The Fellows Gazette

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What’s Up With the College?

No one can ever complain that we are a “do nothing” organization! Much has been happening since our April meeting. The board recently approved the creation of a new committee: The Development, Advocacy, and Profile Committee whose work will be comprised of profile-raising, development, advocacy, and fundraising for the Fellows. This committee will consist of a chair appointed by the Dean every two years and be approved by the board which will appoint a group of 4-8 members on 2-year terms. The committee will report to the board. Their business will be to facilitate the emerging artists awards, garner funds for emerging artists and other needs as determined by the Dean and the board, and raise the profile of the Fellows through press releases and connections to other theatre organizations. Fellow Gail Humphries Mardirosian has agreed to chair. Members of the committee are Dean-elect Karen Berman and Fellows Julie Jensen, Kim Marra, Jeff Koep, Jim Still, Katie Robinson, Robert Schenkkan, and Bonnie Nelson Schwartz.

The new committee can already boast success. Fellow Tom Schumacher has pledged $25,000 to the College to be utilized, at his request, to continue offering the College of Fellows Jane Alexander Award for the next ten years to an emerging artist. Fellows Jim Still and Katie Robinson have agreed to oversee the award for 2016.

At the general meeting last April it was announced that the plans for publishing a new book about the College had been shelved due to the unsuccessful attempts to gather 100-word bios of all Fellows inducted prior to 2005, when the last book was published. Because several Fellows expressed disappointment in that decision, Felicia Londré and I regrouped and are in the process of producing a new book which we hope to distribute next April. If all goes as planned, it will contain about 30 pages describing the College’s history, the original citations of all Fellows since 1965, and about 30 pages of color photos—mainly of our 50th anniversary celebration.

The new book will not contain the Stevens Addresses since they alone would comprise more than 500 pages and make the book too expensive—which leads me to yet another new project you need to know about.

Twelve years ago, Fellow John Cauble’s son, Chris, created our website and has very generously maintained and paid for it ever since. Unfortunately, it is outdated; many people with internet connections on cell phones are unable to open it. Chris concluded it was probably time for the College to assume responsibility. Therefore, we are now in the process of creating a new website, using the same log-in address but with new features. Among the new features will be the inclusion of a link that will bring you to all of the Stevens Addresses. Again, we hope to have this new website up and running by the time of our April meeting.

On page two of this issue of the Fellows Gazette, I have described a few changes that we will face at our next meeting in April.

Sincerely,
Dean Robert Schanke
Changes for Next April!

The past few years, we have reserved a block of rooms at The River Inn. Those of you who attended last year will recall that we were able to keep the rate of $199 per night by having the reservations made for us through the Kennedy Center. Unfortunately, the Kennedy Center can no longer provide that service. In discussions with the River Inn, they offered the rate of $250 per night, quite an increase, especially when you consider adding tax to that rate. One of the reasons for the hike was that during our weekend in DC, the International Monetary Fund is also meeting. All hotels have raised their rates for that weekend.

Another complication surfaced. We cannot have our Saturday night reception at The Cosmos Club next year because they have a wedding scheduled that evening. I contacted several alternatives and found them either unavailable or quite costly, ranging anywhere from $3000 to $8000 just for the rental of space.

With Felicia Londré’s help, we met with the reps of two hotels. I met with two others and telephoned more after return home to Iowa. All of the hotels in the Kennedy Center area (Foggy Bottom) offered the same rate of $250. One hotel in the Dupont Circle area offered the rate of $200, but that location would have meant taking taxis everywhere. We explored the possibility of selecting a hotel in Foggy Bottom area that could provide lodging as well as the reception. That fell through. River Inn did not feel they could accommodate a reception of our size. The others could, but we would have to share the space with other people staying at the hotel. That did not seem appropriate.

Stymied, I asked Fellow Bonnie Nelson Schwartz for advice. Upon her suggestion, I contacted several hotels across the river from DC. In the end, with input from a few other Fellows, I selected Key Bridge Marriott Hotel in Arlington VA. We have the nightly rate of $125 which includes free wi-fi. Our Saturday private reception will be held in their Revival restaurant. Taxis are plentiful for an approximate 10-minute, $10 trip to the Kennedy Center on Friday evening for the Irene Ryan Scenes and Sunday morning for our meetings and luncheon. The hotel is very close the Rosslyn Metro, which is just one stop away from the Foggy Bottom station. On-site parking is $22 per day.

