

# CENTER STAGE

*Newsletter for Friends of the Sandler Center for the Performing Arts*



summer  
2007



## The Excitement Builds

The cultural face of Virginia Beach is changing daily as work on the Sandler Center for the Performing Arts has dramatically progressed at Town Center as we get ready for opening night in November 2007. These photographs present a snapshot of the project to date. Below are a few of the highlights:

- 1,300 seats will arrive in mid-July with installation scheduled for late July to early August. Each generous, comfortable seat in the Sandler Center will be within 100 feet of the stage and all will have excellent sightlines.



- Scaffolding has recently been removed revealing the theatre ceiling with its magnificent wave configuration and perforated metal panels.

- Work on the plaza will be completed by the fall and is being carefully coordinated with the Studio 56 Condo Loft project. The plaza area is a large, welcoming space with decorative lighting, flags, banners, green space and space for 400 people to enjoy outdoor performances and festivals.



- The majestic chandelier is being custom made for the Sandler Center and consists of a cluster of five different glass pendant fixtures. Installation is scheduled for mid-August. The chandelier will be a striking focal point in the three-story, glass-walled lobby.
- Other finishing touches like warm wood accents, stainless steel and brushed pewter metal accents and twinkling silver lights will near completion in August. View more construction photos at [www.sandlercenter.org](http://www.sandlercenter.org)

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# We Are Getting Closer!

As I drive by the Sandler Center for the Performing Arts, it's sometimes hard to believe how far we've come! When we broke ground in May of 2005, we could only imagine the magnificent facility we see today. Our cover story gives you an update and a timeline on the remaining construction and finishing touches. The excitement is building as each piece is put in place. The opening in November will be a grand event that will make history for the City of Virginia Beach.

Let me take this opportunity to offer a sincere thanks to all those wonderful people who have donated their time and their treasures to making the Sandler Center for the Performing Arts a success. A special thanks to Jerry and Laura Miller who are profiled in this newsletter for giving \$1 million for the naming rights to the Miller Studio Theatre.

Without your support we wouldn't be where we are today. I am grateful to the Capital Campaign Steering Committee members who continue to work hard as we approach the opening. Please continue to tell your family and friends about the newest cultural venue in our region. We look forward to your continued support.

I will see you at the opening!

Warm Regards,



*Linwood*

Linwood O. Branch, III  
President

## Setting the Stage



## Leading Roles... Volunteer Spotlight: When it Comes to Raising Funds for the Arts, Joyce Strelitz is a Natural

As a lifelong music lover, Joyce Strelitz has played a key role in giving the residents of Hampton Roads more opportunities to enjoy the arts. Back in the early 1990s, Joyce was instrumental in the renovation of the old Center Theatre into the magnificent Harrison Opera House. "That project was not easy, but it was exciting and you can see the results of our labors today," Joyce said.

When she first heard about the Sandler Center for the Performing Arts, she knew she had to be involved. "I've always had an interest in music," Joyce said. "As I watched the amazing growth at the Town Center, I could see that the Sandler Center would be the icing on the cake for the whole development. I am very, very excited about this project."

Joyce believes the City of Virginia Beach is ready for a first-class performing arts center. "When we worked on the Harrison Opera House we heard the argument – Why do we need another performing arts center? But each center serves the community in a slightly different way," Joyce said. "And I believe the more you offer the community in the area of cultural arts, the more they will want. The Sandler Center for the Performing Arts will upgrade the tastes of the people

of Virginia Beach and the region."

For many years Joyce has helped raise funds for a variety of organizations and she knew

she could use her talents to help the Sandler Center. "I went to a meeting to see how I could help out and I jumped in." She is encouraged by the response to her fundraising appeals for the Sandler Center. "Sometimes you have to drag people kicking and screaming to make a donation, but this community has really stepped up to the plate to support the Sandler Center," she said. "That's evident in that many of the naming opportunities at the Center have already been taken." Never one to pass up the chance to make people aware of the need, Joyce added, "Of course there are plenty of opportunities still available for those who are interested."

