

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Press Contact:**

**Sydney Goldstein | [sydney@cityarts.net](mailto:sydney@cityarts.net) | 415.563.2463**

## **MEDIA ALERT: CITY ARTS & LECTURES ANNOUNCES PLANS FOR RE-OPENING OF NOURSE AUDITORIUM**

Supreme Court Justice Stephen G. Breyer to give remarks at November 16<sup>th</sup> reception

November 14, 2011 (San Francisco, CA) – **At a reception on Wednesday, November 16 at 5pm, City Arts & Lectures will articulate plans to restore the Nourse Auditorium to public use. Executive Director Sydney Goldstein will outline the project** to return the architectural gem to working order and **Justice Stephen Breyer will share remarks** on the history of the Nourse and the Justice's personal connection to the auditorium. Jo Anne Wallace, Vice President and General Manager of KQED Public Radio and Kary Schulman, Director of Grants for the Arts, SF Hotel Tax Fund, will also speak. **The event is from 5-6PM at the Nourse, 275 Hayes Street, San Francisco. Media interested in attending should call 415-563-2463.**

**For over thirty years, the landmark venue has been closed to the theatre-going public.** The building is property of the SF Unified School District. This year, City Arts & Lectures will embark on an ambitious project to restore it by installing new upholstered seating, sound equipment, lighting, stage curtains and carpeting, and bringing all exit doors up to code. Not only will this provide an interim home for City Arts & Lectures during seismic retrofitting of the War Memorial Veterans Building which houses the Herbst Theatre, City Arts' mainstay venue, but it will create **a new space for cultural events in the city.**

Breyer has a longstanding interest in architecture and this year was appointed to the panel that awards the Pritzker Prize, architecture's greatest honor. Moreover, **Breyer has a personal relationship with the Nourse: his father, Irving Breyer, was a lawyer for the School District for 41 years, and Board of Education meetings were held in the Nourse during that time.**

Built in 1927 for the High School of Commerce, the Nourse served as a fixture in the cultural and civic life for decades. During the 1950s and 1960s, it was used as a performance space, hosting opera companies, ballet troupes, and musicians, as well as years of Board of Education meetings. In the 1970s it fell out of public use as a performance space. Then in 1985, it was repurposed as a courtroom for a major State Civil Court asbestos case; flat hardwood floor was installed over the original raked auditorium flooring and desks were brought in for more than two-dozen lawyers. After that trial, the Nourse was essentially shuttered and became storage space for the School District. City Arts & Lectures is excited to refurbish this exceptional auditorium.

**About City Arts & Lectures:** Since 1980, City Arts & Lectures has presented events with leading figures in the world of art & ideas. Each season, there are more than fifty lectures and onstage conversations -- and a few surprise performances -- with outstanding figures in literature, criticism, science, and the performing arts, offering the most diverse perspectives about ideas and values. City Arts & Lectures programs can be heard in edited and delayed broadcasts on more than 170 public radio stations across the country. The broadcasts are co-produced with KQED 88.5 FM.

**More info at [www.cityarts.net](http://www.cityarts.net) | 415.563.2463  
Media inquiries: [sydney@cityarts.net](mailto:sydney@cityarts.net)**