Valborg Sinkler Crossland

Winifred Valborg Sinkler was born February 3, 1897 in Grafton, North Dakota. She was the elder daughter of a prominent attorney. She and her younger sister, Lorraine grew up with poetry and literature and played on the prairie.

Valborg graduated with a degree in speech from Northwestern University and went on to do graduate work there. She also graduated from the Chicago Musical College and the Chicago School of Expression and Dramatic Art. For many years she toured the Midwest singing and performing poetry and drama.

In addition to performing, Valborg taught the first speech improvement classes in the Chicago schools as well as voice and diction. She married attorney George Crossland while in her 40’s and they later moved to Washington D.C.. Following Crossland’s illness, they retired to Florida where Valborg was the Coordinator for Common Cause in the 11th Congressional District. She was the co-editor for more than 25 books for Harper and Row and The Citadel Press. In 1988 she came out of retirement and began to do speaking engagements in Florida and North Carolina where she and Lorraine became involved with the Institute for Senior Scholars program at Appalachian, living in Blowing Rock during the summers and in Juno Beach, Florida in the winter. Valborg died in Florida on December 25, 1992.

“The only thing I ever ask, is that if I can give just one person a little bit of inspiration, that’s all that really matters.”
David H. Matthews attended Appalachian State University where he received a BA degree from the Speech Department in speech and theatre. While he was a student at Appalachian he was active with Playcrafters and performed a number of roles under the direction of Ed Pilkington. Matthews also directed a play for the theatre during his senior year.

Matthews had worked with the Cardinal Care Center in Yadkin County since 1970 and went on to become an administrator in 1977 and subsequently purchased several rest homes in Hendersonville and later in other locations in North and South Carolina. He now owns and operates facilities which provide health care beds and retirement community units to over 4000 people.

Matthews is currently the President of Carolina Retirement Services, Inc., Aaron’s School for Little Folks, Inc., Hendersonville Retirement Center, Heritage Hills, and The Danby Corporation. He is a General Partner in Countryside Village, Skylyn Place, Miller Matthews Chapman and Liberty Assisted Living Centers of Florida. He is Senior Vice President of Horizon Retirement, Inc. and Chairman of the Board and Senior Vice President of Liberty.

Matthews is a member of the Board of Directors of Nations Bank of North Carolina; a member of the Hendersonville YMCA Steering Committee; the Kiwanis Club of Hendersonville; and Chairman of the Blue Ridge Community College Scholarship Committee.

Valor Center for Theatre and Dance

Future plans for the expansion of Chapell Wilson Hall to house the rapidly growing Department of Theatre and Dance include the addition of two dance/performance studios and a studio theatre to square the east side of Chapell Wilson. The studio theatre will be on the front end of the building and will share the lobby and dressing room spaces with the Valborg.

The dance/performance studios will serve the dance program as well as those theatre courses which rely on a large space for movement. The studios will provide space next to the other activities of the department and will help coordinate the two program areas more closely. The studio theatre will be utilized for performances of class projects such as the public performances of one act plays and the Appalachian Young People’s Theatre. Other classes in acting, directing, performance of literature, and choreography will also be able to use the space for final project performances. The studio theatre will also be used for special performances of plays which need a more intimate space. The theatre will be a flexible space which can be set up for a variety of audience and stage relationships.

The three spaces - Valborg Theatre, studio theatre, and dance/performance studios will be known as the Valor Center for Theatre and Dance.
Valborg Theatre

Chapell Wilson Hall was built in 1937 as a WPA project during the depression and was occupied as Appalachian High School. When the Appalachian State administration building which contained the auditorium burned down in 1966, the Speech Department was transferred to Chapell Wilson, and the University Theatre began 25 years of continuous production in the old gymatorium.

In 1992-93 the auditorium was transformed into the modern Valborg Theatre which will provide a more comfortable and attractive facility for the present Department of Theatre and Dance. There is a thrust stage and the scenic studio is in the former seating area with the audience on raised tiers in the old stage area. The beautiful Matthews lobby graces the front entrance to the new theatre and the glass tower creates a distinctive landmark. Dressing rooms and additional storage and a loading dock have been added to the sides of the original auditorium. The stage is composed of modular units which fill the center of the old dressing room space which was under the stage. The stage can be lowered to accommodate extra seating or an orchestra for musical performances.

Theatre students spent the Christmas break completing wiring and building storage units for the new theatre in addition to installing curtain tracks and other equipment in order to prepare for the opening performance of A Midsummer Night's Dream.

