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**PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Tony-award winning musical “1776” part of this year’s Fun Fourth Festival**

**Greensboro, NC, June 9, 2010** Get into the spirit of July 4 this year by seeing the Tony-award winning musical “1776.”

The Fun Fourth Festival and the Music Center of City Arts are pleased to be collaborating with Jeffrey P. Swisher and Jeff Smith to produce the Tony award winning musical “1776” at the historic Carolina Theatre.

Show times are July 1 and 2 at 8 p.m. and July 4 at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$18.50 - \$23.50 plus a \$1.50 restoration fee.

Tickets are available at the Carolina Theatre Box Office from noon to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and one hour prior to performance time.

Tickets are also available by calling 336-333-2605 or [www.carolinatheatre.com](http://www.carolinatheatre.com). Group rates are available for groups of 12 or more by calling 336-854-3403.

The musical “1776” is a light-hearted re-telling of the Founding Father's efforts to write and ratify the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia in the hot summer of 1776.

It debuted on Broadway in 1969 and was made into a film in 1972. The show was nominated for five Tony Awards and won three, including Best Musical.

Director J.P. Swisher felt compelled do the musical after hearing Dr. Franklin McCain’s remarks at the opening of the International Civil Rights Center and Museum in Greensboro on February first: “...remember the spirit of 1775 and 1776? Who would have ever thought that a rag tag bunch of militiamen could defeat the most powerful army in the world.”

McCain was linking Philadelphia and 1776 to Greensboro and 2010. "I was inspired," Swisher said.

Actors John Collier and Steffanie Vaughan will play the lead parts of John and Abigail Adams. Mickey Hyland will portray the sage Benjamin Franklin. Scott Stevens and Kathy Collier are cast as Thomas and Martha Jefferson.

Some familiar faces in the Triad join the cast. Sportscaster Mike Hogewood takes the stage as Richard Henry Lee, the delegate who proposes independence.

Former Greensboro mayor Keith Holliday, and CEO of the Carolina Theatre, portrays Josiah Bartlett of New Hampshire, the first delegate to vote for the proposal.

John Hancock, renowned for his signature on the Declaration of Independence document, will be portrayed by Judge A. Robinson Hassell, a longtime member of performing groups such as the Livestock Players.

Synopsis:

In the days leading up to July 4, 1776, Continental Congressmen John Adams and Benjamin Franklin coerce Thomas Jefferson into writing the Declaration of Independence as a delaying tactic as they try to persuade the American colonies to support a resolution on independence.

As George Washington sends depressing messages describing one military disaster after another, the businessmen, landowners and slave holders in Congress each wrestle with their concerns about passing the Declaration; a single "nay" vote will forever end the question of independence from England.

Jeffrey P. Swisher will direct the 26 talented cast members from Greensboro, Winston-Salem, Kernersville, High Point and Burlington. Stephanie Gray is the musical director and will conduct the orchestra from the City Arts Music Center. The multi-level set for the Carolina's stage, designed by Thomas Barker, will represent the interior of Independence Hall. Period costumes are being supplied by the Winston-Salem Theatre Alliance from their 1993 production of "1776."

The Fun Fourth Festival is produced by Grassroots Productions Limited. This local non-profit organization focuses on charitable and educational activities which foster interest in local history and events in Guilford County. An advisory board of local business and civic leaders oversees the planning of each event.

The Fun Fourth Festival has been recognized as a Top 20 Event by the Southeast Tourism society and as an Outstanding Event by Celebration NC Foundation.

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