



2024-2025 Adjudication Team

Janet Albanese is a strong supporter of Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards and a native of Des Moines. Janet has worked professionally as a production manager and stage manager on both coasts. She has taught stage management to students in undergraduate programs and mentored young stage managers at a variety of professional theaters and academic programs. Janet brings over 20 years of experience working on productions from concept to realized design. She is passionate about communicating this collaborative experience to liberal arts students so they can grow in whatever capacity they are interested—as actors, designers, directors, or stage managers. Janet is the director of production and building services at Des Moines Performing Arts. Previously she has stage managed Iowa's longest running show, *Triple Espresso*, as well as shows around the country, including in Los Angeles and New York.

Robert Barry is a retired vocal music instructor from Sioux City, Iowa. He possesses a Bachelor of Music Education from Morningside College, and Masters of Science in School Administration from Wayne State College. Bob spent 38 years teaching vocal and instrumental music in public and private schools in Northwest Iowa, covering all aspects of music education in primary, secondary and collegiate settings. Bob has extensive experience as a performer, director, accompanist and musical director. His work extends from middle and high school productions in the Sioux City area, regional theater work at Lamb Arts Regional Theater and professional productions at the Betty Ling Tsang Summer Theater Series at Morningside University. Bob maintains a private voice studio, and mentors new choral conductors through the Iowa Alliance for Arts Education and the Iowa Choral Director's Association, and appears often on adjudication panels with the Iowa High School Music Association.

Janice Bear is semi-retired, a 1968 Turkey Valley Grad living in West Union, Iowa. With a BA in English & Creative Writing and MBA from the UofI, she worked in the Washington DC, Cincinnati, and Boston areas prior to returning to northeast Iowa in 1990. She designed, scripted and directed taping and programming for on-line and interactive video training programs. for many industrial training programs scripted interactive video for several corporations. She has worked in marketing, sales, accounting, computers, teaching at NICC, property management, and agricultural survey work. For over 25 years she has been a judge for the IHSSA speech contests. For fun she plays trombone with a Community Band, sings in the West Union Messiah, and acts in community melodramas and plays. As Secretary for Classic Tractors of Northeast Iowa, she handles public relations, raising funds for food banks, scholarships and community celebrations. She enjoys making people laugh!!

Scott Bertelsen taught at Forest City High School for 39 years and is now retired from this role. While teaching, he co-directed 35 musicals and 30 plays. During his time as co-director of the high school musical, the Forest City community abundantly supported him with sold-out shows. In 2015, Scott and Michele Jacobsen, vocal instructor at the time, were highlighted as high school musical directors on an IPTV special. In 2018, Scott was the recipient of the IHSMTA Impact Award and was inducted into the IHSSA Hall of Fame.

Linda Brant spent her career teaching high school College Prep. English, speech, and drama, most recently at Charles City. She also taught college English and drama courses for Iowa State University, Upper Iowa University, and NIACC. She designed and directed numerous high school and community theatre plays and musicals, as well as over a hundred All-State speech



2024-2025 Adjudication Team

casts. Her favorite shows to design are realistic interiors and her favorite to direct are period shows with historic costumes. Among her recognitions are Iowa High School Speech Association Hall of Fame, Wartburg College's Outstanding Teacher of the Year, Charles City's Woman of the Year, and Rotary's Vocational Service Award.

Joshua Brown has been active in the musical theatre community for the past two decades. He has served a variety of roles at Class Act Productions, Inc. including serving as the President of the Board of Directors and in other leadership positions. In addition, he served in multiple other roles as a volunteer including education director and technical director. Joshua also has directed musical theatre productions at Goodrell Middle School where he taught for many years before becoming the President of the Iowa State Education Association. Joshua also is an adjudicator of for community theatre productions in central Iowa with the Cloris Award program.

John Busbee began his musical theatre career while attending the University of Iowa in Theatre and Theatre Design. He has served in a variety of roles, having managed and performed in a national touring company he cofounded, performing to critical praise in leading roles in regional theater and musicals, to designing work at the university and professional level. He also has been reviewing theatrical productions for more than 25 years. He has coached musical theatre ensembles for IHSSA, with a majority of the ensembles achieving All-State. He later served as an All-State Critic. He co-founded the Cloris Leachman Excellence in Theatre Arts Awards in Greater Des Moines, serving as a judge for 9 years. Since 2007, he has produced a weekly arts and culture radio show that is anchored by the performing arts coverage and stories. He was awarded the 2014 Iowa Governor's Award for Collaboration and Partnership in the Arts.

