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Veteran Performers Stenborg and Henderson Named Seff Award Recipients

By Kenneth Jones
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Helen Stenborg and Stephen McKinley Henderson were named recipients of the annual Richard Seff Award, presented by the Actors' Equity Foundation, honoring a veteran female and male character actor for the best performance in a supporting role in a Broadway or Off-Broadway production.

The award includes a \$1,000 check and crystal trophy for each. The award is intended for performers who have worked in the business for at least 25 years.

Octogenarian Stenborg was cited for her performance in the two-hander, *Vigil*, presented at Off-Broadway's DR2 Theatre. Previously Stenborg appeared on Broadway in *Waiting in the Wings*, for which she received a Tony nomination; *The Crucible*; *A Month in the Country*; and *A Life*. She and her late husband, Barnard Hughes (the recipient of Equity's St. Clair Bayfield Award in 1973), toured the country in *Da*, and received Lifetime Achievement Awards from the Drama Desk in 2000. Stenborg also has appeared Off-Broadway, in films, on TV and for 16 seasons was at the O'Neill Playwrights Conference.

Stephen McKinley Henderson was recognized for his performance in the Broadway revival of August Wilson's *Fences*, for which, on May 4, he was nominated for a Tony Award as Best Supporting Actor in a Play. Other Broadway credits include August Wilson's *King Hedley II* and the revival of *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*; *Dracula* and *Drowning Crow*. He was also a member of Wilson's *Jitney* ensemble, which received a 2002 Olivier Award for Outstanding Drama. He has appeared at the Public Theater, Yale Rep, the Signature Theatre and the Kennedy Center. Professor and former chair of the department of theatre and dance at SUNY Buffalo, he is a member of the LAByrinth Theatre Company, the Actor's Center and is a Fox Foundation Fellow.

Equity member Richard Seff established this award in 2003. Previous recipients include Tom Aldredge, Larry Bryggman, Lynn Cohen, Jim Dale, Hallie Foote, Jane Houdyshell, Dana Ivey, David Margulies, Margo Martindale, David Rasche, Roger Robinson and Mary Louise Wilson.

The presentation will take place at Equity's Eastern Regional Board meeting at 2 PM on June 8 at Equity's office, 165 West 46th Street, in Manhattan.

The judges panel includes Joe Dziemianowicz, Daily News; Adam

Feldman, Time Out NY; Susan Haskins, Theater Talk; Harry Haun, Playbill; Michael Kuchwara, Associated Press; and David Rosenberg, Back Stage.

Seff was a respected agent for many years who gave up repping in the 1970s to devote more time to acting. He is also a playwright and librettist. He lives in Manhattan.

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