You can make reservations now. The rate of $125 is good for Thursday, April 14 – Sunday, April 17. Deadline to reserve is March 27.

Make reservations by clicking the link in blue below:

http://www.marriott.com/meeting-event-hotels/group-corporate-travel/groupCorp.mi?resLinkData=College%20of%20Fellows%5Ewaskb%0f%20false%60125.00%60USD%60false%601%604/14/16%604/18/16%603/27/16&app=resvlink&stop_mobi=yes

Phone Reservations may be made by dialing 800-676-2959 but be sure you indicate College of Fellows of the American theatre for the group rate.
The New Fellows

Donna Aronson
Donna has been VP for Academic Affairs at Saint Mary’s University, MN since 2011. She received her MFA and PhD from Florida State University. Always active in ATHE, she has presented dozens of conference papers, served as VP for Conferences, and ultimately as President 1999-2000. Because of her keen interest in voice training, she has served on the board of VASTA and chaired the Voice and Speech Program for ATA.

Cheryl Black
Cheryl is Director of Graduate Studies at the U of MO. She has presented many conference papers and published many peer-reviewed articles. She is the current President of the American Theatre and Drama Society. She is the author of The Women of Provincetown 1915-1922, and co-editor of Experiments in Democracy: Interracial and Cross-Cultural Exchanges in American Theatre and Performance, 1912-1945.

Robert Brustein
Theatre critic, producer, playwright, writer, and educator, Robert founded both Yale Repertory Theatre and the American Repertory Theatre. He has been the theatre critic for The New Republic. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1999 and in 2002 was inducted into the American Theatre Hall of Fame. He is the author of sixteen books on theatre and society. He was the writer and narrator of a 1966 television series, The Opposition Theatre.

John Eisner
John co-founded the Lark Play Development Center in 1994 as a community of theater professionals dedicated to the playwright’s vision. He has grown the Lark into an award-winning “think tank for the theater,” with local, national and global reach, providing a creative community to thousands of theatre artists, and a throng of community leaders, donors, volunteers and students. His work has been recognized with an Obie Award and a Lucille Lortel Award.

Cindy Phaneuf
Cindy is the Chair of the graduate program at the University of NE-Omaha where she has been recognized for outstanding teaching. She was co-founder and Producing Artistic Director of the Nebraska Shakespeare Festival (1986-2010). Active in national organizations, she was President of the National Theatre Conference (2010-2014) and President of the Shakespeare Theatre Association of America (1998-2000).

You Are Invited

Georgia College and Provost Kelli Brown are hosting a wine and cheese reception in honor of Fellow Karen Berman becoming the next Dean.

Everyone is invited.

Place: The location will be posted somewhere on the main floor of the Key Bridge Marriott Hotel.

Time: Friday, April 15 from 5-6:30 pm (Before the Irene Ryan Scenes at the Kennedy Center)

News of the Fellows

MILLY BARRANGER: The National Partners of the American Theatre bestowed the honorary title of Emeritus Partner of American Theatre upon Milly Barranger during their the 2015 annual meeting in Washington DC. In September she gave the keynote address at the 14th Annual Tennessee Williams Tribute Festival in Columbus MS, titled “Three Behind-the-Scenes Women in the Career of Tennessee Williams: Margaret Webster, Cheryl Crawford, and Audrey Wood.” She also received the 2015 Distinguished Scholar’s Medallion awarded annually during the Festival held on the campus of the Mississippi University for Women.

