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L o s A n g e l e s V a l l e y C o l l e g e

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JOAN A. PAYDEN DONATES \$500K TO L.A. VALLEY COLLEGE FOUNDATION

LAVC to name its new mainstage theater in memory of her brother William R. Payden

VALLEY GLEN, CA—The Los Angeles Valley College Foundation has received a \$500,000 donation from Joan A. Payden to support the Foundation’s Steinway Piano Campaign. In recognition of this generous gift, L.A. Valley College (LAVC) and the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) has approved the naming of the mainstage theater of the forthcoming Valley Academic and Cultural Center to the William R. Payden Theater. William Payden is the brother of Joan and he passed away in 2013.

Joan Payden is well-known in the Los Angeles financial and philanthropic community. She is the president and chief executive officer of Payden & Rygel, the global investment management firm that she founded in 1983. She serves as a trustee of the University of Southern California and Loyola Marymount University. She is a member of the board of directors of the John Tracy Clinic, the Amateur Athletic Association, and the Natural History Museum to name a few.

William Payden was a member of the faculty of the L.A. Valley College Journalism Department from 1970 to 1990. He served as chair of the department from 1978 to 1990. During his tenure as chair, the Valley Star newspaper received accolades and national recognition. When he retired from Valley College in 1990, Payden continued to be involved as a speaker and volunteer for the department. He contributed generously to the L.A. Valley College Foundation and provided scholarships to many journalism students.

Retirement also allowed Payden to pursue his other passion, which was music. He was an admirer of Classical as well as Broadway music. He loved to perform for friends at his home on his Steinway piano, and also recorded three CDs. When he was able to do so, Payden attended and enjoyed listening to the college’s orchestra, the Valley Symphony. He mentioned to a friend, “Maybe someday, I’ll be able to go up there and perform with them!”

In January 2018, the L.A. Valley College Foundation launched its first ever capital campaign. The Foundation entered into a lease to acquire four grand pianos for the college. Together with the college’s

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own acquisition of 18 Steinway upright and grand pianos, the LAVC Music Department was able to replace its old and poor-conditioned fleet of 22 pianos dating back to the early 1950's with brand new Steinway pianos.

In doing so, Steinway & Sons recognized L.A. Valley College as the 200th All-Steinway School joining universities and conservatories worldwide which exclusively instruct and perform on Steinways. Steinway & Sons representative Tim Stephenson said, "The acquisition of the Steinway pianos represents the college's commitment to musical excellence allowing its faculty and students access to the finest equipment for the study as well as the performance of music."

The Foundation's campaign goal is to raise \$1.3 million to pay off its lease and to establish a piano maintenance endowment. Before Payden's contribution, the Foundation had already received \$140,000 in donations and pledges. Foundation Executive Director Raul Castillo said, "Ms. Payden has made a very generous gift and it comes at perfect time for our campaign."

Construction of the Valley Academic and Cultural Center (VACC) is scheduled to be completed in late 2020, and brings together the Theater Department as well as the Media Arts Department into a single complex for a more collaborative learning environment. It will feature an 80-seat lab theater, a 150-seat horseshoe theater, a 225-seat screening theater, and to top it all off, a 450-seat mainstage theater – it was renamed the William R. Payden Theater after the LACCD Board of Trustees passed a resolution to do so on May 8, 2019. LACCD Chancellor Francisco Rodriguez said, "This gift represents a much needed investment to provide excellent instruction to our students and to promote the performing arts in the Valley region."

"It is befitting that William's love of music and piano playing as well as LAVC is being celebrated with this donation, and we are delighted to name our new Mainstage Theater in his honor," notes Dr. Denise Noldon, interim LAVC president.

The forthcoming William R. Payden Theater will showcase various performances, but it will mainly feature the Valley Symphony Orchestra, which William Payden enjoyed watching and listening to. A Steinway Grand D Piano will also be residing at the theater. "I think Bill would be very pleased with this contribution and given his love of music and his connection to Valley College and its students, he would be very happy with this recognition," said Joan Payden.

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About the Los Angeles Valley College Foundation

The Los Angeles Valley College Foundation is a non-profit organization that exists to support the efforts of Los Angeles Valley College and its students. Los Angeles Valley College is a community college that was founded in 1949. Its mission is to offer transfer, vocational, general, and vocational education in an environment that fosters a healthy exchange of ideas.

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About Los Angeles Valley College (LAVC)

Los Angeles Valley College, is a public two-year community college situated in the heart of the San Fernando Valley. Established in 1949, it is one of the largest campuses in the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD), and serves more than 20,000 students in the central and eastern sides of the San Fernando Valley. LAVC offers more than 100 associate degree programs and 62 certificate programs in in-demand career fields. For more information, visit the [Los Angeles Valley College website](#).

About the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD)

The Los Angeles Community College District is the nation's largest community college district, educating about 250,000 students annually at its nine colleges that serve the residents of more than 36 cities and communities from 900 square miles of Los Angeles County. Since 1969, the District has been providing an important learning pathway for students seeking transfer to four-year colleges or universities while also offering two-year degrees and certificated training programs to Southern California's diverse workforce in many specialized trades and professions. For more information, visit the [Los Angeles Community College District website](#).

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