Erin Bustin's parents returned from London when she was five years old with recordings: *Les Misérables*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Chess*, and more. She was swept away by the music, the stories, and especially by the power of the human voice. From that moment on, she found every possible opportunity to sing. Erin lives in Grinnell, Iowa where she is the founding director of the Grinnell Children's Choir and co-founder and singer in Vox Feminae, a women's chamber ensemble. She teaches voice lessons, music theory, and Music Together - an early childhood music and movement class - at Studio E Grinnell. Erin holds a Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance from the University of Prince Edward Island and a Master of Arts in Musicology from the University of Toronto. Before moving to Iowa in 2014, Erin worked in non-profit arts management, including positions at prestigious Canadian organizations Soundstreams and Choral Canada, and was a professional member of the Toronto Bach Festival Singers (Doreen Rao) and Toronto Choral Artists (Mark Vuorinen). While choral singing is her first love, Erin is also an active soprano recitalist. Erin is a passionate advocate for music education and accessibility. She believes singing develops invaluable life and leadership skills and creates happier, healthier communities.

Susan Cantine was the Executive Director of the historic 120 year old opera house in Concordia KS from 2006-2014. She worked with performing groups, organized events, gave tours, wrote grants, and promoted the arts. Retiring in 2014, her primary experience with the arts as a retiree is to critique local speech contestants, offer commentary for local productions, and adjudicate for the High School Musical Theatre Awards. For 7 years, Susan was assistant



2024-2025 Adjudication Team

to the director & production manager for Luther College's Dorian Opera Summer Theatre. During her time at Decorah High School; Susan directed numerous variety shows & musicals (student participation averaged 100 students per production). She directed 89 Outstanding Performances and 5 Critic's Choice Awards (best in state of Iowa) selections for (IHSSA); 2 Sweepstakes Trophies. Susan was chosen as a 2005 inductee into the IHSSA Hall of Fame.

Daniel Chase has a BME in music education from Iowa Wesleyan College with graduate studies in music education and musical theater from the University of Northern Iowa, VanderCook College of Music and Drake University. He was a music educator for 27 years, teaching choral music and voice around the state and continues to shape high school musicians as an adjudicator for Iowa High School Music Association and Iowa High School Music Theatre Awards. In addition, Dan directed Cardinal KeyNotes vocal jazz ensemble at Iowa State University and has guest-directed musicals at area high schools and community theaters. Dan has also performed in more than 30 dramas, comedies, and musicals. Favorite acting roles include Rote in "Wait Until Dark", Carmichael in McDonagh's "A Behanding In Spokane," Arvide Abernathy in "Guys And Dolls," and John Wilkes Booth in Stephen Sondheim's "Assassins".

Jeff Chelesvig is President and CEO of Des Moines Performing Arts. Under his leadership, Des Moines Performing Arts presents seven performance series and serves over 300,000 people annually. Chelesvig plays an integral role in the Broadway theater community, serving on The Broadway League's Board of Governors and Executive Committee. He is Iowa's only voter for Broadway's highest honor, the Tony Awards.

Stephanie Coble-Day has her degree in Speech, Communications and Theater Arts Teaching from the University of Northern Iowa. With over 27 years of experience in the arts, Stephanie has directed actors as young as 3 and as old as 80 in plays and musicals for community theater and school productions. She has taught theater and speech and coached speech teams. Stephanie has served as an IHSSA speech judge for the past 13 years, judging many areas including one act play, musical theater, radio news, choral reading and readers theater. For the past 3 years she has been an IHSMTA adjudicators. When not working on a production at her local community theatre, Stephanie is a Program Supervisor of iJAG. She also sings and volunteers at her church, First United Methodist Church, in Ft. Dodge, Iowa. Stephanie and her husband Scott enjoy traveling and spending time with family, especially their wonderful grandchildren.

Jim Cross is a graduate of Greenville University, with a BA in Theatre with an emphasis in artistic direction. Jim Cross's career has including doing high school productions and community theatre in both Illinois and Iowa. In addition, he has been a speech coach for the Iowa High School Speech Association for over 10 years in the Riceville Community School District and more recently Northwest High School in Waukee.

Amy De Waard started her musical career being cast as a lead nun in the musical "The Sound of Music". It was during those years that she realized she loved the arts. She could be found singing and dancing throughout her high school career. As a current public school educator, she is a proud supporter of the arts at her school and can often be found singing in her car and in her church praise team.



2024-2025 Adjudication Team

Peter Dean is an actor, director, IHSSA Large Group Speech judge and Assistant Large Group Speech coach for DCG High School. He has performed numerous roles with the Des Moines Community Playhouse on both the main stage and the Kate Goldman Children's Theatre, and performed with other local theater companies. Peter is also part of the educational staff at the Playhouse. Most recently, Peter has directed "How I Became a Pirate". "Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus, The Musical" and "Polkadots: The Cool Kids Musical", at the Des Moines Community Playhouse and on stage, reprising the role of "Sheriff Tom Lane" in Girls' Weekend 2. Some of Peter's favorite roles to date have been "Sharktooth" in How I Became a Pirate (Dionysus Award winner), "Cowardly Lion" in The Wizard of Oz, "Gaston" in Disney's Beauty and the Beast and "Sheriff Tom" in Girls' Weekend and Girls Weekend 2.

