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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Famous Artists Broadway Theater Series

(Syracuse, NY) It is with great sadness and regret that we announce the passing of Murray Bernthal, the Founder of Famous Artists and Executive Director for the past 64 years.

Murray founded the Famous Artists Series with local businessman ER 'Curly' Vadeboncoeur, with the intention of presenting Syracuse audiences with the very best performances in the world. Through classical concerts, opera, ballet and more recently great theatre, this standard has prevailed.

Along with his first wife Rose, Murray has played an integral part in the musical, theatrical and cultural climate of Central New York.

Famous Artists brought some of the greatest artists to their Fayetteville Country Playhouse from 1949 to 1964, including such greats as Bela Lugosi , Veronica Lake, Basil Rathbone, Olivia DeHaviland, Eva Gabor, Charlton Heston, Hume Cronyn and Jessica Tandy. From 1965 to 1974 Famous Artists Playhouse played host at Henninger High School to Myrna Loy, Mickey Rooney, Zsa Zsa Gabor and Douglas Fairbanks Jr, to name a few. The Summer Festival of Stars was presented in the opening season of the Civic Center in 1976.

Over the years, the Broadway Series developed into a season of Nationally Touring Broadway spectaculars that continues today. Over the past two decades, Murray partnered with Albert Nocciolino (who Murray affectionately referred to as "Notch") in presenting major Broadway shows that have catapulted Famous Artists into a nationally recognized series, with full-week and multi-week shows, including Les Miserables' (1993, 1996), Chicago (1999, 2003, 2008), Riverdance (2000, 2003, 2007, 2010), Mamma Mia (2004, 2006), Disney's Beauty and the Beast (2002, 2011)The Phantom of the Opera (in 2001, 2007), and Wicked (2010).

Murray's pre-curtain speeches and witticisms were eagerly anticipated by his patrons.

Murray's legacy will live on through Famous Artists for many years to come!

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