31ST ANNUAL LUCILLE LORTEL AWARDS
TO BE HELD SUNDAY, MAY 1, 2016 AT NYU SKIRBALL CENTER

Signature Theatre Founding Artistic Director James Houghton to receive
Lifetime Achievement Award;
Suzan-Lori Parks to be honored with induction onto the Playwrights’ Sidewalk

New York, NY (March 23, 2016) – The Off-Broadway League today announced details for the 2016 Lucille Lortel Awards for Outstanding Achievement Off-Broadway. The 31st Annual Lucille Lortel Awards will be handed out on Sunday, May 1, 2016 at NYU Skirball Center, beginning at 7:00pm EST.

Among the special honors to be presented this year, the Lifetime Achievement Award will be given to Signature Theatre Founding Artistic Director James Houghton. It was recently announced Mr. Houghton would be stepping down from Signature Theatre after 25 years. Suzan-Lori Parks will be inducted onto the famed Playwrights’ Sidewalk in front of the Lucille Lortel Theatre. In 2002, Ms. Parks became the first African American woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for her play, Topdog/Underdog, which was also nominated for the Tony Award for Best Play that year. The play began its life Off-Broadway at The Public Theater.

Members of the general public are welcome to view the 7:00 PM ceremony. Public tickets are $75.00 and will be available starting Thursday, March 31, 2016, via phone at 212.998.4941, online at www.nyuskirball.org and in person at the Skirball Center’s Shagan Box Office (556 LaGuardia) from Tuesday – Saturday from 12 – 6 PM, and two hours before showtime.

Important Dates
March 30, 2016 Nomination Meeting – Nominations announced via press release late afternoon
March 31, 2016 2015-2016 Off-Broadway season ends
March 31, 2016 Public tickets go on sale
April 20, 2016 Nominees’ Breakfast at Playwrights Horizons
May 1, 2016 Award Ceremony at NYU Skirball Center

The Off-Broadway League’s Lortel Awards Producing & Administration Committee (Terry Byrne, Denise Cooper, Margaret Cotter, Carol Fishman, George Forbes, Michael Page, Catherine Russell, Lindsey Sag, and Seth Shepsle) produces the Lortel Awards Ceremony. Acclaimed writer/director Michael Heitzman returns to direct the Lortel Awards for the seventh consecutive year. The Lucille Lortel Awards are produced by special arrangement with the Lucille Lortel Foundation. Additional support is provided by Theatre Development Fund.

Representatives of the Off-Broadway League, Actors’ Equity Association, Stage Directors &
James Houghton
James Houghton is the Founding Artistic Director of Signature Theatre, the first nonprofit theatre company in the United States to devote each season of productions to the work of a single living playwright. Under his leadership, Signature opened the Frank Gehry-designed Pershing Square Signature Center, featuring three theatres, two rehearsal spaces and public lobby with café, bar and bookstore, and expanded programming including two additional playwrights’ residency programs. Signature and its artists have received many accolades, including the Pulitzer Prize, OBIE Awards, Drama Desk Awards, Lucille Lortel Awards, and Outer Critics Circle Awards. In 2003, Signature was named “National Theatre of the Year” by the National Theatre Conference. In 2014, Signature Theatre became the first Off-Broadway theatre to be honored with the Regional Tony Award. Since 2006, Mr. Houghton has also served as the Richard Rodgers Director of the Drama Division at The Juilliard School. To enhance the program, Mr. Houghton and the Drama Division initiated significant new programming and opportunities for students. Among these opportunities are a new Master of Fine Arts Program, which offers free tuition and a living stipend during the fourth and final year of training; the introduction of a Playwrights Festival featuring performances of plays written by students of the renowned Lila Acheson Wallace American Playwrights Program; and a bridge to the profession through the creation of the Professional Studio hosted by Signature Theatre, allowing Juilliard’s actors and writers to collaborate closely and build lasting artistic relationships. Mr. Houghton has been honored by The Acting Company with the 2012 John Houseman Award for his profound commitment to developing American actors and building a diverse audience for the theatre, as well as the William Inge Festival’s 1998 Margo Jones Medal for an outstanding contribution to the American theatre. In 2015, he was awarded a Special Award for Sustained Achievement at the 60th Annual OBIE Awards. In 2013, he was inducted into the College of the Fellows of the American Theatre and presented with an honorary Doctorate of Performing Arts by his alma mater, Santa Clara University. Mr. Houghton has also served as the Artistic Director of the O’Neill Playwrights Conference (1999-2003), Artistic Director of the New Harmony Project (1996-1999), and the Artistic Advisor to the Guthrie Theater (1998-2012).