Equipment

When the demolition of Chapell Wilson Auditorium began in October 1992, there was no budget for equipment. The Department was anticipating opening the new theatre with the inadequate equipment that had been accumulated over the previous 25 years.

The bequest of Valborg Sinkler Crossland made it possible to equip the Valborg Theatre with modern state-of-the-art sound and lighting equipment. The Valborg is one of the few theatres in the Southeast with digital sound equipment capable of providing CD quality sound for productions. The equipment is complemented by an extensive library of sound effects on compact disc.

The Valborg Theatre was designed to provide many more lighting positions than the old auditorium. The inventory of lighting instruments has increased from about 120 units to over 250 units. The new computer-based lighting control system, the ETC Obsession, is one of the most advanced available and is currently being used on Broadway. The number of dimmers has increased from 48 to 214, providing much greater flexibility in the lighting design. The new dimmers are smart enough to tell the lighting operator when something is wrong with the dimmer or lighting instrument.

Other equipment now available in the Valborg Theatre includes scenic projection equipment, an intercommunication system, industrial quality shop equipment, a video monitor system, and an adjustable trapped stage.

This equipment will provide greater capability for the productions presented by the Department of Theatre and Dance, but, more importantly will be used to train students on the equipment currently being used in the profession.

| Lighting
| Electronic Theatre Controls
| Wenger Corporation |
| Thrust Stage Platform
| Clearcom |
| Communications
| Apple Macintosh |
| Sound system
| with digital design software. |
| Components: Tascom, QSC, |
| Panasonic, Crown, JBL, JVC | 5 |
Other Special Friends of the Theatre

All of the donors and other special friends have been recognized with seats bearing their names in the front row of the Valborg Theatre.

Antonios Antonokos

Antonios Antonokos was a teacher of physics who was hired at Appalachian State Teachers College in 1929. His hobby was theatre and he founded Playcrafters in 1933 and began the long tradition of outstanding theatre productions. Antonokos remained director of Playcrafters until 1946.

Rogers Whitener

Rogers Whitener began his association with Playcrafters as a student with Antonokos, and his studies were interrupted by World War II. When he returned in 1946 he continued his theatre work with Williams. Whitener later returned to Appalachian in 1959 to teach English and also worked with French in the theatre program. Whitener continued to teach at Appalachian until his retirement in 1991.

John Thomas

John Thomas was Chancellor (1979-1993) when the Department of Theatre and Dance was formed in 1989. He also lobbied for the funds to renovate the old Chapell Wilson Auditorium. When the state allocation was not enough to complete the project as it was designed with the additions of the dressing rooms and lobby, he refused to sacrifice any of the structural parts of the renovation. Thomas went back to Chapel Hill and obtained an additional $370,000 to complete the project as it is today.

Wayne Clawson

Wayne has been a part of Appalachian State University for a long time. He was born in the building which is now Founder's Hall, where he has an office. He graduated from Appalachian High School in what is now Chapell Wilson Hall. He is presently the Director of Planned Giving in the Office of University Advancement. Wayne has been a long time supporter of the theatre program and was the first donor to the theatre. Since 1984 Wayne has performed as Mark Twain and Robert Service. Over the years, when he performed in Chapell Wilson Auditorium, he donated the receipts of the performances back to the theatre. It was also Wayne who performed a special poem in tribute to the old auditorium when it was officially closed on May 9, 1992.

Painting of Valborg Sinkler Crossland
by Susie Creadick

The painting of Valborg which hangs over the doors to the theatre which bears her name was painted by Susie Creadick, an instructor in the Art Department and a local artist. Creadick is also known for her portraits of former chancellors John Thomas and Herbert Wey.

Cratis Williams Memorial Theatre Scholarship
(1911-1985)

Cratis Williams was so many things to Appalachian State and to the region over the years. To the theatre he was an English teacher with a love for the theatre who took over the direction of Playcrafters and many of the plays from 1946-1952. He founded the Lambda Zeta cast of the Alpha Psi Omega national honorary dramatics society in April 1948. The scholarship which bears his name was established in 1976 with the proceeds from the opening performance of An Appalachian Sounding by Romulus Linney which was mounted at Appalachian before going on tour; has been awarded annually to outstanding junior and senior students majoring in theatre who are both academically outstanding and actively involved in the theatre production program.

David French Green Room

The Green Room in any theatre is traditionally the place where actors wait for their calls to enter the stage area. It is indeed appropriate to name the Green Room in the Valborg Theatre for a director and teacher who loved his students and was loved by them. David French was a director at Appalachian State from 1959-1970. French had an MFA in drama from Yale and brought tremendous background and enthusiasm to the theatre program which was a part of the English Department. It was under French's leadership that the College Theatre first occupied Chapell Wilson Auditorium in 1967 after the administration building burned. It was his dream to build a new theatre, but he was never able to see it fulfilled. French's last production in Chapell Wilson was The Lion in Winter in early 1970. In March he was dead.

