



For Immediate Release

Naming of Kathryn Kerbes Lounge Announced as Part of Werklund Centre Transformation in Honour of Celebrated Calgarian Artist

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In recognition of a cherished contributor to Calgary's arts community, Werklund Centre proudly announces the naming of a newly created hosting space within the Modernization phase of the Werklund Centre Transformation project – the Kathryn Kerbes Lounge. The naming of this future hosting space adjacent to the Martha Cohen Theatre is made possible through a \$1 million gift from the Prairie Crocus Foundation.

"Kathryn Kerbes, along with her husband Hal and so many of their friends and colleagues, played a defining role in cultivating art and creative expression in Calgary. Prairie Crocus is very proud to be a small part of what the Werklund Centre is all about - a place where art can thrive," says representative from the Prairie Crocus Foundation. "Art is essential to a thriving city. It brings laughter and tears, it brings wisdom and stirs your conscience, and it brings you solace with moments of beauty and joy. Art is as necessary as breathing. And art helps a city become a great city."

Born and raised in Calgary, Kathryn Kerbes devoted her life to elevating the arts, both from on the stage and behind the scenes. She made her mark as a two-time Betty Mitchell Award recipient and a co-recipient, with her husband Hal Kerbes, of the Harry and Martha Cohen Award for their lasting contribution to theatre in Calgary. She captivated audiences across Alberta and British Columbia, including Theatre Calgary, Stage West, Alberta Theatre Projects, Lunchbox Theatre, and Vertigo Theatre. She also developed an award-winning high school drama program and later served as the school division's Fine Arts Consultant. For many years she applied her acumen to special events and donor relations at Alberta Theatre Projects, inspiring supporters and patrons alike with her glowing passion for the power of live performance. She passed away on June 17, 2025, after a battle with a rare and aggressive form of cancer.

"Kathi was an integral part of ATP's story for decades as an actor and driving force behind many of our most memorable events and development initiatives. Her vision and energy helped shape ATP into the vibrant company it is today," says Haysam Kadri, Artistic Director of Alberta Theatre Projects. "Kathi's warmth, creativity, and unwavering belief in community will forever be part of our company's spirit."

"There are no words to adequately describe the loss of Kathi's untimely passing. For our grandchildren, our daughters and sons-in-law, and certainly for me, it created an unfathomable void, but she lived a bigger life than just our family," says Hal Kerbes. "Kathi had a profound effect on a generation of young people during her 21 years teaching career, first with music and then drama at Chestermere High School. Through Shadow



Werklund Centre

Productions, her impact was felt by more than 200 emerging and practicing theatre artists and over the course of her twenty year career as a professional actor, she also won the respect of her peers. On behalf of all of us, I want to thank the Prairie Crocus Foundation and Werklund Centre for providing this lasting memorial to an extraordinary force in the universe.”

Ushering in the revitalization of the existing Werklund Centre facility, the Modernization phase of the Werklund Centre Transformation project represents part of the largest cultural infrastructure investment currently underway in Canada. The new Kathryn Kerbes Lounge is part of a broader strategy to improve access, modernize and upgrade Werklund Centre’s existing lobby and gathering spaces. Design for the Werklund Centre Transformation Modernization is underway, and construction will begin once the remaining funding is secured.

“The arts community in Calgary has been built by people who gave deeply of themselves to this city—their time, their care, their creativity, and their belief in what culture can make possible. Kathryn Kerbes was one of those people, and her loss continues to be felt profoundly across this community. I can’t think of a more meaningful way to recognize her lasting impact than to have her name become part of this new gathering place next to the Martha Cohen Theatre,” says Alex Sarian, President and CEO of Werklund Centre.

Now well into its second year of construction, the Werklund Centre Transformation is being led in partnership by Calgary Municipal Land Corporation, The City of Calgary, and Werklund Centre. In addition to adding two new performance venues to Calgary’s ever-growing community, the Expansion is integrated with the newly redesigned Olympic Plaza to support a contiguous indoor/outdoor space for cultural activations.

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Werklund Centre

Werklund Centre (formerly Arts Commons) is the steward of Western Canada's largest arts centre and the artistic and civic cornerstone of Calgary's downtown core that fosters the arts through live performance, educational opportunities, and artist development programs. For 40 years, it has been a key contributor to the social, economic, cultural, and intellectual life and well-being of Calgarians—a commitment that is being renewed through the Werklund Centre Transformation project, the largest cultural infrastructure project in Canadian history. It is home to five resident companies, including Alberta Theatre Projects, Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Downstage, Theatre Calgary, and One Yellow Rabbit. It houses six gallery spaces, five theatres, a concert hall, rehearsal and education spaces, costume and scene shops, and a restaurant.