

# Sharon Markee

## Artist of Distinction



Mike and Sharon Markee

Sharon Markee's time with LCT started in 1970 when she volunteered to usher for *Gypsy* and was told to pick out a costume to wear to help set the mood. She knew she got it right when on opening night, a patron asked her, "Are you *Gypsy*?"

Today, Sharon is the quintessential volunteer, twice recognized as Volunteer of the Year in 2007 and 2012. She has acted, ushered, done props, makeup, and costumes, painted and built sets, chaired the History Committee and created a presentation to celebrate LCT's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, served on numerous other committees, and is a season ticket holder and patron donor.

*"It seems 'no' is not in my vocabulary when it comes to LCT," she says.*

Her favorite volunteer role is painting sets with Dillon McArdle (10 years) and Tim Harris (5 years). Sharon has many fond memories at LCT, but the one she is remembered most for is "paint it blue!" During the day of Senior Preview for *Leading Ladies* (2012), it was announced that the entire two-story yellow set had to be painted blue! Although shocked and frazzled, she simply said, "Let's get started."



The set from *Leading Ladies*, 2012.



A sign Sharon painted for *The Wizard of Oz*, 2011.



A flat piece of plywood Sharon painted to appear as concrete blocks.



Sharon 'asleep on the job' painting the set for *Jesus Christ Superstar*, 2015.



Sharon painting a sign for *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, 2014.



Sharon, Toni Tengblad, Julie Gardner, and John Richards in *Women of Lockerbie*, 2007.



Sharon and Camryn Manheim on the set of *Fort McCoy*, released in 2011.

Sharon has acted in numerous LCT productions including *On Golden Pond*, *The Curious Savage*, and *Calendar Girls*. In her opinion, "The most rewarding play, but certainly the most difficult and emotional to perform, was *Women of Lockerbie*. Through seven wonderful months, I was awed by the talent of my fellow actors and honored to share various stages with them. Winning State and Regional competitions and going to Nationals was awesome and an experience I will cherish forever!" Another unforgettable honor was being chosen as an extra for the movie *Fort McCoy*, which she auditioned for at LCT.

When asked what is the greatest gift or opportunity LCT has given you, Sharon's answer is thoughtful and heartfelt, "A second family and home, really, with an ever-changing family. I've learned so much from everyone who I've had the pleasure of meeting on and off stage and how to really listen, get along with a diverse group of people, and step into worlds I may not otherwise see. But, the time I've devoted to the theatre has only been possible with the love and support of my husband, Mike, and daughter, Andrea. They've unselfishly given up time together to allow me to spend time doing something I love. It's a family thing inside and outside the theatre; they help me with my lines and, along with other devoted family members and friends, attend performances. Love and many thanks to all of you!"

For certain, Sharon Markee loves the theatre and she hopes that more people will give LCT a try:

*"I encourage others, young and old, to become involved in any area they desire—their talents, whatever they may be, are needed and always appreciated. Whether you have an hour or an entire day, LCT needs you. Volunteers are the lifeblood of the theatre."*



Sharon and Janet Papenfuss in *Calendar Girls*, 2018.





