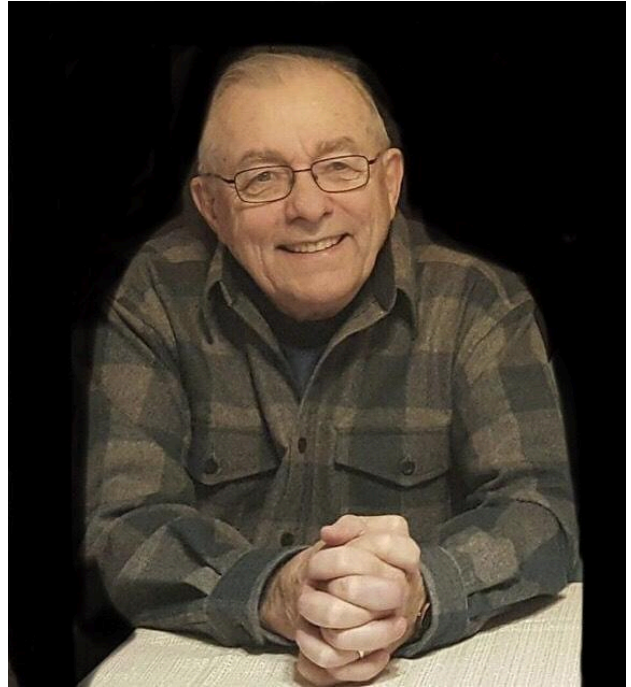


Greg Rindfleisch

This week we are happy to name Greg Rindfleisch as the 129th inductee in Marshfield's 150: Heroes and Leaders, Past and Present register. Greg Rindfleisch was nominated by Erika Danou.

When I was twelve-going-on-thirteen during the summer of 1982, the Campus Community Players (CCP) put on a production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Jesus Christ Superstar*, directed by Marshfield luminary Greg Rindfleisch, (now Emeritus) Professor of Communications and Theatre Arts. I had already performed in a couple of Washington Elementary School plays as a grade schooler, but when I was cast in the chorus of *JCS*, I was suddenly in the big leagues, singing and acting with the cream of the Marshfield artistic crop—and thus began my lifelong love affair with theatre.



Performing and crewing under Rindfleisch in the CCP greatly developed my healthy sense of self-confidence and comfort with performance; in the ensuing years, I continued to perform onstage in high school and CCP shows, sang with the Oslo Philharmonic Choir and performed onstage in Norway, majored in theatre and performed onstage in college, and now teach (English and theatre).

I can trace these opportunities, experiences, and successes in my life directly back to Greg Rindfleisch and the time I spent under his wise direction. But I am far from the only Marshfieldite who benefited from his talent and hard work.

As the founding director of the CCP stretching throughout the five decades between 1966-2001, Rindfleisch created a safe space for campus (college students, staff, and professors) and community (kids, students, dentists, teachers, homemakers, doctors, painters, sausage makers, dancers, woodworkers, and more) from all walks of life to come together and play and to create. And Marshfield became the better for it. Not only did Rindfleisch direct and produce great art and entertainment for the community year-round, but he established a true theatre community in a small central Wisconsin city that, simply by the numbers, should not have been able to generate such an amazing pool of talent. Most Marshfield residents during Rindfleisch's theatrical residency knew not the high caliber of art

they were exposed to until after the beloved director and professor retired and moved to Minnesota.

During his tenure, Rindfleisch discovered and nurtured incredible talent. He was always a demanding yet approachable and fun taskmaster. Being cast in a play or working crew required a high level of commitment; despite the amateur status of the members of the CCP and the fact that everyone involved had a “day job,” CCPers almost lived at the theater during rehearsals and performances—and happily, if exhaustedly, so. Evenings and weekends at the theater could easily total up to twenty-seven-plus hours each week. Hours painting flats in a ubiquitous shade of ochre; hanging lights just so; perfecting sound cues; sewing, fitting, or altering costumes; sawing, hammering, and screwing 2x4s into recognizable set pieces; blocking all of the major movements onstage; rehearsing and taking it from the top one more time -- all of it was hard work joyously performed with Rindfleisch at the helm. And the appreciative audiences responded and returned many times over the years to fill the house with anticipation, emotion, and applause. CCP productions became a draw for much of central Wisconsin, exposing many to live theatre for the first time.

Because of Rindfleisch, the CCP and Helen Connor Laird Theater became a place of refuge for some who desperately needed it, a place of origin for the many lifelong friendships (and even marriages) that formed there, a place of collective creativity for local thespians, artists, and musicians, and a place of artistic, intellectual, and communal growth for all who handed out programs, trod the boards, painted the flats, set the gels, and/or put bows to strings for yet another rehearsal or performance in one or many of his nearly 200 major theatrical productions.

A long list of Rindfleisch’s productions can surely be found in the archives at the UW-Center, but some of the shows he directed (or oversaw as his students directed) include: *The Fantasticks*, *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, *Godspell*, *Paint Your Wagon*, *Gypsy*, *The Foreigner*, *The Misanthrope*, *HMS Pinafore*, *Orphans*, *Evita*, *The Man of La Mancha*, *Greater Tuna*, *Annie*, *Nonsense* and many more. Rindfleisch put his heart and soul into every production he helmed; he recruited the talent for every part of every show, whether onstage, behind the scenes, or in the house. He forged important, long-lasting relationships with his students, co-workers, and community members as a director, mentor, teacher, and friend. Greg Rindfleisch embodies the very best of Marshfield as a leader who influenced Marshfield art, community, and education. For me and many others, it is Greg Rindfleisch who was and is the Superstar of Marshfield!