For the caricatures of Sir John Gielgud in various roles that adorn this keepsake, the English-Speaking Union and the Shakespeare Guild are deeply grateful to Clive Francis, a multitalented London actor who has given us such sprightly publications as Laugh Lines, Sir John: The Many Faces of Gielgud, and There is Nothing Like a Dane.
A Brief Overview on the Gielgud Award

This year the Gielgud Award for Excellence in the Dramatic Arts is being bestowed for the first time by two organizations: (a) the branch of the English-Speaking Union that represents the Nation’s Capital Area, and (b) the Shakespeare Guild. The ESU is by far the older of the two partners in tonight’s proceedings, having been founded by British journalist Sir Evelyn Wrench in 1918. It now serves more than fifty nations around the world, and its motto is “Global Understanding Through English.” The Guild goes back to 1987, when it was established by John F. Andrews as a nonprofit corporation to cultivate stronger audiences for the playwright we’ve long revered as history’s most trustworthy guide to the mileposts of life. Since 2001 Mr. Andrews has headed both ESU Washington and the Shakespeare Guild, and this evening’s ceremony is the latest in a series of efforts to coordinate the offerings of two institutions that share a vital core of cherished values.

In 1993, as a way of perpetuating the legacy of the 20th century’s most lasting exemplar of the classical tradition in the performance of Shakespeare and other dramatists, the Guild secured permission from Sir John Gielgud to create an award that would honor artists who strive to maintain the lofty standards for which this legendary actor, director, and producer had always been admired. At the outset Gielgud laureates received a gleaming John Sayer trophy that was designed to preserve Sir John’s “character” with “golden quill” (Sonnet 85). They now receive a memento with more direct connections to the laurel’s namesake: a limited-edition print by caricaturist Clive Francis that captures the actor’s personality at a special moment in 1996, when he was enjoying a happy repast at the Garrick Club after being inducted into the august Order of Merit at Buckingham Palace. Sir John was to inscribe a number of these renderings, and Mr. Francis has generously donated them to the Guild for presentation to honorees such as Michael Kahn.

The initial Gielgud festivities took place at Washington’s Folger Shakespeare Library, with Sir Ian McKellen (1996), Sir Derek Jacobi (1997), and Ms. Zoe Caldwell (1998) as laureates. Participants in these revels included Brian Bedford, Marvin Hamlisch, Robert MacNeil, Audra McDonald, Kelly McGillis, George Flimoto, Tony Randall, Lynn Redgrave, Dame Diana Rigg, and James Roose-Evans.

In May of 1999 the Guild opted for the Barrymore Theatre in New York to pay tribute to Dame Judi Dench, who had just won an Oscar as the Queen in Shakespeare in Love, and was en route to a Tony as Esmé in Amy’s View. Hosted by Robert MacNeil, this gala featured In the invitation to this reception, we listed the officer and directors of ESU Washington and enumerated those who have provided Major Program Support over the last twelve months or have contributed at the Sponsor, Patron, Benefactor, and Donor levels during that period. Those names will appear again in the June 2007 issue of ESU News & Announcements. In the mean time we’re pleased to recognize those who’ve acted most energetically to ensure the success of this event.

We wish first to thank those who’ve supplied help at the Benefactor level: Stephen and Anne Black, Donald W. King, Susan Lee and Stephen Saltzburg, Pauline Le Marie, Pamela and Malcolm Peabody, Charles and Joyce Hagel Silverman, and Detta Voesar. We next proceed to those whose support of the event is at the Donor level or above: Mr. and Mrs. James Adler, Jennifer Arwas, Robert Barnett and Rita Braver, Scott Berg and Freddi Lipstein, Paul and Carolyn Brubaker, Mr. and Mrs. Alan Capps, Daisy Crowley, Karen and Randall Davis, Alice T. Davison, Claire De Lelle and Matthew Leddicotte, Christina Farrera Donnelly, Susan and Charles Edson, Carolyn and Robert Falb, David and Rosemary Farmer, George and Judith Farr, Cory and Desmond Ffrench-Mullen, Sandra and James Fitzpatrick, Robert and Susan Fratkin, Peter and Linda Parke Gallagher, Marie D. Gilson and Maia Budow, Karl R. and Wilene Worthington Goller, Margaret Johnson Green, David and Jean Grier, Mr. and Mrs. Charles L. Hoke Jr., Jon and Frances Hughes, Joel and Elinor Green Hunter, Earl and Ruth Hyde, Janet G. Jones and Faith M. Cobb, Gerry Kauvar and Susan Brashaw, Florence G. King, Tom Krause, Ellen and Pettus LeCompte, James and Patricia Ledyards, Mrs. Egbert G. Leigh, Scott Lopez and Dawn Erkenbrack, Karen Maples, Ann McClellan, Charles McIntosh, Maryjoan McNamara, William F. and Dorothy McSweeny, Ann Mejia and Kathleen Munds, Phillip Miller and Tom Caldwell, Frances and Michael Mohr, Venice Molivadas and Nancy Ford, Braxton and Debbie Moncure, Deborah Nager and Vincent Murzinski, Evelyn Nef, Mr. and Mrs. William Newlin, Mr. and Mrs. William Nitze, Doreen D. and William Noullet, Andrew and Janis Oehmann, Bill and Carol Press, Simon J. Russell and Anna Zadskjaer-Grapek, Lili-Charlotte Sarnoff, Judith Seiden and Catherine Held, John and Fay Selavage, Victor Shargait, Dean and Andree Smith, Audrey Sondheimer and Richard Wagner, Mr. and Mrs. Louis E. Spector, Ana Steele and John Clark, Craig and Valerie Tanner, Leslie Weisman, Diane Wenneke and Roger Birch, Dr. Marjorie J. Williams, and Alan and Irene Wurtzel. We apologize to anyone whose reservation arrived too late for inclusion in these rosters. And we wish to convey our heartfelt gratitude not only to those enumerated above, but to every invitee who has supported this event.