ROBERT BENEDETTI: Bob scored a big success in March with his production of Lanford Wilson’s The HOT L Baltimore at Queensland University in Brisbane, Australia. He had a lot of good advice from Fellow Marshall Mason, the play’s original director in 1973. (see photo on p. 8)

JEFF CHURCH: Jeff wants to share his director’s concept to The Miracle Worker: “The story of Helen Keller and Annie Sullivan remains the best teacher/student play ever written. Its timeless story of perseverance speaks to every generation about how we open ourselves up to the world and how the people in our lives teach us to do it. The Coterie is attempting a new way of performing the play that we believe is highlighting the strengths of the story while contemporizing other important aspects of the production: our play will be not only a shadow-interpreted above the main action, but also audio-described live by the actors as part of the performance. We do not know if this has ever been done before. We’ve created a ‘visual description’ script that is embedded into the main action. We also feature a multi-ethnic cast, since there is an interesting conversation to be had that family struggles (as well as victories) are always universal.” (see photo on page 8)

(News continued on page 4)
JERRY CRAWFORD: Jerry will soon complete a new comedy, The Deal. He is also researching for another, The Sub. His "Yooper Critic Sees Film Reviews" now has a readership of over 100. If interested, let him know.

BERNARD DUKORE: Earlier in the fall, he was a featured speaker at the International Shaw Society Conference held at Lincoln Center in New York City. The title of his talk: “A Father’s Heart, As It Were**: Paternal Shaw.”

WELDON DURHAM: Weldon has moved to Athens, Georgia, after five years in Covington, Georgia, and has found the bustling energy of a university town to be very invigorating. The third book in his Grace Sextet, Wings of Grace (2014), has earned an honorable mention in the competition for the 23rd Annual Writer’s Digest Self-Published Book Awards. Some 6000 books are entered in the competition each year. In June 2016 he will join a concert tour of Spain and Portugal by the combined choirs of the Athens First United Methodist Church and the Emmanuel United Methodist Church of Memphis, Tennessee.

TOM EVANS: Tom has been invited back to the Winter Program for Writers in Creede CO after working there last March to complete a first draft of his new play, Back Home, which dramatizes the struggle of two WWI soldiers—one a pilot, one a trench fighter—to adapt to civilian life when the war ends. The play he will work on this season, A New Cadence, will center on the efforts of an escaped slave to create a meaningful life in the free state of Indiana. In October at Hanover College, where he taught for 32 years, he staged an all theatre alumni production of You Can’t Take It With You with 17 grads returning to their home stage. His directing book, 111 Directions for Directors, continues to find readers. See Tom get a big laugh with alumnus Woody Harrelson at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hvnyw80suxl. (see photo on page 8)

John Ezell: John designed Disgraced at the Arizona Theatre Company Tucson/Phoenix; a new play Satchel Paige and the Kansas City Swing for Repertory Theatre St. Louis and the Cincinnati Playhouse; and revised designs for the Cincinnati Ballet’s new Nutcracker for national tour. He will also have revivals of his designs for A Christmas Carol at Great Lakes Theatre Festival and another Christmas Carol revival at the Kansas City Repertory Theatre.

RUTH HEINIG: Ruth and her husband recently moved to a retirement community that has just subscribed to Digital Theatre Plus, an online theatre education resource for schools and communities that brings selected filmed (mainly British) productions of drama, opera, symphony, and ballet performances into the garden homes, apartments, and auditorium through computer/television. Interviews and discussions with artistic personnel are also available. Soon they will be combining this with Western Michigan University’s Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) classes.

GIL LAZIER: Gil and his wife Kathryn toured Spain and Portugal in October. (see photo on page 8) In the spring, he directs Donald Margulies’s The Country House for the Fusion Theater Company.

MARK MEDOFF: Mark’s new play, Marilee and Baby Lamb: The Assassination of an American Goddess, is a reimagining of the relationship between Marilyn Monroe (Marilee) and Baby Lamb (Lena Pepitone). Lena began as Marilyn’s seamstress and over the last six years of the icon’s life became her confidant, her best friend, and her secret. Based on interviews Medoff’s partner, Dennis D’Amico, did with Lena over three years, the play asks whether we do, in fact, have the right to make our lives anew. Sure. Unless one offends or threatens the powerful in endeavoring to purge oneself. Medoff says, “The play is a ‘work in progress.’” The play had a three-week workshop production, October 13-18, in the playwright’s hometown, Las Cruces NM, where many of his plays have had their first productions. He writes that the play’s backers are looking to mount the play in a larger venue and city as a next step.

