



## GUEST SPEAKERS FOR THE OCTOBER 26, 2017 NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE ARTS PUBLIC MEETING



### **Michael McGill, Missoula Children's Theatre**

Although Michael McGill became executive director of MCT in 2006, his involvement with the company started decades earlier. After graduating from the University of Montana in 1978 with a degree in performance, Michael began volunteering for MCT. He soon became an employee, and over the years, he has been a touring artist, the human resources director, the musical director, and the production department director. He thus has a deep knowledge of the company and has helped it grow into the largest touring children's theater in the country with an emphasis on bringing live theater to military families, rural communities, and other underserved Americans.

Even as he oversees a complex company of 120 employees, Michael is deeply involved in the Tour on a programmatic level. He goes to hiring conferences to recruit artists, he helps train and evaluate them, and he also develops, writes, and composes the children's musicals that become touring shows. *The Snow Queen* is one example of the dozens of musicals Michael has written. As many as 45 pairs of MCT artists are touring simultaneously, and the shows are performed by tens of thousands of children and enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of audience members every year.

Michael is also a seasoned director. He is currently directing *Mamma Mia* and in recent years, he directed *The Sound of Music*, *Godspell*, and *Spamalot*, among many others.

Michael is committed to doing more and serving more, and he has taken the lead in making MCT more accessible to people with disabilities. Touring artists now receive specialized training in that area, and on the community theatre side of MCT, Michael began what is now a cherished company tradition of adapting one production annually for people on the autism spectrum. Many who attend say it is the first time they have ever experienced theater.



### **Jack L. Briggs II, Maj Gen USAF (Ret), Missoula Children's Theatre**

Jack L. Briggs II is the Assistant Vice President for Emergency Preparedness and Communications at New York University (NYU). Jack is responsible for organizing, integrating and executing the university's Emergency Management Program, Global Security Operations Center, and Continuity Program. This includes building relationships, programs and processes with schools, departments and organizations across the global NYU enterprise. Prior to joining NYU, Jack served in the United States Air Force for over 31 years in a variety of senior leadership roles retiring as a Major General.



Jack last served as director of operations for headquarters U.S Northern Command, Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado. He served as the principal adviser to the NORTHCOM Commander on all operational matters, providing strategic guidance to plan and execute NORTHCOM missions. He was responsible for the defense of North America, support to all federal agencies and state governments during civil operations including natural and man-made disasters, and coordinating nation to nation security cooperation operations in North America.

Jack entered the Air Force as a distinguished graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy. He served as an instructor pilot, chief of wing safety, and has commanded at the squadron and wing levels. He has extensive experience in Europe, including his selection as the first Olmsted Scholar to Hungary, NATO staff positions, and executive officer to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe/Commander, U.S. European Command. He also served as director of inspections for the Air Force, and commander of the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan at the height of the surge. Jack flew 225 combat sorties in operations Desert Storm, Northern Watch, Southern Watch, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. His awards and decorations include the Defense Superior Service medal, the Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross for Valor and the Wright Brothers Award winner for Outstanding Leadership at Air War College.

#### **Ada Smith, Appalshop**



Ada Smith is from Whitesburg, Kentucky and currently serves as the institutional development director of Appalshop. Smith is a founding member of the STAY Project (Stay Together Appalachian Youth), a youth-led, multi-issue regional network. She is a board member of: Southerners on New Ground (SONG), the Mountain Association of Community Economic Development (MACED), and the Kentucky Rural-Urban Exchange. A graduate of Hampshire College, Smith was selected as a 2013 Arts & Culture Fellow by the Rockwood Leadership Institute and a 2016 BALLE Local Economy Fellow.