

Jane Margison



Jane Margison first came to the Riverside Community Players in 1935 at the age of 15 when she was a student at Riverside Poly High School. Her English teacher was a member of the Board and encouraged her to join. Jane's interest in performing, however, began when she was five. She remembers watching 1,500 people laughing and having fun during a vaudeville act. She decided then that she wanted to be a part of making that happen. Jane began performing that same year. In 1933, she was playing the role of a moth in a Marin County production when the director singled her out for a featured bit. He later approached Jane's mother and let her know that he felt that Jane was good and should stick with theatre. She has done exactly that ever since.

Jane has produced, directed and acted in productions not only at Riverside Community Players, but throughout Southern California, including Los Angeles. In 1976, she produced "The Pursuit of Happiness" at the Mission Inn for the Bicentennial and has twice produced productions for the Riverside County Philharmonic. She was also a member of the Board of Directors for the Riverside Opera Guild.

But it is Riverside Community Players with whom she has been most closely associated. She has served nine terms on the Board of Directors, directed 40 productions and starred in 30. Before the words "community outreach" were so common, Jane formed an Olio, or vaudeville-style, group and regularly performed on the stage at the Tyler Mall when it was first built. This Olio group took the Players into multiple venues throughout the community, entertaining audiences and raising awareness about the organization. Fourteen years ago, the Players hired their first Executive Director and Jane was asked to come on as paid staff to assist for six months. She has remained in this capacity ever since.

Jane continues to be active as a director. Two years ago, she began "A Class Act" at the Janet Goeske Senior Center, where she directs senior citizens, most of whom have never been in a play. They are currently in the process of writing an original play about Riverside and the Goeske Center. Jane was most recently seen on stage this past summer, in a staged reading of "Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar," an old-fashioned radio drama at the Community Players.

In the year 2000, the American Association of Community Theatre recognized Jane for her many years of service at its conference in New York. They understood the enormous contribution that Jane's tenure has had on the Players and the impact that she has had in this community. It is only fitting that we, here in Riverside, recognize this achievement, as well. Please join me in welcoming Jane Margison, who will accept the October 2006 Arts Honoree of the Month Award for her significant contribution to the Riverside Community Players.