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Room Dedication to Honor the Late "Gabby" and Lucy Gabbard

Nov-10-2009

Theatre alumni coming back for this weekend's departmental reunion at Eastern Illinois University will have the opportunity to share in an honor commemorating the lives of Glendon "Gabby" and Lucy Gabbard.

Community members are also invited to help pay tribute to the husband/wife team who, together, dedicated years of their lives to entertaining and teaching others.

Eastern plans to dedicate the "E. Glendon Gabbard and Luciana Paquet Gabbard Green Room," located in the newly renovated Doudna Fine Arts Center, at 11:45 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 14. In addition, a tour of the center's theatre facilities will begin at 12:15 p.m.

All those interested in either or both events are invited to attend. There is no admission charge.

Glendon "Gabby" Gabbard began his teaching career in theatre arts at Eastern Illinois University in 1947. Until his retirement in 1984, he directed between three and six plays each year. His plays were well-received by audiences, and many of his students went on to successful careers as actors and teachers.

Lucy Gabbard was a prolific author and published extensively. She taught for many years in EIU's Department of English.

Following their retirement, they moved to Chicago where they became professional actors. They appeared in productions at the Goodman Theatre, Victory Gardens and many other venues in Chicago's active theatre scene. Appearances in "Groundhog's Day," "My Best Friend's Wedding" and "Prelude to a Kiss" highlighted their careers, as did Lucy Gabbard's appearance in the 1990 Tony Award-winning production of "The Grapes of Wrath."

In recognition of the Gabbards' long tenure and service to the students of Eastern, the Board of Trustees agreed in April to name the Doudna Fine Arts Center's Green Room in their honor.

The ceremony coincides with the theatre's department's annual alumni reunion. Alumni from the Classes of 1960-1975 and 1985-1995 have been invited as special guests for the day, which also includes a 7 p.m. production of William Shakespeare's "The Tempest."

Tickets (\$12, general admission; \$10 for seniors and EIU employees; \$5 for students) may be purchased in the Doudna Fine Arts Center box office (217-581-3110) between 11:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays, or one hour before a performance. Tickets may also be reserved via e-mail at doudnatix@eiu.edu.

Additionally, John Oertling, chair of Eastern's Department of Theatre Arts, will formally receive the Illinois Theatre Association's 2009 Award of Excellence for University Theatre. Time and location are to be announced.



Glendon 'Gabby' Gabbard



Lucina Gabbard