



Nancy Morris, RSCJ, (far left) and President Ann Marie Krejcarek (far right) with the Merlone family at a dedication ceremony held during the annual Barat Dinner on May 19, 2022, to name the newly redesigned performing arts space the Merlone Family Little Theater in honor of Valerie Hessen Merlone.



# REDEFINING ART IN THE NEW MERLONE FAMILY LITTLE THEATER

One way of supporting Area of Impact I of Convent & Stuart Hall's Strategic Plan — educating to stretch human capacity — now and for the future — is to make performing arts programming a core part of the curricular experience. And so, over the last couple of years, the school's Visual and Performing Arts departments have continued to grow in size and scope in terms of course offerings, student participation and community spaces.

Through the Strategic Plan Gift Campaign, the Merlone Family Little Theater, a newly redesigned space suitable for instrumental, vocal and theatrical performances, provides a state-of-the-art creative learning environment for students and

an entertainment venue for the community. Having this space affords music and theater students and faculty new and exciting performance opportunities and a smaller black box rehearsal space, complementing Syfy Theatre's proscenium stage with a setting fit for workshops, conferences and other non-traditional formats.

Thanks to a multimillion-dollar gift from the Merlone family, the theater is named in honor of Peter Merlone's late wife and the mother of Kristen Merlone CES '02, Valerie Hessen Merlone, whose memorial service was held in the Little Theater 22 years ago.

PHOTOS: Scenes from elementary and high school instrumental music classes in the new Merlone Family Little Theater.