hits from *The Fifth Dimension*! The first half of the Gala will feature appearances by Tony and Emmy winner Christine Baranski, Emmy winner Gerald McRaney, award winning actress Delta Burke, Broadway and television star Bellamy Young, super model and brand mogul Kathy Ireland, internationally-known percussionist Pedro Segundo, plus University of Mississippi alumni: actress and recording artist Mary Donnelly Haskell, Guy Hovis of the Lawrence Welk Show and Broadway's Laurie Gayle Stephenson! All performers will be supported by the Mississippians Jazz Ensemble under the direction of Dr. Michael Worthy.

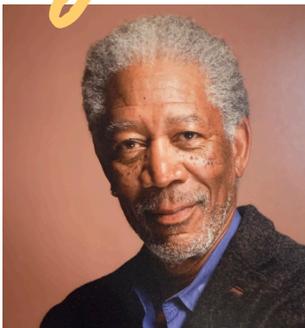
*You will not want to miss  
this truly spectacular evening!*

**FORD SERIES**

# Featuring



Sam & Mary Haskell



Morgan Freeman



Marilyn McCoo & Billy Davis Jr.



Gerald McRaney



Delta Burke



Christine Baranski



Kathy Ireland



Laurie Gayle Stephenson



Bellamy Young



Pedro Segundo



Guy Hovis

# Disney Princess - The Concert

BROADWAY REVUE

Tuesday, Oct. 25 • 7:00 p.m.\*

For generations, Disney's Princesses have enchanted us with their courage and kindness. Their music has been the soundtrack to our lives. Now, for the first time in forever, that beloved music will be celebrated in *Disney Princess - The Concert!* Be our guest as an all-star quartet of Broadway and animated film icons celebrate all the Disney Princesses and Frozen Queens in an unforgettable evening of songs, animation, and stories, alongside their magical Music Director and enchanting Prince.

Your every dream will come true as larger-than-life animation and theatrical effects immerse the audience in pure Disney magic, while these acclaimed stars sing your favorite songs and share their exclusive, hilarious, and heartfelt behind-the-scenes stories from their time on the stage and screen.

## BROADWAY SERIES



# ANASTASIA

BROADWAY NATIONAL TOUR

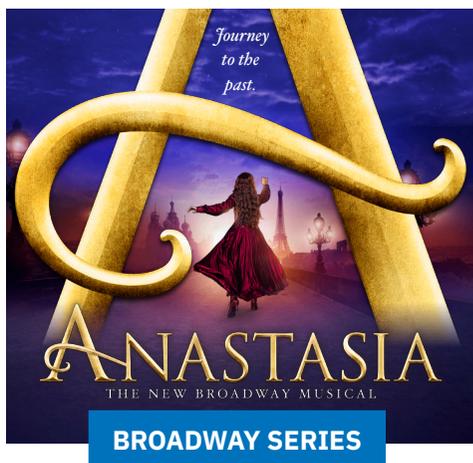
Monday, Nov. 14 • 7:00 p.m.\*

The romantic and adventure-filled new musical ANASTASIA is at home in Oxford at last!

From the Tony Award®-winning creators of the Broadway classic *Ragtime*, this dazzling show transports us from the twilight of the Russian Empire to the euphoria of Paris in the 1920s, as a brave young woman sets out to discover the mystery of her past. Pursued by a ruthless Soviet officer determined to silence her, Anya enlists the aid of a dashing conman and a lovable ex-aristocrat. Together, they embark on an epic adventure to help her find home, love, and family.

ANASTASIA features a book by celebrated playwright Terrence McNally, a lush new score by Stephen Flaherty (music) and Lynn Ahrens (lyrics) based on original direction by Tony Award® winner Darko Tresnjak with choreography by Peggy Hickey and tour direction by Sarah Hartmann.

\*Note curtain time



## BROADWAY SERIES



### ***The World of Musicals*** BROADWAY MUSICAL REVUE

Friday, Jan. 27 • 7:30 p.m.

*The World of Musicals* brings the very best of musical theatre to life. This incredible and unique production is a wonderful revue of all your favorite musical songs, live in concert. Look forward to classic songs from iconic shows such as; *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Mamma Mia*, *West Side Story*, *Wicked*, *South Pacific*, *The Boy from Oz*, *Les Misérables*, and many more.

*The World of the Musicals* is a show for the entire family. Colorful, inspiring and memorable musical classics, all performed by an international star-studded cast. Get ready to be enthralled and sing along to all your favorite and much-loved musical songs in one unforgettable evening.

### ***R.E.S.P.E.C.T- A Celebration of Aretha Franklin,*** ***the Legendary Queen of Soul*** BROADWAY NATIONAL TOUR

Tuesday, Feb. 28 • 7:30 p.m.