Sabrina Duke graduated from the University of Iowa with a BFA in Dance (choreography concentration) and BA in Theatre Arts (musical theatre track). Originally from Cleveland, Ohio, she began dancing and performing at the age of three and trained with Cleveland professionals Gladisa Guadalupe, Jamie Koeth, Leslie Varnick, Melanie Szucs, and Heidi Glynias. She participated in the Dazzle Awards (Jimmy Awards affiliate program) for all four years of high school. As an Iowa student, she performed in many dance department shows including Dance Gala 2022 at Hancher Auditorium, Faculty/Graduate concert, was a member of the touring University of Iowa Dance Company, and wrote her honors thesis on Agnes de Mille's "Oklahoma!'s Dream Ballet." She played Atropos in the Theatre Arts department's production of String and choreographed their production of "Something Rotten!". She now works for the University of Iowa as an admissions counselor.

V~ Dumas-Wines began performing more than 69years ago, and never stopped. She was a Master Teacher at The DM Playhouse, and was a member of their professional troupe Actors On Tour. She has worked as an actor, director, acting coach, writer, and taught acting workshops all over Iowa. V~'s company Allegro Children's Theatre Productions produced plays around Central Iowa, many at the state Historical Building. For Allegro, she was producer, director, costumer, sound, stage manager, props, and, in a pinch, actor. She is currently directing The Saloon Keeper's Daughter for Actors in Ames. She appeared in The Full Monty at Stephens Auditorium in Ames, and directed The Savannah Sipping Society, also at Stephens. She received Best Supporting Actress for IA/South Dakota Theater AACT/Fest for her roles in "From The Window". Other credits include: "Nunsense", "The Cemetery Club", "I Do! I Do!", "Company", "Zorba", "The Wizard of Oz", "Absurd Person Singular".

Natalie Ervolino is an alum of the BA program at the University of Northern Iowa and the MFA program at the University of Memphis. While she has had the joy of working in regional and academic theatres across the country in various design and technical capacities, Natalie still credits most of who she is as an artist today to the wealth of resources and mentorship made available to her as a theatre kid growing up in Iowa. It is both an honor and a privilege to transition into roles that support the next generation of young artists. She is still active in the theatre communities in both Iowa and Memphis, and currently works with several community organizations to promote creativity and literacy programs for youth. She specializes in scenic and digital media design, scenic art, props, production management, creative pedagogy, and theatre for young audiences.



2024-2025 Adjudication Team

Mic Evans is the Education Director for Theatre Cedar Rapids (TCR), one of the largest not-for-profit community based theaters in the United States. Mic oversees the adult, youth and special needs educational programming all under a "Pay What You Can" umbrella- ensuring that any student, of any age, can receive a comprehensive theatre arts education. When he isn't teaching, Mic is a freelance director having worked with Cedar Rapids area high schools, TCR and the Giving Tree Theatre. He's also a local actor having played roles such as Spongebob Squarepants in the Iowa premiere of "The Spongebob Squarepants Musical", Quasimodo in "The Hunchback of Notre Dame", Monty Navarro in "A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder" and so many more. He has also served as a guest critic for the IHSSA All-State convention and looks forward to giving back to a new generation of theatre lovers!

David Felton has been involved in theater since his middle school production of The Wizard of Oz. Throughout high school he stayed onstage, and once he got to college he started exploring the backstage world of theater. It was during college that he found his love of directing. He has served on the board of directors for both Carousel Theatre of Indianola, and Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre. While not directing he has enjoyed spending his time both onstage and stage managing at multiple theatres in the Des Moines area. This last year he received a nomination for the Cloris Leachman Excellence in Theatre Arts Awards for his direction of Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre's production of "The Prom." He is also a judge and coach for the Iowa High School Speech Association and Des Moines contributing editor for BroadwayWorld.

Eric Field is a veteran teacher who has taught and coached speech and drama at the middle and high school level. He is currently a school psychologist for Heartland AEA and will be receiving his PhD from University of Iowa next year. He still serves as an experienced judge for Iowa High School Speech Association and has judged both Solo and Large Group Musical Theatre. Eric also has performed in amateur and semiprofessional theatre for 30+ years, with favorite roles including Nathan Detroit (Guys and Dolls), Mr. Boddy (Clue the Musical), Herman (Sweet Charity), Jeter/Travis (Footloose), and Levi/Baker (Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat). Favorite productions he has directed include FOOTLOOSE, MY FAIR LADY, HELLO, DOLLY!, A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM, OKLAHOMA!, AND COPACABANA.