To learn more about either the ESU or the Shakespeare Guild, visit www.esuwdc.org, e-mail esuwdc@msn.com, or call (202) 234-4602.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The officers and directors of the English-Speaking Union and the Shakespeare Guild are grateful to everyone who has contributed to these proceedings. We’re deeply indebted to Sir David and Lady Manning for their kind hospitality, as well as to Social Secretary Amanda Downtes and her colleagues for their assistance with this and with a number of previous events at the British Embassy.

We’re immensely thankful to the Shakespeare Theatre Company, and particularly to those who have aided us in various stages of planning. Among others we wish to single out Landon Butler, Chairman of the Board, Barry Colfelt, Steven Scott Mazzola, and Danielle Gordon, not to mention actors Helen Carey and Ted van Griethuysen. To STC mainstay Dorothy McSweeny, Chairman of the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities, we owe credit for a congratulatory certificate from Mayor Adrian M. Fenty.

And of course to Managing Director Nicholas Goldborough and his staff we’re pleased to extend gratitude not only for help with this gathering but for all they’ve done to facilitate ESU’s annual Shakespeare Competition for the Nation’s Capital Region, which has long benefited from being held at the Lansburgh Theatre. For assistance with that activity we’re indebted to Dawn McAndrews, Director of Education, and Catherine Weidner, Program Director of the Academy for Classical Acting (a joint venture of the Shakespeare Theatre Company and the George Washington University), for the workshops and master classes they oversee each spring.

For the counsel and encouragement they’ve provided, Anne and Stephen Black and Willee Lewis have been extraordinarily helpful. So has Scott Berg. And so have been such key benefactors of the English-Speaking Union and the Shakespeare Guild as A. Graham Down, Robert Fratkin, William Huneke, James Ledyard, Marjorie Williams, and the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation.

Keith Baxter, an actor and director who’ll be familiar to everyone who knows the Shakespeare Theatre Company, was a dear friend of Sir John Gielgud. And in a gesture that recalls his unique role in previous ceremonies, he has prepared materials for this occasion that place the honoree’s work in the most exalted of contexts. For similar efforts, we’re thankful to Zoe Caldwell and Stacy Reach.

To those who’ve perused the back cover of this souvenir keepsake it will be evident that Clive Francis is one of the most thoughtful artists of our time. There is no way to overstate the significance of his gift, not only to the Shakespeare Guild, but to all the awardees in years to come who will receive his inscribed print of Sir John.

actors Keith Baxter, Brian Bedford, Zoe Caldwell, Hal Holbrook, Ronald Pickup, Toby Stephens, and Christopher Plummer, director Sir Richard Eyre, producer Rebecca Eaton, and playwright Sir David Hare. A few months later Dame Judi and another Gielgud honoree, Sir Derek Jacobi, were among the hosts for a January 2000 presentation of the trophy to actor, director, and filmmaker Kenneth Branagh in London’s historic Middle Temple Hall, a venue that had been hallowed by a 1602 Twelfth Night whose cast would have included the comedy’s author. This salute included vignettes by composer Patrick Doyle, U.S. Ambassador Philip Lader, and actors Samantha Bond, Richard Briers, Helena Bonham Carter, Ben Elton, Stephen Fry, Bob Hoskins, Sean Rafferty, John Sessions, and Timothy Spall.

In 2002 the Guild returned to New York for A Shakespearean Revel at Lincoln Center, where such personalities as actors John Cleese, Kitty Carlisle Hart, Bill Irwin, Dana Ivey, Tony Randall, and Roger Rees, writer Adam Gopnik, and directors Barry Edelstein, Bernard Gersten, and Margot Harley toasted, and at times roasted, Kevin Kline as the first American artist to receive this prestigious laurel. A year later the National Arts Club provided a warm and intimate ambience for the Guild’s 2003 gala. This time the spotlight was on Lynn Redgrave, who was lauded by her siblings Corin and Vanessa, by performers Kathleen Chalfant and Richard Easton, and by film director Bill Condon and theatre producer Elizabeth I. McCann.