R.E.S.P.E.C.T. is the ultimate tribute to the legendary Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin. The elevated concert experience brings a community together with timeless music that speaks to the complicated human condition, honoring the impassioned and transcendent music of one of America's most beloved singer-songwriter. Rejoice while you are taken on an intimate musical odyssey guaranteed to get you up and out of your seat and dancing!

The production journeys through Aretha Franklin's courageous life of love, tragedy and triumph starring a live band, supreme vocalists and a night full of music by one of the greatest artists of all time.

"Natural Woman," "Think," "I Knew You Were Waiting for Me," "Chain of Fools," "Respect" — all your favorite hits in one evening celebrating the iconic songstress!



## BROADWAY SERIES

## BROADWAY SERIES



### ***The Pirates of Penzance*** NEW YORK GILBERT & SULLIVAN PLAYERS Thursday, Mar. 30 • 7:30 p.m.

Everyone has pretended to be a pirate at some point. Set sail with this classic comedy that boasts one of the most famous patter songs in musical theatre history. On the coast of Cornwall, a band of tenderhearted pirates celebrates the coming of age of Frederic, who was mistakenly apprenticed to the pirates until his 21st birthday. Now, Frederic has vowed to devote his life to the extermination of piracy - until a ludicrous leap year snag threatens to keep him apprenticed to the pirates for life! Throw in a bevy of beauties, a brash Pirate King, the delightfully stuffy Major-General Stanley and you've got what *The New York Times* calls "An endearing production with high musical standards and spirited performances."

### **Canadian Brass**

Thursday, Oct. 6  
7:30 p.m.

One of the most popular brass ensembles today, Canadian Brass' repertoire features brass standards as well as a wide-ranging library of original arrangements including the works of Renaissance and Baroque masters, Classical works, marches, ragtime, Dixieland, Latin, jazz, big band, and Broadway as well as popular songs.

Masters of concert presentations, Canadian Brass has developed a uniquely engaging stage presence and rapport with audiences. Each of their concerts will show the full range from trademark Baroque and Dixieland tunes to new compositions and arrangements created especially for them – from formal classical presentation to music served up with lively dialogue and theatrical effects. The hallmark of any Canadian Brass performance is entertainment, spontaneity, virtuosity and, most of all, fun – but never at the expense of the music. Whatever the style, the music is central and performed with utmost dedication, skill and excellence.



ARTIST SERIES

## Jay Jurden, Comedian

Saturday, Oct. 22 • 7:30 p.m.

Jay Jurden is a New York based comedian, writer and actor. Originally from Mississippi and a University of Mississippi alum, Jay regularly performs all over the country and is currently a Staff Writer for Apple TV+'s *The Problem With Jon Stewart*. Jay has been seen on *The Tonight Show starring Jimmy Fallon*, *The Late Late Show with James Corden*, *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, and HBO's *High Maintenance*.

His album, *Jay Jurden Y'all*, debuted #1 on iTunes. Jay has written for *Vulture*, *Teen Vogue*, *McSweeney's*, and *The New Yorker*. Jay was listed on *Vulture's* 'Comedians You Should and Will Know in 2020' and was selected for Just for Laughs Festival's New Faces in 2019.

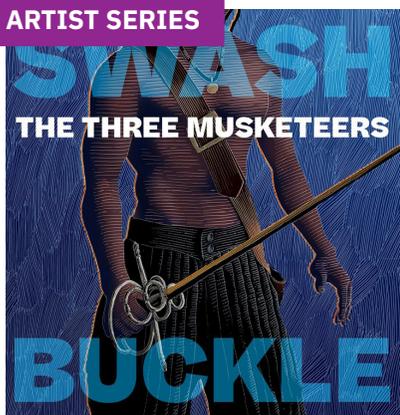
Jay was named one of *Variety's* 10 Comics to Watch in 2022.

*Content warning: adult themes discussed.*



ARTIST SERIES

ARTIST SERIES



## *The Three Musketeers*

THE ACTING COMPANY

Thursday, Nov. 3 • 7:30 p.m.

This world premiere adaptation commissioned by The Acting Company will draw inspiration from an astonishing secret—that Dumas' father, General Alex Dumas, was the highest-ranking person of Color in a Western military until our own time. This adaptation of *The Three Musketeers* will shed new light on this swashbuckling adventure and give a favorite story new importance. An inspiring tale filled with laughter and adventure, *The Three Musketeers* is a reminder to all that courage, honesty, and valor can change the world.

## Step Afrika!

Monday, Feb. 13 • 7:30 p.m.

Step Afrika! blends percussive dance styles practiced by historically African American fraternities and sororities; traditional West and Southern African dances; and an array of contemporary dance and art forms into a cohesive, compelling artistic experience. Performances are much more than dance shows; they integrate songs, storytelling, humor and audience participation. The blend of technique, agility, and pure energy makes each performance unique and leaves the audience with their hearts pounding.

