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BILL CUSTARD, LIFE TRUSTEE AND FORMER BOARD CHAIR OF DALLAS THEATER CENTER DIES AT AGE 89

DALLAS, Texas (March 17, 2025) – William A. “Bill” Custard died Tuesday, March 4 at 89 years old. Custard and his wife, Linda, were both Life Trustees of Dallas Theater Center, having been involved with the organization since its founding in 1959. Bill and Linda Custard are the only couple to be Life Trustees of DTC, and Bill additionally served as Chairman of the Board from 1983-85 and again from 1985-89. Their support of DTC spans more than 65 years, and has been invaluable to the life of Dallas Theater Center.

“In the history of Dallas Theater Center, few people loom as large as Bill Custard.” said Kevin Moriarty, Executive Director, “Alongside his wife, Linda, Bill’s service to DTC extended throughout his adult lifetime. From the opening night of the Kalita Humphreys Theater in 1959, which Bill attended on an early date with Linda, through his years of service as chair of DTC’s board of trustees and, ultimately, as a Life Trustee, Bill Custard was always there for the theater. His steadfast leadership in both good and bad times and his financial acumen was matched by his deep humanity and care for others. He listened with care, navigated complicated issues with thoughtful nuance, and led with grace. He provided wise counsel and, when necessary, he stepped forward to make difficult decisions with strength and assuredness. In short, he was the model of a board member and of an engaged, concerned citizen.

“In addition to their decades of generosity to DTC, Bill and Linda lent their name to DTC’s highest honor, the Linda and Bill Custard Award, which is bestowed each year to a person who has had a transformative impact on DTC and left an indelible mark on our theater’s history. Bill and Linda were the first recipients of this honor. All of us who come after them at DTC seek to live up to their example.

“Even while mourning his loss, I am filled with joy by the many wonderful memories of time spent with Linda and Bill. Bill was a wonderful storyteller. I loved his witty sense of humor, his kindness, his intellect and his openness to a boundless range of people, ideas and stories. In every encounter I had with Bill over many years, I was keenly aware of his deep, abiding love for Linda and for his family. All of us at Dallas Theater Center share our condolences with the Custard family. We are heartbroken at his passing. As Shakespeare wrote, ‘He was a man, take him for all in all, I shall not look upon his like again.’”

DTC Board Chair Jennifer Altabef added, “From opening night in 1959 through all of the succeeding years, Bill Custard helped shape Dallas Theater Center in heroic ways. As board

chair, he faced incredible challenges and somehow led DTC through them all, with his sure-footed, natural leadership. Later, as a Life Trustee, he and Linda built the endowment, without which the theater would not have survived the recent COVID crisis and its aftermath.

“The Custards’ generous support, through leadership and resources, is an important part of the success of many of the best organizations in Dallas. When I became board chair of DTC, Bill became an advisor to me. He was always supportive, and offered his counsel with warmth and great humor. When I felt particularly between a rock and a hard place, Bill would recount similar experiences of his, and soon he would have me either laughing with him, or asking for more advice, or both. I, along with scores of others, will miss him, and I will reflect often on what he taught me.

“His care for DTC came through in every conversation, and I am so grateful for his devotion. He was compassionate, kind, and open-hearted, and treated everyone with great respect. He loved his family, and our last conversation centered on the joy they gave him. His love and support for Linda showed in everything he did, and their relationship inspired everyone around them. To echo Kevin, I offer Shakespeare: ‘Now cracks a noble heart. Good-night, sweet prince; And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.’”

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DALLAS THEATER CENTER is one of the leading regional theaters in the country and the recipient of the 2017 Regional Theatre Tony Award. Dallas Theater Center (DTC) is committed to producing theater with resident artists that illuminate diverse experiences and spark collaboration and dialogue. Founded in 1959, DTC is a resident company of the AT&T Performing Arts Center and presents its annual season at the Dee and Charles Wyly Theatre, and at its original home, the Kalita Humphreys Theater, the only freestanding theater designed and built by Frank Lloyd Wright. Under the leadership of Executive Director Kevin Moriarty and Interim Artistic Director Jonathan Norton, DTC produces a year-round subscription series of classics, musicals, and new plays and an annual production of A Christmas Carol for more than 100,000 North Texas residents annually. Additionally, the theater produces extensive education programs, including the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award-winning Project Discovery; a partnership with Southern Methodist University’s Meadows School of the Arts; and is also the home of the Diane and Hal Brierley Resident Acting Company which features twelve resident artists that perform in every season.