Destination Stratford partners with Stratford Festival to create new audio tour dedicated to the Stratford Festival Founder Tom Patterson

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(Stratford, ON) Building on the tremendous success of Destination Stratford's self-guided audio tours, a new and exciting tour has recently been added in partnership with the Stratford Festival. The Tom Patterson tour takes listeners on a journey back in time, uncovering how Patterson's intuition, passion and persuasion set the stage for one of the world's greatest theatres.

The audio tour is both intriguing and rich in history. Dating back to Patterson's childhood in Stratford and his days attending the Stratford Collegiate Institute, where the concept was born to create a Shakespearean Festival. Patterson's idea ultimately helped save his hometown, which he knew would suffer once the steam-engine repair shops were closed due to decreased demand.

Excerpt from the audio tour:

> *"The other fellows and I used to think up ways of trying to save our native town. One idea had to do, not surprisingly, with hockey…. Another idea, my own, was to create a Shakespearean Festival. After all, I argued, we had a city named Stratford on a river named Avon. We had a beautiful park system. We had wards and schools with such names as Hamlet, Falstaff, Romeo, and Juliet. We even had a bronze head of the great dramatist by the Canadian sculptor Cleeve Horne, which had been donated to the city by the Sons of England." Tom Patterson*

This unique tour features the voices of two talented Canadian actors, both who you may have seen on stage at the Stratford Festival. Jessica B. Hill takes you on a journey through time, while actor Ben Carlson records the voice as though Tom Patterson himself, with quotes taken from Patterson's book "First Stage; The Making of the Stratford Festival."

"*We are so pleased to have had the opportunity to collaborate with the Stratford Festival to bring this fascinating audio tour to life,*" says Zac Gribble, Executive Director of Destination Stratford. "*The Tom Patterson audio tour is a great addition to our 10 unique*

Stratford tours and provides theatre lovers, historians and everyone in-between the chance to discover the long history and passion behind the Stratford Festival."

In addition to the audio tour and live performances, locals and visitors are encouraged to visit the new exhibit at the Stratford Perth Museum: Who Was Tom Patterson? The exhibit takes you through Patterson's family life as well as his various careers that include; a veteran, a journalist, an academic, and an actor. The exhibit celebrates and documents the life of Tom Patterson and was created to coincide with Tom Patterson's 100th birthday on June 11, 2020 and with the opening of the new Tom Patterson Theatre (in-person tours of this architectural gem are now available to book at stratfordfestival.ca).

"The timing of the Tom Patterson tour and exhibit is perfect, with the newly completed theatre named in his honour providing such a fitting tribute to our hometown hero," says Anita Gaffney, Executive Director of the Stratford Festival. "Destination Stratford and the Stratford Perth Museum drew on the many fascinating facts and artifacts in our Archives to create the tour and exhibit. Visitors and locals alike will find them both to be enlightening and entertaining experiences."

Experience the Tom Patterson audio tour for yourself at visitstratford.ca/audiotours. Explore our city and surrounding area at your own pace, or from home, with our unique and complimentary self-guided audio walking tours. Choose your preferred starting spot on the audio tour map and listen as the history unfolds while you make your way from one stop to the next.

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