



# The Fellows Gazette

Volume 58

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## Thoughts on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

For over a year as your Dean, I focused on developing a three-pronged approach to planning the celebration of our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2015. The three groups include the oversight committee for the souvenir publication that completes the fifty-year history of the Fellows; a planning committee for a gala celebration in April of 2015; and a fundraising committee to implement strategies for supplementing costs for our anniversary publication and events.

The souvenir volume, covering the years 2005-2015, is being compiled and edited by Felicia Londré, Robert Schanke, and Barry Witham. The committee for the festivities is helmed by Bonnie Nelson Schwartz and David Young. And, the fundraising committee functions under the direction of Jack Clay and Jeffrey Koep.

I am confident that over the next three years our committee leaders will invite all members to participate in the planning. After all, this extraordinary milestone celebrating fifty years of



Fellow Jack Clay with Dean Milly Barranger

good fellowship and recognition of notable theatre educators and practitioners extends to everyone in the College.

At the close of our April 2012 meeting, Felicia Londré will be your Dean for the next two years. In the intervening months, I will continue to work toward the future success of this high point in our history and look forward to celebrating in the nation's cultural center for the performing arts in Washington, DC, our fifty years as an "honorary universe" of American Theatre Fellows.

Milly S. Barranger, Dean

## Fellow Edward Stern to Deliver the Roger L. Stevens Address



Edward Stern, producing artistic director of the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, will deliver the twelfth annual Roger L. Stevens Memorial Address on Sunday morning, April 22, 2012. First delivered in the year 2000, the Stevens Address has since been given annually at the John F. Kennedy Center

for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, as a feature of the Fellows' weekend.

The address honors our nation's "unstoppable visionary," a term coined for the many endeavors of Roger Stevens on behalf of the performing arts that included commercial producing, support of nonprofit companies, oversight of the building of Washington's National Cultural Center, later the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and appointment by President Lyndon B. Johnson as Chairman of the National Council on the Arts and then first chairman of the newly created National Endowment for the Arts. Moreover, in 1989, Mr. Stevens welcomed the College of Fellows into an informal association with the Kennedy Center's Education Department as a site for the Fellows' annual meetings.

Edward Stern's experiences with nonprofit professional theatres follow in the creative footprints of Roger Stevens. Co-founder of the Indiana Repertory Theatre, where he served as artistic director for over a decade, he joined the Cincinnati Playhouse in 1992 as producing artistic director, and, twenty years later, he retires from the Playhouse having encouraged over 200,000 ticket holders each year to attend plays in their two theatres. As an experienced producer-director, who has collected two Tony Awards for the Playhouse, Ed Stern brings a regional and national perspective on theatre in America to the Stevens address in April.

## In the Spotlight: Tice L. Miller



(left to right) Keith Michael, Felicia Londré, Tice Miller

The year is 1972, and I am starting a Ph.D. program at the University of Nebraska. I had not wanted to do this, but the president of the college where I was teaching in Nebraska informed me for the first time that I would not get tenure unless I had the Ph.D. At least I could commute to Lincoln, Nebraska, I thought, and get the degree there. Not a very good reason to choose a degree program, I must admit. But then, I did not really want to do it in the first place. I just wanted to direct plays.

Not knowing anything about the professor and really very little about the subject, I enrolled reluctantly in Tice Miller's American Drama course. What an eye opener! He had us reading some of the old 19<sup>th</sup> century chestnuts—*The Contrast*, *The Octoroon*—and we wrote papers on American theatre artists. I recall like it was yesterday, when he handed back my first paper on Edwin Booth. Red ink everywhere! I panicked. "Cut this paragraph." "Say it more simply." "If you're going to include a long quotation, then make your own comment about it at the end." "Move this sentence." "Too wordy." "Make it more readable." Would I be able to pass this course? And then I turned to the back page. There it was, a grade of "A". I quickly learned that Tice was a stickler for writing, very precise, very specific in his comments. He loved teaching and truly wanted to help his students improve.

Our final project for the course was for each person in the class to research and write the history of a Nebraska opera house. Luckily, I was teaching in Fremont, Nebraska, where the Larson Opera House still stood. Under Tice's guidance, I dug through tons of newspaper microfilms, interviewed dozens of old-timers who had attended the opera house, talked with city officials, read some of the scripts that had been produced. What a thrill to uncover lost and forgotten information. A recovery project, to be sure. What fun! Certainly, this was unlike any history course I had ever taken.

