

History of Lake Superior Theater, Inc. and Lake Superior Youth Theatre

The planning process and creation of Lake Superior Theater began as a joint effort with Northern Michigan University and the City of Marquette during their Sesquicentennial Year in 1999. Dr. Shelley Russell, a Theater Professor at Northern Michigan University was approached by the City of Marquette to write a historical musical, *Beacon on the Rock*, for the city's Sesquicentennial Celebration in 1999. Lake Superior Theater was born from that collaboration and has been working every summer since toward its mission of acting as a regional theater which presents and preserves the unique culture and history of the Upper Peninsula and fosters the performing arts. The Board of Directors has since then determined the plays which will be performed in the boathouse venue. Lake Superior Theaters Season is six weeks beginning at the beginning of July and running through mid-August with typically a total of 30 performances.

Lake Superior Theater, Inc., is a non profit semi-professional organization with 501 c (3) status that was founded in 1998 in Marquette, Michigan, located in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Lake Superior Theater's mission is: to present and preserve our past by developing and presenting original, professional dramatic productions of a cultural/and or educational nature which will further the knowledge and appreciation of the heritage of our area and region through the creation, development, publication and presentation of live theater.

Our strategies include conducting arts and education outreach programs and introducing audiences to live theater performances. Our goal is to keep our ticket prices affordable so families who attend will be motivated to explore and preserve their past. We have a volunteer Board of Directors which offers tremendous support, and we receive immeasurable support from the cast and crew. The cast and crew are a mix of semi professional actors, student interns and community members.

The unique venue for Lake Superior Theater's summer productions is the Frazier's Lake Superior Theater Boathouse, which in the winter months actually serves as a working boathouse and in the summer is transformed into a theater for the productions. The boathouse is located on the shores of Lake Superior. We can seat approximately 180 persons for each performance and have five shows per week, Wednesday through Sunday. The building is handicap accessible. The Fraziers' lease the building to the theater for \$1.00 per season. Because of the uniqueness of the venue, many persons who attend our theater performances are people who otherwise would not go to see a play at "a theater."

The Board of Lake Superior Theater received a National Endowment Chairman's Discretionary Grant in 2001 from Chairman Bill Ivey, who attended the theater during the summer of 2000. This grant was used to upgrade the lighting of the boathouse theater space. The theater is supported annually by the community through special fundraisers, City of Marquette and Northern Michigan University support, donations and ticket

Lake Superior Theatre, Inc.– History and Board of Directors sales.

Our youth theatre has been based on the following belief: Young people gain confidence and learn commitment, responsibility, commitment and teamwork skills that are critical to their success in school and in life. The City of Marquette Arts and Culture Center Youth Theatre was founded through the City of Marquette Arts and Culture Center in 2001 as a program of the city. Reatha Tweedie, former Director of Arts and Culture for The City of Marquette, worked with staff member and NMU intern Nikke Nason to develop and produce youth theatre in Marquette. This program blossomed for the past 10 years under the direction of Nikke Nason.

The City of Marquette Arts and Culture Department is reorganized and approached Lake Superior Theatre's Board of Directors in September 2011 about taking on the youth theatre program under their umbrella as they the city do not have the staffing or administration to keep the program going. Many were verbal about the potential loss of this program. Lake Superior Theatre Board of Directors voted on Thursday September 29, 2011 to continue this program for one year. During this year, the youth theatre formed a board of directors, hired a local strategic planning consultant to work with Youth Theatre Advisory Committee to form a five year strategic plan to ensure the youth theatre's future sustainability. The program has greatly developed over a two period providing high, quality youth theatre educational experiences for youth in Marquette County. As the board met every goal of the first strategic plan, they met again this winter to write another strategic plan. Out of this planning process, they restructured the staffing from two part-time positions of Executive Director and Artistic Director, into one full-time contractual position of Executive/Artistic Director and Business Manager of Lake Superior Theatre. This is the first full-time position that the theatre has been able to hire.

Mission of Lake Superior Theatre, Inc.

To produce live theatre that provides opportunities for engaging our community while celebrating the Upper Peninsula's unique culture.

Mission of Lake Superior Youth Theatre

To empower young people through performance arts, education and the creation of outstanding theatrical and musical art.

LAKE SUPERIOR THEATRE, INC. **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The Lake Superior Youth Theatre is an autonomous program functioning independently in association with Lake Superior Theatre. As an independently operating program it has a separate mission statement, board of directors, and financial arrangements. The LSYT Board advises and works in cooperation with the Lake Superior Theatre Board of Directors in matters pertaining to the youth theatre program.

Board President

Peggy Frazier
Marquette, MI Retired Pharmacist
Affiliations: Marquette Breakfast Rotary,

Board Vice President

Rita Hodgins
Marquette, MI Retired Economic Development Specialist
Affiliations: President of St. Peter Cathedral Pastoral Council

Board Secretary

Reatha Tweedie
Marquette, MI Retired, City of Marquette Arts and Culture Center Director
Affiliations:

Board Treasurer

Lois Stonehouse
Marquette, MI Accountant, Marquette Charter Township

Monica Nordeen
Gwinn, MI Assistant to the Superintendent/HR, Marquette Alger ISD
Affiliations: First Nighters Board– NMU Theatre,
City of Marquette Arts and Culture Center, Superior Arts Council
Michigan School Business Officials, UP Human Resources Assoc.
Marquette Regional History Center

Jeff Spencer
Marquette, MI Night Auditor, Holiday Inn
Affiliations: Vertigo Theatre Founder

Artistic Advisor

Dr. Shelley Russell
Marquette, MI Theatre Professor, Northern Michigan University
Affiliations: local playwright

Board Representation of Diverse Communities: Our board is fairly representative of the demographics that we serve. Our board is diverse within it's economic, gender, and cultural diversity. There is a lacking of diversity in terms of race and disabilities. However, the lacking may be attributed to the general statistics as demonstrated in our separate attachment. There is a diversity of ages on our board as well.

LAKE SUPERIOR YOUTH THEATRE ADVISORY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Sue Acocks Marquette, MI	Retired Public School Counselor, Volunteer Affiliations: City of Marquette Sister Cities
Gery Anderson Negaunee, MI	Retired Public Schools Band Director Affiliations: Negaunee City Band
Polly Friend Marquette, MI	Retired Arts Administrator, volunteer Affiliations: Marquette Alger Resolution Service, Upper Peninsula Reading Association
Steve Grugin	NMU Music Professor Affiliations: Westerly Winds Big Band Music Director Marquette Symphony Orchestra Board, Principal Trombone, Artistic Advisory, Marquette City Band Director
Rita Hodgins Marquette, MI	Retired Economic Development Specialist Affiliations: Lake Superior Theatre Board of Directors
Lisa Jahnke Marquette, MI	Marquette Area Public Schools Special Education Teacher Affiliations: MAPS Strategic Planning Committee
Karl Numinen Champion, MI	Attorney, Pence & Numinen Affiliations: Marquette Symphony Orchestra, Westerly Winds
Julie Peterson Marquette, MI	Principal, Lakeview Elementary School, Negaunee, MI Affiliations: MI Elementary and Middle School Principals Assoc.
David Shahbazi Marquette Township, MI	Family Practice Physician Affiliations: Marquette Symphony Orchestra, Noquemanon Trail Network, Medical Care Access Coalition, Superiorland Ski Club, Michigan State University School of Medicine.
Reatha Tweedie Marquette, MI	Retired, City of Marquette Arts and Culture Center Director Affiliations: Lake Superior Theatre Board of Directors