February 8, 2017 — (Provincetown, MA) The Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theater Festival announces today that its Annual Dinner will be held on Saturday, June 3, 2017. The gala will be held at Town Hall in Provincetown to support the organization’s 12th-annual Festival, which will celebrate Tennessee Williams and William Shakespeare when performances around the world come to Provincetown from Sept. 21-24, 2017.

Festival board members Deborah Bowles and James Mauro will co-chair the event. The 2017 Annual Dinner will inaugurate a new tradition by awarding the first-ever TENN Award to an individual, group, or organization that advances the spirit of Tennessee Williams through performance, public awareness, study, or publication.

The 2017 TENN Award will be announced this spring. Premium seats, general admission tickets, and table sponsorships for the Annual Dinner are available online and by phone at twptown.org or by calling 866-789-TENN.

Past guests of honor at the Annual Dinner have included award-winning stage and film actors Brian Dennehy (2016), Cherry Jones (2015), Zachary Quinto (2014), and Elizabeth Ashley (2013).

The 2017 Festival program will be announced in full at the Dinner. The line-up will include productions of Williams’ work paired with works by Shakespeare, as well as lighter "lagniappe" experiences similar to recent cabaret and late-night Festival events such as last year's Movie Night and Saloon Songs.

This year’s theme builds off the success of last year’s festival, during which plays by Williams were paired with plays by Eugene O'Neill. The 2016 Festival audiences enjoyed making connections between the two playwrights — explored through performance, educational programming, and social events.

In 2017, the experience of Tennessee Williams and Shakespeare side by side in performance will offer festival audiences a new understanding of both playwrights.
“After both playwright/poets had mastered their craft,” says Festival Curator David Kaplan, “the countries where they lived experienced seismic political change. For Shakespeare, it was after the death of Queen Elizabeth; for Williams it was after the assassination of President Kennedy.”

Kaplan adds that “water recurs as an image of instability — tears, sweat, a fountain, the river Nile, and the Gulf of Mexico — in the plays of both writers, who assaulted their era’s conventional forms of tragedy or comedy, removing the certainty of a happy ending, and undoing the finality of tragedy with farce.”

Festival Executive Director Jef Hall-Flavin says: “Because we live on a narrow strip of sand, water plays an important role in the history and culture of Provincetown. We are excited to announce a season of great plays that celebrate the shimmering mystery and buoyancy surrounding us. This year’s gala will be a night to remember, with our first recipient of the TENN Award, surrounded by the friends and supporters who’ve kept this Festival sailing for the past 11 years.”

About the Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theater Festival:
The Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theater Festival was founded in 2006 in Provincetown — the birthplace of modern American theater — where Williams worked on many of his major plays during the 1940s. The TW Festival is the nation’s largest performing arts festival dedicated to celebrating and expanding an understanding of the full breadth of the work of America’s great playwright. Each year, theater artists from around the globe perform classic and innovative productions to celebrate Williams’ enduring influence in the 21st century, hosted by venues throughout the seaside village. For more details, visit twptown.org and follow the Festival on Facebook.

This Festival is funded in part by Mass Humanities and Provincetown Tourism Fund, and is presented by Sage Inn & Lounge.