

James H. Clancy

May 1, 1912 — March 3, 1993

James H. Clancy was born in 1912 in Oakland, California. He obtained his B.A. degree in theatre studies at San Jose State College in 1935 and continued at San Jose as an instructor of dramatic literature and history of the theatre. In 1940, he joined the United States Air Force, attaining the rank of Captain, then pursued advanced study at Stanford, obtaining a Ph.D. degree in 1947. He returned to San Jose to teach and serve as director of the University Theatre. Two years later he married Stella Pinoris.

During the next thirty years Jim Clancy established himself as one of the leaders in the American educational theatre, excelling separately and concurrently as administrator, teacher, and director. He contributed significantly to the national professional organization, the American Theatre Association, served (1957-59) as editor of its journal, the *Educational Theatre Journal*, and headed four of the country's most distinguished programs in theatre education.

He left San Jose in 1957 to become professor of dramatic literature and director of the University Theatre at the State University of Iowa. There he founded an experimental theatre which became one of the most important in the country. Within a few years, in fact, his achievement at San Jose and Iowa made him one of the ten American directors awarded grants-in-aid by the Ford Foundation in 1960 to study European theatre direction. Then in 1961 he returned to Stanford as professor of dramatic literature, director of the University Theatre, and director of Graduate Studies, and the following year he was appointed professor of drama at Dartmouth College and director of Dartmouth's Hopkins Center.

In 1967, Jim came from Dartmouth to Cornell to serve as department chair and director of the University Theatre. His major concern at this juncture was to guide the reorientation of the department, which had recently changed from a Department of Speech and Drama to one of Theatre Arts. Central to Jim's reorganization was the establishment of a professional training program in acting and directing and the organization of M.F.A. degrees in these areas to complement the program's already established M.A. and Ph.D. degrees. The establishment of these programs and the advanced students they attracted enabled the Cornell University Theatre to aim at more ambitious and more polished productions than had previously been undertaken, an important gain both for the department and the entire community. Within a short time, the "Clancy era" was firmly underway, and the evidence in interest and enthusiasm among undergraduates, graduate students, and community theatre buffs was

matched only by the steady intensity of activity at the Straight and Lincoln Hall theatres. Jim not only directed frequently (he once said that any director worth his salt directed at least three shows a year), he and his wife frequently joined their students as actors.

The improvement in the quality of theatrical productions under Jim's leadership served, among other things, to make more evident than ever the inadequacy of the University Theatre's aging facilities in the sub-basement of Willard Straight Hall. The eventual construction of the new University Theatre in Collegetown may be seen in significant measure as a response to the heightened awareness of the need for the support of quality theatre that Jim encouraged at Cornell.

Among his further contributions to such theatre, he was instrumental in 1970 in the formation of the Ithaca Summer Repertory, which developed into a joint venture supported also by Ithaca College and the Center for the Arts at Ithaca. The current highly successful Hangar Theatre is the direct descendant of this organization.

During his ten years at Cornell, Jim was widely admired and loved by students and colleagues alike for his infectious passion for and knowledge of theatre, his wit, his Irish charm, and his inspiring uncompromisingly high standards for the art of the theatre. His classes were lively and stimulating, and the productions he directed were always fresh and exciting, and frequently powerful and visually stunning. Upon his retirement he returned to California, and subsequently moved to southern Arizona, where he continued for some years to accept invitations to teach and direct. He is survived by his wife, two sons, a daughter, and grandchildren.

Anthony Caputi, Bert O. States, Marvin Carlson