Suzan-Lori Parks
Named one of TIME Magazine's “100 Innovators for the Next New Wave,” in 2002, Suzan-Lori Parks became the first African-American woman to receive the Pulitzer Prize in Drama for her Broadway hit, Topdog/Underdog. A MacArthur “Genius” Award and Gish Prize recipient, she has also been awarded grants by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the New York State Council on the Arts and the New York Foundation for the Arts. Her new play, Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3) made its world premiere at The Public Theater in New York, followed by a celebrated run at the A.R.T. in Cambridge, MA, and is opening in Spring of 2016 at the Center Theater Group in Los Angeles, CA. The play was named a finalist for the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and was awarded the 2015 Edward M. Kennedy Prize for Drama Inspired by American History, as well as the 2014 Horton Foote Prize. Parks's work on The Gershwins’ Porgy and Bess was honored with the 2012 Tony Award. Her numerous plays include The Book of Grace, In the Blood (2000 Pulitzer Prize finalist), Venus (1996 OBIE Award), 365 Days/365 Plays, and The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World, among others. Suzan-Lori’s novel Getting Mother’s Body was published by Random House. Her first feature-length screenplay was Girl 6, written for Spike Lee. She’s also written screenplays for Brad Pitt, Denzel Washington, and Jodie Foster, as well as adapting Zora Neale Hurston’s classic novel, Their Eyes Were Watching God, which premiered on ABC’s Oprah Winfrey Presents. Parks is currently writing an adaptation of the film The Harder They Come for a live stage musical, and she is also creating a television series for Amazon. Suzan-Lori serves as a professor in dramatic writing at New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts, and is also the Master Writer Chair at The Public Theater.

ABOUT OUR HONOREES

For updates and news about the ceremony, hosts, presenters and media releases, visit www.LortelAwards.org. Follow the Lortel Awards on Twitter at https://twitter.com/LortelAwards and like the awards on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/LortelAwards.com.

To download hi-res images of our honorees, please visit: http://bit.ly/1Mb6mry.
ABOUT THE LUCILLE LORTEL AWARDS
The Lucille Lortel Awards for Outstanding Achievement Off-Broadway were created in 1985 by the Off-Broadway League. The Lortel Awards recognize excellence in Off-Broadway by honoring the invaluable contribution of artists to the theatre community. Representatives of the Off-Broadway League, Actors’ Equity Association, Stage Directors & Choreographers Society, the Lucille Lortel Foundation, in addition to theatre journalists and academics and other Off-Broadway professionals, serve on the Voting Committee. Awards may be given in the following categories: Play, Musical, Solo Show, Revival, Alternative Theatrical Experience, Director, Choreographer, Lead Actor and Actress in a Play and Musical, Featured Actor and Actress in a Play and Musical, Scenic, Costume, Lighting and Sound Design. The following honorary awards may also be given: Lifetime Achievement Award, Body of Work (awarded to an institution), the Edith Oliver Service to Off-Broadway Award and induction onto the Playwrights’ Sidewalk in front of the historic Lucille Lortel Theatre in New York City. For more information, please see www.LortelAwards.org.

ABOUT THE LUCILLE LORTEL FOUNDATION
Lucille Lortel Foundation was created by Lucille Lortel to foster excellence and diversity in the theatre, as well as to faithfully preserve the rich history and support the continued prosperity of Off-Broadway. The Foundation has several major programs, including its general operating support program that has provided millions of dollars to small to mid-size theatres in New York City, universities, and theatre service organizations. The Foundation created and maintains the Internet Off-Broadway Data Base (www.IOBDB.com). For a listing of all the Foundation’s programs, previous Lortel Award nominees and recipients, information on the Lucille Lortel Theatre and Playwrights’ Sidewalk, and much more, please visit www.lortel.org.

ABOUT NYU SKIRBALL CENTER
The Jack H. Skirball Center for the Performing Arts is the premier venue for the presentation of cultural and performing arts events for New York University and lower Manhattan. Founded by Jay Oliva (President Emeritus, NYU), the programs of the Skirball Center reflect NYU's mission as an international center of scholarship, defined by excellence and innovation and shaped by an intellectually rich and diverse environment. A vital aspect of the Center's mission is to build young adult audiences for the future of live performance. www.nyuskirball.org

ABOUT THEATRE DEVELOPMENT FUND (TDF)
THEATRE DEVELOPMENT FUND (TDF) was created in the conviction that the live theatrical arts afford a unique expression of the human condition that must be sustained and nurtured. It is dedicated to developing diverse audiences for live theatre and dance, and strengthening the performing arts community in New York City. Since 1968, TDF’s programs have provided over 90 million people with access to performances at affordable prices and have returned over $2.5 billion to thousands of productions. Best known for its TKTS Discount Booths, TDF’s membership, outreach, access (including its internationally renowned Autism Theatre Initiative) and award-winning education programs — as well as its Costume Collection — have introduced thousands of people to the theatre and helped make the unique experience of theatre available to everyone, including students and people with disabilities. TDF honors include a 2011 Mayor’s Award for Arts and Culture, a 2012 Tony Honor for Excellence for its Open Doors Arts Education Program, a 2012 New York Innovative Theatre Award for its support of the off-Off Broadway community, and a 2013 Lortel Award “Outstanding Body of Work Award.” For more information about TDF go to: www.tdf.org.

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