



## Abbott's Widow Bequeaths Late Showman's Royalties to Temple University

By [Adam Hetrick](#)

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George Abbott

The George and Joy Abbott Center for Musical Theater will be named in honor of George Abbott, the late impresario who was instrumental in creating the Broadway musicals *The Pajama Game*, *Pal Joey*, *Wonderful Town*, *Damn Yankees* and *On the Town*.

The late showman's widow, Joy Abbott, has bequeathed her share of rights and future royalties earned by theatre productions authored by her late husband (currently valued at a minimum of \$6 million) to the Boyer College of Music and Dance at Temple University in Philadelphia, PA.

"I always wanted to ensure George's legacy was preserved in a way that would benefit future generations," stated Mrs. Abbott, a Temple graduate, "and this is a way to tribute his legacy and dedication to mentoring young artists."

The announcement was made during an Oct. 25 reception at Sardi's with theatre luminaries Hal Prince, Tommy Tune, Tovah Feldshuh, Arlene Dahl, Donald Saddler and Heather Randall in attendance.

Memorabilia from Abbott's illustrious career — including original scripts of *Pal Joey* and *The Boys from Syracuse*; an original Hirschfeld drawing of George Abbott, Leonard Bernstein, Jerome Robbins and Comden & Green; Tony Awards; Abbott's Pulitzer Prize; as well as numerous personal letters to famous friends such as Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen — will be donated to the college's library.

"The Abbott Center will attract some of the most accomplished professionals in the field," said Robert T. Stroker, Dean of Boyer College. "This historic gift will allow us to continue Mr. Abbott's legacy and teach the craft of musical theatre in much the same way he did throughout his extraordinary career — as a mentor to scores of young people."

The bequest will fund Boyer College's creation of a BFA program in musical theatre, while also funding the Abbott Center.

George Abbott, who was nicknamed "Mr. Broadway" for presenting over 100 works for the Broadway stage, earned seven Tony Awards, including a 1976 Tony for lifetime achievement. Abbott is a Pulitzer Prize winner for the musical *Fiorello*.

Abbott made his Broadway debut as a performer in 1913's *The Misleading Lady*. His debut as a director came in the 1926 comedy *Love 'em and Leave 'em*, which he also wrote. Among the theatre artists he took under his wing include directors Harold Prince, Jerome Robbins and Bob Fosse. Abbott remained a figure on the Broadway scene until his death in 1995 at the age of 107.

Among the theatrical productions whose royalties will benefit the Abbott Center and BFA program at Boyer College are *Music Is*; *Anya*; *Flora*, *The Red Menace*; *Tenderloin*; *Fiorello!*; *New Girl in Town*; *Damn Yankees*; *The Pajama Game*; *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*; *Where's Charley?*; *Beat the Band*; *The Boys from Syracuse*; *Sweet River*; *On Your Toes*; *Three Men on a Horse*; *Ladies' Money*; *Heat Lightning*; *Lilly Turner*; *Those We Love*; *Ringside*; *Coquette*; *Four Walls*; *Broadway*; *Love 'em and Leave 'em*; *A Holy Terror*; and *The Fall Guy*.

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