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**KANSAS CITY GOES BLONDE!**

*Legally Blonde the Musical Kicks Off 2009 Starlight Broadway Season on June 30- July 5*

**KANSAS CITY, Mo.** – The first national tour of the Broadway hit musical, *Legally Blonde the Musical*, will open Starlight Theatre's 2009 season with a six-night run on June 30-July 5. The seven-time Tony Award®-nominated production makes its Kansas City premiere as it launches Starlight's blockbuster Broadway season. Audience members of all hair colors will be thinking pink as this show lights up Starlight's Cohen Community Stage with memorable characters, important messages, stylish sets and to-die-for costumes!

Original Broadway cast member Becky Gulsvig stars as sorority star Elle Woods in the tour, the role she understudied on Broadway. Elle's tutor and confidante, Emmett Forrest, will be played by D.B. Bonds who last delighted Starlight audiences in 2007 with his portrayal of con man Freddy Benson in *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*.

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As in the MGM hit movie, Elle Woods doesn't take "no" for an answer. When her boyfriend dumps her for someone more "serious," Elle puts down the credit card, hits the books, and sets out to go where no Delta Nu has gone before: Harvard Law. Along the way, Elle proves that being true to yourself never goes out of style.

On Broadway, *Legally Blonde The Musical* earned seven 2007 Tony Award nominations, 10 2007 Drama Desk Award nominations and a 2007 Outer Critics Circle Award. The show's chorus was honored by Actors' Equity Association's Advisory Committee on Chorus Affairs (ACCA) with the first-ever ACCA Award. The musical also ranked in Ticketmaster's top 10 list of most requested "Arts & Theatre Events" for 2007.

More recently, on May 4, 2009, in New York City, *Legally Blonde The Musical* received three 2009 Touring Broadway Awards for Best New Musical, Best Production Design and Best Choreography of a Touring Production. Presented by The Broadway League, the awards honor excellence in touring Broadway productions.

"Since this tour began last fall, *Legally Blonde The Musical* has drawn rave reviews from audiences and critics nationwide," said Denton Yockey, Starlight Theatre president and executive producer. "It's a fun musical and an ideal show to kick off summer at Starlight. And, if you're not careful, you might even take home a few good life lessons! I'm thrilled that *Legally Blonde* is the first show I'll present during my tenure at Kansas City's favorite outdoor theatre."

Fans of the MTV reality show "Legally Blonde The Musical: The Search for Elle Woods," which premiered in June 2008, will recognize two familiar faces in the tour's cast; third runner-up Rhiannon Hansen plays Elle's best friend, Margot, and fourth runner-up Lauren Zakrin is an ensemble member and understudies the role of Elle. Last summer's reality show represented the musical's second venture with MTV; in fall 2007, MTV aired *Legally Blonde The Musical* in its entirety. The show garnered stellar ratings and, subsequently, was nominated for two 2007-08 Daytime Emmy Awards.

Another highlight is the entourage of shelter-dogs-turned-show-dogs who tour with the show. Accompanying Elle on stage is her faithful companion Bruiser, played by Frankie, a rescued Chihuahua. Frankie and his three canine friends who travel with *Legally Blonde The Musical* are all shelter dogs rescued and trained by famed theatrical animal trainer Bill Berloni. Berloni also authored the book "Broadway Tails. Heartfelt Stories of

Rescued Dogs Who Became Showbiz Superstars.”

As on Broadway, Tony Award-winner Jerry Mitchell is the touring production's director and choreographer. Music and lyrics are by Laurence O'Keefe and Nell Benjamin, and the book is by Heather Hach. The musical features scenic design by David Rockwell, costume design by Gregg Barnes, lighting design by Kenneth Posner and Paul Miller, orchestrations by Christopher Jahnke and sound design by ACME Sound Partners. *Legally Blonde The Musical* is produced on tour by Hal Luftig, Fox Theatricals and Dori Berinstein, in association with MGM Onstage, Darcie Denkert and Dean Stolber.

Tickets for *Legally Blonde The Musical* are on sale now at Starlight Theatre, 4600 Starlight Road. Ticket prices range from \$9 to \$79 and are available at the Starlight Theatre box office, at [www.kcstarlight.com](http://www.kcstarlight.com) or by calling 816.363.STAR (7827). Discount prices for groups of 15 or more are available by contacting Bob Potemski at 816.997.1137 or [bob.potemski@kcstarlight.com](mailto:bob.potemski@kcstarlight.com). All performances begin at 8:30 p.m.

For more information about this touring production, visit [www.legallyblondethemusical.com](http://www.legallyblondethemusical.com).

### **Starlight Theatre**

Presenting Broadway entertainment since 1951, the non-profit Starlight Theatre Association is Kansas City's oldest and largest performing arts organization. The Association operates, programs and maintains the largest stage in the United States, as well as the 16-acre Starlight Theatre complex. While assuming all annual operating costs for the complex, the Association also raises funds for capital improvements and a variety of programs, including national Broadway musical performances, concerts, community outreach and education. Since 2000, the Association has contributed more than \$25 million of privately funded improvements to the Kansas City, Mo.-owned Starlight Theatre. Each Broadway season, Starlight donates more than 11,000 tickets to its performances to regional non-profit organizations serving the disadvantaged.

In 2008, Starlight Theatre was selected as the "Favorite Performing Arts Venue or Organization" in the Kansas City Convention & Visitors Association's Visitors' Choice Awards program. Starlight also received a Gold Award for "Best Performing Arts Venue" and a bronze award for "Best Theatre" in *Ingram's* 2008 Best of Business Kansas City Awards. The theatre seats approximately 8,000 and is located in Swope Park.

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