Founded in 1994 by C. Brian Williams, Step Afrika! is the first professional company dedicated to the tradition of stepping. Step Afrika! now ranks as one of the top ten African-American dance companies in the United States.

STEP AFRIKA!



ARTIST SERIES

## ARTIST SERIES



### Aizuri String Quartet

Tuesday, Mar. 7 • 7:30 p.m.

The Aizuri Quartet has established a unique position within today's musical landscape, infusing all of its music-making with infectious energy, joy and warmth, cultivating curiosity in listeners, and inviting audiences into the concert experience through its innovative programming, and the depth and fire of its performances.

Praised by *The Washington Post* for "astounding" and "captivating" performances that draw from its notable "meld of intellect, technique and emotions," the Aizuri Quartet was named the recipient of the 2022 Cleveland Quartet Award by Chamber Music America, and since its inception in 2012 has received major chamber music prizes on three continents and been in residence at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Quartet's debut album, *Blueprinting*, featuring new works written for the Aizuri Quartet by five American composers, was released by New Amsterdam Records to critical acclaim ("In a word, stunning" —*I Care If You Listen*), nominated for a 2019 GRAMMY Award, and named one of NPR Music's Best Classical Albums of 2018.

## FAMILY FRIENDLY

### Artrageous

Tuesday, Oct. 11  
7:30 p.m.

Artrageous is a troupe of multi-talented live performance artists, world class singers and musicians, and highly trained dancers. Their interactive, high-energy performance is a combination of all arts on one stage presented in a frenzy of movement and color.

Artrageous has a passion for all things art and community and they bring their message of the arts being an integral and valuable part of human existence to the stage, leaving their audience of all ages singing, dancing and clapping along.

Artrageous has been fortunate to perform for theatre goers and celebrities alike and their artworks are in private and public galleries around the world.



# 2022-23 SEASON AT A GLANCE

## FALL 2022

- **Dawn of the Arts with Pianist Bruce Levingston and Special Guest Artists** ..... Thursday, Sept. 22 • 7:30 p.m.
- **Canadian Brass** ..... Thursday, Oct. 6 • 7:30 p.m.
- **Artrageous** ..... Tuesday, Oct. 11 • 7:30 p.m.
- **Brass Transit The Musical Legacy of Chicago** ..... Monday, Oct. 17 • 7:30 p.m.
- **Jay Jurden, Comedian**..... Saturday, Oct. 22 • 7:30 p.m.
- **Disney Princess - The Concert**  
BROADWAY REVUE ..... Tuesday, Oct. 25 • 7:00 p.m.
- **Nitty Gritty Dirt Band**..... Saturday, Oct. 29 • 7:30 p.m.
- **The Three Musketeers The Acting Company** ..... Thursday, Nov. 3 • 7:30 p.m.
- **ANASTASIA**  
BROADWAY NATIONAL TOUR..... Monday, Nov. 14 • 7:00 p.m.
- **Mindi Abair** ..... Thursday, Nov. 17 • 7:30 p.m.
- **Black Violin**  
GIVE THANKS TOUR..... Thursday, Dec. 8 • 7:30 p.m.

## SPRING 2023

- **The World of Musicals**  
BROADWAY MUSICAL REVUE ..... Friday, Jan. 27 • 7:30 p.m.
- **Step Afrika!** ..... Monday, Feb. 13 • 7:30 p.m.
- **R.E.S.P.E.C.T- A Celebration of Aretha Franklin**  
BROADWAY NATIONAL TOUR..... Tuesday, Feb. 28 • 7:30 p.m.
- **Aizuri String Quartet**..... Tuesday, Mar. 7 • 7:30 p.m.
- **20th Anniversary Gala**  
featuring Marilyn McCoo & Billy Davis, Jr. .... Saturday, Mar. 25 • 7:30 p.m.
- **The Pirates of Penzance**  
New York Gilbert & Sullivan Players ..... Thursday, Mar. 30 • 7:30 p.m.

- Ford Series
- Broadway Series
- Artist Series
- Family Friendly



The 2022-23 season is sponsored in part by  
The Inn at Ole Miss and High Cotton Warehouse



Wine is  
available  
at all shows.

## DAYTIME SCHOOL SERIES

*Attention Teachers*

# BRING YOUR CLASS!

The Daytime School Series is sponsored by Nancye B. Starnes and the Madison Charitable Foundation Fund (Joc and Leigh Anne Carpenter).

For more information about tickets for school groups, contact, **Kate Meacham** at **kmeacham@olemiss.edu** or **662-915-6502**. Tickets available only to schools or homeschool organizations.

