

# UCLA PARTNERSHIP BACKGROUNDER

The University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) has had a long history of working closely with professional theaters as an extension of its academic mission. For many years UCLA owned and operated the Doolittle Theater (now the Ricardo Montalbán Theater) in Hollywood to fulfill this partnership.

However, in the early 1990s, when Gil Cates was Dean of the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television, he recognized that the Doolittle's geographic distance from campus created a barrier to any meaningful relationship with the University. Cates argued that a better partner would be the Westwood Playhouse, located right across from campus in the heart of Westwood Village. Compelled by the proximity and potential of the historic theater, Chancellor Charles Young agreed to sell the Doolittle and pledged the proceeds of the sale to assist Cates with the purchase and refurbishment of the Westwood Playhouse.

The goal was to create a new non-profit professional theater company that would provide development opportunities for UCLA students and faculty. To accomplish these goals, the University created an independent board, helmed by Cates, which would assume all costs and risks of operating the theater, as well as take over sole responsibility for the theater's programming and future development.

It was decided that five members of the UCLA community would sit on the board to ensure UCLA remained represented in all important decisions. Then, the University leased the theater to the newly named Geffen Playhouse (in recognition of an endowment gift from philanthropist David Geffen) to begin the creation of a permanent professional playhouse in Westwood.

Today, the University still leases the building to the Geffen Playhouse as a non-profit and UCLA affiliate organization. The University's vision of enhancing academics through the creation of the Playhouse is realized almost every season at the Geffen Playhouse through countless internships, residencies and workshops at the theater.

Highlights of the UCLA partnership through the years include:

- More than **23 master classes** for TFT students with acclaimed artists including Academy Award nominee **Annette Bening**, Tony Award winner **Uta Hagen**, Tony Award nominee **Gregory Itzin**, Pulitzer Prize winner **David Mamet** and Pulitzer Prize winner **Donald Margulies**
- Nearly **100 internships** for both undergraduate and masters students in the all disciplines of running a professional theater including, **stage management, lighting, direction, dramaturgy, sound design, playwriting, education, and marketing**
- **Roles and understudy roles** in professional productions such as *Love, Valour, Compassion, Wit, Looking for Normal* and *Nightmare Alley*
- Special access for UCLA faculty and students – staff and faculty are invited to regular main stage performances and students are invited to the **final dress rehearsal** of all main stage productions

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- A **sharing of professional resources** including Geffen Playhouse Producing Director **Gil Cates**, Artistic Director **Randall Arney**, Production Manager and lighting designer **Daniel Ionazzi** and UCLA Prop Master **Chuck Olsen**
- Since 1996, the Geffen Playhouse has had **more than 20 UCLA alumni direct, act in or stage manage** the theater's productions
- More than **15** undergraduate UCLA students work as **ushers, house managers, bartenders or concierges** at the Geffen Playhouse

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