



THE GAZETTE

Publication of the College of Fellows of the American Theatre

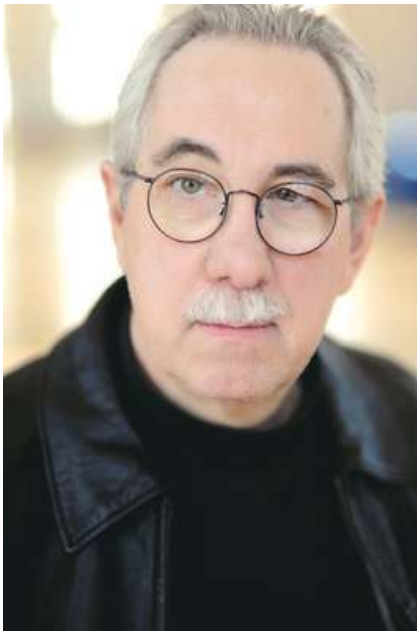
Summer 2026

*61st Annual Membership Weekend
April 11-12, 2026*



*The Curtis Hotel
Denver, Colorado*

A MILE HIGH CELEBRATION OF THEATRE



2026 Fellows Welcome from Dean David Grapes II

“Holding the Light: Theatre in a Fractured World”

Welcome to the 61st Fellows Weekend of the College of Fellows of the American Theatre here in Denver, CO.

It is good to see all of you. Truly good after the year that we have all just experienced.

When I look around this room this afternoon, I see a lifetime of work. Decades of rehearsal halls. Productions that felt as if we were soaring and others that felt like we had just stepped off a cliff. I see directors, playwrights, designers, scholars, and teachers—people who have spent their lives doing something that most of the world considers improbable and even worse yet—irrelevant.

We gather here today for the first time outside of Washington, DC to celebrate and invest the extraordinary Class of 2026 because, at some point in their lives, theatre found them. Just like it found all of us.

Or perhaps, it was we who found the theatre and its inclusive community. And once we found that special place—that home—it was impossible for us to leave. Somewhere along the way we discovered something extraordinary. We discovered that when human beings gather in a room and tell a story together, something magical happens that cannot be replicated anywhere else.

A kind of electricity. A shared breath. A moment when strangers begin to recognize themselves in one another. That's the quiet miracle of theatre. And every person in this room has dedicated a life to protecting that miracle.

Now, the world we live in today is...complicated. I don't need to tell you that. And unfortunately, we find ourselves living through another political period when the arts are misunderstood, often dismissed, and this year were pulled repeatedly into the crosscurrents of political argument. And in many places the performing arts have become entangled in the kind of polarization that leaves little room for nuance, curiosity, or listening. A year when the performing arts became a battlefield and where stories were judged “woke” even before they were heard.

But here's what my 50 years in the theatre has taught me. I'd rather be “woke” than asleep at the wheel.