The Sandler Center for the Performing Arts thanks Joyce Strelitz for her dedication as a member of the Capital Campaign Steering Committee!



### Spring 2005

Official groundbreaking ceremony of the Performing Arts Center at Town Center

### September 2005

Steve and Art Sandler donated \$5 million to name the center: Sandler Center for the Performing Arts.

# Laura and Jerry Miller – Giving Back to Their Community for Today and Tomorrow

For Laura and Jerry Miller the decision to donate \$1 million for the naming rights to the Studio Theatre in the Sandler Center for the Performing Arts was an easy one. It provides them with the opportunity to give back to the community that has been a significant part of their lives for more than 25 years. Jerry moved to Virginia Beach when stationed here by the US Navy in 1979. He met Laura, left the Navy, and together they decided to make this area their permanent home. Jerry is president and CEO of Earl Industries in Portsmouth and a developer of commercial real estate in Virginia Beach.

We enjoy a nice life in Virginia Beach. The community has been good to us and we know the Sandler Center for the Performing Arts will be a tremendous addition to the region. It's time for Virginia Beach to have something like this.

– Jerry Miller

Laura added, "Soon we won't have to drive to Norfolk to enjoy a performance."

The more intimate atmosphere of the Sandler Center with its 1,300-seat theatre with no seat more than 100 feet from the stage appeals to Laura. "We are building a first-class facility that will be

warm and inviting. People of all ages and from all economic backgrounds can afford to come here and I believe entire families will attend performances together."

"The Sandler Center is much more than a grand performance theatre," Laura said. "It's also a rehearsal hall, teaching studio, and offers several beautiful rooms where special events can be held." The Miller Studio Theatre is a 2,400 square foot hall for rehearsals, but with its 150 seats it can be used as performing space for smaller, more intimate productions.

Laura likes the cosmopolitan design of the Sandler Center that is sure to draw people in. "One feature I'm excited about is the enormous picture windows that will allow people strolling by to view a performance or rehearsal taking place inside. I'm sure the Miller Studio Theatre will be in constant use because it can accommodate any art form and every local organization will have access to it."

Both of the Millers are enthusiastic about the impact the Sandler Center will have on children. "One reason we are seeing great athletes emerge from our area is because of the outstanding youth programs that have been developed," said Jerry. "The Sandler Center will

provide the inspiration and facilitate youth participation in the arts."

"It will be wonderful when it opens in the fall, but I'm also thinking of the future," Laura added. "Children who get involved now will return to the Sandler Center as adults and remember the time they spent here in their childhood."

Laura and Jerry Miller are honored to have their name displayed on the Miller Studio Theatre. It is all about giving back to the community they love, not just for today, but for generations to follow.



I'm sure the Miller Studio Theatre will be in constant use because it can accommodate any art form and every local organization will have access to it. – Laura Miller



## Spring 2007

Laura and Jerry Miller donated \$1 million to name the Studio Theatre/Rehearsal Hall.

## Summer 2007

Community Campaign Kick-off Planned.

## November 2007

Grand Opening of the Sandler Center for the Performing Arts.

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## Don't Miss Your Chance for a Season Subscription

With outstanding shows, concerts, dance, and theatre, the Sandler Center for the Performing Arts is certain to have many SOLD-OUT events.

"It is hard to believe we are only four months away from the opening of the Sandler Center for the Performing Arts," said Rob Cross, Director of the Virginia Arts Festival. "I am very proud of the amazing performances we have programmed for both the opening series and for the entire season," Cross said. "I look forward to our August announcement of the Great Performance Series."

The Virginia Arts Festival is working with Global Spectrum to bring the very best to Virginia Beach. "The great part about our

lineup is that we're going to have events that appeal to everyone," commented Sandler Center for the Performing Arts General Manager Paul Lasakow. "We're highly anticipating the season announcement and tickets will go on sale August 2nd. We really think the Hampton Roads community will be impressed with the high quality and appeal of performances, not to mention the extraordinary setting of the Sandler Center."

Look for the announcement of the upcoming season performances and purchase your season subscription early. It's your opportunity to be a part of world class entertainment in the heart of Virginia Beach!



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