

# James Kern

Inducted into the *Hall of Fame* in 1997

Jim Kern is a native of Iowa and a graduate of the University of Northern Iowa where he received the Purple and Gold Award for Outstanding Conspicuous Achievement in Theatre. After teaching in Tipton and suburban Chicago, working in Chicago restaurants, and owning a French restaurant in Newhall and Cedar Rapids, Jim became the sole theatre faculty member at Washington in 1981, responsible for artistic direction, technical direction, choreography, and facility maintenance.

From 1981 to 1986 Jim directed 44 productions including two premieres, chaired the Performing Arts Department, co-founded Patrons of the Performing Arts, increased the Thespian membership from 20 to more than 100 each year, created dinner theatre, and starred in two productions for PPA fundraisers. After three more years in Chicago where he performed for the Chicago City Theatre Company and appeared as a guest panelist on the Oprah show, Jim returned to WHS in 1989 as a Language Arts and Humanities teacher. In 1998 Jim became the Director of Development for Theatre Cedar Rapids, and in 2002 he accepted the position of Assistant Director at Brucemore.

Throughout his tenure in those positions he continued to teach Humanities on a part-time basis at Washington. In fact, Jim Kern is the only teacher Ralph Plagman hired three times.

Jim's accomplishments include founding the Tipton Community Theatre, co-founding the Classics at Brucemore outdoor theatre, and creating the Director's Academy for Theatre Cedar Rapids, as well as on-stage leading roles in nearly 60 productions at Timberlake Summer Stock Theatre, WHS, TCR, and in Chicago.

