

ALVIN CRAMER SEGAL C.M.,

Awarded Prix Arts-Affaires de Montréal (Arts and Business Prize) 2006
Montreal Chamber of Commerce and the Arts Council of Montreal

President of the Segal Centre for Performing Arts

For the past decade Mr. Segal, a visionary and successful entrepreneur, has progressively put his experience, time, heart and financial resources into championing arts and culture organizations in Montreal.

Alvin Segal is a role model for business partnership with the arts. He has emerged as the leader of the Boards of the Segal Centre for Performing Arts, the English theatre that now bears the Segal family name and the Dora Wasserman Yiddish Theatre. Mr. Segal guides and sustains these two theatres and the Arts Centre fullness of artistic expression and fiscal stability. With his broad vision, he recognized the importance of breaking down barriers and supported joint projects with French theatres in Montreal, other arts organizations across Canada and a wide spectrum of public and private firms. The result has been a revitalization of the arts in the western sector of Montreal. He has recruited countless individuals and corporations to the cause of the arts and its pleasures. His support of the arts has broadened to other major arts organizations in Montreal.

Mr. Segal has expressed his innovative spirit in business as well as the arts. As the Chairman and CEO of Peerless Clothing, Alvin Segal manages the world's largest production plant for men's fine tailored clothing. He is a self-made man who sets the trend for the whole apparel industry. He started out working on the Peerless factory floor in 1951 he pioneered the introduction of the engineered suit into North America. He introduced computerized methods to the industry and proceeded to retrain his staff to use this revolutionary method of production. His plant is driven by the most sophisticated, integrated Enterprise Resource Planning System. When the US-Canada Free Trade Agreement loomed on the horizon, he had the foresight to build a 'state of the art' facility on Pie IX Blvd and took his company into the US market. Mr. Segal is widely known in business circles as an outstanding spokesperson for the apparel industry. He played a pivotal role in negotiations leading to NAFTA. He served as long-time President of the Men's Clothing Manufacturer's Association and on the executive of Apparel Manufacturers Institute of Quebec and the Canadian Apparel Federation.

Alvin Segal's generosity is legendary. He has not forgotten his origins. He is eminently approachable and a person of great warmth. In his office at Peerless he has a big black binder of the organizations to which the Alvin Segal Family Foundation contributes. His early support was to health, education and social services, which he continues, while he has brought his attention to bear on the arts. Cote Ste-Catherine Road between Côte des Neiges and Décarie Boulevard could well be renamed 'Segal Street'. The new Cancer Centre at the Jewish General Hospital, the Jewish Public Library, Klezkanada, Federation-CJA and across the street, the Saidye Bonfman Centre for the Arts all benefit from Alvin Segal's support. Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, the Musée d'art contemporain and McGill University have also received considerable help along with a myriad of other non-profit institutions small and large.

If he is convinced of the cause, he is not afraid of a project's challenges. Alvin Segal's interest in the arts began in a relatively modest way. He and his wife Leanor were approached by Manuel Batshaw to chair the Yiddish Theatre's first ever endowment fund. Although they were generous funders, this was the Segals' first serious fund-raising effort. Against all odds, Alvin Segal ensured a stable future for Canada's only Yiddish Theatre. With Leanor and Alvin Segal at the helm, the Dora Wasserman Fund for Jewish Culture remarkably

Alvin Cramer Segal, C.M cont'd

netted close to one million dollars. The theatre hall at the SBC was renamed "The Leonor and Alvin Segal Theatre" in their honour.

Over and above the funds, Alvin and Leonor Segal's involvement also elevated the profile of The Yiddish Theatre among the city's elites and rallied them to this cause. Repeatedly, he personally invited groups of potential donors to attend performances. The Yiddish Theatre is now considered the 'jewel in the crown' of the Montreal Jewish community and is a source of pride for all Montrealers.

Mr. Segal's leadership was critical in the re-emergence of the English Theatre at the SBC. In 1999, Alvin Segal began to learn firsthand about the objectives, risks and intricacies of theatre production. The English Theatre at the Saidye Bronfman Centre, the oldest English theatre in Montreal, was floundering. It was hardly producing any of its own plays and had almost succumbed to being a rental house.

Mr. Segal supported the artistic direction to produce full seasons of plays. He lobbied publicly and privately for the theatre's goals and his influence was felt. Many times he stepped in to personally guarantee the bottom line of the budget, but never overstepped the boundaries of artistic decisions. The English Theatre has blossomed. Many Masque Awards in a row attest to that. Theatre subscriptions now have increased and houses are full. Moreover, budget projections are on target.

Mr. Segal has guided the English Theatre and the Saidye Bronfman Centre towards artistic fulfillment and autonomy. After a strategic planning process, it was decided that the English Theatre was strong enough to stand on its own and was incorporated. Today Alvin Segal is President of the Leonor and Alvin Segal Theatre. Parallel to the formation of a new Board, an endowment fund for the English theatre was created, to which Mr. Segal is the largest contributor. To launch this fund, Alvin and Leonor Segal stood as the honorees of a major fund-raising gala, which raised more money than had ever been seen at the Saidye Bronfman Centre. He has succeeded in encouraging others to take on fund-raising responsibilities, but the Segals continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the fund-raising effort.

On 2007, when the Saidye Bronfman Centre's future was tenuous, Mr. Segal stepped in and helped to evolve it into the Segal Centre for the Performing Arts. Alvin Segal is the President of the Board.

Everyone profits from Mr. Segal's support for these non-profit arts initiatives: the artists and technicians who find employment opportunities, the emerging artists who have a chance to master their craft and the thousands of people who get to experience first-class theatre. The surrounding neighbourhood also benefits from this cultural revitalization.

Alvin Segal gives not only money but of himself. After putting in a full day at his office, he can often be found at the Theatre offices discussing budgets, physical plant and plans. Before show time and at intermission, he is talking to his friends and colleagues and recruiting in the lobby. Belying his perspicacity and perseverance are his mild manner, his calm voice in the storm and the fact that he speaks to everyone as an equal.

Montreal's artists and public will for generations owe a debt of gratitude to business leader Alvin Cramer Segal.