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Book-It's Founding Co-Artistic Directors Jane Jones and Myra Platt to Step Down in 2020

[Seattle, Wash., Jan. 24, 2019]—Book-It Repertory Theatre [Book-It] announces that Founder



and Founding Co-Artistic Director **Jane Jones** and Founding Co-Artistic Director **Myra Platt** will step down from their roles at the end of Book-It's 30th season, in the summer of 2020. Over the next year, Book-It plans to hire a new artistic director through a local and national search.

“Jane and Myra have been the creative force driving Book-It since the beginning. They developed the Book-It Style® and provided the creative vision that has defined Book-It for close to 30 years. As board president I'm excited to work with them and enable the smooth transition to new artistic leadership that builds on the legacy they've created,” says Board President **Stuart Frank**.

“The value of initiating our succession now, with intention and care, is an investment in Book-It's core values and vision ensuring that Book-It will continue. The company is so vital, strong and capable,” says Platt.

What started as an idea during a road trip is now a two-million-dollar company that employs over 100 local artists each season. While reading books aloud to pass the time on a road trip, Jones thought about creating scenes for the stage by using language from novels. From there, she experimented with short stories on stage with a group of artists in New York. In 1987, she brought the idea for Book-It to Seattle and introduced it to a collective of Seattle theatre artists. Platt moved to Seattle in 1988 and joined the collective where she met Jones. Platt held a degree in the performance of literature from Northwestern University, and was thrilled Jones shared a passion for the art form. Through their artistic partnership and leadership, Jones and

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Platt worked to develop the Book-It Style® and grow the company into what it is today.

Since incorporating in 1990, Book-It has produced over 130 world-premiere mainstage productions and 30 touring shows for its Arts & Education program. Book-It's honors include 2010 Mayor's Arts Award, a 2010 Women of Influence award from *Puget Sound Business Journal*, Paul G. Allen Family Foundation Founder's Award, 2012 Governor's Arts Award and three Gregory Awards for Outstanding Production, among others.

"From the beginning, all the work produced at Book-It was designed for our community. We have done this work in collaboration with the artists of this community, for this community, and supported by the citizens and organizations of the Puget Sound. Together we have built a body of work that stands on the shoulders of literary giants. It has been hard, sometimes impossible, but it has been a mighty privilege," says Jones.

Jones, Platt, and Managing Director **Kayti Barnett-O'Brien** have worked with the board and staff to create a strategic plan for the next five years. "This plan allows us to see the company into a new future with strength and joy. We have no doubt that our love and pride for the work created at Book-It will carry on long after we leave," say Jones and Platt.

A board committee seeks to design an equitable and inclusive search process that will launch in early fall of 2019. Book-It plans on announcing the new artistic director in spring of 2020. "With support from our board and the time to complete a solid search, we are confident we will find a bold, new artistic leader to take Book-It into our next chapter," says Barnett-O'Brien.

As Book-It's 29th season continues, Jones will be directing *American Junkie* and *Returning the Bones*, as well as adapting *American Junkie* with **Kevin McKeon**; and Platt will be adapting and directing *Behold the Dreamers*. After they step down from their positions at Book-It, Jones and Platt will continue their freelance theatre and artistic careers.

Book-It is announcing its 30th anniversary season in spring 2019.

