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Lt. Governor Guadagno Honored with Vanguard Award from Count Basie Theatre

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Red Bank Theater Recognizes Leaders in the Arts at 2nd Annual Awards Ceremony, Concert

Trenton, NJ - In recognition of her continued work to promote the arts in New Jersey, Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno last night received a 2015 Vanguard Award from the Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank. Bobby Bandiera, guitarist for Bon Jovi and Southside Johnny, and Richard Spengler, Chief Lending Officer with Investor's Bank, were also honored with Vanguard Awards.

"The arts are indelibly woven into nearly every aspect of the American experience, and organizations like the Count Basie Theatre nurture the talent and fuel the creativity that help artists thrive," said Lt. Governor Guadagno. "Congratulations to Bobby Bandiera and Richard Spengler. Thanks to leaders like them, it's clear that New Jersey's considerable artistic legacy remains in very capable hands."

The Count Basie Theatre was named in honor of the jazz pianist, bandleader, and Red Bank native William James "Count" Basie. The Theatre serves New Jersey's residents by presenting a broad spectrum of entertainment and educational programs that reflect the diversity of the region, foster an understanding of the performing arts, and create opportunities for cultural enrichment for all residents, regardless of age or background.

"The 2015 Vanguard Awards shine a light on the soul of the historic Count Basie Theatre: its education and outreach programs. This year's honorees support the Basie's mission and the importance of the arts in everyday life around our region," said Adam Philipson, President and CEO of the Count Basie Theatre. "Special thanks to Bobby Bandiera, Richard Spengler, the Lt. Governor, and all of the NJ legislators who continue to advocate for nonprofit arts organizations!"

In addition to the awards, the event included a performance of "The Who's Tommy In Its Entirety and Other Sounds of '69," by Rockit! At the Basie and special guests Bobby Bandiera, drummer Carmine Appice, 2015 Rock and Roll Hall Of Fame inductee Ricky Byrd, and others. The Rockit! Live Foundation is a nonprofit organization that welcomes children ages 8-18 to audition for and participate in a musical education and performance program. Funds raised from the concert will go towards partnership program scholarships and other initiatives that fall within the Basie's mission of providing arts education and outreach programs.

In July, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts awarded grant funding for over 700 arts organizations, projects and artists throughout the state - including the Count Basie - for FY16. The Count Basie Theatre is designated as one of the Major Presenting and Service Organizations by the Arts Council.

More information on the Count Basie Theatre and its upcoming programs is available on its website at: <http://www.countbasietheatre.org/>.

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