



The Lovejoy Hall, 520 West College,  
Jacksonville, IL

### Directors Note:

Thank you for joining us for "Branson Bound!" I need to share that although I've been so excited about this show, I must confess I've also been nervous. Not the normal nervous, this nervous has been different because, well...it's just not the same without KB.

How do you finish a script by a legend and mentor? How do you direct it?

In the time since Ken passed, like others, I was wondering when, or if, I'd even do another production. All who knew Ken and did shows with him have been so privileged...let's face it, we've been spoiled...and blessed. Why? Obviously because of Ken, his faith, his talent, and his love.

Luckily, I think together we found answers to those questions. Ken left breadcrumbs to follow...some were his notes, some found in the suggestions from a creative cast and crew of friends. We've done our best to follow them.

This weekend we get to join together to perform the final show Ken was writing at the time of his passing, the first of what hopefully will be a series of performances of his works. It's the first show at a new venue...it's sort of a new start. Thank you for being here to celebrate Ken's life and continue Ken's legacy of support of original local theatre and a scholarship in his name.

Back to that nervous thing...I wish all of you could have had the experience we've had during rehearsals. Laughs, tears, prayers. Ken's been with us each step of the way.

It's been noted several times by this cast: "Ken's smiling." We trust you will too.

Jim Yale

**Cast in order of appearance:**

**Loretta:** Stephanie Soltermann

**Floyd:** Brad Barnes

**Esther:** Jodi Heitbrink

**Ginger:** Mary Beth Maloney

**Carol:** Carrie Carls

**Richard:** Jim Yale

**Verna:** Tammy Guthrie

**Ely:** Jaxon Dion

**Happy Hank:** Tom Guthrie (Friday & Saturday)

John Love (Sunday)

**Brad Barnes**

I was new to Jacksonville when I auditioned for Ken for "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" and was thrilled to be cast. One night after rehearsal Ken said, "You are holding back on me Brad. I cast you because I knew you were a "stand-out" not a "blend-in", so give me all you've got." Ken only needed to say that once. "That was Ken's gift: recognizing the good in people and encouraging them to give their best." We shared 21 years of Follies, Original Musicals, Church and Community Fundraisers and Speech Contests. And along the way we grew in our faith and friendship. For that I will be forever grateful."

**Carrie Carls**

I have performed in numerous KB productions in many venues over several years. Being from Beardstown and performing in many Jacksonville shows I didn't have time to drive home between work and rehearsal. I was often the first cast member to arrive at rehearsal and would find Ken already there; he was always there to greet the cast. We had quiet one on one time and visited about family, work, or our health-- a sort of 'Joys and Concerns' session. Sometimes I got to be the advisor if he had a question about healthcare, and for all other topics he shared his wisdom with me. If we chatted about my daughter, Parker's, upcoming life events, he would always say 'there's nothing more powerful than a mother's prayer.' I treasure the memory of those quiet times with my friend Ken. I am thankful to Ken for providing the medium for life-long friendships, for the example of witnessing, for the commentary on everyday life that is relatable to everyone, and for inducting me into the "Mutual Admiration Society," where I have spent many hours enjoying the talents and gifts of others because of him.

## **Jaxon Dion**

Ken was humble and giving. He never wanted to talk about himself and he would turn it back on you. Even in his horrible sickness. At church on Sunday the church wanted to pray for him, so the children gathered around the piano to pray. When we got done we all went back to our seats and Ken said, "Pastor, I'm missing my wallet."

If things got sad Ken would make it happy. Ken gave me a great experience with him, and this will be my third play with him. Ken's faith was so strong. You walk up to Ken and you say, "How are you doing?", he would say "Good, how is your life?" No matter how many times you asked him a self-centered question, he would turn it back on you.

One day at play practice we were taking a bathroom break and so I took a picture and I said, "I look ugly!" "You are ugly", he responded with that classic laugh of his.

Ken was a lot of things to me, he was a Christian, an example, a teacher, a director, a comedian, a musician, a listener ... the list could go on and on, but if I had to pinpoint one thing that Mr. Bradbury was to me, he was my friend . . . and gosh I'm going to miss you.

**Tammy Guthrie** has known Ken since she started teaching at Triopia in 1980. Through the years Ken has been a blessing to her many times... including playing bagpipes at her wedding reception in 1983 and Ken asking her to play piano for the high school play in 1984. She is forever thankful that God had her path cross with Ken Bradbury.

**Tom Guthrie** has known Ken for over 35 years, when Ken played the bag pipes at Tom and Tammy's wedding reception. While this "gift of music" was not anticipated by Tom, neither was being cast in Ken's traveling production of Cotton Patch Gospel a few months after their wedding. Ken's gift of music and theatre to Tom, as wonderful as it was and is, is second only to the gift of Ken's friendship through the years. Tom is very grateful to God for the gift of Ken's friendship and the privilege of being a part of helping to carry on Ken's mission and ministry.

## **Jodi Heitbrink**

Depending on my mood, I will either give credit, or assign blame to KB for getting me into theater. Some of my favorite theatrical moments have occurred during the rehearsal process, because so much growth and transformation happens during this time. Ken always provided a safe place to allow for new character interpretations to be developed. It takes courage to begin to take chances, and as a cast member would go out on a limb to try something new, Ken would chuckle, say, "Sweet" or "Cool" and then you would know you were on the right track. I loved and sorely miss the way he always believed I could, even when I had convinced myself I couldn't. I will always thank God and give Him the glory for placing me on KB's path, just like I will always carry with me the nurturing life lessons he taught, and continue to 'give, give, give!'