I wound up enrolling in all of the graduate courses taught by this remarkable man. He invited me to attend an ASTR convention (at that time membership was by invitation only), and he encouraged me to become active in ATA and ACTF. Clearly, he became my mentor, my inspiration.

In 1979, he sensed the need for a more vibrant theatre organization in the Midwest. The Mid-America Theatre Conference (MATC) had begun a few years earlier when the American Theatre Association (ATA) divided up the country into several regions. But our MATC had never really functioned. Tice invited several theatre professors to a meeting in Omaha to discuss the problem. Among those in attendance, besides myself, was Fellow Rose Bank. Thus began a revitalized Mid-America Theatre Conference. Among those attending our first annual convention in 1980 were Fellows Jed Davis, Weldon Durham, Ron Engle, Felicia Londré, and Ron Willis. For our "banquet," we purchased chicken box lunches in advance and sold them to attendees. The planning committee feared that we might be sponsoring a convention and nobody would come, so the idea was to be very frugal. MATC now boasts nearly 300 members and each year sponsors three cram-packed days of pedagogy, directing, playwrighting, and theatre history panels.

Another of Tice's achievements was founding *Theatre History Studies* as a major function of MATC. Total subscriptions now are over 800 and represent more than thirty countries.

Somehow, in addition to his teaching and research, Tice managed to chair the theatre department at the University of Nebraska for 8 years while, at the same time, serving as Executive Director of the Nebraska Repertory Theatre. He has been active in NAST, ACTF, NTC, and the College of Fellows. He retired in 2008, but this past fall he returned to the classroom to teach a graduate level course in script analysis. Of the 12 plays he selected, most were contemporary—*Jerusalem*, *God of Carnage*, *Good People*, *The Vibrator Play*. "It was great fun!" he beamed. "Very invigorating." How I wish I could have been part of that class—forty years after my first exposure to Tice.

Robert A. Schanke



Barry Witham & Rose Bank at last spring's Luncheon

## DONN FINN

1937 - 2011



This eulogy celebrates Donn Finn, a fascinating, many faceted spirit. Donn accepted life's challenges with positive energy and tasteful style. As a teacher, theatre director and producer, he worked in an intelligent, visionary and creative

manner. He struck people as a man who knew what he was talking about. Friends called him generous and gracious, a debonair raconteur with a wicked sense of humor.

Donn focused on family, friends, and new talent in theatre and film. Furthermore, he had a sommelier's knowledge of wine, a passion for his Sicilian heritage, and a love of sailing. His intense devotion to family and friends illustrates his unique co-creative gift--evoking the best from everyone he met or worked with. He was an admirable provocateur.

He gave lifelong allegiance to his wife and son. In 1961 he married Mary Alice Struchen (Mali) and helped her create Mali Finn Casting. The company became a leading casting agency in Los Angeles. They collaborated in casting such projects as *Undertow*, *Eight Mile*, *Titanic*, and the *Matrix* films. Donn and Mali's only child, David, was born in July 1962, and they took great pride in his degree from Dartmouth and career as a world-renown stage and opera lighting designer.

Donn directed five of my stage plays in first productions, and we formed an enduring friendship. We helped build the Midwestern region of ACTF and for five years co-produced the White Sands International Film Festival. One memorable summer we lived on the west coast of Connemara writing a screenplay.

Donn attained the highest levels of accomplishment as theatre director and film audition specialist. He was an undergraduate at Macalester College and the University of Minnesota; at the latter he earned an M. F. A. He served as a professor of theatre at Oberlin, Hope College, and Cal State Fullerton. His professional stage direction credits include Roger Cornish's *A Class "C" trial in Yokohama* for Paramount Pictures/Apollo in Chicago. For the

National Theatre of Bosnia in Sarajevo he directed *House of Blue Leaves*, *Waiting for Godot*, and *Vlast (Power)*. He also taught and directed in Australia.

Donn forged a strong connection between educational theatre and the professional world of film and television. For more than forty years as a theatre administrator and dedicated promoter of new plays, his vision was to bring the best professional ideas and practices to university theatre, offering students better opportunities to enter their profession.

