



Barbara and Jesse Waldinger

Canaan, NY

“Let’s go on with the show.” Who knows whether Irving Berlin had Barbara and Jesse Waldinger in mind when he wrote those famous lyrics, but the words certainly apply to this Canaan, NY couple who are touched by theater in nearly everything they do. Barbara and Jesse have been immersed in numerous theater-connected activities in the six years since they retired and settled in their small upstate New York community next to Berkshire County.

Barbara always aspired to the theater. She earned a Master of Arts degree in theatre at New York’s Hunter College and a Ph.D. from the City University Graduate Center. As an adjunct assistant professor of theatre, she taught for twenty-five years at Hofstra University, Marymount Manhattan, and Queens College. Long before moving to Canaan, Barbara accepted the position of Artistic Director of Hudson River Classics (HRC) Showcase Theatre in Hudson, New York, a post she has held for nearly two decades.

While still living in Long Island, Barbara began teaching for OLLI at Berkshire Community College. A co-founder of OLLI’s Performing Arts Initiative, she also organizes play readings and theatre parties. Berkshire Eagle readers may be familiar with Barbara’s interviews of artists associated with upcoming plays. Barbara is also a theatre reviewer for the online publication Berkshire on Stage and is a member of the Berkshire Critics Association.

In the middle of his career at a prominent medical malpractice firm in New York, Jesse discovered his own theatrical voice when he wrote a courtroom drama, “The Knights of Mary Phagan,” that was produced on Long Island, in California and other venues. More recently, he has turned out numerous short historical plays with legal angles, staged at Hudson Hall, Hancock Shaker Village and Temple Anshe Amunim, often under Barbara’s direction. The Waldingers’ many theatre activities at the temple have led to it being informally dubbed the “Theatre Temple.” Jesse also serves as co-director of a Hudson play development workshop, Plays in Progress.

Whether writing, performing, staging or judging dramatic works, Barbara and Jesse Waldinger are never far from theater and the people who love it.

Photography: Peter Levine

Words: Chris Guidette