

Wayne Nicklas, In Memoriam

So long, Wayne.



1951 – 2010

We lost one of our stalwarts this May with the passing of Wayne Nicklas. Some of you, particularly out-of-towners, might not remember him, but anyone who attended theatre in this town would recognize him. He appeared on all Winnipeg stages, most notably as a company member of Shakespeare in the Ruins, but also on every stage from MTC to independent productions. Tourists who saw Brian Richardson's Heritage Theatre at the Forks would also remember Wayne.

I can remember three fringe shows that Wayne graced, although I am sure there are more. In 1991 he starred in *Follow the Leader*, where he did his best to light up a play written by an anonymous politician. The next year he and Harry Nelken teamed up in David King's memorable *Contents under Pressure*, a series of vignettes about people's lives sliding sideways. In one of my favourite Fringe memories, he played a hopeful but nervous guy driving to a first date who gets progressively more frustrated as he tries to follow sketchy directions to his date's house. In 1999 he appeared in *The Wild Guys*, directed by B. Pat Burns and produced by Terry Tully. He really carried that show. You could always count on Wayne to give a solid performance, regardless of the situation, but I think his greatest gift was as a film actor. In the otherwise forgettable film *New in Town*, he dominated

the screen whenever he was on, as he did in his short but touching scene in *The Stone Angel*.

The Stone Angel also highlighted another aspect of Wayne's life that people outside the acting community might not know about. He was the local rep on the ACTRA national council for many years, and in that role he started up the effort to establish a PAL lodge in Winnipeg. (PAL lodges provide affordable housing for retired performers.) Wayne arranged for a special screening of *The Stone Angel*, with the proceeds going towards the Winnipeg PAL. It was the first large infusion of cash for this worthy project.

What I cherish most about Wayne, though, is the person Wayne was offstage. Wayne always supported local artists; the local production that did not find Wayne and his wife Judy sitting in the back row was a rare one, and you would always know when Wayne thought something was funny. He was always cheerful, always interesting, and you could count on him to have a great story to tell at any gathering.

If you would like to express your appreciation for the life Wayne lived so well, he'd probably be most honoured if you were to make a donation to PAL Winnipeg, 203 - 245 McDermot Avenue, Winnipeg R3B 0S6.

Kevin Longfield

Supporting the JENNY!

PREMIER GREG SELINGER & THE NDP CAUCUS

