

## The Legacy Project

by Rich Rand, Department Chair

Some years back, one of my former students – now, a high school theatre teacher – showed up at my office with a young lady: her daughter. I hadn't seen this student in almost twenty years, but her daughter was interested in taking an acting class and so they came to see me. I sat down and talked about the program, the art form of acting, and the business of theatre; and I saw in the daughter the same passion that lived in the woman sitting next to her. The spark in her daughter's eyes was inspired by the woman who found her calling with Purdue Theatre. I had inspired her mother to teach theatre and now it would be my job to help her daughter discover her calling. It was a watershed moment for me. I was a link in a larger chain.

When I first arrived at Purdue University in 1987, I wasn't much concerned with the history of the place. Frankly, I was busy creating my own history, and after living and acting around the country and achieving a few of my dreams, I was ready to embrace a role that I always knew I was destined to play – the role of teacher. I was lured to Purdue from the University of Kentucky by Jim O'Connor, Jim Wise and Mary Lowry; attracted to Purdue Theatre because of a connection I felt

with my colleagues and their approach to theatre training. Over the years, those and other colleagues moved on to other places, and a thousand former students graduated, established careers and found their place in the larger scheme of things.

Unintentionally, I've had an opportunity to weave a few strands of history into the fabric of this place. I've taught class in Peirce Hall and the old trap room, rehearsed on a dirt floor in the sub-basement of Stewart Center, and acted, directed or choreographed in every imaginable (and a few unimaginable) space on and off campus. Over time, I've had an opportunity to meet and establish relationships with people who were here before me, individuals who shaped and defined the community that is Purdue Theatre. Some are friends; some are

colleagues; all are artists who inspire me to strive for excellence in my work as an artist, teacher and administrator.

Since beginning work on the Legacy Project, I've had the great and unanticipated pleasure of getting to know

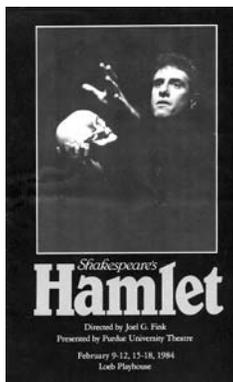
and establishing relationships with individuals who were once just names on a page – Gene Kildahl, JT Tengdin, Dorothea Smith, Joe Stockdale, and Mark Andrews. I've grown closer to a great many colleagues, alumni and faculty who are now (unbeknownst to themselves) living historians. I've learned about our history from all of them, in particular T2, Gene, Dorothy and Joe. And I've learned about it from colleagues Dale Miller, Van Phillips and Jim O'Connor, too. I've been regaled with wonderful stories of Playshop era productions; of the playwrights William Saroyan and Tennessee Williams; the actors James Earl Jones, Helen Hayes, Frances Farmer, and Anne Revere; the designers Jo Mielziner and Michael Philippi, and many others. I've heard

these stories from the people who helped craft them, people who impacted Purdue Theatre and the professional theatre going back 65 years.

The Legacy Project was conceived as a way of recognizing and honoring professionals and professors who have had a profound impact upon Purdue Theatre and the professional theatre. It was also a way for our current and future students – and the faculty and staff of Purdue Theatre – to know of our history, know about the careers of these individuals and the ways in which their contributions have shaped the lives and careers of so many others. I am honored to present to you our first group of Legacy recipients: Mark Andrews, Stephen McKinley Henderson, Stuart Howard, Gene Kildahl, Wayne Lamb, Sam Marks, Dorothy Mennen, Dale Miller, Tom Moore, Jim O'Connor, Van Phillips, David Potts, Peter Schneider, Ross Smith, Joe Stockdale, and Rick Thomas. We will recognize them during the weekend of October 1-3, 2010. We invite you to join us for this once-in-a-lifetime event!

I am grateful for the opportunity to be our historian. It's not a role I anticipated ever playing, but it was a role that was written for me, and I am honored to play a part in this historic event.

For Legacy Weekend information contact the Department of Theatre (765) 494-3074 or [theatre@purdue.edu](mailto:theatre@purdue.edu).



# Purdue Theatre Legacy Honorees

October 1-3, 2010



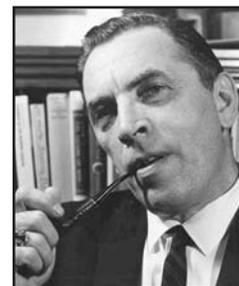
**Mark Andrews**



**Stephen McKinley  
Henderson**



**Stuart Howard**



**Gene Kildahl**



**Wayne Lamb**



**Sam Marks**



**Dorothy Mennen**



**Dale Miller**



**Tom Moore**



**Jim O'Connor**



**Van Phillips**



**David Potts**



**Peter Schneider**



**Ross Smith**



**Joe Stockdale**



**Rick Thomas**