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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DR. JIM JOHNSON TO LEAD ARTS EDUCATION  
PROGRAM AT GALLO CENTER FOR THE ARTS**

MODESTO, CA—December 18, 2009— Dr. Jim Johnson, recently retired after long career with Modesto Community College, has been named arts education coordinator at Gallo Center for the Arts. Johnson begins the volunteer position immediately.

“We are thrilled to have Dr. Johnson take on this crucial responsibility at the Center,” said Lynn Dickerson, chief executive officer of the non-profit performing arts center. “Considering his distinguished career and inspiring accomplishments, there could not be a more appropriate choice to help us bring the arts to the children of our community.”

Johnson, who holds a Ph.D. from the University of Southern California, taught at Modesto Junior College for more than forty years. From 1997 to 2005, he served as the dean of the arts division at the college, and in 2006-2007 he also served as interim vice president of instruction.

Johnson will help guide the Center’s selection of programming for children and work with school districts from Stanislaus, Merced and neighboring counties to facilitate student participation. He succeeds the Center’s community engagement manager, Raul Garcia, whose recently expanded duties prompted the organization to seek out Johnson.

“I’m delighted to join the creative team at the Gallo Center,” said Johnson. “I look forward to building on the excellent work of Raul Garcia in community outreach.”

Through the Center’s arts education program, Pathways to Creativity, to date an estimated 50,000 area school children have attended \$5 matinee performances as part of an initiative that promotes creative learning through cultural diversity and intellectual excellence.

(more)

Pathways to Creativity is funded in part by Save Mart C.A.R.E.S, the supermarket chain's non-profit charitable organization, AT&T and Doctors Medical Center.

Johnson has won numerous awards during his career, including the 2008 Stanislaus County Arts Council Lifetime Achievement in the Arts. In addition to his academic achievements, he frequently acts in and directs local stage productions. Johnson has appeared in plays such as "Molly Sweeney" at Prospect Theatre, and in "You Can't Take it With You" at California State University, Stanislaus, and he is scheduled to direct "Dead Man's Cell Phone" at Prospect next July.

He also is a committee member of State Theatre Film Society and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration, and is the editor of the MJC Arts Division season brochure.

Johnson can be contacted at [jjohnson@galloarts.org](mailto:jjohnson@galloarts.org).

The Gallo Center for the Arts opened in September 2007 after a decade of planning and development, and since then has sold more than 350,000 tickets to events such as Broadway touring productions, concerts by stars of pop, country, and classical music, and a wide variety of family programs. As a non-profit organization, the Center relies on financial support from the public, corporate sponsorships, foundation grants and other funding sources.

The Gallo Center's 2009-10 Premier Partners are Doctors Medical Center, Doubletree Hotel Modesto, Foster Farms and KVIE Public Television.

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