His love of travel emerged as he toured the country adjudicating American College Theatre festivals and responding to many collegial invitations to present an audition workshop. Also, he traveled widely--including England, Ireland, and Africa--to find talented actors and funnel them into casting sessions with major film directors. He also worked as dialogue coach on such major films as *Titanic* and *Terminator 2*.

During his career, Donn collaborated with many talented people. He and John Tammi co-founded the Hope Summer Repertory Theatre, a semi professional company in Michigan. He directed there for eight years and served as artistic director for two years. With other leaders of American College Theatre Festival, Donn assisted in creating the NAPAT organization. Kierstin Schupack, with whom Donn and I worked to produce the White Sands International Film Festival, wrote this about him: "Donn was very generous with his time and knowledge. He always stood ready to help or support an actor or film, never expecting anything in return." His honors included induction into the College of Fellows of the American Theatre.

In the opinion of Donn's many friends and beneficiaries, certain words capture his persona and way of life. Generous. Passionate. Visionary. Fearless. Loyal. The character trait people remember best was his sense of humor. He loved laughter, and he often held people spellbound with humorous stories about his life experiences and marvelous exaggerations of them.

When the spark of life flickers out of a cherished friend's eyes, an empty space remains. But the void fills rapidly with vivid memories of the departed friend. Poets claim that's how someone's spirit lives on. So, let's preserve Donn's spirit in our memories and together recall his devotion to people and his skill for telling hilarious tales over a glass of wine.

Sam Smiley

## News of the Fellows

ROBYN BAKER FLATT received Northwood University's 2011 Distinguished Women's Award in recognition for outstanding achievement and excellence. Community leaders, business entities, and over 250 other Distinguished Women alumnae from across the nation joined Robyn for a multi-day celebration, November 4-5, 2011 in Dallas, Texas. (see photo page 8)

KAREN BERMAN directed her new adaptation of *Hamlet* (see photo page 8) at Georgia College and directed a Theatre of the Oppressed social justice play on issues of teen pregnancy, bullying, and substance abuse with at-risk teens in Macon, Georgia at the historic Douglass Theatre (where Duke Ellington and James Brown performed).

KATHLEEN CONLIN has had a deeply satisfying year and a half starting with a production of *Pericles* at the Utah Shakespeare Festival with a newly developed score and an intriguing design employing both new and ancient technologies as part of the theatrical nature of storytelling and preservation. From the ancient Mediterranean, she then tackled Shaw's *Misalliance* at Illinois with



guest AEA actors and union designers. A return to Utah then followed with a production of *Richard III* for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Festival. Elijah Alexander (fresh from two successful seasons at Ashland) starred in the lead and was balanced by a strong quartet of women. This fall brought her back to Illinois for a hugely successful *Magic Flute*—the second opera she has directed. The singers were superb musically but had their work cut out for them since they both sang the score and acted the scenes in German.

ORLIN COREY presented on Veterans' Day *Voices: 1914 – 1945*, a commemorative concert at the National WWII Museum. He researched and voiced in the dialect or accent of 24 individuals (British, Scots, 12 areas of the USA). Last April he presented *Unknown Heroes at the Holocaust* at the museum, which continues to be presented at community centers and libraries.

SHIRLEY COREY continues to serve on the state board of the New Orleans Center at Creative Arts. It has expanded into a \$300,000 complex of buildings and has just begun an additional \$7,500,000 expansion.

JERRY L. CRAWFORD will serve as Adjunct Professor next fall at Northern Michigan University, teaching courses for both English and Theatre. He is

finishing his Memoir for his family and will be traveling in the spring—New York City, Goodyear, Arizona (Cleveland Indians spring training), Las Vegas, Washington, D.C., and Salt Lake City. The family planted a lilac tree in Marquette, Michigan, along with Patricia's ashes in a family service.

TOM EVANS, for the third consecutive season, was engaged by the Bloomington Playwrights Project as a guest director. In December he staged the 2011 winner of BPP's Reva Shiner Comedy Award script, *I am a Grock*, (see photo page 8) by west coast writer, Amanda Rogers. In mid-December he served as an adjudicator for the state of Ohio in their biennial playwrighting awards competition. February will see him directing his Equity wife, Barbara Farrar, in *The Cocktail Hour* for South Carolina Repertory on Hilton Head. March will take him back to Hanover College, where he taught theatre for 32 years, to direct and design a student production of Caryl Churchill's, *Vinegar Tom*.