# Tim McNamara

## Managing Director of Distinction

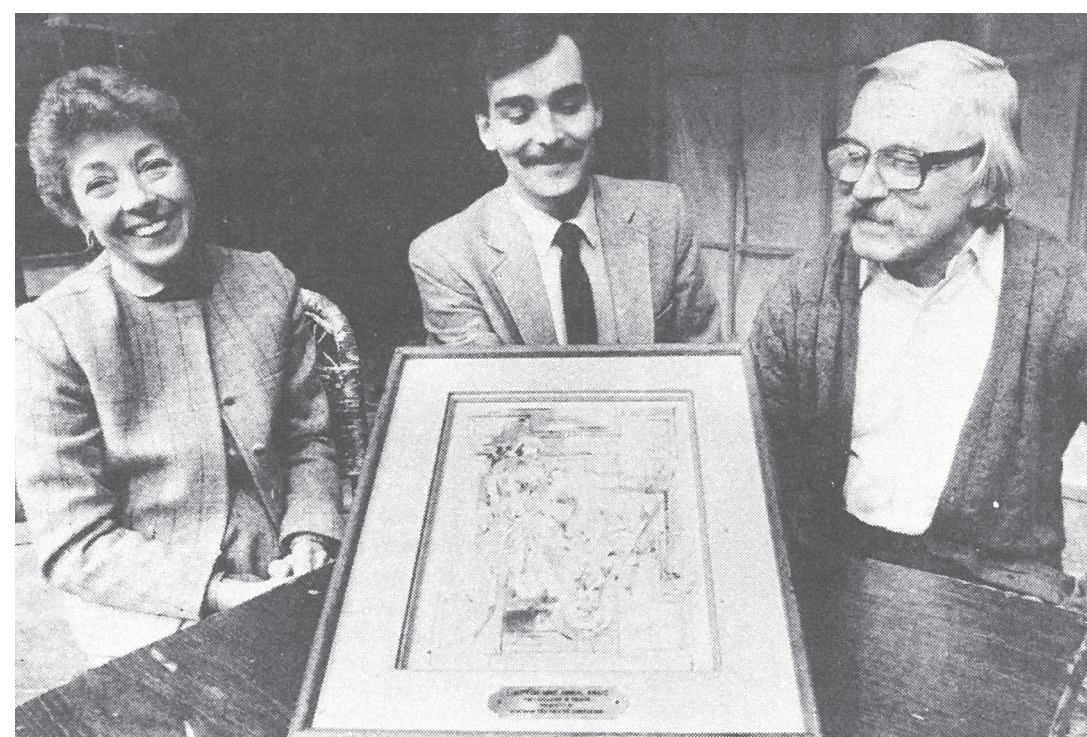


Tim McNamara

Tim began his professional relationship with LCT when he was hired as Managing Director in the fall of 1982.

*“This was the beginning of a five year, very important part of my artistic life. I was originally drawn to the organization by its place in the artistic environment of the La Crosse community. The first show that I directed was Carousel—the 101<sup>st</sup> play produced by LCT. I was responsible for the next 30 productions.”*

One of his favorites was the 1982 production of *The Gin Game* with Julia Steinke Saterbak and Bill Nelson. It was a powerful and moving production that received first place honors at Wisconsin’s Festival of America’s Community Theaters in 1983. Tim was the first LCT director to enter a production in a competition, thus bringing LCT new fame and acknowledgement from beyond La Crosse.



Julia Steinke Saterbak, Tim, and Bill Nelson.

*“Watching these two excellent actors grow into their characters was one of the thrills of my life,” he says. “Watching Julia stand up and throw her cards on the table and yell, “GIN GOD DAMNIT, GIN!” will never be forgotten. It still on occasion haunts my dreams!”*

Tim recalls other beloved productions:

*“In the 20<sup>th</sup> season, mounting the first ever LCT full length Gilbert and Sullivan comic opera HMS Pinafore was an absolute blast from beginning to end! Wilma Scheffner, Dan Johnson-Wilmot, Colleen Kavanaugh and the entire cast—you are amazing! Of course the 1986 production of *The Music Man*, complete with a full marching band at Viterbo College, was one of my favorite undertakings.”*



Dan LeFebvre, Jan Sahagian, and Austin Russell in *The Music Man*, 1986.