MARSHALL MASON: It has been a busy summer of honors for Marshall. In May he was inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame (inducted by Fellow John Lee Beatty); then in September, he received the New York Innovative Theater Award for Creative Achievement. (see photo on page 8) Also that month he was honored by an evening sponsored by the Articulate Theater Company that was a salute to the Circle Repertory Company called “Circling Back,” where testimonials were proffered by Jeff Daniels, Richard Frankel, Jeffrey Sweet, A.R. Gurney, William M. Hoffman, William Mastrosimone, and a sold-out crowd at the Snapple Center in mid-town New York.

SCOTT PARKER: After attending a family wedding in Vermont, Scott Parker and partner Pat Petalion made the rounds of theatre, dance, and music festivals in Massachusetts and New York, including Jacob’s Pillow, Tanglewood, Saratoga Performing Arts Center, Shakespeare and Company, Berkshire Theatre Festival, Williamstown Theatre Festival, and a tour of “The Egg” in Albany. Ten performances in as many days. He remarked, “Business was booming.”

ROBERT SCHENKKAN: Robert is writer and executive producer (along with Steven Spielberg and Bryan Cranston) of his adaptation of his Tony Award winning play, All the Way, for HBO, currently shooting in Los Angeles. Look to see airing in May. His newest Young Adult Play, Shadow Play, has been selected for the Kennedy Center’s, “New Visions, New Voices” series.
Julian Bond Honored in a Music-filled Celebration

On October 6 Fellow Bonnie Nelson Schwartz produced a memorial service honoring civil rights icon, Julian Bond. Civil rights activists, policymakers, scholars and friends numbering about 1,200 filled the historic Lincoln Theatre in Washington DC. From a stage that had hosted performances by Duke Ellington, Nat King Cole, and Ella Fitzgerald, stories were shared, songs were sung, and a life dedicated to the pursuit of justice.

Bond’s love of music also was evident throughout the service. It began with Grammy-winning jazz trumpeter Scotty Barnhart leading two choirs into the theater to perform “Oh, Freedom,” which was played at the 1963 March on Washington. As the chorus performed underneath a photo of a young Julian Bond, the audience rose to its feet and sang along.

Bond's life traced the arc of the civil rights movement, from his efforts as a militant young man to start a student protest group, through a long career in politics and his leadership of the NAACP almost four decades later. The memorial also made clear that Bond’s pursuit of justice did not wane. In recent years, he turned his attention to LGBT rights, becoming a vocal crusader for equality. On the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington, he used the occasion to declare that LGBT rights are human rights.

As the program ended, the Choral Arts Society of Washington and others performed “May the Circle be Unbroken” as the audience stood and applauded. As the last note faded, it was clear that the service was at its end, but not the march for justice to which Bond devoted his life.

by Fellow Bonnie Nelson Schwartz

In Memoriam

James Brandon

The passing of James R. Brandon comes as a major blow to the field of Asian theatre studies. I first met Jim at a conference in Louisville forty-seven years ago, and from that moment on we became close friends, even though, after leaving Michigan State University, he was about to begin his brilliant career at the University of Hawaii, and I was halfway around the world at Brooklyn College. We met not only at conferences but whenever I was able to visit Japan to do research, which I usually timed so we’d be there at the same time. We were both there on fellowships from 1974-1975, a glorious year given our similar interests in kabuki. In January 2000 I roomed with Jim in the spacious apartment he was given by Waseda University in connection with a Japan Foundation Fellowship. That month together gave us the opportunity to begin collaborating on our four-volume Kabuki Plays On Stage, and to get to know each other better than ever. I won’t say who had a habit of leaving the toilet seat up!

I was going to write an obituary for the Gazette but just today I received a wonderful one written by Profs. Elizabeth Wichmann and Julie Iezzi, Jim’s colleagues at the University of Hawaii. Elizabeth is a renowned scholar and practitioner of traditional Chinese theatre, and Julie is a noted specialist in kabuki (she succeeded to Jim's position when he retired). Their summary of Jim’s life and achievements is far better than any I could have composed, and so I submit it to the Gazette as a worthy encomium to the life and achievements of this remarkable man.

