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[Herro-Franke Studio Theater Renderings and Photos](#)

Milwaukee Repertory Theater Names Studio Theater in the New Associated Bank Theater Center for Philanthropists David Herro and Jay Franke

November 1, 2023 (MILWAUKEE) — [Milwaukee Repertory Theater](#) (Milwaukee Rep) is pleased to announce that with a generous \$5 million gift, the Studio Theater in the new Associated Bank Theater Center will be named the **Herro-Franke Studio Theater** after philanthropist David Herro and his partner, Milwaukee Rep trustee Jay Franke. Of the \$5 million gift, \$4 million is allocated to the Powering Milwaukee Campaign and \$1 million to the John (Jack) D. Lewis New Play Development Fund to further support the new plays and playwrights produced in the Studio theater and beyond. The Powering Milwaukee Campaign to build the new Associated Bank Theater Center is now over 90% funded with construction expected to start in May 2024.

“David and I are honored to support Milwaukee Rep as they build their new home in the Associated Bank Theater Center,” said **Jay Franke**. “The theater is a special place where many artistic elements come together to create an experience completely unique to every audience. It’s a thrill to be a part of and we look forward to audiences’ generations from now experiencing the innovative art that will be possible in the new theater center.”

“In addition to David and Jay being incredibly generous donors, they are also very sophisticated ones, and are extremely cognizant of the fact that beautiful new performance spaces are only truly relevant, if the work produced in them is of a certain level of excellence too,” said **Mark Clements**, Artistic Director. “Therefore, their serious commitment to invest in new play development, in tandem with naming the new *Herro-Franke Studio Theater*, is incredibly exciting and meaningful to us.”

The **Herro-Franke Studio Theater**, a flexible, black-box space that will better serve intimate and dramatic productions and boundary-pushing theatrical events will include:

- **Easily transformable performance space.** New seating technology will allow Milwaukee Rep to reconfigure the seating and performance spaces more easily.
- **Welcoming lobby.** Modernized restrooms, an acoustical barrier between performance space and lobby, and a beautiful, fully functioning bar and gathering spaces.

“We are extremely grateful for David and Jay, not only with this generous gift, but with their time and expertise on our Board,” said **Chad Bauman**, Executive Director. “They understand that a theatre is not just a building, we are an institution that is here to serve the Milwaukee community and the only way we thrive is with buy in of our audiences and donors.”

The **Powering Milwaukee Campaign** to build the new **Associated Bank Theater Center** will define the standard of theater in Wisconsin for generations to come. The campaign, which is over 90% complete, funds the creation of a new complex, including three state-of-the-art performance spaces, a large,

unified lobby providing ample opportunities for community events, a dedicated Herzfeld Foundation Education & Engagement Center to serve the theater's 20,000+ students, an expanded offsite production center employing hundreds of local artisans, and venues with modern audience amenities. Take a [Virtual Walk through Associated Bank Theater Center at the link.](#)

Milwaukee Rep's 2023/24 Season, marking the theater's 70th anniversary, kicked off in its current home starting with the World Premiere rock musical *Run Bambi Run* this past September and features twelve full productions in all three theater venues through May 2024. Following the conclusion of the 2023/24 Season, the theater plans to break ground in late May 2024 with a targeted grand opening of the new **Associated Bank Theater Center** in Fall 2025 with a full season of exciting offerings.

To learn more about the Powering Milwaukee Campaign and to get involved, please visit www.MilwaukeeRep.com/PoweringMilwaukee.

About Milwaukee Repertory Theater

Milwaukee Rep is the largest performing arts organization in Wisconsin with three unique performance venues in the **Associated Bank Theater Center**. For over seven decades, Milwaukee Rep has been a centerpiece of Milwaukee's vibrant arts and cultural scene with productions ranging from Broadway musicals to Shakespeare to American Classics and New Works that are entertaining, inclusive, and impactful. Under the leadership of **Artistic Director Mark Clements** and **Executive Director Chad Bauman**, Milwaukee Repertory Theater ignites positive change in the cultural, social, and economic vitality of its community by creating world-class theater experiences that entertain, provoke, and inspire meaningful dialogue among an audience representative of Milwaukee's rich diversity.

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