



June 13th, 2023

**For Immediate Release:**

**The Stage Managers' Association Announces 2023**

**Del Hughes Awards**

**for Lifetime Achievement in the Art of Stage Management**

The Stage Managers' Association (SMA) has announced its annual Del Hughes Awards for Lifetime Achievement in the Art of Stage Management. The distinguished 2023 honorees are theatrical production stage managers John M. Atherlay and Gwen Gilliam, and opera production stage manager Brett Finley. In addition to these Lifetime Achievement Awards, the SMA will honor Elynmarie Kazle with The Founders Award.

This year's Special Recognition Awards will celebrate honorees who are steadfast advocates and lift-up the stage management industry past, present and future. Robert J. Bruyr laid the foundation at Actors' Equity and fought for stage management recognition for decades. The organization *Broadway & Beyond: Access for Stage Managers of Color*, founded by Lisa Dawn Cave, Beverly Jenkins, Jimmie Lee Smith and Kenneth J. McGee, has been created to ensure that the door stays open for all.

The Del Hughes honor is awarded to those who represent the finest qualities and artistic achievement in stage management throughout their lifelong career. Instituted in 1986, the award was named for Del Hughes, who had an illustrious career as a Broadway and television stage manager as well as a TV director from 1933 to the 1970s. Honorees are chosen each February from nominations submitted by industry members. The SMA thanks Broadway Cares/Equity Fights Aids for their leading sponsorship of The Del Hughes Awards Event, which will take place on Monday, November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023, with details to be announced.

## **About the Honorees**

**John M. Atherlay's** 40-year career spans Broadway, National Tours, Off-Broadway, Regional and Summer Stock Theatres, and Cruise Ships. His work on Broadway includes original companies of *Beauty and the Beast* and *Xanadu*, and a revival of *The Seagull* with Tyne Daly and Jon Voight. He has Production Stage Managed over 25 National Tours including *Blithe Spirit* with Angela Lansbury, *Fiddler on the Roof* with Topol, *The Band's Visit*, *The Producers* and *A Soldier's Play*. He served as a Stage Manager Councilor at Actors' Equity for 20 years and a three-time Chair of the SMA. John is a graduate of Ithaca College and is the father of James, Philip and Clari.

**Brett Finley** has been production stage managing opera and sharing her love of that art form with her colleagues and students for over 40 years. She has stage managed operas across the country and internationally including Spoleto Festival USA (20 seasons), Seattle Opera, Opera Company of Philadelphia, Lyric Opera of Chicago / Scenario Two, San Francisco Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, San Diego Opera, Tulsa Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Opera Colorado, New Orleans Opera, Opera San Jose, Opera Festival di Roma, and many more. Brett created the BFA program in Stage Management at the University of Michigan.

**Gwen Gilliam** has worked on Broadway, national and international tours. Productions include *Walking With Ghosts*, *Slave Play*, *Eclipsed*, *Mike Tyson: The Undisputed Truth*, *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof*, *Bring In Da Noise/Bring In Da Funk*, *Topdog/Underdog*, *Chicago*, *Fences*, *The Wild Party* and *Fela!*. Her producing credits include *Nativity: A Life Story*, *W.E.B. DuBois: Souls of Black Folk* and *Harlem Song*. In addition, she has production managed special events for numerous charities and corporations including Jackie Robinson Foundation, Merrill Lynch, BideaWee, Avon, Rainforest Foundation, New Line Cinema, NY Film Society and NMSDC.

**Elynmarie Kazle** has made an impact through four decades of service. Her stage manager career spans 30 years in dance, theatre, opera and special events. Serving on multiple not-for-profit arts boards throughout her career and promoting the importance of a career in stage management she also served nine years on AEA's stage management committee, nine years as the Chair of the SMA, and eight terms on the board of USITT launching the Stage Management Mentor Project. Currently Elynmarie supports new work, shares her knowledge through education, and is the President of the new Stage Managers' Association Foundation.

**Robert J. Bruyr** joined the Actors' Equity Association's Stage Manager's Committee in 1968 while working as a stage manager and was subsequently elected to Council as an Equity Principal Councilor. Later, as an AEA Senior Business Representative, Bob became SM Committee staff, supervised Equity member disciplinary proceedings and was Equity's Stage Manager Ombudsman. He regularly spoke at SMA events regarding Equity's activities during the year. Retiring in 2002, he is proudest of his honorary Life Memberships in the SMA and Actors' Equity.

***Broadway & Beyond: Access for Stage Managers of Color*** is a networking organization that connects early and mid-career BIPOC stage managers with industry professionals. Led by veteran stage managers Lisa Dawn Cave, Beverly Jenkins, Jimmie Lee Smith and Kenneth J. McGee, *Broadway & Beyond* provides opportunities to aspiring and current stage managers of color to learn from industry insiders and meet industry leaders, and provides insights to help BIPOC stage managers start, maintain and advance a career in the arts and theatre through free networking and educational events.

### **About the Stage Managers' Association**

The Stage Managers' Association of the United States (SMA) is the only national professional organization for working stage managers across the United States. Our mission is to recognize, advocate for, and provide continuing education and networking opportunities, creating community for stage managers across the USA and connecting them with the world through our International Cohort.

Celebrating its 41<sup>st</sup> anniversary year, the Stage Managers' Association is a pivotal resource for stage managers nationwide in all areas of live performance. With a growing national membership, the SMA promotes networking opportunities through its many initiatives such as Operation Observation, Collaborative Connections, and A View from the Wings Symposia. SMA members include top Broadway, Off Broadway, Corporate, Regional, Dance, and Opera stage managers as well as students and those just beginning their careers.

The Stage Managers' Association strives for equity, fairness, diversity and inclusion. As stage managers we are discreet in our dealings with Productions, Producers and employers. We respect and value diverse life experiences and heritages, strive toward equitable treatment of our members, and support members who nurture diversity and equity in their places of work and in their broader communities.

Learn more about the Stage Managers' Association at [www.stagemanagers.org](http://www.stagemanagers.org)



Stage Managers' Association

The Del Hughes Award, The Founders Award & Special Recognition Honorees 2023

Top: Del Hughes Honorees John M. Atherlay, Gwen Gilliam, Brett Finley

Bottom: Founders Award Honoree Elynmarie Kazle,

Special Recognition Honorees Robert J. Bruyr, Broadway & Beyond: Access for Stage Managers of Color Founders Lisa Dawn Cave, Beverly Jenkins, Jimmie Lee Smith and Kenneth J. McGee



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Press & Event Questions please contact:

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