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THE CITY OF FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS

ADMINISTRATION

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December 6, 2010

G. David Gearhart, Chancellor
The University of Arkansas
425 Administration Building
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Dear Chancellor Gearhart:

I appreciate your letter of December 3rd making clear the University's position on the expansion plans of the Walton Arts Center and your opposition to litigation to enjoin the Board's recent decision. Thank you also for your commitment and work toward strengthening the partnership between the University of Arkansas and the City of Fayetteville, evidenced most recently by our collaboration on the proposal for expansion of the Walton Arts Center. I firmly believe that our joint proposal was by far the best of the 25 submitted for consideration, and I am deeply disappointed that our proposal for the 2,200-seat theater was not chosen by the Walton Arts Center Board.

I am pleased, however, that Fayetteville is receiving the 600-seat theater, and I am also pleased that the added arts benefits that the City and University proposed beyond the criteria established by the WAC for use of the Bud Walton Arena and Reynolds Razorback Stadium were adopted by the Board. These additional venues in Fayetteville will enhance the creative economy in Fayetteville by adding over 25,000 new seats to Fayetteville's existing offerings and increase the number of shows that can come to Fayetteville.

As I have said many times, my administration is committed to supporting the Walton Arts Center to assure that this non-profit entity remains an economically viable and artistically outstanding institution in our community and the region. The proposed construction of an additional performance space on the existing WAC campus is a welcome addition and clear evidence that the Walton Arts Center will remain headquartered in Fayetteville. The satellite expansion in Bentonville will extend our reach to the north, and expose more people to the arts in Northwest Arkansas, the state, and this region of the nation.

It is important that our City maintains an environment in which we strengthen our partnerships with the Walton Arts Center, the University of Arkansas, and the many other very important partners in Fayetteville that contribute so much toward advancing the arts. Fayetteville is blessed with a long-time arts culture, outstanding artists, numerous and diverse programming and artistic venues, and the very important strong public patronage of the arts. It is simply a fact that donor contributions and the arts have long gone hand-in-hand, and the arts, particularly big projects in the arts, are dependent on large donor contributions. Our community has a rich history of support from the public, from the many arts groups in Fayetteville, and from the strong arts programs at the University. It must continue.

I agree with you that a lawsuit against a board of volunteer citizens would be counterproductive, and it would not be in the best interests of the City of Fayetteville, our vibrant arts community, or our creative economy. It could jeopardize fundraising and delay construction of the additional 600-seat theater space on the current WAC campus and other improvements in the Dickson Street area that links our City and the University.

I remain thankful for your commitment to strengthen and grow creative opportunities at the University of Arkansas and in Fayetteville, and I look forward to our continued partnership to expand our creative economy and the richness of cultural opportunities for all residents.

Sincerely,



Lioneld Jordan

Cc: Steve Clark, Chamber of Commerce President
Scott Varady, University of Arkansas Attorney
Kit Williams, Fayetteville City Attorney
Fayetteville City Council