

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
SEPTEMBER 9, 2009

CONTACT
Ann Filmer (773) 307-1563 cell, (708) 795-6704x105
ann@16thstreettheater.org

**16th Street Theater and North Berwyn Park District
present a staged reading
DEFAMATION by Todd Logan**

BERWYN, SEPTEMBER 9, 2009 – 16th Street Theater and North Berwyn Park District present a staged reading of **Todd Logan's** *Defamation* directed by Richard Shavzin on **Friday, Sept 25 at 7:30 PM** and **Saturday, Sept 26 at 5:00 PM**. Race, religion and class collide when a South Side African American woman sues a Jewish North shore real estate developer for defamation. The audience finds themselves drawn in unexpectedly in this courtroom drama. Engage with 16th Street for a reading, followed by a dialogue with the playwright, director and all-star cast: Bernard Beck, Kenn E. Head, Rob Riley, Michelle Taylor, Tim Thilleman and Penelope Walker. \$5 suggested donation. (708) 795-6704 for reservations.

TODD LOGAN, playwright

Todd Logan's play *Botanic Garden* directed by Olympia Dukakis ran at Victory Gardens, followed by a run at Piccolo Theatre in Evanston in 2008. He is a playwright, filmmaker, and a humorist. His plays, *Tops or Bottoms*, *Persistence of Vision*, *Fallout*, and *The Playwright and all That Crap* have appeared in Chicago over the last several years. He also wrote the independent film, *With a Family Like Mine...* In an old life, he started Sportscape, Inc., a publishing and trade show company. In an even older life, he wrote humor pieces for many publications, including *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, and *Writer's Digest*. Todd Logan maintains an eclectic site of his work; featuring blog entries and free audio downloads of many of his plays and the video of *With A Family Like Mine...*

"In a speech in February, Attorney General Eric Holder made 'controversial' comments that in spite of Obama's election there continues to be serious racial divide in America. As I was working on *Defamation*, one of Holder's comments struck at the heart of the play. He said:

'As a nation we have done a pretty good job in melding the races in the workplace. We work with one another, lunch together and, when the event is at the workplace during work hours...we socialize with one another fairly well, irrespective of race. And, yet, even this interaction operates with certain limitations. We know by 'American instinct,' and by learned behavior, that certain subjects are off limits and that to explore them risks, at best, embarrassment, and, at worst, the questioning of one's character. And outside the workplace the situation is even more bleak in that there is almost no significant interaction between us. On Saturdays and Sundays, America in the year 2009 does not, in some ways, differ significantly from the country that existed 50 years ago.'

"I believe Holder is right. I also find it's generally true, regardless of race, class and politics, when most people go to bed at night, it's in a in a segregated town, community, neighborhood, block, or building. For several years I've been trying to write a play that deals with the question, 'what does it really say about ourselves about where we go to bed at night?' After many aborted attempts, I finally found a dramatic way into the subject through a story about a professional African American woman, a successful Jewish businessman and a watch."
-- **Todd Logan, playwright**

16th Street Theater is located 17 minutes from downtown Chicago at the Berwyn Cultural Center, 6420 16th Street, Berwyn, IL 60402. Just west of Ridgeland, the theater is one mile southwest of the Austin exit off the Eisenhower Expressway/290 and the Austin Blue line. There is free street parking and a free lot at 16th and Gunderson. Go to www.16thstreettheater.org for more information.

FACT SHEET

WHAT:

DEFAMATION, a staged reading

WHEN:

Fri, Sep 25 at 7:30 PM and Sat, Sep 26 at 5:00 PM

WHO:

Written by Todd Logan

Directed by Richard Shavzin

Featuring: Bernard Beck, Kenn Head, Rob Riley, Michelle Taylor, Tim Thilleman, Penelope Walker

WHERE:

Berwyn Cultural Center, 6420 16th Street, Berwyn

TICKETS:

\$5 suggested donation

Online at <http://www.16thstreettheater.org>

In Person in advance at North Berwyn Park District, 1619 Wesley Ave, Berwyn, IL 60402

At Door at 6420 16th Street, Berwyn

Ticket and Info Hotline (708) 795-6704

Please visit www.16thstreettheater.org

16th Street Theater is Berwyn's professional equity theater under the artistic direction of Ann Filmer. 2009 marks its second season. The 16th Street Theater is under the umbrella of the Berwyn Cultural Center, a part of the North Berwyn Park District. The Berwyn Cultural Center is dedicated to providing the highest quality and range of cultural arts programs, classes, workshops, events, and exhibitions providing opportunities for Berwyn residents and area artists. The center will provide year-round programs engaging participants of all ages in visual, performing, literary, martial and media arts and 16th Street Theater's professional productions. The BCC also will serve as an incubator for emerging artists, artisans, writers, performers and musicians to develop and present new works. The center is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life and sustainability of our local communities by advancing appreciation for the beauty of cultural diversity.

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