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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Circus Juventas kicks off their 30th year with
Annual Gala, Saturday, Nov. 4, 2023, under the Big Top
Evening will honor legacy of founders Dan and Betty Butler**

(Saint Paul, MN) Guests attending **Circus Juventas** Annual Gala will be treated to highlights from their sold-out 2023 summer show *Excalibur* and a meal fit for King Arthur as the acclaimed youth performing arts organization kicks off their 30th year. The fundraising event will celebrate the legacy of **Circus Juventas** co-founders Dan and Elizabeth “Betty” Butler and welcome their talented successors, Rachel Butler Norris and Rob Dawson. The Gala takes place 6-11 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 4, 2023, under the big top at 1270 Montreal Avenue, Saint Paul, with proceeds benefiting the non-profit organization’s scholarships and programming. WCCO Radio Host Vineeta Sawkar and Saint Paul Parks Conservancy Executive Director Michael-jon Pease will serve as celebrity emcees. Tickets are \$200 per person, with sponsored tables for up to 10 guests starting at \$3,000. For details and to purchase tickets, visit <https://circusjuventas.ejoinme.org/tickets>.

The evening will be an opportunity to honor Dan and Betty Butler for their vision and dedication in growing Circus Juventas from an after-school rec center program

to an internationally acclaimed award-winning youth circus arts institution that trains 2,500 students annually. Under the Butlers' guidance, Circus Juventas performed at the **Smithsonian Folklife Festival** in Washington, D.C., earned the distinguished **Circopedia** award for excellence in the circus arts and earned a reputation as one of the best youth circuses in the world. Betty Butler serves on the advisory board for **The World Circus Federation** and is a founding member of the **Global Alliance Circus Schools**. In addition, they employ a "who's who" of international coaches, allowing students to reach the highest pinnacles of circus arts performing.



Betty, Danny and Dan Butler

Many graduates of the program have gone on to professional careers with **Cirque du Soleil**, **The Wallenda Family**, **The Royal Hanneford Circus** and many other organizations, utilizing the circus skills they learned from the Butlers and their team of internationally renowned coaches. This past summer, the Butlers' youngest son, Danny, also joined this elite group. Danny Butler, 20, beat out hundreds who auditioned for a role in the newly relaunched **Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus** produced by **Feld Entertainment**. He signed a two year contract to perform as a catcher on the flying trapeze and will travel to 69 cities across the country, entertaining audiences almost every weekend. Danny received the news that he would be the youngest on his team, where he proudly assumes the role of one of the two catchers for the show. "It's everything I've dreamed of just being able to catch professional flyers," Danny said.

The Butlers met as teenagers in Sarasota, Fla., where they trained at Sailor Circus, one of the oldest circus schools in the country. They continued training at the Florida State University Flying High Circus, and upon graduation moved into careers outside of the big top. In 1994, drawn back to when they were most happy, they started Circus of the Star at a Saint Paul recreation center. That program soon outgrew the space. Realizing that there was a huge interest in circus training, the Butlers re-launched the program as Circus Juventas, and with the help of hundreds of generous donors and a long-term lease from the City of Saint Paul, in 2001 opened the doors to the state-of-the-art big top that now serves as the program's home.



Betty & Dan (middle and right) as teenagers at Sailor Circus in Florida

“Circus Juventas has been the focus of our lives for 30 years, and we could not be more grateful to everyone – from coaches, students, staff, volunteers and donors – whose support has helped it grow into the world-class circus arts program that it is today,” said Dan Butler. “Stepping back from our daily roles is certainly bittersweet,” said Betty Butler. “We have every confidence in Rachel and Rob. We could not have found two people better suited to lead Circus Juventas into the future.”

Circus Juventas remains dedicated to its core mission as a youth development program, offering the opportunity for young people of all abilities the chance to shine. “The gala is a night of celebration and an opportunity to thank our donors for allowing us to provide student scholarships and continue to grow our program,” said Dan Butler.

The evening includes dazzling table-side performances by Circus Juventas' most advanced students along with a sumptuous feast from CRAVE Catering, the opportunity to bid on one-of-a-kind silent and live auction items, and epic games and surprises. Complimentary valet parking will be available.

About Circus Juventas

Circus Juventas is a 501(c)3 non-profit performing arts circus school for youth. Its' mission is to inspire artistry and self-confidence through a multicultural circus arts experience. CJ's vision is to create an environment that encourages leadership and life skills, teamwork, athleticism, artistry, pursuit of excellence and community service. They are North America's largest youth circus performing arts program. For more information, visit <http://circusjuventas.org>.

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