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Contact: William C. Martin  
media@NTD.org

## **NTD NAMES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**NEW LONDON, CT**, July 15, 2012 – The famed National Theatre of the Deaf has appointed a theatre veteran as its new executive director, while it also has opened a main office at the O’Neill Theater Center in New London.

Dr. Harvey J. Corson, chairperson of the NTD Board of Trustees, announced that the board selected Ms. Betty Beekman as the new Executive Director of The National Theatre of the Deaf effective July 1, 2012. Ms. Beekman has been serving as Interim Executive Director during the past transitional year.

“The NTD board is delighted that such an experienced, talented and dedicated theatre professional as Betty is now officially leading our cherished organization,” said Dr. Corson. “She proved herself during the past year by increasing the quality of our theatrical performances, increasing the number of bookings and bringing back some of the ‘magic’ the NTD displayed during its best eras.”



Ms. Beekman, a child of Deaf adults, has played a key role in many different areas in creative work and as part of the NTD management team.

“I am excited and enthused about the opportunities we see for NTD to bring its unique brand of entertainment and enlightenment to more audiences, deaf and hearing alike,” said Ms Beekman. “We certainly believe that as an acting troupe dedicated to audiences ‘seeing and hearing’ our plays and performances, the surge of interest in sign language in primary, secondary and college venues provides us with a bright future.”

During the time that NTD was based in Chester, CT, she was responsible for the community sign language program. Betty has also created curriculum, taught courses and performed workshops at several colleges and universities. Her recent achievements

include returning NTD to The O'Neill Theater Center with an office at O'Neill's summer home at Monte Cristo Cottage in New London, CT. She has also streamlined the fiscal development process as well as maintains creative excellence for which the company is renowned around the world. The NTD will maintain its office on the campus of the American School for the Deaf in West Hartford.

Ms. Beekman developed and directed *Stories In My Pocket* and *Stories In My Pocket Too* for the 2010-11 and 2011-12 national tours of the Little Theatre of the Deaf. She recently directed the piece performed by LTD in their recent appearance on the BBC "Planet Word" starring Stephen Fry as well as directed the piece used by David Michalek's art film piece for the 2011 Lincoln Center Summer Festival. She taught sign language techniques at the NTD Professional Theatre School.

For many years, she directed the company's Storytelling Hours on the Green in Chester, directed freelance work, and worked as Education and Outreach Coordinator, as well as Tour Director. Ms. Beekman has also written the *Learn and Study Together Guides* for the past 8 seasons, and has directed a number of LTD performances since 1983. She has designed lighting for the company's national tours of *All the Way Home* and *A Christmas Carol*. Betty has also stage managed eighteen national tours, twelve foreign tours and three television programs for WGBH *Festival of Hands* series: *The Silken Tent*, *The Road to Cordoba* and *Issa's Treasure*, for which she also did voice over work.

This year, 2012, the NTD reaches its 45th anniversary with many achievements to its credit. Above all, the NTD deaf and hearing actors/actresses, directors, and cast members have created a new dramatic art form. This art form presents with both signs and voices for beauty and power - one for the EYE and one for the EAR.

This unique dual sensory style has expanded the boundaries of theatrical expression, enabling our performances to unfold in two languages - American Sign Language and spoken English - appealing to all audiences, deaf and hearing, everywhere around the world.

Through the magical art of theatre, The National Theatre of the Deaf has created a far-reaching and profound impact on society's perception of Deaf people, promoting increased awareness, respect, and empowerment.

For more information about NTD/LTD log on to [www.ntd.org](http://www.ntd.org) Images available for download upon request. To contact the NTD offices:

#### Main Office

325 Pequot Avenue  
New London, CT 06320  
860-574-9063

139 North Main Street  
West Hartford, CT 06107  
860-236-4193

VP (video phone) 860-607-1334

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