GERALD FREEDMAN was honored when the Sonnet Repertory Theatre presented its *Tenth Annual Benefit and Cabaret* in November and celebrated his career as a director and teacher. Among those attending were Patti LuPone, Brian d'Arcy James, Kevin Kline, and Jeremy Jordan.

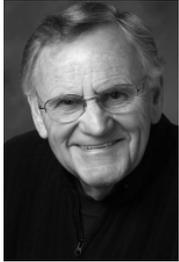
JULIE JENSEN had her play, *Last Lists of My Mad Mother*, produced at the Pygmalion Theatre in Salt Lake City in October and November. Earlier in the year, Jensen served as Dramaturg for the Native Voice New Works Festival in San Diego. She also moderated a panel on adaptation with Marsha Norman, Doug Wright and Carol Hall at the national conference of the Dramatists Guild of America in Fairfax, Virginia. And she participated in a panel on new play development at the annual conference of the Theatre Communications Group in Los Angeles. She has been named the Regional Representative for the Dramatists Guild of America.



GIL LAZIER completed a production of *The Rocky Horror Show* in November for the University of New Mexico, and is getting ready to direct *The Seafarer* in March for the Mother Road Theatre Company in Albuquerque. This coming summer he directs the world premiere of *Paloma* by Anne Garcia-Romero at the National Hispanic Cultural Center of New Mexico. He and Kathryn visited Switzerland, Germany, Amsterdam and London in November and then took off to New Orleans to celebrate Kathryn's birthday in December.

News continued on page 5

SAMUEL L. LEITER returned to Japan in October to complete his Mellon Emeritus Fellowship project. His manuscript, now titled *Kabuki at the Crossroads: Years of Crisis, 1952-1965*, is presently under review. For the fall 2011 issue of *Asian Theatre Journal*, devoted to the founders of postwar Asian theatre studies in the West, he contributed biographical essays on Faubion Bowers and John D. Mitchell. His own biography was penned by David Jortner. Sam also reviewed two DVDs on Japanese theatre for this issue, as well as *No Theatre Transversal*, edited by Stanca Scholz-Cionca and Christopher Balme.



AL MULLER is in the 19<sup>th</sup> year of his retirement from the San Joaquin Delta College Theatre Department. Al has enjoyed one of his busiest seasons. During the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of Stockton Civic Theatre, he was honored for 50 years of “artistic achievement and leadership contributions.” At SCT he co-directed, with director daughter, Dominee, *The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* with another daughter, Alison, designing the costumes. Al was also chosen to direct in Santa Cruz Actors’ Theatre 10 minute play festival, *Eight 10’s at 8* and, in October, directed and designed a production of *The Letters*, by New York playwright, John Lowell, for a small professional company dedicated to the presentation of new or recently produced works. The year 2012 holds great anticipation and excitement for the extended Muller Family—Al’s 80<sup>th</sup> birthday and he and Camilla’s 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary!

DONN MURPHY and his partner of 38 years, Jon Carrow, USA ret., (see photo page 8) married recently in Vermont. They both retired as of 2011 and have acquired a condo in Fort Lauderdale for use during the winter months. The Symphony Condo building is directly adjacent to the Broward County Performing Arts Center, so Broadway tours and other theatre and music are available without even crossing a street. Heading to Fort Lauderdale? Let them know.

BARBARA REID is expecting a granddaughter in early February—a first! Her daughter and her husband live in London, so she’ll be going over before the baby comes and staying to help out afterward. Otherwise, she and her husband spent the summer at their place near Blowing Rock, N. C. This fall she took a poetry class, which she enjoyed!

JAMES STILL had his Pulitzer-nominated play, *The Heavens Are Hung in Black*, published by Dramatic Publishing Company. Focusing on Abraham Lincoln’s second year in the White House, it has

been labeled “The all-time best selling play in the history of Ford’s Theatre in Washington, DC.” Recent productions of his plays include *And Then They Came For Me* at the International School in Macau China, *Amber Waves* at Northwestern University, and *Searching for Eden* at 24/6 in New York.