## John Love

Ken gave me my first taste of real theatre. In third grade he cast me as 'Little Samson' in Samson. This show also provided me with one of my favorite Ken stories to tell; It was a long rehearsal and he had asked me to redo a scene about 300 times (give or take). Finally, I asked, "Is this gonna take much longer? I've got a sandwich waiting for me in my backpack." Me, a third grader, talking back to Ken, this local theatre hero... He could have responded in many ways, this snotty little kid who just dared to defy his request . . . But he taught me who he really was that day by whipping his head back and laughing. He still made me do the scene at least 100 more times, but this simple interaction between us showed me that things don't always have to be so serious; people, experiences, interactions, sandwiches . . . Don't be afraid to rejoice in the life that God has given you. We have so many reasons to, after all. Ken was, and always will be one of those reasons. Love you KB.

## Mary Beth Maloney

I first worked with Ken in 2001 when I was cast in Distant Thunder. I couldn't do the show due to a family illness. He didn't seem pleased at the time and I thought -- I'm toast with this director. Fast forward to 2012. Marian Levine recommended me when she couldn't do a part and Ken gave me another chance in Stoops. It was magic. After that came Potluck and Couplings and now this one. Loved his writing and his style of directing. He was encouraging regarding creativity and kind when giving notes or direction. Love him dearly. He also steered me toward several commercials. I miss him and his friendship. He always told me I was his favorite, once I got back in his good graces.

## Stephanie Soltermann

I first worked with Ken in the 2010 Passavant Follies. From that time on, I said "yes" whenever he called. And fortunately for me, he called a lot! Through the years, I have been a sometime-actress/sometime-musician in several KB productions. Favorite shows include *Genesis*, *Pearl's Place*, and last summer's children's musical *I Wanna Be*--for which I served as music director. I can't even count the number of good friends I have made as a direct result of being involved in Ken's shows—including 5 members of tonight's cast. Love you guys!

## Jim Yale

My first experience with Ken was an audition for "From Behind The Curtain." I was just getting back into theatre when Bill Bauser recommended I try out for this original musical. Late because of a flight delay, I hurried back to Springfield, arriving just as all the other folks at the audition were walking out the door. I had never met Ken before, but he was gracious enough to stay and let me try-out. First, I delivered the worst dance audition in recent history, second was singing, and third was a reading...a story from the show. At the end Ken, talking to someone with not that much confidence, said he didn't know if it was appropriate, but he wanted me to know what I did was beautiful, and I was in. Later on, I got to perform that same story (about missing my mom who would always call the morning after opening night) and Ken let me know that was *his* story...I couldn't believe he trusted it with a newcomer. When that show closed, the cast hung around for hours...simply not wanting the experience to end. In the second experience, KB got Brenda into the act casting her for "Stoops," and since then we've gotten to perform together, with a growing group of wonderful friends...wow, what gifts we've been given. We've been blessed to have so many great experiences in every "Ken Show" we've done.

**Director:** Jim Yale

**Production Coordinator:** Maryjane Million

**Lights and Sound:** Chris Griffith and Steve Tankersley

**Stage Managers:** Brenda Yale and Lynette Guthrie

**Set:** Steve Tankersley, Tom Guthrie, Jim Yale, Dalton Kindred

**Costumes:** Cast & KB

**Thanks to:**

Steve Tankersley, Steve Cantrell, The Source Newspaper,

The Jacksonville Journal Courier, WLDS Radio, Jeff

Stephens, Wes and Linda Hendricker, Brenan Pool, Randy and

Karen Nobis, Lucie Dion, Hannah Werries, and Boyd Music.

**Upcoming Ken Bradbury Shows:**

**Lilacs, Land, and Long-Necked Chickens,**

**Readers Theatre by Ken Bradbury**

Memories of Pike County Farm Families, Celebrating 100  
Years of Farm Bureau in Pike County

June 14, 7:00, United Methodist Church, Hull, IL

June 15, 2:00 and 7:00, Farm Bureau Hall, Pittsfield

June 16, 2:00, United Methodist Church, Perry, IL

Tickets available at Pike-Scott Farm Bureau, 217-285-2233,  
1301 E Washington, Pittsfield

**Ken Bradbury Triopia Music Review**

Celebrate Ken's music from his original productions at  
Triopia. Dates TBA. Fall of 2019

**Bradbury By Bradbury**

The McGaw Fine Arts Series at Illinois College presents this  
encore performance originally performed in 1999 on the  
Sibert Theatre Stage, November 22, 23, and 24.

## **Celebration of Life Presenters Sunday**

Bruce Surratt

Jaxon Dion

Sylvia Burke

Rick Barger

Wes Hendricker, Mike Crawford, Todd Burrus, Tracy Waddington  
Daniel Lepper, and Glen Barber

Jim Yale

Tammy Guthrie

Brock Gwaltney and John Love

Steve Eisenhauer

Brad Barnes

Mary Beth Maloney & Shelley Flickinger

Melissa Mueller

Carrie Carls & Stephanie Soltermann

Dalton Kindred

Jodi Heitbrink

Becky McCartney

John Love

Many thanks to Amy Albers, Craig Albers and Maddy Albers

When asked which was his favorite show

Ken would always reply: 'The next one'.