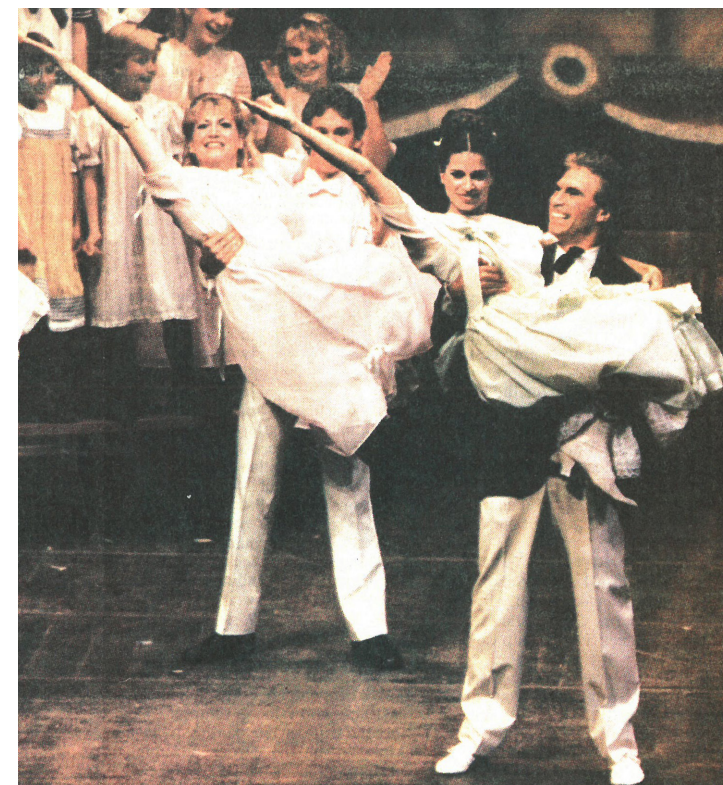


Photo from *The Music Man*, 1986.

Tim worked with many additional local music and band directors, including marching bands from all of the area high schools, in the show. A different band performed each night.

Actors and crew members who have worked with Tim describe him as an exceptional director—creative, innovative, and inspiring. But he did more than just direct. Tim created the LCT Studio Series, giving amateur directors and playwrights an opportunity to produce new works and smaller scale plays. These shows were produced in addition to the regular season. This resulted in many amazing shows, including *Greater Tuna*, a comedy that featured two actors playing 44 characters. Tim was able to demonstrate his superb acting skills in this production.



Steven L. Larson and Tim in *Greater Tuna*, 1986.

Tim’s final LCT production was in the spring of 1987. He then moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico to direct at the Albuquerque Civic Light Opera and the Albuquerque Little Theatre Company. In 1997, he began a 20-year tenure at the Sandia Preparatory School, where he was tasked with directing, producing, teaching theatre, and serving as chairman of the performing arts department. One of the highlights from Sandia Prep was taking a full production of *The Music Man* to perform at the Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland. Since retiring, Tim and his partner have settled into running their own artisan chocolate company, Elixir Chocolates. They travel throughout the southwest selling confections.

Tim regards his time with LCT as one of the highlights of his life. When asked what the greatest gift or opportunity LCT gave him was, Tim offers words of gratitude and encouragement:

*“LCT gave me the opportunity to develop my skills and the chance to build many lifelong friendships. My fondest memories from LCT are the many friends that I made and still cherish. LCT was truly a wonderful part of my life and my growth artistically. I encourage current members and volunteers to keep on doing what we have done at LCT for years—inspire the youth of our country to get involved in the arts. Thanks La Crosse!”*



Dan LeFebvre and Jan Sahagian in *The Music Man*, 1986.





# Kathleen Pantzer

## Artist of Distinction



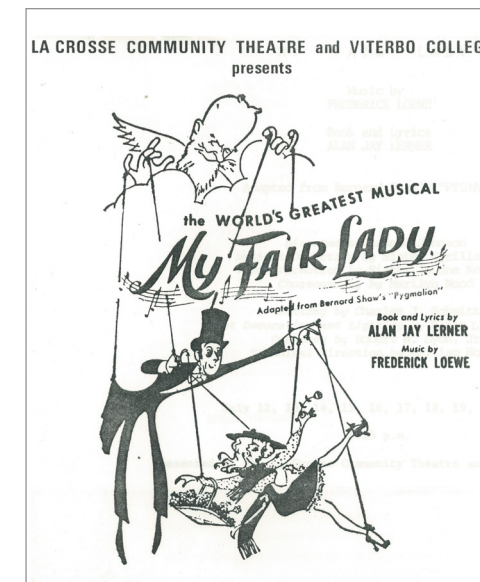
Kathleen Pantzer

When Kathleen Pantzer moved with her family to the La Crosse area in the 1970's, she had only enjoyed theatre as an audience member. Shortly after arriving, Kathleen spied an audition notice in the newspaper for a show at La Crosse Community Theatre. This looked to be a great way to get involved in the community and make some new friends. So, inexperienced as she was but eager to try new things, Kathleen auditioned, got a small role, and took the first step in her long La Crosse Community Theatre journey. It would include a variety of theatrical duties and span the course of three decades.

