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## MEDIA RELEASE

# CANADA'S NEW GOVERNMENT SETS STAGE FOR CULTURAL COUP AT UWINNIPEG

*Federal Government Supports UWinnipeg's CanWest Centre for Theatre & Film Renovation Project*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – July 24, 2007**

**WINNIPEG, July 24, 2007** - On behalf of the Honourable Beverley J. Oda, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women, the Honourable Vic Toews, President of the Treasury Board and Member of Parliament (Provencher), today announced funding of up to \$473, 600 for The University of Winnipeg's CanWest Centre for Theatre and Film renovation project. This funding will go towards the renovation of two rehearsal rooms, two large acting studios, as well as the acquisition of specialized sound, lighting and audio-visual equipment.

"The University of Winnipeg's Department of Theatre and Film has demonstrated its commitment not only to its students, but also to the local arts community, making its facilities available to the broader community," said Minister Oda. "The development of their performing arts facility will provide students and local performing arts groups with increased access to spaces that meet professional performing-arts standards. Canada's New Government is pleased to support the University in its efforts to provide more opportunities for local artists to produce, rehearse, and present work."

"Our Government is committed to ensuring that all Canadians have direct access to artistic experiences," said Minister Toews. "Once this work is completed, The University of Winnipeg's CanWest Centre for Theatre and Film will contribute to the development and promotion of the arts and culture in Manitoba, enhancing the vitality of our community, both culturally and economically."

Dr. Lloyd Axworthy, UWinnipeg's President and Vice-Chancellor thanked the federal government for its generous contribution noting "this funding will help complete the \$5.5 million project by providing much needed specialized equipment and modern facilities. The University of Winnipeg is considered to have one of the best theatre programs in the country," he added. "With this contribution, we will now have the physical facility to match the high caliber teaching program."

Since its inception in 1982, UWinnipeg's Department of Theatre & Film has seen many well-known Canadian actors and filmmakers pass through their programs including Tina Keeper, Pamela Sinha, Brian Drader and Larry Desrochers. Today, the Department offers 90 different courses in acting and directing; design; drama in education; filmmaking; playwriting; and stage management and production. Enrolment in the department has grown by 87 per cent in the past five years, due in large part to the University's reputation for excellence in theatre and film studies.

The University of Winnipeg's Department of Theatre and Film is one of the largest programs in Canada and offers a full program of undergraduate and pre-professional training for theatre and film artists and practitioners. The Department is renowned for its high caliber programs and its commitment to the local theatre community, to whom it often provides free or low cost rehearsal facilities and technical support. Many UWinnipeg Theatre & Film graduates are employed throughout Winnipeg's theatre community including the Manitoba Theatre Centre, Prairie Theatre Exchange, Manitoba Theatre for Young People, the Winnipeg Film Group and the Winnipeg Fringe Festival. The new Centre will provide the very latest in teaching, performance and production facilities, and serve as a welcome addition to Winnipeg's cultural landscape.

Canada's New Government has provided this funding under the Cultural Spaces Canada Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage. This program supports cultural infrastructure projects that increase access for Canadians to the performing, visual, and media arts and that improve physical conditions for artistic creativity and innovation. Funding is also provided for the construction and renovation of arts and heritage facilities, for the purchase of specialized equipment, and for feasibility studies and projects to transform buildings into arts or heritage facilities.

In December 2006 Leonard Asper, President and CEO of CanWest Global Communication Corp. announced a corporate gift of \$3 million to The University of Winnipeg to establish the CanWest Centre for Theatre & Film. The \$5.5-million project will feature state-of-the-art performance, production and teaching facilities for theatre and film students. As well, it will include a 120- to 150-seat theatre, and labs and studios dedicated to lighting, sound and recording, and film and media production. As well, the Centre will house specially designed spaces for rehearsals, teaching, costume, make-up and prop development. Thanks to the CanWest gift and today's federal government announcement of Heritage Canada funding, the new Centre will enhance the national prominence of The University of Winnipeg's highly-regarded Department of Theatre & Film and affirm its reputation as a centre of excellence in theatre and film studies in Canada.

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*The Department of Theatre and Film at The University of Winnipeg offers programs in Acting, Design, Drama in Education, Filmmaking, Playwriting, and Production/Stage Management. Our classes are small and our programs practical. Our faculty is comprised of highly respected and award-winning professionals who are experienced teachers and remain active in their disciplines, bringing relevant and up-to-date instruction to our students.*

*Located in the heart of downtown, The University of Winnipeg is a compact, diverse, multicultural academic community committed to access and excellence. Home to more than 9,200 full- and part-time students, UWinnipeg has been ranked by our graduates in the Top Ten of all Canadian universities when asked about their "Entire Educational Experience" (Maclean's Graduate Survey, June 2006). The Globe & Mail 2006 Report Card gives The University of Winnipeg an overall 'A' grade in the areas of quality of education, teaching quality, class sizes, faculty-student interaction, and the availability of faculty outside classroom hours. Find out why. Visit [www.uwinnipeg.ca](http://www.uwinnipeg.ca)*

*Celebrate The University of Winnipeg's 40th Anniversary at Homecoming - September 13-16, 2007. For more information or to register, visit <http://40th.uwinnipeg.ca>*

For more information, please contact:

Ilana Simon, Communications Officer  
The University of Winnipeg

T: 204.786.9930

C: 204.782.3279

[i.simon@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:i.simon@uwinnipeg.ca)