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Contact: Michael Elkins – melkins@ndnu.edu/650-508-3623

December 11-20, 2015:

NDNU Theatre Celebrates 30 Years of The Gift – A Christmas Carol The Musical

BELMONT, CA--The Bay Areas' longest running stage production of *A Christmas Carol*, a treasured holiday tradition for thousands of Bay Area residents, returns to the stage of the Notre Dame de Namur University Theatre in Belmont, for nine performances beginning Friday, December 11th. Over the past 30 years, The Gift has provided professional caliber musical theatre performances of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, to Bay Area communities free of charge. Tickets for all but one of the performances are given to the public free of charge as a gift. The musical is based on the story by Charles Dickens with musical score by Alan Menken, lyrics by Lynn Ahrens and book by Mike Ockrent and Lynn Ahrens.

The musical features a cast, that annually features over seventy actors, singers and dancers from NDNU University and the surrounding communities. Many of the performers bring years of professional stage talent and experience to the annual stage production. Since its first presentation in 1985, over 150,000 people, from all over the world, have seen this spectacular musical theatre production presented by the Notre Dame de Namur University Department of Theatre and Dance and the Performing Arts Company.

The production is staged through the efforts of a team of professional stage and music directors, choreographers, and scenic, light, sound and costume designers and technicians. To help audiences rekindle the holiday spirit, the volunteer designers and technicians have installed elaborate Christmas decorations onstage and outside the theatre and in the lobbies. Upon entering the theatre, audience members are entertained by a choir of carolers before each performance.

Each year audiences contribute an average of 1,500 toys and three tons of non-perishable food when they attend performances. Over the last twenty-nine years over 50 tons of food and 25,000 toys have been donated. The food and toys have been distributed in the surrounding communities by several social service organizations each Christmas.

The Gift has received Commendations and Proclamations from California governors, members of the United States Congress, the California Assembly and Senate, other state and local government agencies, and local arts and social service organizations.

Notre Dame de Namur University is an independent Catholic, coeducational institution serving nearly 1,800 students. Founded by the Sisters of Notre Dame of Namur, Belgium in 1851 and chartered by the state in 1868, NDNU maintains a strong commitment to social justice and community engagement. The University is fully accredited and offers 21 liberal arts and career preparation undergraduate programs, and 12 graduate degrees and 7 credentials. The 50-acre campus is located in Belmont, just south of San Francisco.

Tickets and Information available at www.ChristmasCarolTheGift.com.

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