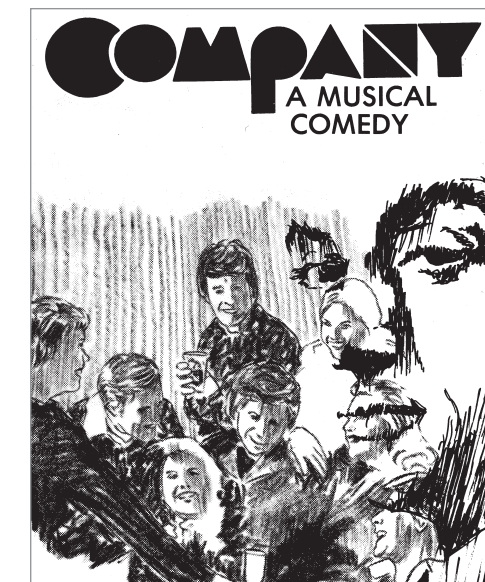
Kathleen performed in many plays and musicals. Among her favorite roles are Harriet in *The Man Who Came To Dinner*, Ethel Savage in *The Curious Savage*, and Miss Tipdale in *Not Now, Darling*, for which she won a Dionysus Award. She tapped into her "creative, technical side" by designing and hanging lights, painting sets, and helping with costumes. Never afraid of heights, Kathleen was regularly seen perched high atop step ladders while she adjusted lights or ran spotlight, which earned her a Special Recognition Award for technical work. Kathleen also served as an Assistant Director and Stage Manager for a number of productions including: *Once Upon a Mattress*, *Don't Dress For Dinner*, and *Annie*.

Kathleen has many fond memories of her years with LCT, but one of her favorites is watching her youngest son, Tommy, play the role of Tiny Tim in LCT's production of *A Christmas Carol*. When asked what is the greatest gift or opportunity LCT has given you, she smiles and says:

*"All of it. I loved meeting so many great people while working on these wonderful La Crosse Community Theatre shows!"*



Program from *My Fair Lady*, 1974.



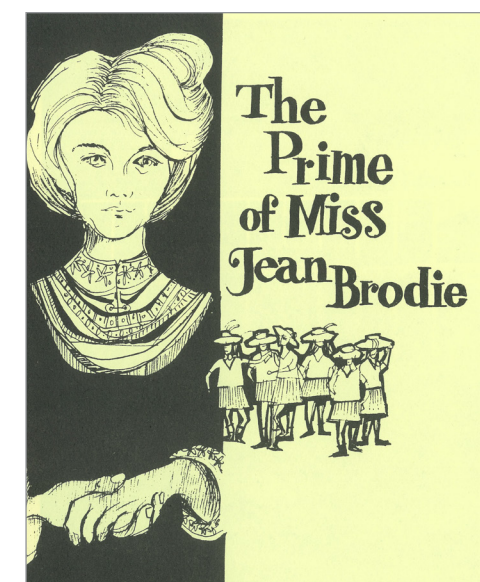
Program from *Company*, 1977.



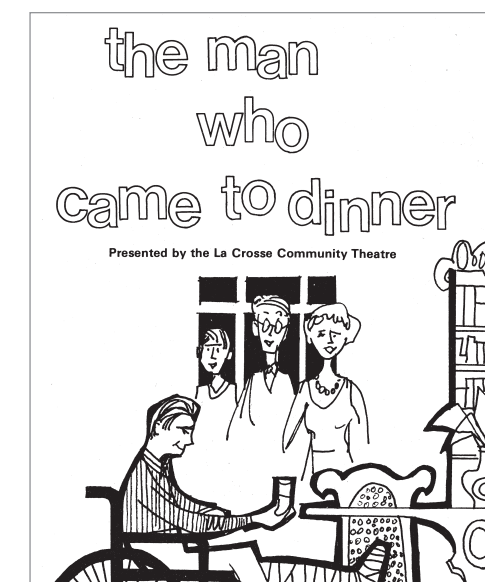
Program from *Damn Yankees*, 1980.