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ABOUT JANE JONES

Jane is the founder and founding co-artistic director of Book-It Repertory Theatre, with Myra Platt. In her 30 years of staging literature, she has performed, adapted, and directed works by such literary giants as Charles Dickens, Eudora Welty, Edith Wharton, Kurt Vonnegut Jr., Pam Houston, Raymond Carver, Frank O'Connor, Jim Lynch, Ernest Hemingway, Colette, Amy Bloom, John Irving, John Steinbeck, Daphne du Maurier, and Jane Austen. A veteran actress of 35 years, she has played leading roles in many of America's most prominent regional theatres. She co-directed with Tom Hulce at Seattle Repertory Theatre, Peter Parnell's adaptation of John Irving's *The Cider House Rules, Parts I and II*, which enjoyed successful runs in Seattle, at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles (Ovation Award, best director) and in New York (Drama Desk Nomination, best director). Jane's most recent directing credits include *Native Gardens* at Arizona Theatre Company. With Portland Center Stage she directed, *Cyrano, Twelfth Night* (Drammy awards, Best Direction and Production) and Book-It's adaptations of *Great Expectations* and *Pride and Prejudice*. For Book-It her credits include *The Maltese Falcon, A Moveable Feast, What We Talk About When We Talk About Love, The Dog of the South, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: Uncensored, Truth Like the Sun, The House of Mirth, The Highest Tide, Travels with Charley, Pride and Prejudice, Howard's End, In a Shallow Grave, The Awakening, Owen Meany's Christmas Pageant, A Tale of Two Cities, and The Cider House Rules, Parts I and II*, winner of the 2010 and 2011 Gregory Awards for Outstanding Production. In 2008 she, Myra Platt, and Book-It were honored to be named by *The Seattle Times* among seven Unsung Heroes and Uncommon Genius for their 20-year contribution to life in the Puget Sound region. She is a recipient of the 2009 Women's University Club of Seattle Brava Award, a 2010 Women of Influence award from *Puget Sound Business Journal*, and the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation's 20th Anniversary Founders Grant and was a finalist for the American Union for Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation's 2012 Zelda Fichandler Award.

ABOUT MYRA PLATT

As the founding co-artistic director with Jane Jones, Myra has helped produce over 85 world-premiere mainstage productions and over 30 education touring productions. Most recently she directed and adapted the new musical *Howl's Moving Castle*. Previously, she adapted and directed *The Brothers K* and directed *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay* (2014 Gregory Award for Outstanding Production, *The Seattle Times* Footlight Award). She was

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nominated for Outstanding Director 2012 (*Financial Lives of the Poets*) and 2014 (*Kavalier & Clay*). Other directing credits include *Little Bee*, *The Financial Lives of the Poets*, *The River Why*, *Persuasion*, *Night Flight*, *Red Ranger Came Calling*, *The House of the Spirits*, *Plainsong*, *Cry*, *the Beloved Country*, *Sweet Thursday*, *Giant*, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *Cowboys Are My Weakness*, *Roman Fever*, and *A Child's Christmas in Wales*. Adapting credits include *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *Little Bee*, *The Financial Lives of the Poets*, *The River Why*, *Night Flight*, *The Art of Racing in the Rain*, *Red Ranger Came Calling*, *The House of the Spirits*, *Giant*, *Cowboys Are My Weakness*, *Roman Fever*, *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, and co-adapted *Owen Meany's Christmas Pageant* with Jane Jones. Composing credits include *Prairie Nocturne*, *Night Flight* (with Joshua Kohl), *Red Ranger Came Calling: A Musical* (with Edd Key), *The Awakening*, *Ethan Frome*, *Owen Meany's Christmas Pageant*, *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, and *I Am of Ireland*. Acting credits include Seattle Repertory Theatre, Intiman Theatre, New City Theatre, the Mark Taper Forum, *Prairie Nocturne*, *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears*, *The Awakening* (West Los Angeles Garland Award), and *Howards End*. She originated the role of Candy Kendall in *The Cider House Rules, Parts I and II* directed by Jane Jones and Tom Hulce. Myra is the recipient, with Jane Jones, of a Paul G. Allen Family Foundation Anniversary grant, the 2010 Women of Influence from *Puget Sound Business Journal*, and was named by *The Seattle Times* a 2008 Unsung Hero and Uncommon Genius for their 20-year contribution to life in the Puget Sound region.

ABOUT BOOK-IT REPERTORY THEATRE

Book-It Repertory Theatre, a leader in the narrative theatre movement, was founded in 1990. Book-It is a non-profit organization with a dedication to great literature and quality theatre experiences employing simple, sensitive and imaginative production techniques, and to inspiring its audiences to read. The company is funded, in part, by generous contributions from corporations and foundations, and hundreds of individuals who share its passion for literature.

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