He was a different man—a unique man. His greatest loves were his students and the theatre... And he was a teacher... Teaching was his passion... It was a dream that someday he would produce a play... on a real stage instead of a gym floor. (Appalachian, 3-26-70)
The Architect
Calloway, Johnson, Moore, P.A.
Winston-Salem, N. C.
Jim White,
Principal In Charge

Theatre Consultant
Frank C. Mohler II
Appalachian State University
Boone, N. C.

Accoustical Consultant
Scott Templin
Winston-Salem, N. C.

Jim White
Jim White worked closely with the Department of Theatre & Dance in providing appropriate spaces for the performance of plays and dance and meeting the special needs of the department.

The Contractors
General Contractor
James R. Vannoy and Sons Construction Company, Inc.

Electrical Contractor
Besco Electric Company

Mechanical and Plumbing Contractor
Tri-Meck Mechanical , Inc.

A Short History of Theatre at Appalachian State University

Theatre at Appalachian State Teacher's College apparently became organized in 1929 when Professor Antonios Antonakos joined the faculty to teach physics and chemistry. Antonakos enjoyed theatre and art as hobbies and quickly organized a drama club at the school. Playcrafters was approved as a campus organization in 1933.

The Playcrafters, with the direction and assistance of Antonakos quickly began to produce both one acts and full length productions and won numerous awards at the annual Carolina Dramatic Festival in Chapel Hill. Over 100 students were members of Playcrafters which held workshops and published Playbill, a newsletter with many articles on various production topics. Graduates of Appalachian who were certified to teach English went on to win awards as high school directors in the state.

In 1946, Antonakos was elected president of the Carolina Dramatic Association and the production of the first play was turned over to a new, young English professor, named Cratis Williams. He was assisted by a Playcraft member, Rogers Whitener, who had just returned from service during World War II. Williams directed a number of plays and taught a class in play production. He also founded the Lambda Zeta cast of Alpha Psi Omega, national honorary dramatic society in April of 1948. Williams continued to direct until 1952 until he went on to other responsibilities with the growing college.

There were a variety of different directors from 1952 - 1959, but Playcrafters continued to produce, sometimes without a faculty member to assist them. In 1959, David French joined the English Department as director of drama and advisor to Playcrafters. Productions were being mounted in the auditorium in the administration building. One of French's first projects was to remodel the stage of the auditorium with the assistance of Rogers Whitener who had returned to Appalachian as an English teacher. Vice President D. B. Dougherty provided money for lighting instruments, Playcrafters saved up enough to buy a lighting control board and the play production class made the drapes.

The productions became more ambitious and The Appalachian listed the 1961 production of Romeo and Juliet as the first Shakespearean production at Appalachian. Operettas, particularly those by Gilbert and Sullivan, had frequently been performed throughout the years in cooperation with musical groups. H.M.S. Pinafore had been performed in
the spring of 1959 under the direction of Nicholas Ernston. The first musical to be presented was Oklahoma in the spring of 1961, directed by French with Ernston conducting the orchestra. The role of Ali Hakim was played by Clinton Parker. That summer French took over the direction of Hom in the West.

In 1963, the speech and theatre areas separated from the English Department to become the Speech Department. In December 1966, the administration building burned destroying all of the theatre records, supplies and equipment. The college had taken over the old Appalachian High School which had been built in 1937 as a Works Progress Administration project and the Speech Department moved into the building in the spring of 1967. By March the College Theatre was ready to reopen in the gymatorium of the building renamed Chapell Wilson Hall.

In 1967 Appalachian State Teachers College became Appalachian State University and French began to plan the renovation of Chapell Wilson Auditorium. He did not live to see his dream realized.

Charles Porterfield became chair of the Speech Department in 1970 and Ed Pilkington and Charles Martin were hired to replace French. Some improvements were made in the auditorium and Mountaineer Playhouse was introduced in the summer of 1971. The next summer Pilkington began his 20 year association with Hom in the West. In the fall of 1972, Appalachian became a part of the University of North Carolina system.

Martin was replaced by Pete Rose as technical director in 1973 and Linda Welden joined the department in oral interpretation. In 1975, the program was expanded to 3 faculty with the addition of Susan Cole. The rest of the department moved into Wey Hall in 1976, leaving theatre in Chapell Wilson with additional space including a costume studio. A second small theatre was created in the old band room in I. G. Greer in 1983 to help accommodate the growing production program with 4 major productions and 9 - 12 one act plays each year. The department also produces 2 plays for young audiences, 1 - 2 dance concerts and an occasional dinner theatre program.