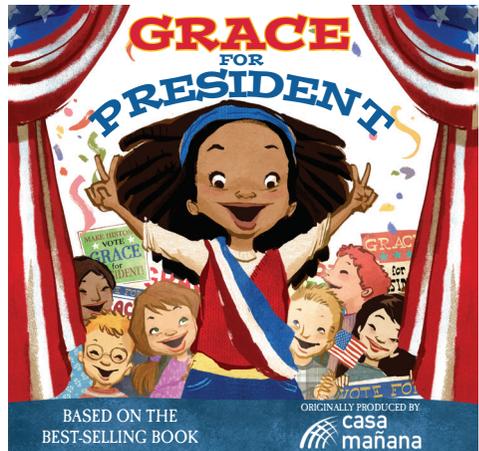
## Grace for President

Wednesday, Jan. 25, 2023  
9:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

*Wishing Star Productions proudly presents a musical originally produced by Casa Mañana Based on the book by Kelly S. DiPucchio Book, music and lyrics by Joan Cushing*

When Grace Campbell's teacher reveals that the United States has never had a female president, Grace decides to be the first. And she immediately starts off her political career as a candidate in the school's mock election. But soon, she realizes that she has entered a tough race.

*Recommended for Grades 1-4.*



## The Lightning Thief

Thursday, Feb. 2, 2023  
9:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

Lately, mythological monsters and the gods of Mount Olympus seem to be walking straight out of the pages of Percy Jackson's Greek mythology textbook and into his life. And worse, Zeus's master lightning bolt has been stolen and Percy is the prime suspect. Now Percy has ten days to find and return Zeus's stolen property and bring peace to a warring Mount Olympus. But to succeed on his quest, Percy will have to do more than catch the true thief: he must come to terms with the father who abandoned him; solve the riddle of the Oracle, and unravel a treachery more powerful than the gods themselves. *Recommended for Grades 2-6.*



## Disney's ***Winnie the Pooh: The New Musical Stage Adaptation*** Wednesday, Feb. 8, 2023 • 9:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

Disney's iconic Winnie the Pooh, Christopher Robin and their best friends Piglet, Eeyore, Kanga, Roo, Rabbit, and Owl (oh... and don't forget Tigger too!) have come to life in a beautifully crafted musical stage adaptation. Featuring the Sherman Brothers' classic Grammy Award-winning music with further songs by A.A. Milne, this beautiful fresh stage adaptation is told with stunning life-sized puppetry through the eyes of the characters we all know and love, in a new story from the Hundred Acre Wood. *This production is created by renowned family entertainment creator Jonathan Rockefeller, and made by Rockefeller Productions alongside Disney Theatrical Productions. Recommended for Grades PreK-3.*



## **Llama, Llama Live!**

Tuesday, March 21, 2023  
9:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

*From the beloved book series by Anna Dewdney & new Netflix series! The Bay Area Children's Theatre presents Llama Llama - Live!*

Bedtime has never been so exciting! It's the end of the day for the Llama family. After a long day of adventures at the school and the store, Baby Llama can't wait to put on his red pajamas. He and his friends the toys are ready to sing and dance their way to sleep...except...they need a bedtime story and a kiss goodnight and a drink of water. But, where's Mama? This hilarious new musical based on the bestselling books by Anna Dewdney will warm every Llama and Llama Mama's heart. *Recommended for Grades PreK-1.*



## Gertrude Castellow Ford

**W**ith an ever-inquisitive mind, Gertrude Castellow Ford fully embraced the arts. As a patron, an observer and a practitioner, Ford engaged in a lifelong exploration of all things of beauty and inspiration, and held true to classic traditions in the fine arts. She was an accomplished flutist, violinist and pianist as well as fluent in French, Latin and Spanish. Exceedingly well-read in poetry and classic literature, she was often at the center of spirited discussions about the merits of all manner of literary works and was not afraid to raise challenging concepts in literature, especially concerning the authorship of Shakespeare's plays. Always at the very foundation of her spirit was a great and sincere love of the arts and letters.

Raised in a generations-old tradition of philanthropy, Ford established the Gertrude C. Ford Foundation in Jackson with a generous gift in 1991. In 1998, the Ford Foundation awarded the University of Mississippi \$20 million to design and build the Gertrude C. Ford Center for the Performing Arts on the Oxford campus. This regal facility is a physical testament to Ford's lifelong dedication to the arts. Ford died in September 1996. She and her husband, Aaron Lane Ford, who was an Ackerman attorney and U.S. congressman representing what was Mississippi's 4th District, are buried in Cuthbert, a small town in southwest Georgia.

### **Gertrude C. Ford Center for the Performing Arts**

351 University Ave., P.O. Box 1848, University MS 38677

**[fordcenter.org](http://fordcenter.org) • 662-915-7411**