Program from *Guys and Dolls*, 1981.



Program from *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, 1982.



Program from *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, 1982.

### Actress

*My Fair Lady* (1974)  
*Company* (1977)  
*Inherit the Wind* (1980)  
*Damn Yankees* (1980)  
*Guys and Dolls* (1981)  
*The Man Who Came to Dinner* (1982)  
*Not Now, Darling* (1984)  
*You Can't Take It With You* (1988)  
*The Curious Savage* (1990)  
*The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-Moon Marigolds* (1990)  
*Lend Me A Tenor* (1993)

### Production Team

*South Pacific* (1974)  
*Last of the Red Hot Lovers* (1974)  
*The Devils* (1975)  
*Forty Carats* (1975)  
*Kismet* (1975)  
*The Remarkable Mr. Pennypacker* (1975)  
*Status Quo Vadis* (1976)  
*The Pajama Game* (1976)  
*How the Other Half Loves* (1980)  
*Tribute* (1980)  
*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1982)  
*Carousel* (1982)  
*The Gin Game* (1983)

*The Good Doctor* (1983)  
*A Thousand Clowns* (1983)  
*Not Now, Darling* (1984)  
*Annie* (1984)  
*Catch Me If You Can* (1985)  
*The Mikado* (1985)  
*Mass Appeal* (1986)  
*The Robber Bridegroom* (1986)  
*The Only Tradition* (1986)  
*True West* (1989)  
*Baby* (1990)  
*Steel Magnolias* (1990)  
*Once Upon A Mattress* (1991)  
*Annie* (1997)

*In addition to her many acting and production team credits, Kathleen volunteered building sets, costumes, and backstage for 38 shows beginning in 1974 through her final show at LCT in 1997.*



Kathleen warming up for a show.



Kathleen (center) in *The Curious Savage*, 1990.



Kathleen and Lee Hafemann in *The Curious Savage*, 1990.





# Scott and Mary Rathgaber

## Artists of Distinction



Mary and Scott Rathgaber

For Scott and Mary Rathgaber, theatre means “Family”. Scott, Mary, and their two children have been involved in practically every type of volunteer activity LCT has to offer for the past 13 years. Their son, Adam, was the first to join LCT in the early 2000’s, performing in a few ensemble roles through the Children’s Theatre Outreach program.

Scott’s involvement began in 2005 when he accompanied Adam to the auditions for *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. He was asked if he would like to audition, as it would allow him to be involved in an activity with his son. Not having been an actor previously, he thought:

*“Sure, maybe I could be cast as the grandpa that just lies in bed. Not many lines.”*

He was cast in the lead role of Willy Wonka, and his son was cast in the lead role of Charlie. Scott remembers being at a medical conference and having to go back to his hotel room to memorize lines each day.

Since then, Scott has appeared on stage in many LCT shows, including: *BIG: The Musical*, *Babes in Toyland*, *The Producers*, *Yes, Virginia There is a Santa Claus*, and *The Wizard of Oz*. Two of his most memorable roles are the Tin Man in *The Wizard of Oz* and Director Roger De Bris in *The Producers*.



Andrew Manson and Scott in *Big: The Musical*, 2007.



Scott in *Babes in Toyland*, 2006.



Mike Adank and Scott in *The Producers*, 2009.



Natalie Wikstrom and Scott in *Yes, Virginia, There is a Santa Claus*, 2008.



Amanda Wright, Scott, and Jeremiah Galvan in *The Wizard of Oz*, 2011.



Scott in *The Producers*, 2009.



