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'STEPPIN' OUT' CELEBRATES 35 YEARS!

New Orleans, LA – Wednesday, March 17, 2021 – New Orleans' only restaurant, arts and entertainment discussion program, **STEPPIN' OUT**, made its debut on local television on March 19, 1986. The program premiered on WLAE-TV, where it aired for almost two years, before creator and host **Peggy Scott Laborde** returned to WYES. When she did, the program, its signature set and neon logo came with her. On Thursday, March 18th at 7:00 p.m., Laborde invites viewers to tune in for a special "**35th Anniversary Edition**" of **STEPPIN' OUT** on WYES-TV.

For many years theatre critic **Al Shea** covered the performing arts scene. He started his long television career at WDSU in the 1950s and was considered to be among America's first television broadcast entertainment critics. After Shea's death, longtime *The Times-Picayune* writer and New Orleans playwright **David Cuthbert** provided his own in-depth coverage. Upon Cuthbert's retirement, **Alan Smason** has been covering the local stage for over a decade. Smason writes reviews for *The Crescent City Jewish News* and theatre criticism.com.

For the 35th Anniversary special Alan Smason and **Poppy Tooker**, who has been covering the local food and restaurant scene for **STEPPIN' OUT** for almost fifteen years, will look back at important moments in local theatre and dining history. Tooker is the creator and host of the public radio program, Louisiana Eats, on WWNO Radio.

WWL-TV movie critic **Alfred Richard** and **Doug MacCash**, who covers the local arts and culture scenes for *The Times-Picayune/New Orleans Advocate*, will look back at the last 35 years in New Orleans in their respective fields.

A special on the annual New Orleans Carnival season has become a **STEPPIN' OUT** tradition since the program's inception. Mardi Gras historians **Arthur Hardy** and **Errol Laborde** are featured guests.

"With the support of the community WYES has been able to cover the history and culture of our city on Steppin' Out," states Laborde. "During these trying times we feel that now more than ever that it's important to spread the word about the creativity and resilience ever present in New Orleans."

Throughout this anniversary special, Laborde and her guests will be reflecting on the recent past in various areas. "While we certainly focus on what's new, it's only fitting that we recall important moments in this historic city. It is a time to relish the rich heritage we have here."

STEPPIN' OUT "35th Anniversary Edition" premieres on Thursday, March 18 at 7:00 p.m. and repeats on Friday, March 19 at 11:00 p.m. on WYES-TV, wyes.org/live and on the WYES and PBS apps. All weekly episodes of **STEPPIN' OUT** can be viewed on WYES' YouTube channel and at wyes.org/steppinout.

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