Sarah Florian has a Bachelor of Music with Emphasis in Business Studies with minors in Musical Theatre and Business Studies from Drake University. Sarah has spent a majority of her career in arts administration with roles at the Des Moines Symphony & Academy, Des Moines Performing Arts, and the Iowa Arts Council. During her professional tenure in the sector, she is most proud of managing the day-to-day operations of the Iowa High School Musical Theatre Awards and being part of the team that built this program into the statewide initiative it is today. While she has left the arts as a profession, you can still see Sarah singing with the Des Moines Choral Society or catch her performing in a musical around town. Most recent musical theatre credits include Kinky Boots (Pat) and A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder (Ensemble/Miss Barley), both at the Des Moines Playhouse.

Olivia Forney fell in love with theatre in elementary school, when she saw the local high school's performance of Bye Bye Birdie. She started acting in middle school and continues to today. In college, she earned a B.A. in Theatre Arts and English, and found a love for directing,



2024-2025 Adjudication Team

playwriting, and dramaturgy. Although she still enjoys acting, Olivia now prefers supportive roles backstage, guiding others into a deeper understanding of the character they are portraying. She has directed plays and musicals, has coached high school speech teams, and is an active judge for the Iowa High School Speech Association and IHSMTA.

Jessica Fridley has been involved in the performing arts for over 15 years whether as a performer, a coach/director, or a judge for the IHSSA. She has taken multiple classes that assist in enhancing her knowledge of staging, acting, and speaking. She has been a coach for the AC/GC individual speech team for 4 years as well as assisted in coaching both large group and individual events at numerous schools throughout her career. She also has experience with staging and choreography during her time as a color/winter guard and as a performer through her time as a color guard member with the Govenaires Drum and Bugle Corps, currently holding a world title.

Peggy George recently played the role of Grandma in Ankeny Community Theatre's production of *The Addams Family*. She's also performed several seasons at the Thunder Bay Theater (Summer stock,) The Olde Creamery Theater, and the former Dorian Opera Theater. Too, Peggy's performed in many shows with The Des Moines Playhouse, the former Ingersoll and Charlie's Showplace Dinner Theaters, and the former Drama Workshop. With the latter, she played Fraulein Kost in *Cabaret* and, 25 years later, played Frau Schneider in the same musical as a graduate student at U.N.I.! She's also served as alto soloist in choral ensembles, most notably the Dubuque Chorale, with whom she did two European tours. Peggy is a Voice and Music Ed. graduate of Simpson College and has done graduate work in Education and Theater at U.N.I. She's taught music in several schools. Currently, she teaches voice, piano, guitar, and stage dialects at her private studio.

Michelle Grob is a retired teacher who has spent the last 30 years involved in school and community theatre. She loves all aspects of theatre: acting, choreographing, costuming, stage crew, tech, and directing. To date, Michelle has been part of 60+ productions. With no formal training in theatre, she credits amazing directors, mentors, and actors for everything she has learned and the successful shows they have been able to bring to the stage. "Theatre is a living entity that gets in your blood and helps you to learn and grow. Like any passion, theatre is where one truly finds themselves.

Kenneth Hayes went to Northwestern College, Orange City, IA. While attending Northwestern College, he was awarded a theatre scholarship to study under Jeff & Karen Barker where he performed in numerous plays and musicals. After graduating, Dr. Hayes was a high school business teacher where he also served as the advisor/coach for the school plays, musicals, large group & individual speech. He is author to several published monologues and continues to write scripts in his spare time. He has acted and directed in community theater plays and musicals with Orange City's Tulip Festival and Starfighter's Theatre in Anamosa. In 2000, Dr. Hayes became a principal and was awarded the Fine Arts Administrator of the Year by the Iowa High School Speech Association (IHSSA) in 2009. Dr. Hayes has served as a judge for the IHSSA for many years in the past two decades. He currently works at the UNI.



2024-2025 Adjudication Team

De Heaton is the Executive Director of Corning Opera House Cultural Center in Corning, located in southwest Iowa. She has a Bachelor's of Music Education from Morningside College and a Master's in Education from Viterbo University. After teaching music for many years and watching the music programming being cut from so many school districts in the early 2000s, De became the director of the opera house to keep the arts alive. For community plays and musicals at the opera house, she has helped in many capacities from directing, stage manager, costumes, set design, lighting design and operator in local musical productions, plays and youth musicals. In 2023 De was honored as the Iowan of the Day from the Iowa State Fair Blue-Ribbon Foundation and received the Iowa Governor Volunteer of the Year Award.

Laura Hinspeter is the owner and instructor at L.A.H. Music Studio in Waukee, teaching private voice, piano and flute lessons year-round. She is an active music educator: clinician, adjudicator, and studio instructor. She has her Bachelor of Music Education from Wartburg College. Laura started her career teaching 6th-12th grade vocal music for the St. Ansgar Schools. Her career continued in the West Des Moines Schools where she taught 7-8 grade vocal music at Stilwell Junior High School (2001-2005). When at Stilwell her students sang on the east staircase at the Des Moines Civic Center before attending opening night of *Les Misérables*. Laura has been a member of the Iowa Choral Directors Association, an adjudicator for the Iowa High School Music Association and Iowa All-State Jazz Choir and serves as clinician and festival director throughout the state of Iowa. She has been a member of the IHSMTA adjudication team since 2016.

