



Alleman Catholic High School
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‘Stage Door’ opening Thursday (Jan.14) at Dr. Tracy Spaeth Center for the Performing Arts

Alleman’s production of the “Stage Door” has a lot of meaning to its director John Donald O’Shea. It also could be a bit of an education for the very people performing it – if they plan to go on in theatre.

The story may be set in the 1930s in New York, but O’Shea has found the theme regarding young actresses trying to break into careers in theatre is still apt for today. “My daughter is doing just that,” O’Shea said of his daughter, Erin O’Shea, a 2004 Alleman Catholic High School graduate. “So many of the things that (Edna) Ferber and (George) Kaufman wrote into this play Erin and I have talked about. I think it’s a very good representation of what it’s like to try and break into the theatre.”

Opening Night is Thursday January 14 at 7 p.m. at the Dr. Tracy Spaeth Center for Performing Arts. There will also be shows Saturday, Jan. 16, also at 7 p.m., and Sunday, Jan. 17 at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$7 for adults, \$6 for senior citizens and \$5 for students.

It’s clear that the play’s director believes the audience will find it plenty interesting. “Stage Door is kind of a classic in American theatre,” O’Shea said. “You meet all sorts of actress types. One doesn’t bother going to auditions; she just writes letters. Another actress tried to make every possible round on Broadway and all those in between.”

The main character, Terry Randall (played by Claire Schaecher) is known for her acting ability, and has a mother who was an actress. Two other main characters are a young playwright, Keith Burgess (played by Jason Gende) who is so self-absorbed and self-centered that eventually he leaves the New York stage and



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goes out to Hollywood to write scripts. David Kingsley (played by Daniel Holland) is a Hollywood talent scout, who is impressed by Terry Randall.

Other major roles include Jean, (played by Grace Meier) the girl with the pretty face and dancing ability, who goes to Hollywood, has some success, but returns to the stage where she is not as talented. You also have the character of Kaye Hamilton (played by Sarah Menage) who flees an abusive husband and comes to New York and becomes Terry Randall's roommate. Another one is Judy Canfield (played by Noel Huntley), whom he describes as a wisecracking sidekick. "You have all sorts of characters," O'Shea said.

Like all directors prior to opening night, O'Shea has concerns. He mainly wants his cast which includes 22 Pioneers to remember their lines well enough to deliver them with ease while also bringing their character across to the audience.

O'Shea, of course, is plenty familiar to the Alleman faithful, having directed plays here for years. He's happy to make the large donation of his time to Alleman. But there's another big reason for his efforts. "I adhere to something my dad once said. He said everything in life, whether you are a doctor or a lawyer or a salesman is salesmanship," O'Shea noted. "You've got to learn to present yourself in public so you can sell your ideas and sell yourself. The main reason I do theatre is to try and help kids develop skills in using their voices, their eyes, their bodies to sell themselves and their ideas. If they happen to become competent actors and actresses, that's secondary."

Participating Pioneers: Themis Abarca, Alexandra Cajigal, Emily Bauer, Brittani Solorzano, Cloie Jennings, Vanessa Reger, Noel Huntley, Sarah Menage, Zoe Sierra-Ballard, Grace Meier, Isabella Gusse, Kathy Hougland, Gretel Forsythe, Claire Schaecher, Sydner Heller, Collin Solorzano, Cameron Flack, Matt Dilulio, Bailey Bassford, Daniel Holland, Jason Gende, Luis Portillo.

- **Alleman Alumni Relations Coordinator Jim Meenan**