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THEATRE TUSCALOOSA PRESENTS A NEW MUSICAL COMEDY:  THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE

October 28, 2011 (TUSCALOOSA, AL) – Theatre Tuscaloosa will present The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee November 11-20 in the Bean-Brown Theatre on Shelton State’s Martin Campus. This Tony-winning Broadway hit musical comedy premiered in 2005 and has won the hearts of audiences across the country with its funny, heart-warming story and its amazing set of quirky songs.

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee is about six young people vying for the spelling championship of a lifetime. A charming ensemble cast of misfit contestants discover that a spelling bee is one place where they can stand out and fit in at the same time, win or lose.

Directing and choreographing Spelling Bee is Theatre Tuscaloosa veteran and UA assistant professor of Musical Theatre and Dance Stacy Alley. Alley is well-known for her performance in the lead role in Peter Pan in 2003, and she has continued to be involved behind the scenes at Theatre Tuscaloosa, most recently as the choreographer for last summer’s The Drowsy Chaperone.

“One of the exciting and challenge parts of directing this show is the audience participation element. The script allows for several guest spellers each night. Their lines are not pre-scripted, and they have the chance to stay in the bee well into the show,” said Alley. “So, the show will literally be different every single night depending on how many words our guest spellers get right!”

At each performance, a different celebrity guest speller will be competing for a donation of up to $500 to their favorite tornado-relief-related charity. The celebrity who gets the most fans and supporters out to see the show wins. Celebrity guests include Greg Thomas from B101.7, Shelton State President Mark Heinrich, former Mrs. America Julie Love, Tuscaloosa City Councilman Kip Tyner, Comedian Dr. Allen Mallory, Madison & Shepherd in the Morning (95.3 The Bear FM), and more.

Audience members will also have a chance to participate in each performance. A registration table will be available in the lobby starting one hour prior to performances, and those who enter will have a chance to be chosen at random to participate in the show.

“I am so excited to be working on Spelling Bee with Theatre Tuscaloosa,” said Alley. “We have assembled such an amazing production team and a truly ensemble cast filled with talented people! I know that audiences will fall in love with these characters and will go home humming the whimsical music from this show.”

The cast of The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee includes Ashley Kontos, Charles Prosser, Zachaeus Kimbrell, Lindsey Jones, Stephen Billy, Justin Barnett, Gia Asperas, Kathryn David, and Christian Clark. The production team
includes Leslie Poss (musical director), Jameson Sanford (scenic designer), Jeanette Waterman (costume designer), Wheeler Kincaid (lighting designer), Frank Duren (sound designer), and Amanda Manos (stage manager). The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee was conceived by Rebecca Feldman with music and lyrics by William Finn and book by Rachel Sheinkin.

Theatre Tuscaloosa’s 2011-12 Winning Season is presented in cooperation with Shelton State Community College and is sponsored by Alabama One Credit Union, Jamison Money Farmer, PC, al.com, Cumulus Media, and the City of Tuscaloosa. The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee is sponsored by Mercedes and B101.7 FM. Additional sponsorships include Ameriprise, Afflink, and D. Harkey Design.

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee will be presented November 11-20 in the Bean-Brown Theatre on Shelton State Community College’s Martin Campus (9500 Old Greensboro Road). Audiences are advised that the script includes adult language and mature subject matter and that an equivalent movie rating for this play would be PG-13. Performances will take place Thursdays-Saturdays at 7:30pm and Sundays and Wednesday at 2pm. All proceeds of a pay-what-you-can final dress rehearsal on Thursday, November 10, at 7:30 pm, will benefit the Charlie Dennis Memorial Scholarship Fund. Tickets to the regular performances are $22 for adults, $18 for seniors (60+), and $14 for students and children. Special rates are available for groups of 10 or more. Tickets can be purchased online at www.theatretusc.com or by phone at (205) 391-2277.

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**Media Note:** If you would like to arrange to cover a performance of The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, a limited number of complimentary press passes are available. Contact Adam Miller at (205) 391-2277 to make arrangements.

Theatre Tuscaloosa is a not-for-profit 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.