Adam Hooten is the President, Artistic Director and Choreographer for the Wolfpack Theater Company, a non profit youth theater group based in Northeast Iowa which he co-founded with his son. The Wolfpack produces full production musicals such as GREASE, LEGALLY BLONDE, RENT, GUYS & DOLLS, AND MEAN GIRLS. The group also conducts charity work benefiting local communities. Adam has actively been involved in theater since childhood. He is a former competitive dancer specializing in swing and ballroom dance, which fueled his passion for choreography. He has been a part of countless high school musical productions, concerts and film festivals throughout Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, providing everything from choreography, consulting, directing, backstage management, lighting, costume and set design. Adam is also an Iowa High School Speech Association judge specializing in musical theater and acting. He truly enjoys working with kids and helping them gain a lifelong appreciation for the performing arts.

Braxten Jones graduated from the University of Iowa receiving a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Arts on the acting track. Within her time in Iowa City, she learned acting methods to expand the movement of the body and extend vocal presence. In new work productions she used acting, singing, dancing to connect with university audiences. While in school she went on to be a Theatre Representative and originator of The Producers Club to foster undergraduate creativity. In her coursework, she gained interest in sound design and went on to produce music compositions. Before college, Braxten was active in high school theatre culture; performing in ensembles, supporting, and lead roles in musicals such as YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN, THE WEDDING SINGER, HEATHERS, AND URINETOWN. Additionally, she was student leader in



2024-2025 Adjudication Team

Group Speech and received All State Performing Rankings. Currently, Braxten studies vocal techniques through studio lessons and produces music and independent film work.

David Kilpatrick has been with the Des Moines Playhouse since 2017, one of the oldest and largest community theatres in the US. Prior, he was the executive director at La Crosse Community Theatre where he oversaw the construction of a brand-new \$8.4 million theatre. David's career has included producing artistic director, owner of a dinner theatre, production manager, director, lighting designer and stage manager. David has enjoyed working for theatres in such diverse communities as Iowa, Wisconsin, Missouri, Virginia, Georgia, California, and Upstate New York. His education includes degrees from George Mason University, Missouri State and University of Missouri, where his dissertation was the exploration of the audience preparing for the show.

Wyn Kischer is a multiple award winning director/producer, designer, actor, teacher and mentor for many theatrical productions - over 200 of these have been for the benefit of 6th through high school productions alone. He has worked in these productions mostly at Punahou School (Honolulu - 1986-2000), Trollwood Performing Arts School (Fargo - 1987-2011 summers) and Waukee CSD (2003-2022) where he served as teacher, director, producer and designer. His last year as head of the high school Waukee Theatre Arts program, he enrolled WTA's production of "Guys and Dolls" in the newly minted DMPA Iowa High School Musical Theatre Awards program. This production was recognized as one of the top two awardees that year in the state of Iowa. It also produced two triple threat winners to represent Iowa at the 2013 National High School Musical Theatre Awards in NYC.

Doug Krejci is a performing arts educator and visual digital content creator with over 30 years of experience in middle school, high school, and college theatrical productions. He is frequently sought out for his expertise of stagecraft, stage design, lighting design, sound design, and new media usage in theatrical productions. Credits include: SWEENEY TODD, COMPANY, OKLAHOMA, PETER AND THE STAR CATCHER, BEAUTY AND THE BEAST, 42ND STREET, JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR, SKIN OF OUR TEETH, THE BAACHE, MYSTERY COMEDY MURDERS OF 1940, THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK, THE MUSIC MAN, MADAGASCAR JR., and NOISES OFF among many other productions. Mr. Krejci has also supported national touring productions, touring rock concerts, and mounted a production at the International Thespian Festival. Mr. Krejci is an IHSMA (Iowa High School Music Association) judge (percussion) and an IHSSA (Iowa High School Speech Association) judge specializing in the speech, theatre, digital media and motion media fields.

Emily Kruse is a development manager at Des Moines Performing Arts (DMPA). While growing up in Libertyville, IL, a northern Chicago suburb, she attended many performances at the Marriott Lincolnshire Theater in Lincolnshire and the Auditorium Theater in Chicago. She began playing French horn in fourth grade and was in the pit orchestra for her high school performances of MY FAIRLADY and INTO THE WOODS, the latter of which was selected for the Illinois High School Theatre Festival. Emily was a four-year member of the Hawkeye Marching Band and has continued to play her instrument since then. She is a season ticket holder at the Civic Center and donor to DMPA. Emily has a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Iowa and a Master's Degree in Communication from the University of Dubuque.



