

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Digital Library Collections

This is a PDF of a folder from our textual collections.

Collection: Correspondence, White House Office of:
Records, 1981-89

Folder Title: National Theater Week
Box: 80 (1986)

To see more digitized collections visit:

<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/digitized-textual-material>

To see all Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Inventories, visit:

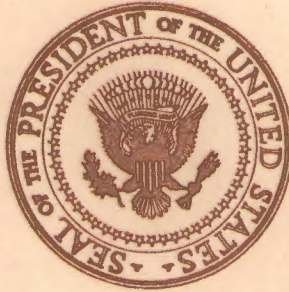
<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/white-house-inventories>

Contact a reference archivist at: **reagan.library@nara.gov**

Citation Guidelines: <https://reaganlibrary.gov/archives/research-support/citation-guide>

National Archives Catalogue: <https://catalog.archives.gov/>

Last Updated: 05/23/2023



National Theatre Week, 1986

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Theatre is an ancient and honored art form with a recorded history spanning 2,500 years. Some have speculated that its roots go so deep on human nature and human experience that it may well be the wellspring of all the arts. We do know that poetry, story-telling, dance, music, masks, costumes, and sets all have a place in what we have come to call "theatre." These elements can be found in the performances of primitive tribes and the most sophisticated modern productions. In fact we see the impulse to theatre in every child who has ever played "let's pretend" or "make believe."

Theatre lets us stand apart from the flow of life: to feel pity and understanding and empathy; to smile at human foibles and to weep at human tragedies. Theatre is an art form for all seasons and all moods. It can refresh our spirits with comic hijinks, dazzle us with the splendor of pageantry, and impart rich insights into human relationships. It can convulse us into gales of laughter, wring our hearts with pathos, and dramatize eternal moral truths. In the works of such giants as Shakespeare, Goethe, Moliere, and O'Neill it can do all these things.

In one respect theatre is an art of the present moment—once performed it is gone, save in the memory of the audience. Yet new productions and performances give it a kind of ever-renewed immortality. It can put us in touch with the culture, conditions, and viewpoints of many civilizations. Indeed, theatre is at once a reminder and an affirmation of the continuity of civilization and the fundamental unity of all mankind.

That continuity is manifested not only in performances of plays of the past, but also in the attempts of modern artists to give voice to the conditions and experiences of our own time. These efforts, in turn, will enrich the legacy we will leave to future generations.

Today, theatre exists not only in the traditional cultural centers of our country but all across the land. Theatre at all levels—professional, community, and school—has sprung up in every region of our country. There is no greater testimony to mankind's need for theatre than this. Today we are experiencing a renaissance of the living theatre, with great gains in artistic excellence, in aesthetic variety and diversity of cultural voices—and in growing and loyal audiences throughout America.

In recognition of the importance of theatre in the lives of all Americans, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 247, has authorized the President to proclaim the week of June 1 through June 7, 1986, as "National Theatre Week."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week beginning June 1, 1986, as National Theatre Week. I encourage the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies, performances, programs, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and tenth.

Ronald Reagan