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Canadian Actors' Equity Association to honour Martha Henry,  
Nora Polley, Barbara Gordon, Susan Benson and the Stage West-  
Equity Emerging Theatre Artist Award winner

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Canadian Actors' Equity Association (Equity) will honour director Martha Henry, stage manager Nora Polley, actor Barbara Gordon and scenographer Susan Benson on November 30th in Toronto, Ontario at the Gladstone Hotel.

"Once again Equity's Council faced the challenging task of selecting award recipients from a pool of many talented and deserving candidates." said Allan Teichman, Equity President. Director and performer **Martha Henry** and stage manager **Nora Polley** will both be presented with **Life Membership** in Equity in recognition of their distinguished careers in the performing arts.

Martha Henry's (Stratford, Ontario) distinguished career includes tenure as the former artistic director of The Grand Theatre and as the current director of the Stratford Shakespeare Festival's Birmingham Conservatory for Classical Theatre Training. She is an accomplished stage and film actress and a Companion of the Order of Canada. Nora Polley (Stratford, Ontario) was a stage manager at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival for 37 years, and the close of the 2009 season marked Nora's retirement from the Festival.

"These two extraordinary women exemplify artistic excellence and achievement in their chosen crafts." continued Teichman. "Martha's accomplishments as a leading actor and director continue to be an inspiration to the members of Equity. Nora is regarded as the cornerstone of the stage management department at Stratford – her dedication to the art of making theatre and her passion and encouragement are legendary."

The recipient of the prestigious **Larry McCance Award** is Equity member **Barbara Gordon** (Toronto, Ontario) in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the Association and its membership. Barbara is an active member of Equity having served as an Advisory Committee member, mentor, and dedicated volunteer. Barbara's commitment to the Association and generosity of spirit make her an ideal recipient for recognition.

Premier theatre, opera and ballet designer **Susan Benson** (Stratford, Ontario) is this year's recipient of **Honorary Membership** in Equity. Susan was the head of design at Stratford Shakespeare Festival under John Hirsch, and designed for the Festival from 1974 to 2006. Countless Equity members have had the pleasure of performing on her remarkable sets and acting in her beautiful and detailed costumes. She is a winner of multiple honours including eight Dora Mavor Moore Awards (Toronto), and a Jessie Award (Vancouver).

The 2009 **Stage West - Equity Emerging Theatre Artist Award** winner is **Donna Soares** of Vancouver, B.C. This Award and its \$2,000 cash prize was initiated in celebration of Equity's silver anniversary in 2001, and recognizes an Equity member of three years or less who has already made a significant contribution and impression as an artist. Donna is an innovative performer, specializing in a collaborative creative style and already making a distinguished mark on the theatre scene in her hometown.

Equity is the voice of professional artists working in live performance in English Canada. It is a national artists' association representing more than 5,500 performers, directors, choreographers, fight directors and stage managers working in theatre, opera and dance from coast to coast.

**Awards Presentation: Monday, November 30, 8:00 - 9:15 p.m.**  
**The Gladstone Hotel Ballroom, 1214 Queen Street West, Toronto, ON**

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