

Actor Bernard Bragg Creates Theater Endowment at NTID

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Internationally acclaimed deaf actor, playwright, and director Bernard Bragg has committed \$100,000 to the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, a college of Rochester Institute of Technology, to establish the Bernard Bragg Deaf Theatre, Signed Arts, and Deaf Cinema Endowment Fund.

The fund will support scholarships, training, workshops, and lectures related to deaf theater and cinema for deaf and hard-of-hearing students interested in the performing arts.

Bragg, 77, a former artist-in-residence at NTID, began acting in the 1950s as a college student at Gallaudet University and then studied in Paris with legendary mime Marcel Marceau. He spent years performing as a traditional mime artist throughout the United States before helping found the National Theatre of the Deaf in 1967. He has been teaching and directing at California State University at Northridge since 1998.

In 2001, he received a Special Lifetime Achievement Award from the World Federation of the Deaf “for his commitment, dedication and leadership in the deaf theatre world and his encouragement to deaf actors everywhere.”

“I wish to see deaf people in theatre and film, around the world, continue to explore and enhance the quality of their creative works,” Bragg said in announcing his gift to NTID. “Deaf theatre and film groups have made significant and impressive contributions not only to their own deaf communities, but also to the general culture of the greater societies in which they live. Recognition of their extraordinary talents also helps to increase respect and empowerment.”

Bragg will visit NTID this fall, when students will perform his play, “Tales from a Clubroom,” in his honor.

NTID is the first and largest technological college in the world for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. One of eight colleges of RIT, NTID offers educational programs and access and support services to its 1,100 students from around the world who study, live, and socialize with 14,400 hearing students on RIT's Rochester, N.Y., campus.

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