

'An education for a lifetime'

In 1974, I piled into a car with four other theater majors from Garden City Community College for a campus visit to Marymount College. I had no intention of attending Marymount; I was just going along for the ride, hoping to have a good party weekend.

While I don't remember if we partied, I do remember the weekend because it set me on the course of my life and career.

That weekend I watched theater students Jack Willis, David Stump and Kim Hassler perform in the musical "Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris" and I was bowled over.

I met Sister Lucille Herman, who was the Associate Dean of Students, and learned that she was my dad's first cousin.

Two weeks later I received a letter from Dr. Dennis Denning offering me a theater scholarship. The rest, as they say, is history.

That fall I arrived on campus and became immediately immersed in the theater department and life at Marymount.

In the classroom I was exposed to Aristotle's Poetics, Plato's "The Republic," Shakespeare's Elizabethan England and Nietzsche's "The Birth of Tragedy."

I was introduced to ideas and beliefs that have guided human beings and shaped civilizations for thousands of years. What does it mean to be human? What is truth and beauty, and what are their value to life? How do we determine right and wrong?

These were some of the key questions examined not only by the faculty, but by the plays we were performing on stage.

Suddenly the theater was not just about acting, directing and designing, but was also a conduit to understanding life.

The teaching and mentoring of Dennis Denning, Francis Roesner, Eric Stein and Anna Lakin laid the foundation for my own teaching career in the arts. I realized at Marymount that I wanted to be a university professor and follow in their path.

But I also quickly learned that an education at Marymount was not just about charting a career. More importantly, it was about developing the skills to become a lifelong learner capable of understanding how the arts, humanities and the sciences inform, enrich and

affect one another.

These lessons came from the Sisters of St. Joseph.

When I graduated in 1976, little did I know that just three years later I would return as a faculty member in the theater department.

That began a university teaching career that has lasted 37 years.

In the five years I taught at Marymount, I considered myself more a student than an instructor as I was constantly learning from teachers like Dr. Denning, Harley Elliott, Bob Hower, Sister Francis Ellen Rioridan, David Rayl and Steve Murray.

Dr. Denning gave me numerous opportunities to direct and this led me to pursue a Ph.D. in Directing and Acting at Texas Tech University. While that move guided me physically away from Marymount, the knowledge, skills, friendships and teaching have stayed with me throughout my life.

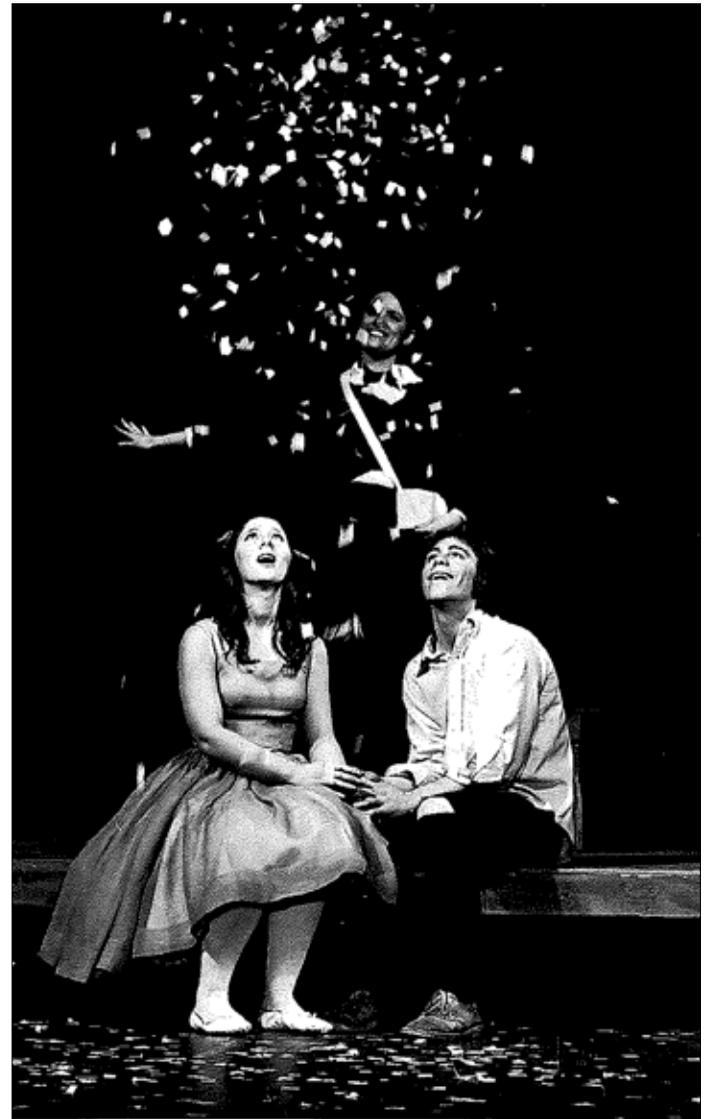
The students I taught at Marymount have remained friends and I have been fortunate to share in their personal and theatrical lives.

As I was working on writing this article, I came across an old scrapbook I had kept called "MMC My Memories of College." Among

Alumni UPDATE

RICHARD "BUZZ" HERMAN

CLASS OF '76



The 1975 Marymount College production of "The Fantasticks" featured Kim Hassler Grimaldi, left, and Richard "Buzz" Herman, with Nancy Vogelsberg-Busch, standing.

pictures, letters from home, theater programs, and "break-a-leg" cards, was a Marymount recruitment brochure from 1974.

In the mission statement for the college it stated that "A Marymount education is an education for living, an education that lasts a lifetime."

For that past 30 years, I have taught and chaired the Department of Theatre and Dance at the University of Central Missouri in Warrensburg. However, during that "lifetime" of teaching, I still consider myself a student.

Marymount instilled in me a love for learning and for that I am ever grateful. As the Broadway musical "Wicked" says in the song "For Good,"

"Because I knew you, I have been changed for good."