Elizabeth notes that Jim's widow, the well-known textile specialist and artist Reiko Mochinaga Brandon, was fully satisfied with their words. She also point out that “thanks to Jessica Jacob, there is now a memorial website dedicated to him. The URL for it is listed in the last paragraph of the obituary.” She hopes that those who wish to write something about Jim do so that Reiko can appreciate them there.

by Fellow Sam Leiter

(Brandon obituary continued on page 6)
Brandon Obituary (continued from page 5)

James Rodger Brandon, beloved husband, trailblazing scholar, inspiring director, mentor, teacher, translator, actor, and friend, passed away in Honolulu on Sept. 19, 2015, leaving a remarkable legacy in the world of Asian theatre studies, a discipline he pioneered and fertilized with numerous scholars and artists he so graciously and carefully nurtured over half a century. Born and raised in the small town of Mazomanie, Wisconsin, he joined the State Department Foreign Service after receiving his PhD from the University of Wisconsin in 1955, and spent six years in Java and Japan. He returned to the U.S. in 1961 and began teaching Asian theatre in the Department of Speech and Comparative Literature at Michigan State University, where he directed his first two Kabuki plays in English, Kanjincho and The Zen Substitute. He joined the University of Hawai‘i Department of Drama and Theatre as a full professor in 1968, and remained with U.H. until his retirement in 2000. During his 32 years with what became the Department of Theatre and Dance, he firmly established its unique Asian Theatre Program, co-founded the Asian Theatre Journal, served as department chair from 1985 to 1988, and brought international recognition to the department through his scholarship and large-scale English language Kabuki productions.

In his illustrious career, Brandon authored approximately 80 articles, book chapters, and reviews in addition to 20 books, displaying an amazing breadth as well as depth in geographic and artistic range. His books include standard texts in the field of Asian Theatre today, such as Theatre in Southeast Asia (1967), On Thrones of Gold: Three Javanese Shadow Plays (1970), and Kabuki: Five Classic Plays (1975). Groundbreaking research in Kabuki’s Forgotten War: 1931-1945 (2008) forced a reexamination of long-held “truths” about the fossilization of Kabuki in the 19th century; it was designated an Outstanding Academic Title for 2009 by the American Library Association’s Choice magazine for its excellence in scholarship and importance to the field. His creative endeavors include 22 productions at the University of Hawai‘i as translator, director, adaptor and/or playwright, and include national recognition from the American College Theatre Festival, commendations from the Hawai‘i State House of Representatives and Senate, and Po‘okela awards from the Hawai‘i State Theatre Council. His dedicated scholarship and artistic work brought him international recognition and accolades, including the Imperial Decoration of the Order of the Rising Sun with Gold Rays with Rosette from the Government of Japan, the John D. Rockefeller 3rd Award from the Asian Cultural Council for his exemplary contributions to the understanding and appreciation of Asian Theatre, a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Hawai‘i State Theatre Council in 1991, the UH Regents’ Medal for Outstanding Teaching, and a national award as Outstanding Teacher of the Year from the Association for Theatre in Higher Education.

Brandon attained iconic status in his own lifetime, yet remained humble in demeanor, genuinely interested in and encouraging of young scholars. Though he claimed to “never give advice,” his guidance as mentor, teacher, director, actor, role model, scholar and gentleman cultivated generations of Asian theatre scholars throughout the world, who will remember him with fondness and gratitude.

James R. Brandon is survived by his loving wife of 54 years Reiko Mochinaga Brandon, and his niece Janet Wright. A memorial celebration of his life and achievements will be held at the University of Hawai‘i’s Kennedy Theatre on Sunday, November 29 at 1pm. Those who wish to share stories and remembrances may do so on the following dedicated website: http://jamesrbrandon.muchloved.com.

The family requests that no flowers or monetary donations be sent to them or to any memorials. Instead, for those who wish to do so, please send donations made out to UH FOUNDATION, with “Asian Theatre in memory of James R. Brandon” in the memo line, and mail them to: University of Hawai‘i Foundation, 2444 Dole Street, Bachman Hall 105, Honolulu, HI 96822.