2024-2025 Adjudication Team

Lissa Lane-Johnson was a part of Musical Theatre as far back as she can remember. As she grew up, there was no real outlet for her desire to be involved in theatre so, instead she became a musician and singer. On returning to college in the 80's, she found a place in the theatre community and has never left. She embraces performing and, later, directing and designing. Fate brought her to Sheldon High School Summer Theatre where she began a 30-year journey in educational theatre. Musicals have always been a focus for Lissa and even though she is no longer working in the school system, she continues to direct and appear in musical productions. She loves supporting young performers in their journey on stage and looks for ways to continue that mission.

Avery Lauer is an artist from Pleasantville, Iowa. He studied at The Theatre School at DePaul University in Chicago, IL. Lauer has been involved with theatre and film productions across the United States. He is an active oil painter and tries to encourage the arts in the great state of Iowa whenever he can.

Carl Lindberg is an educator, actor, and director originally from California. He is the Chair of DMACC's Theatre & Acting Programs—flagship departments within The Simon Estes School of Fine Arts. He holds a BA in Acting from California State University, Stanislaus, and an MFA in Directing from Western Illinois University. He has trained with Steppenwolf, The Second City, Shakespeare & Co., and has worked professionally as an actor, director, educator, designer, and administrator throughout the country. In Iowa, Carl is represented by the Peak Agency and has performed in several Midwest commercials, films, and at Iowa Stage and Tallgrass. Previously, Carl lived and worked in Chicago where he performed on stage with major Equity companies such as Lookingglass, Remy Bumppo, About Face, and appeared in national and regional commercials and short films. He taught at the College of DuPage and the Chicago Academy for the Arts.

Brett Logsdon is an accountant at Des Moines Performing Arts (DMPA). While growing up in Lawton, Iowa, Brett participated in many productions through school and the community theatre's. He began playing the trumpet and french horn in grade school and continued his passion of the arts while studying at Simpson College. Brett graduated from Simpson College in 2021 with a degree in accounting, music and arts management.

Julie Murren is a long time board member, actor, and director of adult and youth productions for community theatres in southwest Iowa. In addition to directing many productions, she founded and serves as director of the youth program for Southwest Iowa Theatre Group in Shenandoah, IA. Due to the creation of the youth program, the proceeds from those youth camps provided a fund to create a scholarship for graduating seniors for their contributions to musical theatre in their school programs as well as community theatre, a dream Julie had had since joining the SWITG Board in 2013. Julie enjoys all kinds of theatre but enjoys working with children of all ages most because of their enthusiasm, growth mindset, and willingness to try new things.

Jeffrey Neary judges musical theatre at district and state speech contests. He has performed lead and supporting roles in musicals at LeMars Community Theatre: played Gomez in *Addams Family* and supporting role in *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*. In college, he was a



2024-2025 Adjudication Team

vocal music scholarship recipient with participation in Chorale, Madrigals and presented a senior voice recital. He was a tenor all-state qualifier for two years.

Chris Nemec has had a love for theatre since they were young participating in church and local productions. When they joined their high school's production of *Crazy for You* they learned they were going to be doing this forever. Currently they work as school tour leader at an orchard. They also participate and attend community productions and loves to support students in theatre.

Patricia Olson is a strong supporter of the Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards and is a native of Lansing, Iowa. Patricia has earned a Bachelor of Arts in the field of Earth Science from the University of Northern Iowa. Patricia has worked professionally as an assistant Speech Sponsor at Eastern Allamakee Community School District from 2012-2017. She began judging for the Iowa High School Speech Association in 2013 and is currently certified as an expert judge. Patricia started adjudicating for the Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards in 2021 and has been with this organization for 4 seasons.

Allison Oyler is a proud Iowa All-State Vocalist and Speech participant. She has been performing in musicals and plays since her high school days and now enjoys taking the stage, directing the music, and participating backstage at her local community theatre. As a wife and mom to three, her home is filled with music (and noise). Her “real job” is Music Director and Liturgical Coordinator at the Catholic Churches in the Iowa Great Lakes; her “fun job” is getting to create musical and magical moments as a Kindermusik educator, most specifically to preschoolers.

Shawn Pavlik did three shows in high school, and they were his fondest memories looking back. At Westmar University he participated in two shows alongside theatre majors and learned a ton. Since that time, Shawn has done theatre, particularly musical theatre, in towns and cities across Iowa, including LeMars, Marshalltown, Conrad, Cedar Rapids, Ankeny, Des Moines, Newton, Pella, Knoxville, and Leon. He has multiple lead roles in musicals, including Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof*, Javert in *Les Miserables*, Curly in *Oklahoma!*, Judas in *Godspell*, and the Baker in *Into the Woods* (twice). He has also directed *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *The Fantasticks*, and *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. He currently serves on the board of directors for Carousel Theatre in Indianola.

