
Curtain rises on HCC theater festival next weekend

HOLYOKE — The annual Phillips Festival, an evening of short plays written, directed, and staged in 24 hours by Holyoke Community College alumni, students, staff and friends, returns on Saturday, Sept. 28, for its seventh year.

The festival raises money for the Leslie Phillips Theater Fund for Arts and Education, honoring the legacy of Leslie Phillips, founder of the HCC theater program.

To produce the Leslie Phillips Festival, HCC alumni, students and staff register to participate as writers, directors, actors, or members of the stage crew. This year, writers will meet with the actors on Friday, Sept. 27, the

night before the show, to receive props, prompts and character assignments. They have until 6 a.m. the next morning to write their plays. Two hours later, actors and directors meet for daylong rehearsals.

All the original plays will be performed that evening, Sept. 28, starting at 7:30 p.m.

Funds raised from the festival enable the HCC Theater Department to host master classes, make capital improvements, and hire guest artists, through the Leslie Phillips Theater Fund for Arts and Education.

“The Phillips Theater Festival is a beautiful way for our theater alumni to stay connected to HCC

while expressing their creativity and supporting generations of future students who will benefit from these programs,” said Elizabeth Ollson, manager of alumni relations. “I especially love how the festival creates space for local theater enthusiasts to participate and share their talents with the HCC community.”

The Phillips Fund is administered by the HCC Foundation. This year’s festival is also supported by a \$2,500 grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

The festival was first organized in 2016 by HCC alumni working with HCC theater professor Pat Sandoval, a 1984 alum, as a tribute to Phillips,

who died in 1988 after inspiring legions of HCC students.

To participate in the festival, register at hccplayers@gmail.com. Audience tickets can be purchased in advance at hcc.edu/phillips-2024 or at the door. General admission tickets are \$15 and \$10 for students (14 and up) and seniors (65 and up). Tickets are \$5 for HCC students who bring their college ID.



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