In 2004 the Guild combined forces with the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and the Royal Shakespeare Company to observe the centenary of Sir John’s birth, filling the Gielgud Theatre in London for an evening at which notables like playwrights Alan Bennett and Sir David Hare, director Sir Peter Hall, and actors Dame Judi Dench, Clive Francis, Rosemary Harris, Barbara Jefford, Barbara Leigh-Hunt, Sir Ian McKellen, Michael Pennington, Ian Richardson, Paul Scofield, and Sir Donald Sinden recalled their late-departed friend. This stellar gathering was emceed by the BBC’s Ned Sherrin, and it was followed by a reception in Covent Garden’s Garrick Club.

The Guild was back to Manhattan in 2006 for a National Arts Club presentation to Christopher Plummer, who was lauded in an evening that featured two previous Golden Quill recipients, Zoe Caldwell and Lynn Redgrave, along with actor and visual artist Clive Francis, television journalist Robert MacNeil, and soprano Audra McDonald.

The Guild and ESU Washington are gratified by the opportunity to bring to this beautiful setting a program to convey the enduring influence of a great Briton — a man who has been praised by one of his illustrious younger contemporaries, actor Keith Baxter, as “the greatest creative force in the English-speaking theatre.”
A Tribute to Michael Kahn

A salute to Shakespeare, and to the classical tradition in drama, at which one of the most gifted directors of our era receives the 2007 Gielgud Award.

Toasts to this Year’s Honoree

His Excellency Sir David Manning
Her Majesty’s Ambassador to the United States

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg
Supreme Court of the United States

Landon Butler
Chairman of the Shakespeare Theatre Company

Ted van Griethuysen and Helen Carey
Members of the Shakespeare Theatre Company

Lord Watson of Richmond
Co-Chair of the U.K. Jamestown Committee

Bestowing of the Gielgud Award

John F. Andrews
President of the Shakespeare Guild

Acceptance Remarks

Michael Kahn
Artistic Director of the Shakespeare Theatre Company

An Expression of Gratitude to the Embassy

Gerald B. Kauvar
President of ESU Washington

A Warm Welcome to this Evening’s Festivities

We’re delighted that you could join us in celebrating one of the most wide-ranging and versatile directors of our time, a man whose work in opera has earned almost as many plaudits as his efforts in the genres for which he is best known in our metropolis, and a man whose dedication to the nurturing of young talent has established him as one of the most respected and influential educators in the dramatic profession.

Michael Kahn had garnered accolades on Broadway, and had overseen such artistic enterprises as the American Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford, Connecticut, and the McCarter Theatre in Princeton, New Jersey, before he came to Capitol Hill in 1986 to rescue an embattled troupe that was on the verge of extinction. Drawing upon his experience not only as an artist but as a gifted teacher (he’d helped establish the Drama Division at Lincoln Center’s prestigious Juilliard School, which he headed from 1992 to 2006, and he had assisted John Houseman and Margot Harley when they launched an itinerant Acting Company that would foster the budding careers of such stars as Kevin Kline and Patti LuPone), Mr. Kahn transformed what had begun in 1969 as the Folger Theatre Group into a complex operation that is now recognized as one of the finest classical ensembles in the world. As that enterprise extends its scope and prepares to occupy its magnificent new quarters at the Harman Center for the Arts, Mr. Kahn is directing Hamlet and putting his finishing touches on an unprecedented Shakespeare in Washington festival which was conceived by Kennedy Center President Michael Kaiser but which has been brilliantly orchestrated under the guidance of tonight’s honoree.

To commend Mr. Kahn’s accomplishments and thank him for all he’s brought to the cultural life not only of our area but of our nation, we’re delighted to be joined by such distinguished figures as Landon Butler (Chairman of the Shakespeare Theatre Company, and a civic leader who has worked with Mr. Kahn and with STC Managing Director Nicholas T. Goldsborough to enlarge the Theatre’s mission and extend its outreach in new directions), Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg (an eloquent and loyal advocate for these efforts), and award-winning actors Helen Carey and Ted van Griethuysen (two of the remarkable performers who’ve done so much to realize the lofty dreams with which Mr. Kahn has inspired his associates). We’re privileged to include the international perspective that Alan Watson imparts as a global envoy for the English-Speaking Union, as a representative of the House of Lords, and as co-chair for a commission to commemorate the 400th anniversary of a venture that introduced the language of Shakespeare to what the playwright would describe as a “brave New World.” But above all, we’re deeply grateful to Sir David and Lady Manning for hosting for an event at which they too pay tribute to an artist for whom they’ve long provided support.