Michael Petkewec has been an IHSMTA adjudicator for several years and loves to see the work of high school theatre artists and all the people who produce the shows. Michael has a BA in Theatre and English and an MA in Arts Administration/Non-profit Administration. He has lived and worked as an artist and arts administrator across the country for over 30 years as a director, actor, designer, producing artistic director, gallery director consultant, marketing director, and development director. Currently living in Iowa City since 2010 with his wonderful wife Megan, Michael works for the UI REACH program at the University of Iowa as a Senior Program Specialist and coordinates marketing and recruitment efforts at the department as well since 2015. Michael also has a consulting business free-lancing in the arts and helping arts and educational organizations with marketing, fundraising, strategic planning, and board development.



2024-2025 Adjudication Team

Michael Powers has worked in the Entertainment Industry for over 60 years. He is a (retired) member of IATSE, AEA and SAG. His musical theatre career began as a Dancer/Actor/Singer, by his true talent was behind the curtain, in the design and production side of the scale. He has taught theatre at the Graduate and Undergraduate levels in Scenic Design, Lighting Design, Stagecraft, FX Engineering, Design and Construction.

Donna Scarfe was in the film of *The Miracle Worker at 7*, She had a Fulbright Fellowship for ballet in Bucharest, Romania then choreographed and performed Liturgical Dance with the Epiphany Dancers in London. Acted with the National Theatre of the Deaf (CT, Los Angeles), Locally performed with the DM Playhouse, Stage West Theatre and the Repertory Theatre of Iowa. A founding member of Iowa Stage Theatre Company, Donna acted in CROWNS, A CHRISTMAS CAROL, THE WOMAN IN BLACK, GOD OF CARNAGE, SENSE & SENSIBILITY, OUR TOWN, THE CRUCIBLE, TROUBLE IN MIND, and at Salisbury House - THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR, A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, KING LEAR AND ROMEO & JULIET. She teaches hat classes yearly in CA at Costume College. Donna has a M.A. in Theatre/Deaf Studies and owner /designer of Fyne Hats by Felicity creating Period and Contemporary hats selling at Renaissance Faires.

Nicole Schumacher is thrilled to start a new year with the 2024-2025 adjudication team. This is Nicole's 4th year working in partnership with Iowa students/staff through IHSTMA. Nicole participated in vocal studies all through her schooling, including singing at Iowa State University in her college years. She has performed onstage with local community theatres and has worked behind the scenes on creating sets and costumes as well as crewing live productions. She enjoys engaging with schools on their creative process and providing feedback on opportunities for growth both to the students individually, and to the school's theatrical department as a whole. With creative partnership we all succeed.

Jenny Schwery is currently a teacher within the Indianola Community School District. She has been with the district for 10 years and has a passion for fostering a supportive and encouraging environment that promotes growth and excellence for all students. She is drawn to the opportunities to work with high school students, as she believes this is a formative stage for young performers. Her love for watching Broadway performances inspired her to start working at the Des Moines Performing Arts center where she is able to assist patrons and appreciate the shows from several aspects that make each show unique.

Bridget Grace Sheaff's primary artistic practices are directing and playwriting. She works in development for Hoyt Sherman Place in Des Moines, Iowa. She has previously served as the Director of Audience Services and Community Engagement at Maples Repertory Theatre (Macon, MO), Executive Director at the Washington Area Performing Arts Video Archive, Casting Director at We Happy Few Productions, Casting Manager at Spooky Action Theatre, and in various capacities at Ford's Theatre, the Shakespeare Theatre, Theater J, Imagination Stage, and Woolly Mammoth Theatre. Bridget is a member of the Lincoln Center Directors Lab 2019 and Directors Lab North 2022. Bridget's works have been published by Blackbird, Feels Blind Literary, Apricity, New Plains



2024-2025 Adjudication Team

Review, The Interp Store, Mushroom Cloud Press, Crux Literary Magazine, Theatre Unbound, Ghost Light Lit, and Qu Literary Magazine. BA 2014 summa cum laude, The Catholic University of America. www.bridgetgracesheaff.com

Laura Sweet has served as the Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for Des Moines Performing Arts since 2012. Sweet is past chair of the International Association of Venue Managers (IAVM) Performing Arts Managers Committee and co-chairs the Association of Performing Arts Professionals (APAP) new colleague orientation program. Sweet has a Master of Arts and a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the University of Kansas, respectively. She has played the flute and piccolo since childhood as well as serving in various positions with the Lincoln Community Playhouse and Lincoln Symphony Orchestra.

Libby Waterbury is a seasoned actor, director, choreographer, and arts educator. She graduated with a degree in theater education from the University of Iowa where she also performed as Herky the Hawk. She also graduated from AMDA-NYC with an emphasis in musical theater performance. After joining Actors' Equity and touring nationally, returning to Iowa to focus on growing youth theater here. She has choreographed dozens of musicals and marching band shows across the state, led high school speech and theater departments, and directed children's theater shows. Most recently, she has enjoyed watching her children take to the stage and fall in love with the craft.

