

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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# **The Whiting Proudly Presents HAL HOLBROOK**

## **In**

## ***Mark Twain Tonight***

**Flint** - The Whiting is pleased to present **Hal Holbrook** *in Mark Twain Tonight* on **Saturday, April 10 at 8pm**. Ticket prices range from \$17 to \$45 and are available online at **TheWhiting.com**, by calling **(810) 237-7333** and by walk up at The Ticket Center located within The Whiting. The Whiting is located at 1241 E. Kearsley St. just off I-475 between University of Michigan Flint and Mott Community College on the beautiful Flint Cultural Center campus.

In 1959, after five years of researching Mark Twain and honing his material in front of countless audiences in small towns all over America, he opened at a tiny theatre off-Broadway in New York. He was a stunning overnight success, as stunning to Holbrook as anyone else. "The critics went wild." (Associated Press). "Mr. Holbrook's material is uproarious, his ability to hold an audience by acting is brilliant." (New York Times). "Uncanny. A dazzling display of virtuosity." (The New Yorker). "One of the

treasures of the American Theatre.” (Life Magazine). The white hope of the family had finally arrived.

Holbrook quit the soap opera. After a twenty-two week run in New York he toured the country again, performed for President Eisenhower and at the Edinburgh Festival. The State Department sent him on a tour of Europe, during which he became the first American dramatic attraction to go behind the Iron Curtain following World War II. He was a star who had never appeared in a Broadway play, a nighttime television show or a movie. He was 36 years old and had to jump start a new career.

When David Merrick offered him co-star billing with Robert Preston playing an 80-year old Mexican bandit in a new Broadway musical, Holbrook turned it down in favor of younger roles, concerned that he would be typecast as an old man. He played Hotspur in *Henry IV, Pt.I* at the Shakespeare Festival Theatre in Stratford, Connecticut; then Lincoln in *Abe Lincoln In Illinois* off-Broadway. In 1963 he joined the original Lincoln Center Repertory Company in New York appearing in *Marco Millions*, *After the Fall*, *Incident at Vichy* and *Tartuffe*. Word got around that he could act his own age. Starring roles on Broadway came along: *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Apple Tree*, *I Never Sang For My Father*, *Man of La Mancha* and *Does A Tiger Wear A Necktie?* with the young Al Pacino.

Meanwhile, he continued to do Mark Twain every year and in 1966, on Broadway, his second New York engagement won him a Tony Award and a Drama Critics' Circle Award followed in 1967 by a ninety-minute CBS television special of *Mark Twain Tonight!* which was nominated for an Emmy Award and seen by an audience of 22 million.

In 1970, after a dozen plays in New York, he was brought to Hollywood to star in a controversial television series, *The Senator*, which won 8 Emmy Awards and was cancelled in one year. But his new career had taken off. In the 39 years since then Mr. Holbrook has done some 50 television movies and mini-series, been nominated for 12 Emmys and won 5 for *The Senator* (1971), *Pueblo* (1974), *Best Actor Of The Year* (1974), *Sandburg's Lincoln* (1976), and as host and narrator of *Portrait Of America* (1989). He has appeared in two sitcoms: *Designing Women* and *Evening Shade*, and has

made guest appearances on West Wing, the sitcoms Becker and Hope & Faith, The Sopranos and NCIS.

Holbrook's movie career began with *The Group* in 1966 when he was 41 years old. Since then, moviegoers have seen him in nearly 40 films including *Magnum Force*, *Midway*, *All The President's Men*, *Julia*, *Capricorn One*, *The Fog*, *Star Chamber*, *Creepshow*, *Wall Street*, *The Firm*, *The Bachelor*, *Waking The Dead*, *Men of Honor*, *The Majestic*, *Shade*, *Killshot* and *Into the Wild*, written and directed by Sean Penn, for which he received his first Academy Award nomination. In 2008 he completed filming *That Evening Sun* which premiered at the SXSW Film Festival in Austin in March 2009.

Throughout his long career, Holbrook has continued to perform Mark Twain every year, including his third and fourth New York engagements in 1977 and 2005; and a world tour in 1985, the 150th anniversary of Mark Twain's birth, beginning in London and ending in New Delhi. And he has constantly returned to the stage: in New York (*Buried Inside Extra*, 1983; *The Country Girl*, 1984; *King Lear* 1990; *An American Daughter*, (1997); at regional theatres (*Our Town*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Merchant Of Venice*, *King Lear*, *A Life In The Theatre*, *Be My Baby* and *Southern Comforts*, the last two with his wife Dixie Carter); and a National Tour of *Death Of A Salesman*.

But Holbrook has never been able to quit Mark Twain and probably never will. He has toured the show in some part of every year since 1954, with over 2100 performances, making 2009 the 55<sup>th</sup> consecutive year for this remarkable one man show. *Mark Twain Tonight!* has become perhaps the longest running show in theatre history. Holbrook adds to his Twain material every year, editing and changing it to fit the times and has mined over sixteen hours of Twain with more coming all the time. He has no set program – he chooses material as he goes along.

Holbrook is a sailor. In June 1980, he competed in the Single-handed Transpac Race from San Francisco to Hawaii in his 40-foot sailboat, *Yankee Tar*, sailing 2400 miles alone. With one or two friends or his wife, Dixie, he has sailed through the South Pacific to Tahiti, Samoa, the Tongas, New Zealand and the Fiji Islands.

Holbrook has received Honorary Doctor of Humanities Degrees from Ohio State and the University of Hartford, an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Ursinus College, an Honorary Doctor of Letters from Elmira College and Honorary Doctor of

Fine Arts Degrees from Kenyon and his alma mater, Denison University. In 1996 he received the Edwin Booth Award and in 1998 the William Shakespeare Award from The Shakespeare Theatre, Washington, DC. In 2000 he was inducted into the New York Theatre Hall of Fame; and in 2003 received the Nat'l Humanities Medal from the president.

He lives in Los Angeles and Tennessee with his wife, actress/singer Dixie Carter. Together they have five children.

Hal Holbrook in *Mark Twain Tonight* is generously supported by Health Alliance Plan, McLaren Regional Medical Center, ABC12, Michigan Public Radio, WFNT and Genesee District Library.

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**\*\*Reviewer Tickets AVAILABLE. High Resolution Images available upon request.**

**To secure tickets or request images, please contact Wendi Fournier at**

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