



The Wally Russell
FOUNDATION

October 20, 2014

PRESS RELEASE

Foundation Announces the Creation of the Annual Wally Russell Mentoring Award with USITT

The Board of Directors of the Wally Russell Foundation announce the creation of the annual Wally Russell Mentoring Award in conjunction with the United States Institute for Theater Technology (USITT). The first annual award will be presented this year at the USITT Conference and Trade Expo in Cincinnati, Ohio, March 18-21st.

Because of the commitment of both Board's of Directors and the generous sponsorship of Philips Strand Lighting and Thern Stage Equipment, this award will be a permanent part of the USITT awards program each year at the National Conference. Details regarding nominations for the award can be found by going to either the USITT website, (www.usitt.org), or the Wally Russell website, (<http://www.wallyrussellfund.org>).

"Since 1992, The Wally Foundation has been a major contributor to the Lighting Intern programs at the Los Angeles Opera and Canadian Opera, contributing over \$200,000 to those organizations in support of their Wally Russell Lighting Intern Programs. In addition, the Foundation has provided for a 'lifetime achievement award' on an annual basis", commented Richard Pilbrow, Chairman Emeritus of the Wally Foundation. "We strongly felt the need to create a 'permanent' award in Wally's name, and the USITT Board was in agreement. The creation of a Mentoring Award in Wally's name is an excellent opportunity to continue to recognize the many and diverse contributions of Wally Russell, in addition to promoting active mentoring in our industry, of which he was a superb example."

David Grindle, Executive Director for USITT also commented on this exciting development. "When the Wally Board first approached USITT with the idea of creating a Wally Award, we considered many options. When we hit upon the idea of a mentoring award, there was unanimous agreement that such an award was needed, and that there was no better means of celebrating Wally's life than to create this award in his honor."

"USITT by-laws require sufficient funding to support such a permanent award", commented Tom Folsom, Chairman of the Wally Foundation. The Wally Board agreed to back the funding, and we are

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very fortunate to have leadership support from Thern Stage and Strand Lighting to help sponsor and support this commitment.”

The Wally Russell Mentor Award is an award to recognize, encourage and permanently commemorate that process which so often lies at the heart of our profession . . . the mentoring of young people at the start of their careers by colleagues, teachers or benefactors. We all began somewhere; we all received inspiration and support from someone . . . we wish to record these networking relationships and begin to build a "family tree" of the influences that have guided all of us through our careers.

For more details on the award and directions on how to nominate a potential winner, please visit either website where you will be directed to the nominations page.

The Wally Foundation will continue to support the Los Angeles Opera and the Canadian Opera Lighting Intern programs moving forward.

“We can always use more contributions to continue this good work”, said John Wiseman, Wally Board Member and President and CEO of Chaos Visual Design. “There is no doubt in my mind that I would not be here today without the positive influence of Wally Russell in my career”.

Any and all contributions to the Wally Foundation may be made at:

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