FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PLAYWRIGHT TO ATTEND THEATRE TUSCALOOSA’S UPCOMING PRODUCTION OF WIT

TUSCALOOSA, AL - Theatre Tuscaloosa will present Wit, a Pulitzer Prize-winning play by Margaret Edson, in the Bean-Brown Theatre on Shelton State’s Martin Campus, February 20-March 1. On Saturday, February 21, playwright Margaret Edson will speak at 6:15 p.m. in the Alabama Power Recital Hall; she will also attend the 7:30 p.m. performance of Wit.

Edson makes very few public appearances. As an elementary school teacher, she devotes most of her time to her young students. Thanks to a personal connection with one of Theatre Tuscaloosa’s board members, Edson has agreed to give a rare pre-show lecture and discussion in the Alabama Power Recital Hall (off the lobby of the theatre). The pre-show event is free, but seating is limited.

Wit is the story of Vivian Bearing, Ph.D., a renowned professor of English who has spent years studying and teaching the brilliant and difficult metaphysical sonnets of John Donne. Bearing has been diagnosed with terminal ovarian cancer. Her approach to the study of Donne is aggressively probing and intensely rational, but during the course of her illness and her stint as a prize patient in an experimental chemotherapy program at a major teaching hospital, Bearing comes to reassess her life and her work with a profundity and humor transformative both for herself and the audience.

“I really believe this play is going to touch a lot of people’s lives in a way that is profound,” says executive producer Tina Turley. “We’re really excited to have Jeff Wilson directing with us again, too. He has a passion for research and authenticity that will make this show feel real and extremely personal.”

Wilson, a veteran Theatre Tuscaloosa performer and director, leads a tight-knit cast. “This piece has been one I’ve been particularly keen on bringing to the Tuscaloosa stage because it offers this look at life that I just don’t think you get to see very often,” he says.

In its Off-Broadway debut in 1998, Wit was greeted with rave reviews. Wit won the 1999 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and the Lucille Lortel Award for Best Play. The New York Times called Wit, “[A] brutally human and beautifully layered new play...you feel both enlightened and, in a strange way, enormously comforted." New York Magazine said, "[Wit is] a dazzling and humane new play that you will remember till your dying day."

“Being chosen for the role of Vivian Bearing and to portray her story of revelation and introspection is such an honor,” said actor Drew Baker. “It’s even more rewarding being surrounded on stage by longtime friends and co-performers to help tell this story.” Baker is accompanied by a supporting cast including Gary Wise, Richard Wallace, Kathy Wilson, Carol DeVelice, Brandie Bowden, Bucky Clements, Aubrey Dean, Porsche Kemp, and Laura White.

As part of Theatre Tuscaloosa’s commitment to raising awareness about ovarian cancer, two special events have been planned in cooperation with the Norma Livingston Ovarian Cancer Foundation. On Sunday, February 22, there will be a post-show talk-back with actors, cancer survivors, and medical professionals. On Thursday, February 26, there will be a
physician-led pre-show lecture and discussion titled “Signs, Symptoms, and Treatment of Ovarian Cancer.” More information about these free special events is available at www.theatretusc.com.

Theatre Tuscaloosa’s 2014-15 Season, To Life!, is presented in cooperation with Shelton State Community College and is sponsored by Jamison-MoneyFarmer PC. Wit is sponsored by Renfroe Outdoor Advertising and Southland Benefit Solutions. Additional sponsors include Alabama One Credit Union; Warrior Roofing; TotalCom Marketing; TownSquare Media Group; Afflink; Buffalo Rock; Left Hand Soap Company; Mercedes-Benz U.S. International, Inc.; Ameriprise Financial; Campbell Guin; and Bank of Tuscaloosa. Wit is made possible by grants from the Alabama State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts and the City of Tuscaloosa.

Wit runs February 20-March 1, 2015, in the Bean-Brown Theatre on Shelton State Community College’s Martin Campus (9500 Old Greensboro Road). Performances are at 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays and at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, Sundays, and Saturday, February 28. A Pay-What-You-Can dress rehearsal will be presented on Thursday, February 19, at 7:30 p.m., and proceeds benefit the Charlie Dennis Memorial Scholarship Fund.

For more information and tickets, visit www.theatretusc.com or call 205.391.2277.

###

**Media Note:** Photos are available upon request. If you would like to arrange to cover a performance of Wit, a limited number of complimentary press passes is available. Contact Adam Miller at 205.391.2925 to make arrangements.

*Theatre Tuscaloosa is a not-for-profit (501c3) community theatre located on the Martin Campus of Shelton State Community College. Theatre Tuscaloosa has been enriching the greater Tuscaloosa community since 1972 through quality theatrical productions and educational outreach.*