

From: Darren Johnson/Pres
To: Darren Johnson/Pres@SUNYSB

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STONY BROOK SOUTHAMPTON NEWS

Darren Johnson
 Media Relations Manager
 Darren.Johnson@stonybrook.edu
 Phone: 631-632-5088

**AVRAM THEATER AT STONY BROOK SOUTHAMPTON
 TO BE SUBSTANTIALLY RENOVATED STARTING IN FALL**
Avram Family Makes Significant, Multi-year Gift to Support Effort

STONY BROOK, N.Y., July 30, 2007—The Avram Theater at Stony Brook Southampton, for over two decades one of the leading venues for the arts on the East End, will be substantially renovated beginning this September. Stony Brook University President Shirley Strum Kenny said, “The Avram Theater has a rich legacy as a host for the world’s top performers and their audiences. It deserves a makeover, and it is getting one.”

The restoration will include the installation of new seats, modernized lighting and sound equipment, backstage renovations, and modifications to make the theater fully accessible. The 433-seat theater will be closed this fall with a grand re-opening anticipated in Summer 2008.

The Avram Theater has been the site of leading artistic events since the 1980s, including dance and musical recitals, dramatic performances, operas, theater productions, and Pianofest, a series of concerts by internationally-acclaimed classical musicians. After Stony Brook University purchased the former Southampton College property in 2006, President Kenny pledged to revitalize the cultural resources at the new Stony Brook Southampton campus.

The theater restoration is being made possible, in part, through a significant, multi-year gift by Dr. Morrell Avram and his wife, Maria, long-time patrons of the arts. Other fund-raising efforts in support of the project will continue throughout the coming year.

“We are so grateful for the Avram family's continued commitment to this wonderful theater,” Kenny said. “The Avram Theater has long been associated with the arts and important cultural and educational events on the East End. With support from Mike and Maria and their

family, it will once again become an unparalleled destination for outstanding performances, lectures, and discussions of issues that matter most to the people of Long Island, the nation, and the world.”

“The 21 members of the immediate Avram family have a profound interest in improving the cultural life of Eastern Long Island,” Dr. Avram said. “The future of the Avram Theater is very bright indeed.”

Dr. Avram is Chief of the Avram Division of Nephrology and Professor of Medicine at SUNY Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn. He is considered a pioneer in organ transplantation and specializes in artificial kidney life-maintenance. He and his wife have long been supporters of higher education and the arts on the East End. The Avram Theater and the adjacent Avram Family Art Gallery were named after them in 1998 in recognition of their generosity to the former Southampton College of Long Island University.

Stony Brook also announced that Leonard Ziemkiewicz, who has extensive experience in administration and operations for performing arts venues, has been named Theater Manager for the Avram Theater. Ziemkiewicz previously was Operations Manager for the Performing Arts at the Ross School. He also has worked with various theater companies such as The Pittsburgh Public Theater, Playwrights Horizons, and the Town Hall of New York City.

He also served as General Manager of Theater Row in Manhattan, a complex of five theaters and 15 rehearsal spaces, which primarily served the not-for-profit theater community.

The Avram Theater is a key component in Stony Brook’s vision of integrating the East End Arts community into the campus environment. Already, the theater is home to “Sustainable Pleasures,” a series of four performances which began earlier this month and concludes August 29 (www.stonybrook.edu/pleasures). The performances feature leading artists from the world of opera and Broadway.

Last month, the Pollack-Krasner House announced that its public programs and Study Center collections are being re-located to Stony Brook Southampton; the highly-acclaimed Southampton Writers Conference took place last week; and the Center for Wine, Food and Culture has announced a series of programs and courses through the Fall.

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Darren Johnson
 Media Relations Manager
 Stony Brook Southampton
 239 Montauk Hwy
 Southampton, NY 11968
 631-632-5088
 darren.johnson@stonybrook.edu
<http://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/southampton/>

