

When I was here last year for the Centennial, I spoke about this building as a stake in the ground, as the outward and visible sign of our commitment to Live Theatre in Southern California and the entire western half of the United States. Our union has a long and proud history. As an organization we have set great store by that history, by tradition, by the way we have always done things. And yet, while we have respected tradition and history -- the tried and true, in our efforts to serve our members, Actors' Equity has never been afraid of the new and different.

In the 101-year history of our union, my four years as President and Mary McColl's three years as Executive Director mark us as relatively new. But I have spent forty years as a working actor and twenty years representing the membership on Council, and Mary has spent her entire working life in the Theater. There is something of new and different about us, but we are tried and true.

Speaking of new and different: 5636 Tujunga. This is a new address for Actors' Equity, but this is not a new building. It is an old structure -- but the construction, configuration and purposing inside this structure are new. And my hat is off to the folks at OKB Architects for this construction and particularly our own Steve DiPaola for the fantastic job he did supervising all this work. We are creating a new configuration and purposing within the noble and historic structure of Actors' Equity in order to make our union more effective, more responsive and more supportive on our members' behalf. We are delighted to have you all join us this evening as we celebrate those efforts and this wonderful new space.