



**COLLEGE OF
PERFORMING & VISUAL ARTS**

SOUTHERN UTAH UNIVERSITY

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Ashley H Pollock, Public Relations & Information Coordinator
College of Performing and Visual Arts
Southern Utah University

Office: (435) 865-8667
Cell: (435) 590-0961
pollocka@suu.edu

Learning from the Tragedy in *The Laramie Project*

Written by Ashley H Pollock

Southern Utah University, Cedar City, Utah: The SUU Department of Theatre Arts and Dance is performing *The Laramie Project* on January 26, 30 and February 3, 4 at 7:30 p.m. with a matinee on January 28 at 2 p.m. All performances will be held in the Eileen and Allen Anes Studio Theatre in the Beverley Center for the Arts. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$8 for alumni with a card, and \$5 for youth. Southern Utah University faculty, staff, and students are free with a valid ID card. Faculty and staff IDs are allowed one guest. Tickets are available at the door, in person at the Centrum Ticket Office, or at suu.edu/pva. ***The Laramie Project* contains mature content, strong language, and sexual themes.**

Scott Knowles, Assistant Professor, is directing this production. He said, "In 1998 Matthew Shepard was tied to a fence, beaten brutally, and left to die. The play focuses on the earth shattering killing of Matthew Shepard and how it brought down and called into question several boundaries. Members of the LGBTQ+ community were confronted with the very real question of their safety within the United States and the potential for loss that comes with it. Laramie specifically, and the world more generally, was confronted with the reality of hate crimes propagated by systemic homophobia and bigotry. The play rehearses and makes present this historical, boundary shifting, moment of change. SUU is currently working to shift this same boundary toward diversity and inclusion and our production's goal is to further that conversation through an experience that challenges the fences we all put up."

The Laramie Project was written by Moisés Kaufman and members of the Tectonic Theater Project. They interviewed members of the community following the tragic murder of Matthew Shepard. This play is written as a documentary with actual community members reactions to this horrific moment in history. These responses are varied and show just how different people can be in one community.

Isabella Abel-Suarez, theatre major from Las Vegas, plays Barbara Pitts among other characters in the show. She said "Everyone in the cast plays at least four or five different roles. It is important for us to give each character life and make them distinguishable from one another without playing stereotypes or a generalized version of that individual. We're playing real people and saying things that they actually said."

Alaynah Woodhouse is currently a junior Theater Arts student. She said, "Laramie, Wyoming isn't very different from Cedar City, Utah. The similarities are striking- it's a college town far away from other places, and the people who live here love being so connected to nature. This

story deserves to be told. We are all so similar, and we need to hear these stories. To help us understand.”

Experience this heart wrenching performance of a small town struck by tragedy. For more information about the show, please visit www.suu.edu/pva. To learn more about Matthew Shepard and how you can be an advocate for human dignity and inclusion, please visit <http://www.matthewshepard.org>.

About the College of Performing and Visual Arts

The Southern Utah University College of Performing and Visual Arts is comprised of nationally accredited departments of Art and Design, Music, and Dance. The College also offers programs in Theatre Arts, graduate programs in Arts Administration and Music, as well as a Center for Shakespeare Studies. The College offers 16 different degree areas, including liberal arts Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees; professional Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Fine Arts in art and theatre degrees; and Master of Fine Arts in Arts Administration, Master of Arts in Arts Administration, Master of Music Education and Master of Music in Music Technology graduate degrees. More than 60 full- and part-time faculty and staff are engaged in teaching and mentoring nearly 600 majors in the College. Over 1,100 students enroll each year in over 195 arts classes on the SUU campus. The College presents over 100 performances, lectures, presentations, and exhibitions each year. The College’s affiliate organizations include the Southern Utah Museum of Art (SUMA), Utah Shakespeare Festival and SUU’s Ballroom Dance Company. For more information about the College of Performing and Visual Arts, visit www.suu.edu/pva.

For Calendar Editors: Follow the Journey of Human Nature in The Laramie Project

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Who: Department of Theatre Arts and Dance, College of Performing and Visual Arts, Southern Utah University

When: January 26, 30 and February 3, 4 at 7:30 p.m. with a matinee on January 28 at 2 p.m.

Where: Eileen and Allen Anes Studio Theatre, Beverley Center for the Arts, Cedar City

Tickets: Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$8 for alumni with a card, and \$5 for youth. Southern Utah University faculty, staff, and students are free with a valid ID card. Faculty and staff IDs are allowed one guest.

Info: For more information, please visit www.suu.edu/pva.

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