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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 2, 2016

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**MAYOR EMANUEL, CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE ANNOUNCE NEW THEATER SPACE AT
NAVY PIER**

The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare is the latest investment in the revitalization of Navy Pier

Mayor Emanuel, Chicago Shakespeare Theater Artistic Director Barbara Gaines, Chicago Shakespeare Executive Director Criss Henderson and Navy Pier CEO Marilynn Gardner today announced a new performance venue, The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare.

The new theater space announcement comes during Navy Pier's centennial year and underscores the Mayor's commitment to reinvigorate the attraction. In November 2015, the Mayor announced Shakespeare 400 Chicago, a yearlong international arts festival celebrating the vibrancy, relevance and reach of Shakespeare.

"Creating this state-of-the-art performance venue is another step in the redevelopment of Navy Pier to ensure that it remains one of Chicago's premier centers for commerce but also for culture and I want to thank Chicago Shakespeare for their tremendous contribution to that effort," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "There is no better time to announce this new performance space than in the year when we will bring local and international artists together for Shakespeare 400 Chicago, which will keep the spirit of Shakespeare alive in our schools and on our stages. I look forward to watching The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare become one of Chicago's next great cultural jewels for years to come."

At a cost of \$35 million, the project repurposes components of the venue formerly known as Skyline Stage, located adjacent to Chicago Shakespeare. The Yard is connected to the existing facility, which currently houses two theaters, through expanded lobbies. The year-round, flexible venue can be configured in a variety of shapes and sizes with audience capacities ranging from 150 to 850, defining the audience–artist relationship to best serve each production.

The Yard will be Chicago Shakespeare's third stage and, together with the two existing performance spaces, positions the Theater to amplify its artistic vision and community

impact—expanding audiences and its service to Chicago schools through its nationally recognized arts-in-education programs.

“We’ve long needed a third theater, but we knew that a fixed theatrical space would not serve next-generation theater makers or the artistic ambition of our company” shared Chicago Shakespeare’s Artistic Director and founder Barbara Gaines. “The Yard will offer a new kind of venue, one that allows us the freedom to reconfigure and recalibrate a playing space each time we approach it. The Yard has been designed as a fun, responsive theater that will adapt to artistic impulses. It offers the volume for us to dream bigger, engaging future audiences in surprising and provocative ways.”

“The Yard demonstrates that a creative, yet economical approach can revitalize an existing facility and transform it into a world-class resource for education and entertainment,” noted Executive Director Criss Henderson. “By adding The Yard, Chicago Shakespeare’s home will feature three diverse theatrical platforms: an Elizabethan-style courtyard theater; an intimate studio theater; and a flexible ‘state of the imagination’ theatrical venue.

Thanks to our partnership with Navy Pier and the generosity of a community of donors, this expanded campus will allow us to foster the work of the leading theater artists of our time; produce and present theater that breaks traditional boundaries of expression; extend popular productions; and double our service to students and teachers.”

The development of The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare marks a significant milestone in transforming the Pier’s 50 acres of premier urban waterfront into a spectacular, global destination and treasure for Chicago and its guests.

The redevelopment builds on the strengths of the Pier—its singular location along the edge of Lake Michigan and downtown Chicago, its size and scale and its programmatic richness. It seeks to enhance the experience for current guests while drawing new audiences with evening and year-round entertainment and cultural attractions. In addition, Navy Pier is reimagining its arts and discovery programming, as well as its 13-acre entrance, now known as Polk Bros Park, with new multi-stage performance lawns, public fountain and expansive promenade.

“Chicago Shakespeare and Navy Pier have had a visionary partnership since the forward-thinking decision to bring the Theater to our venerable civic space in 1999,” explained Marilynn Gardner, President and CEO of Navy Pier, Inc. “With the Theater’s proven track record for serving the community and creating award-winning performances, we are confident that this investment will lead to a successful second act. This expansion, new dining options and the completion of the Pierscape plan will not only enhance the theater-going experience for guests, it will continue to elevate Navy Pier as a major cultural destination and growing draw for worldwide visitors to Chicago.”

Building on the Theater's 16-year partnership in residence on Navy Pier, The Yard will be funded through a \$15 million investment by Navy Pier, Inc. along with \$20 million in capital funding raised through Chicago Shakespeare's Our City, Our Shakespeare Campaign.

Navy Pier's Centennial Celebration will kick off with the opening of the new Ferris wheel on May 27, followed by the unveiling of the Polk Bros Fountain and Plaza, Louis Vuitton America's Cup World Series Chicago from June 10 through 12, 4th of July celebration, Tall Ships Chicago from July 27 through 31, and the opening of The Yard at Chicago Shakespeare in Fall 2017.

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