Jana Schreier and Adam Rathgaber in *Big: The Musical*, 2007.



Scott in *The Producers*, 2009.

Though not an actress, Mary gave generously of her time in numerous ways when other family members took the stage. She worked on tech and stage crews, sold concessions, and ushered at nearly every performance. One of Mary’s funniest and most enjoyable memories was seeing Scott sashay around the stage in an embarrassing sparkly silver dress that resembled the Statue of Liberty in *The Producers*.

Scott has fond memories as well. He used to watch Jana Schreier sing to his son, Adam, during an emotional part of *BIG: The Musical* from behind the curtain backstage. Scott remembers having to wipe tears away during every performance before going on for his scene.

Scott and Mary agree that the greatest gift LCT has given them is the opportunity to do something as a family. Unlike sports or music activities, there wasn’t just one star with the rest of the family watching from the sidelines. When the Rathgabers volunteered at LCT, each member of the family played an active role.

Scott and Mary believe that a theatre cast and crew becomes a family and are the best support system for helping you offstage as well. Theatre is a place to learn valuable life skills, like public speaking, listening to audience feedback, and making a commitment to a group of people.

The Rathgabers have always felt welcome and valued at LCT, even as people with no prior experience. They encourage other families to get involved.

*“The bond formed during rehearsals or volunteering feels real and deep.”*



Adam Rathgaber (center) in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, 2005.





# Dick Sartz

## Artist of Distinction



Dick Sartz

Dick Sartz always loved the theatre and while watching plays he would often ask himself:

*“I wonder if I could do that?”*

In 1973, at the ripe young age of 54, he got his chance. Dick and his wife, Mary Jean, read an ad in the La Crosse Tribune announcing tryouts for a play called *The Cherry Orchard* at La Crosse Community Theatre.

Mary Jean quickly encouraged Dick:

*“I think you should go. Just try it.”*

Even though he had never acted or even read the play, Dick auditioned and was cast as the eccentric 87-year-old manservant, Firs, a role he remembers fondly because of the “unique” stage makeup he wore.

*“The makeup artist first applied karo syrup to my face, followed by torn pieces of facial tissue, that was then dotted with water to make “wrinkles,” before applying regular stage makeup,” he recalls with a laugh.*

Dick has volunteered in many capacities at LCT: working backstage, stage managing, serving on play reading committees, ushering for every show he was not cast in, and repairing theatre seats. He and Mary Jean even did duty one day as the “Sartz Cleaning Service” to tidy up the green room at the old Theatre on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. He enjoyed it all, but acting is by far his favorite. He has appeared in 46 LCT shows and liked every one of them.



Dick in *Oklahoma*, 1973.



Dick (left) in *You Can't Take It With You*, 1973.



Dick (left) in *My Fair Lady*, 1974.



Dick (left) in *Anything Goes*, 1975.



Dick in *Guys and Dolls*, 1981.



Georgia Hess and Dick in *On Golden Pond*, 1982.

*“The whole creative process of developing a character from start to finish is exciting, as you wonder who this written character in the script is finally going to become when he appears on the stage.”*

Dick smiles as he recounts his many roles. “I had the time of my life portraying such diverse characters: an Oklahoma farmer, a bum, a drunk, a minister, a Founding Father in 1776, President FDR, and a retired Professor who summers *On Golden Pond* (which happens to be Dick’s favorite play and one that earned him one of his four Dionysus Awards). He quotes his favorite line of all time when at the end of the show his character experiences a heart attack. The wife shouts, “Get your nitroglycerine!” and Dick follows with, “I’ll blow up!”

Dick’s favorite part was Jimmy, the town misfit. Jimmy had dementia, slept in a phone booth, and heard the Lord talking to him in *Penalty For Early Withdrawal*. Dick remembers incorporating comic Charlie Chaplin moves to add more humor to the role.

