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IA PRESIDENT THOMAS C. SHORT ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT



SAN DIEGO, July 31 – Thomas C. Short, President of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, announced his retirement here today, at the IA’s mid-Summer General Executive Board Meeting held at the Westin Hotel in San Diego’s Gaslamp district.

A member of the IA for over 40 years, and an elected official for the past 21 years, Short became President in 1994, and stated then that his goals were to make the IA a better organization and to provide the best representation possible for the entire membership in the US and Canada. He has accomplished many of his goals and exceeded more.

During Short’s tenure, the IA has become the largest entertainment union in the world with an increase in membership of more than 50%, covering over 400 Locals and more than 110,000 members in the US, Its territories, and Canada. As a result, the assets of the Alliance have increased to nearly \$50 million and allowed the purchase of two buildings located in Toluca Lake, California, and Ontario, Canada. Under Short’s leadership, the union has been restructured to include five Divisions (Stage Craft, Motion Picture and Television Production, Organizing, Trade Show & Display Work, and Canadian Affairs), allowing for greater focus on the needs of various sectors of the membership.

When taking office in late 1994, the International held two term agreements: the Hollywood Basic Agreement and The League of American Theatres and Producers. Since that time the number of term agreements has increased to nearly 2,000, which has resulted in tremendous employment opportunities for IA members.

Short also oversaw the establishment of the Individual Account Plan on the West Coast that provides an additional retirement savings to nearly 35,000 members, and increases in the Motion Picture Pension and Health Plans to \$5.5 billion, nearly four times above what

PRESIDENT SHORT RETIRES

2

it was prior to 1995. Likewise, the IATSE National Benefit Funds headquartered in New York City has reported a net increase in assets of 300% in the Pension Fund since 1994, increased participation three-fold in the Health and Welfare Fund, and tripled the Annuity Fund.

In 1999 after an 81-year absence from the IATSE, Short brought back into the IA fold the 3100-member United Scenic Artists Local 829. And after 32 years the IATSE regained its rightful seat on the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO. The establishment of the IATSE-PAC has helped to engage the union in the political arena in an unprecedented way because of Short's belief in the importance of establishing and maintaining relationships with city, state, and nationally elected officials. The IA has a flourishing relationship with Britain's BECTU (Broadcasting Entertainment Cinematograph and Theatre Union), and an affiliation with UNI-MEI (the international media, entertainment and arts organization) which has enabled the Alliance to further engage with labor organizations from around the globe.

During Short's tenure in office he has been recognized with the Lew Wasserman Spirit of Democracy Award, the DGA Honors Award, the Heart to Heart Award presented by Encore Community Services in New York City, the Motion Picture and Television Fund's Silver Medallion Award, and the Actor's Fund Medal of Honor.

Said Short in a parting statement, "I have put forth my energy and every effort to enrich this organization and enlisted the help of what I believe to be a phenomenal staff of intelligent, sophisticated and progressive individuals who have stood ready to work hard and assist in accomplishing the goals I believe we had to achieve in order to survive the many challenges facing this International."

Thomas C. Short began his IA career in January 1968 when he was initiated into Stagehands Local 27 in Cleveland. He is also a Charter Member of Special Department Local B-27, founded in 1977, as well as having served as its Business Agent. He was elected to serve on the Executive Boards of Stage Local 27 and Studio Mechanics Local 209 of the State of Ohio in 1971, and in 1978 was elected to serve as Local 27's President.

In August 1988, Short was elected Eleventh International Vice-President of the IA, and in 1993, the General Executive Board elected him to fill the vacated position of General Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. In July 1993, Short was elected to a full two-year term by the delegates to the Centennial Convention in New York City, continuing his tenure as General Secretary-Treasurer.

Short has served as President of the IA since December 1994, when he was elected to fill the position after the resignation of the late Alfred W. Di Tolla. Short was re-elected to his first full three-year term as International President in 1995, and has continued to serve in that position since then.

PRESIDENT SHORT RETIRES

3

Short stated that he “is extremely proud of these accomplishments and the IATSE has been such an important part of my life. As hard as it is for me to believe that this time has come, I am now prepared to move on. I am not leaving for political reasons or for health reasons, but rather because I have learned that life is short and there is a great deal that I have yet to experience and enjoy.”

Short’s future plans have not been announced. A successor to Short will be elected by the IA’s General Executive Board.

The IATSE is an International Union that represents members employed in the stagecraft, motion picture and television production, trade shows industries as well as a vast number of allied crafts throughout the United States, Its Territories, and Canada.

(For background information on the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees: www.iatse-intl.org.)

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