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Future Stars Event Series: Junior Players Annual Gala Goes Virtual

DALLAS, TX, September 21, 2020 - Junior Players is excited to be transforming their annual Future Stars Gala into a completely virtual event series with events on October 19, November 7, and December 2, all at 7 pm CST. Junior Players' incredible stakeholders and supporters will come together to hear from celebrity keynote speakers and to raise money to empower over 15,000 young voices annually.

Junior Players is thrilled to have Junior Players' Alumni, **William Jackson Harper**, join us as our keynote speaker on **October 19, 2020**, **James Roday Rodriguez** join us as our keynote speaker on **November, 7 2020**, and **Dean Fearing** join us as our keynote speaker on **December 2, 2020**.

William Jackson Harper was born in Dallas in the earliest of the 80's. He attended Lakeview Centennial High School, and graduated with a degree in Theater from The College of Santa Fe. His lone Broadway credit is "All the Way". Selected Off-Broadway credits include *Ruined*, *Placebo*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Modern Terrorism*, and a great many more. Film and Television credits include *Law and Order*, *American Dad*, *High Maintenance*, *Midsommar*, *Dark Waters*, *Paterson*, *The Good Place*.

James Roday Rodriguez is a multi-hyphenate who is best known for his 8-year run as Shawn Spencer on the USA hit comedy *Psych* which also spawned a *Psych* film that aired in December to huge ratings success. He currently stars on ABC's DJ Nash drama *A Million Little Things* that is in its second season. Next up is the second *Psych* movie, *Psych 2: Lassie Come Home*, which has aired on the new Peacock Network earlier this summer.

Creator of Fearing's Restaurant and author of *The Texas Food Bible*, Chef Dean Fearing is known as a "Father of Southwestern Cuisine" and has spent his life cooking for people who love good food. After graduating from the Culinary Institute of America and following 20-plus years at The Mansion on Turtle Creek, Dean opened his own Fearing's Restaurant at The Ritz-Carlton, Dallas in 2007. Since then, he and his popular menu favorites have been featured in *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Newsweek*, *Food and Wine*, *Southern Living*, *Forbes*, *Fox News*, *Bon Appétit*, *Garden & Gun*, *Robb Report*, *The Food Network*, *Guitar Aficionado* and more. He was recently recognized as a "Pioneer of American Cuisine" by The Culinary Institute of America, and was also presented with the Silver Spoon Award for sterling performance by Food Arts.

In addition to a wide variety of entertainment, the 2020 Future Stars Celebration will feature a variety of enticing silent auction items, a virtual liquor pull, and performances showcasing Junior Players' participants through the years. All proceeds benefit Junior Players' free arts education programs that take place throughout the year and serve over 15,000 youth in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods and 6,000 audiences annually for a total reach of 20,000 individuals.

Sponsorship levels begin at \$1,000. Individual tickets are available for \$125 or at a Young Professionals Discount of \$100. To purchase or for more information, follow this link juniorplayers.org/futurestars.

Junior Players was founded in 1955, and is the oldest non-profit children's theater organization in Dallas. Over its sixty-five-year existence, Junior Players has strived to meet the changing needs of the community. From 1955 to 1989, Junior Players presented traditional children's theater productions performed entirely by children and teenagers. In 1989, the Board of Directors changed the focus of Junior Players activities, deciding that Junior Players can best serve the youth of Dallas by providing free programming accessible to all the children of North Texas. Junior Players exclusively provides free arts education programs in local recreation and cultural centers, housing projects, elementary and middle schools and through social service agencies serving youth at risk.

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