Julia Weisshaar-Mullin is a veteran music educator from southwest Iowa. She received her degree in music education from the University of Kansas with additional studies in theatre and vocal jazz, and a Masters of Music degree in Choral Conducting at Simpson College. In addition to performing in and directing instrumental and vocal ensembles, Julia has extensive performance and technical experience in professional repertory and community theatre in Kansas, Missouri, and Iowa, as well as producing and directing shows in school and community settings, collaborating with musicians and actors of all ages and ability levels. Her goal is to give each and every participant a sense of ownership in the creative process so they feel they are a valued, essential part of a cooperative artistic community. Julia also adjudicates for the IHSMA and IHSSA, teaches privately, and - as often as possible - plays weekend music gigs with her family.

David Wendt has over 40 years of educational performance experience. He was a K-12 educator for 32 years where he coached Individual Events, Large Group and Debate. He also directed numerous high school productions. He acted, directed and produced community productions for two theater groups. He was inducted into the Iowa High School Speech Association Hall of Fame in 2016. After retiring from K-12 teaching, he was an Assistant Professor at Iowa Wesleyan University where he served as the Director of Writing Center and taught a variety of English, Communication and Theater courses for seven years. After IWU closed in May 2023, he returned to K-12 teaching at West Burlington High School where he teaches dual credit Freshman Composition, high school composition and speech courses.

Elizabeth Weyers was active in the arts in high school, participating in drama, music (15-years of piano), dance (All-State x2), speech (All-State), and was President of Tri-M Music Honor Society. At Drake University, Elizabeth continued to study music alongside her major and after graduating



2024-2025 Adjudication Team

opened Weyers Music Studio where she teaches music lessons and advocates for art education. Elizabeth has worked in the events and arts industry for over 5 years. Working with DMPA, Hoyt Sherman Place, and shadowing for shows like Waitress and Les Mis. Elizabeth also worked as an event manager in Drake University's Fine Arts Department working with Civic Music Association, Heartland Youth Choir and Des Moines Youth Symphony. Elizabeth performance repertoire includes, many piano competitions, Iowa State Fair, private recitals at The Hotel Pattee and another at Stanway House. Currently Elizabeth is the Downtown Farmers' Market Manager for the Greater Des Moines Partnership.

Valerie Williams started working in musical theater at age 12 and hasn't stopped since. Performing as a featured dancer in shows produced by both professional and amateur theaters, she toured throughout the Midwest, dancing, singing and acting in shows such as GODSPELL and COMPANY. She became a choreographer and has since made dances for over 100 shows for professional theater, colleges, opera, community theater and high schools. Making the move to modern dance, she co-founded Co'Motion Dance Theater in 1978 as a professional modern dance company, and with that company and the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company she has toured throughout North America, Europe and New Zealand. She loves being part of the spirit of live performance.

Micaela Wilz is the Guest Services Assistant Manager at Des Moines Performing Arts (DMPA). While growing up in Pella, Iowa, Micaela participated in choir, show choir, and other productions through Pella Community Schools. She began singing at a very young age and continued this passion for the arts while studying at the University of Northern Iowa. She worked for Gallagher Bluedorn Performing Arts Center on UNI's campus. Micaela graduated from UNI with a degree in Communications and Family Services.

Nancy Wright has worked in community theater as a director, producer, actor, and board member for over 40 years. She has judged for the Iowa High School Speech Association, judging individual and large group events. She graduated from Northwest Missouri State University with a B.S. in Elementary Education and minored in music. She also holds an M.S. degree in Education from Peru State College, Nebraska. Nancy retired as an Iowa school teacher 2022.

Megan Young performed in two musicals and one play during high school: *Camelot* (small role), *The Comedy of Errors* (small role), and *The King and I* (wife). In college, she helped create and perform short skits to raise awareness in a social outreach theatre class. She received a minor in theatre arts. She is certified to teach speech communication and theatre K-12. Megan has coached speech club through the IHSSA for 8 years. She has served on several committees as well as hosted contests. Her students have received All-State nominations for the past 4 years. She enjoys working with students and wishes to provide feedback for students in the performing arts field.

Lainie Vansant has worked on productions as an actor, stage manager, playwright, dramaturg, and director and holds a PhD in theatre and performance studies from the University of Missouri - Columbia, for which she translated and adapted a play by Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz. She currently serves as Assistant Professor of Directing at the University of South Dakota. Her plays



2024-2025 Adjudication Team

have been performed in community theatre and summer stock and have received multiple readings at venues like the Midwest Dramatists Conference, the University of Missouri, KCACTF Region V, and Pot Luck Productions. In addition, she has directed and helped develop short plays for the Mizzou New Play Festival, the Starting Gate New Play Festival, Short Attention Span Theatre, and the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF) - Region V. She has also served as a Managing Director for the Mizzou New Play Series the last three years, and has served on the planning committee for the University of Missouri's production of "The 24 Hour Plays." Her research interests include translation, adaptation, and Latin American theatre.