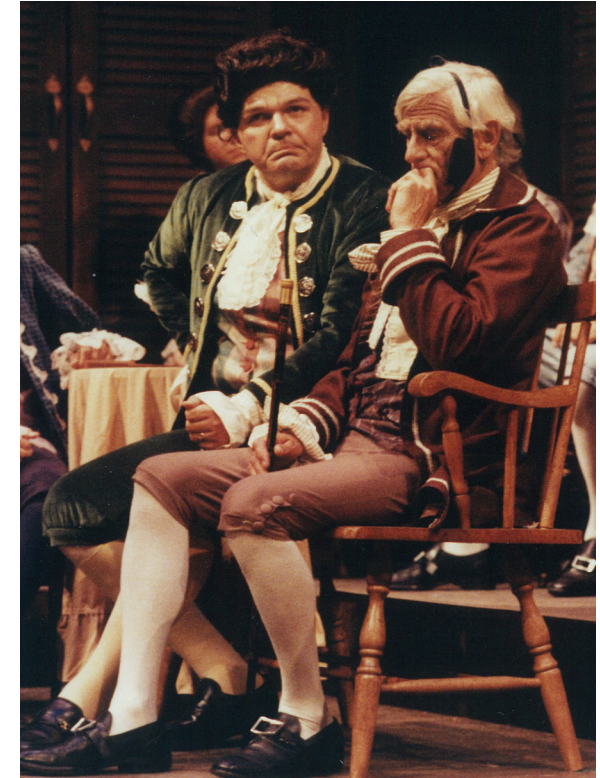
Dick has even had his brush with the famous. While playing Kit Carson in LCT’s 1978 production of *The Time of Your Life*, Dick was visited back stage by Julie Hayden, the actress who originated the role of Kitty in the Broadway production. Much impressed with Dick’s performance, she told him that his portrayal was better than the actor who played Kit on Broadway!

Dick Sartz has shared his energy and talent with La Crosse audiences for over 3 decades. At 98, he now prefers to volunteer offstage rather than on. When asked what the greatest gift or opportunity LCT has given him, Dick says:

*“LCT provided me with 35 very enjoyable years meeting and working with many wonderful people. As I said before, I have had the time of my life.”*



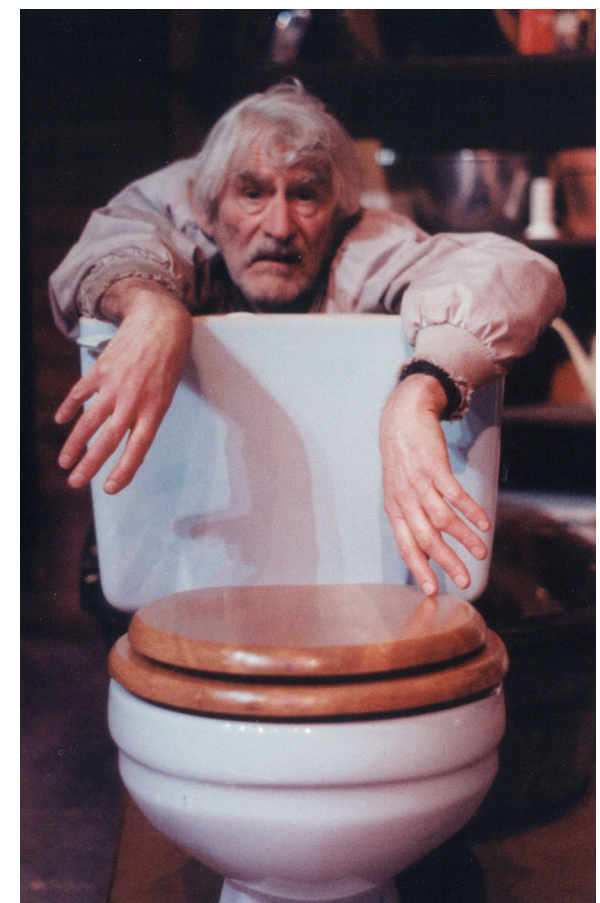
Dick in *Penalty for Early Withdrawal*, 1994.



Dick (right) in *1776*, 1990.



Dick (left) in *Foxfire*, 1992.



Dick in *Penalty for Early Withdrawal*, 1994.