PAULA VOGEL enjoyed a revival of her play, *How I Learned to Drive*, at Second Stage Theatre in late January, directed by Kate Whoriskey.

DAVID YOUNG directed that old chestnut, *An Inspector Calls*, back in October and really had a great time trying to think up some new concepts and ideas for the production. (see photo page 8)

## The Fellows Gazette

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## Theatre in Washington

Besides a Eugene O'Neill Festival in the city, several theatres are presenting exciting productions during our April weekend.



*Come Fly Away*, April 18 – 29  
at Kennedy Center



March 27 – April 29  
at Shakespeare Theatre Co.



*Long Day's Journey Into Night*  
April 18 – 22 at Arena Stage



at Woolly Mammoth Theatre



*1776*, April 19 – 21 at Ford's Theatre



*The Whipping Man*  
April 18 - May 20 at Theatre J



*Just a Dream: The Green Play*  
April 17 – 22  
at Ripley Center



*The Taming of the Shrew*  
April 20 – 22  
by the Synetic Theatre Co.

## Introducing Two New Fellows

### Beverley Byers-Pevitts



Dr. Byers-Pevitts was the founding president of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education. Prior to founding ATHE, she had been a major force in the American Theatre Association. She is an editor and author, a published and produced playwright, and a distinguished theatre educator. In addition, she founded the journal *Theatre Studies* and was its first editor.

### Robert Benedetti



Dr. Robert Benedetti has written six widely acclaimed textbooks, including his well-known *The Actor at Work*, now in its 10<sup>th</sup> edition. In 2005, the Association for Theatre in Higher Education awarded him Career Achievement Award in Educational Theatre. He has also received Chicago's Joseph Jefferson Award, the Los Angeles Dramalogue Award for Directing, a Golden Globe award, and three Emmys.

## Fellows Gallery



Robyn Baker Flatt is pictured here with the DW medallion and her daughter, Kristi Cardwell.



*I Am a Grock*, directed by Tom Evans



*Hamlet*, directed by Karen Berman



Donn Murphy & his partner, Jon Carrow



*An Inspector Calls*  
directed by David Young

## The Fellows Weekend

Saturday Evening, April 21, 2012

Location: The Cosmos Club  
2121 Massachusetts Ave. NW  
Tel. (202) 939-1557

The Club has a Dress Code: You must be “properly attired—coats & ties for men, and dresses, suits, or clothing of comparable formality for women.”  
There are two parking lots: the Rear Valet lot and the West Garden lot.  
Parking is \$12 per vehicle to be paid to the College of Fellows.

6:00 pm-7:00 pm  
Gala Reception Honoring New Fellows  
Beverley Byers-Pevitts and Robert Benedetti  
Open Bar and Hors d’oeuvres

To reserve for the Gala Reception send a check of \$60 for each person & made payable to College of Fellows of the American Theatre.  
Send to: Ruth Beall Heinig, Treasurer  
College of Fellows of the American Theatre  
1805 Chevy Chase, Kalamazoo, MI 49008-2221  
Checks must be received no later than Friday, April 8.  
No refunds can be made after April 8.

7:00 pm-8:00 pm  
Introduction of New Fellows  
Signing of Enrollment Register  
The Fellows Toast

8:00 pm  
Dinner on your own

Sunday, April 22, 2012

Location: The Kennedy Center  
South Opera Tier Lounge & South Opera Tier Box

9:00 am- 10:00 am  
Business Meeting, Dean Milly Barranger presiding

10:00 am-11:00 am  
Twelfth Annual Roger L. Stevens Address  
Presented by Fellow Edward Stern

11:00 am-1:00 pm  
Luncheon and Investiture of New Fellows

Invitations are sent by the Kennedy Center & payment should be returned to them.

1:15 pm - 3:00 pm  
Discussion with Planning Committees for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Conversations with New Fellows Beverley Byers-Pevitts and Robert Benedetti  
3:00 pm Adjournment

Host Hotel-The River Inn 924 25th Street, NW, (phone) 888-874-0100  
Special Rate: \$190 per room. Mention you are with the College of Fellows. Deadline to Reserve: March 31, 2012. There is a limited number of rooms reserved at this rate, so register as early as possible.