In Memoriam

Orlin Corey
(1926-2015)

Orlin Russel Corey, theatre artist and publisher, died October 11, 2015 following a stroke. He was 89. A gentle man of integrity and visionary talent, he will be greatly missed. A native of Oklahoma, he served in the Navy in World War II. He earned BA and MA degrees from Baylor University studying with Paul Baker and Charles Laughton. He had advanced study at Britain’s Central School of Speech and Drama and...
further study at the University of London and University of Kentucky. He taught eight years at Georgetown College, Kentucky, and eight at Centenary College in Shreveport, Louisiana.

He founded and directed Everyman Players, a touring classical troupe, creating celebrated productions of Job, Electra, Romans, Pilgrim’s Progress, Quixote, and such children’s classics as Reynard the Fox and Tortoise and Hare. He led them through repeated New York and London seasons, and 24 years performing on four continents. They appeared at numerous international festivals receiving the American Theatre Association Jennie Heiden Award for Professional Theatre for Youth, and honors from the National Catholic Theatre Association and Britain’s Religious Drama Society.


Honors include Distinguished Alumnae Award, Baylor University; Induction into National Theatre Conference, New York City; Induction into the College of Fellows of the American Theatre; Dean of College of Fellows; Campton Bell Lifetime Achievement Award, American Alliance for Theatre and Education; Founders Award, Educational Theatre Association; the Medallion Award, Children’s Theatre Foundation of America; AATE Orlin Corey Award of Artistic Excellence; and Honorary Lifetime Membership Award by Religious Drama Society (RADIUS) Great Britain.

Never a spectator, he was actively involved with national organizations serving on the board of the Children’s Theatre Foundation of America for 34 years, and as president for 25 years. The CTFA Medallion award was renamed the Orlin Corey Medallion in his honor in 2010. He was president of the US Center for ASSITEJ. Professional colleague and playwright emeritus, Susan Zeder, referred to him as “Dean of All that Matters.”

A nurturer of talents, he served on many boards including The NOCCA Institute (President 1996-98) and an Honorary Lifetime Member. He served as an evaluator for Gifted/Talented Theatre programs in school districts throughout Southern Louisiana for over 40 years.

His lifelong fascination with history was initiated during his year-long recovery from infantile paralysis, at the age of 11, when he devoured a history of World War I and listened to radio speeches of Winston Churchill and Adolph Hitler. He became a voracious reader. Such passion compelled him to research and present programs for The National WWII Museum. His Voices: 1914-1945, A Commemorative Concert has been presented at the WWII Museum on November 11 for the past 13 years. He was an active member of the Board of Directors of the Churchill Society of New Orleans and a frequent attender of international conferences.

Preceded in death by his parents, Nada Patton and Lue A. Corey, and siblings Leland Corey and Ina Mae Corey Brewer. Survivors include his beloved wife of 40 years, Shirley Trusty Corey; niece Georgia Brewer Kilmartin (Alan) of Sherman Oaks, CA; and a wide circle of extended family and friends.

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to The NOCCA Institute, 2800 Chartres St., New Orleans or the Children’s Theatre Foundation of America (www.childrenstheatrefoundation.org).

JAMES STILL: Jim recently saw his new play APRIL 4, 1968: before we forgot how to dream produced at the Indiana Repertory Theatre. Commissioned by the IRT, his new play takes an intimate look at one Indianapolis family’s collision with history. Bobby Kennedy’s powerful speech on the night of Martin Luther King Jr.’s assassination is a vital moment in Indiana’s memory. Inspired by true stories from those who were there, this world-premiere offers an intimate look at one family and their personal experiences as history unfolds around them.

JON WHITMORE: In mid-August, Jon traveled to Malaysia, Thailand, and South Korea on business before retiring at the end of the month.

BARRY WITHAM: Last October Barry gave a keynote address at the symposium “Spectacles of Labor: Performance and the Working Class” at the University of Pittsburgh. The meeting included panels and talks by performance scholars as well as a staged reading of Pins and Needles. (see photo on page 8)
Marshall Mason & spouse Daniel Irvine as Marshall received the NY Innovative Theatre Award

Kathryn & Gil Lazier at Cordoba Cathedral

Michelle Granshaw, Barry Witham & Lisa Jackson-Shebetta at the University of Pittsburgh

Jeff Church’s production of *The Miracle Worker*

Woody Harrelson & Tom Evans

Robert Benedetti’s production of *Hot L Baltimore*