The theatre area grew from 3 people with a handful of majors in 1975 to 5 in 1987 and then 7 with the formation of the Department of Theatre and Dance in 1989 when the theatre area was combined with dance. The present faculty consists of 7 full time and 4 part time in theatre and 1 full time and 1 part time in dance with almost 90 theatre majors and 20 - 30 minors each in theatre and in dance.

Marianne Adams  BS, MA, Appalachian State University: MFA, University of North Carolina at Greensboro. 1984-1990 Adjunct Instructor in Dance, 1990 - Assistant Professor of Dance. She teaches dance history, appreciation, choreography and dance techniques and directs the Appalachian Dance Ensemble.

Susan Stockbridge Cole  BA, MA, Stanford University; PhD, University of Oregon. 1975-1989 Director of Theatre, Professor of Theatre, 1989 - Chair of Department. She teaches directing, theatre history, supervises student teachers, and directs.

Teresa Lee  BFA, Memphis State University; MFA, University of North Carolina at Greensboro. 1988 - Assistant Professor of Theatre. She teaches voice, movement, acting, creative drama, and is the director of the Appalachian Young Peoples Theatre.

Martha Marking  BFA, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater; MFA, Michigan State University. 1987 - Assistant Professor of Theatre. She teaches costume, makeup, design and is the costume and makeup designer for the department.

Frank C. Mohler, II  BA, MA, PhD, The Ohio State University. 1983 - Professor of Theatre, 1991 - Director of Theatre. He teaches lighting, history, and scenic and lighting design and is the scenic and lighting designer for the department.

Edward L. Pilkington  BFA, Ithaca College; MFA, University of North Carolina at Greensboro. 1970 - Professor of Theatre. He teaches advanced acting and playwriting and directs.

Linda Welden  BS, MS, Georgia Southern University; PhD, Louisiana State University. 1973 - Professor of Theatre. She teaches performance of literature, oral interpretation, and dramatic literature and adapts and directs literature for performance.

Joel Williams  BS, Troy State University; MFA, University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa. 1990 - Assistant Professor of Theatre. He teaches scenery and introduction to design, coordinates the Introduction to Theatre classes and serves as technical director.
Adjunct Faculty

Donna Devereux  BS, East Tennessee State; MA, Winthrop
College; 1990 - theatre and speech

Susan Lutz  BA, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; 1988 - dance

Perry Mixter  BS, Denison University; MA, University of Wisconsin;
Director of Cultural Affairs; 1991 - theatre management

Claudia Mohler  BS, The Ohio State University; MA, Appalachian
State University; 1989 - theatre and speech

Sue Williams  BA, Wesleyan College; MFA, University of Alabama at
Tuscaloosa; 1993 - theatre and voice and diction

Departmental Secretary

Elaine H. Phillips  Appalachian State; 1985 - theatre secretary;
1989 - departmental secretary.

Valborg Theatre Seats

Front Row Center

Dorothy & James Gibbons,
Dorothy & James Moore
Erin Simmons
Rogers Whitener

Janice Whitener,
Katy Whitener, Kim Buntin
Elizabeth Williams,
Sophie & David Cratis Williams

Theatre Seats

Alpha Psi Omega
Charley & Carla Belcher
LuAnn Guignard,
John & Susan Taylor
M. Faye Sawyer
Judith & Gerard Rothschild
Robert & Aileen Adams
Gamma Beta Phi
Bud Gerber & Maggie McFadden
Dr. & Mrs. John W. Bates
Patsy Stubbs Fry
T.J. Charlson
Vaughn Walton
Dr. & Mrs. Richard Haunton
Wally White
Frank C. Mohler, II
Susan S. Cole
Bill & Diane Griffin
Paul D. Early, Jr.
Donald L. Clark
Edelma & David Huntley

Playcrafters
Psychology Department
Northern Telecom
Ruby Akers
Dr. Donald W. Sink
Dr. Clyde D. Robbins
Peter & Joni Petschauer
Dept. of Military Science
Douglas & Birgitta Klima
Mr.& Mrs. William J. Brooks, Jr.
James K. Flynn
Karla D. Webber
Mr. & Mrs. Paul W. Longley
Tom Tyson
Martha A. Marking
Linda Welden
Bob Cole
David Wilhelm
Roger Stilling
M. Sue Clark
Office of Cultural Affairs