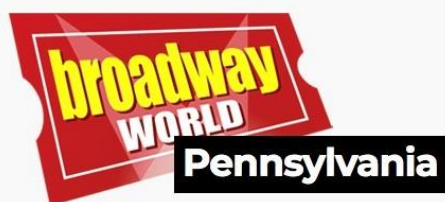


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Lou Volpe, RISE Inspiration, Being Honored Saturday At Bucks County Playhouse

by BWW News Desk Apr. 10, 2018



Lou Volpe, the retired theatre education pioneer, is being given the prestigious Bucks County Playhouse Hall of Fame Award, following such honorees as Angela Lansbury, Oscar Hammerstein and Shirley Jones. Volpe, whose career is the inspiration behind "Rise," the new TV series on NBC, was the brilliant high school drama teacher from Harry S. Truman High School in Levittown, PA, who transformed this Bucks County community with the magic of theater.

There will be a Tribute to [Lou Volpe](#) by Tracey Gatte and his fellow teachers. The song "Seasons of Love" from RENT, one of the shows presented at Harry S. Truman, will be performed by alumni with accompaniment by Graeme Burgan.

Hall of Fame Induction remarks will be made by Hans Weichhart, Chief Relationship Officer at Educational Theatre Association, and [Michaela Murphy](#), Education Director [Bucks County Playhouse](#) and nationally known storyteller, actress, coach and teacher.

** Lou's induction coincides with the 50th Anniversary of [Bucks County Playhouse's](#) Student Theatre Festival, where for more than 30 years, Lou's students electrified thousands of participants with their presentations.

[Lou Volpe](#), now retired, was an educator for 44 years at Harry S. Truman High School in Levittown, PA. He began his career as an English teacher but quickly moved to teaching theatre where he found his true career calling. Over the course of his tenure he directed many musicals and plays. Many of these shows were produced at festivals throughout the USA including 6 mainstage shows and many one acts at The International Thespian Society Secondary School Theatre Festival at The University of Nebraska/Lincoln.

Lou and Truman High School were asked to present the premiere high school pilot production of Les Miserables, Rent, and Spring Awakening by the New York licensing

company, [Music Theatre International](#). These productions gained national recognition for Lou and Truman, with renowned producer Sir [Cameron Mackintosh](#) traveling to Levittown for the opening of Lou's acclaimed production of *Les Miserables* and leading the audience in a standing ovation. In 2014, The Ford Theatre in Washington named Lou "the arts education teacher of the year." He and his son Tom traveled to Washington for the gala in his honor and while there they were invited to The White House to meet [President Barack Obama](#) and First [Michelle Obama](#).

In 2013, Michael Sokolov's book "Drama High," which celebrated and chronicled Lou's remarkable career, was published and named to The New York Times Best Seller List. In 2015, Broadway producer [Jeffrey Seller](#) (*Hamilton*, *Rent*, *Avenue Q*, and *In the Heights*) developed the book, with writer Jason Katims ("*Friday Night Lights*," "*Parenthood*") into the TV series ("*Rise*") that premiered on March 13, 2018 on NBC.

Lou is a beloved and admired theater adjudicator at [Bucks County Playhouse's](#) annual Student Theater Festival, where during his tenure as drama teacher many of his productions performed on the historic stage. Lou lives in Yardley and is devoted to his two twin grandchildren, Lilyanna Mae and Finn Thomas Volpe.

ABOUT [Bucks County Playhouse](#)

[Bucks County Playhouse](#), a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization, is the oldest and largest professional Equity performing arts center in Bucks County. Under the direction of Tony Award-winning producers [Alexander Fraser](#) and [Robyn Goodman](#), the Playhouse provides first class professional theatrical entertainment as well as community events, partnerships and arts education programming for visitors and residents of New Hope, Doylestown, Lambertville and the Delaware Valley.

Located between Philadelphia and New York, [Bucks County Playhouse](#) opened in 1939 in a converted 1790 gristmill after a group of community activists, led by Broadway orchestrator [Don Walker](#) and playwright [Moss Hart](#), rallied to save the building. The Playhouse quickly became one of the country's most famous regional theaters, featuring a roster of American theatrical royalty including [Helen Hayes](#), [Kitty Carlisle](#), [George S. Kaufman](#), [Grace Kelly](#), [Robert Redford](#), [Bert Lahr](#), [Walter Matthau](#), [Angela Lansbury](#), [Bernadette Peters](#), [Alan Alda](#), [Tyne Daly](#), [Liza Minnelli](#) and [Audra McDonald](#) and remained in continuous operation until December 2010. In 2012, the Playhouse re-opened thanks to the efforts of the Bridge Street Foundation, the nonprofit family foundation of Kevin and [Sherri Daugherty](#), and Broadway producer [Jed Bernstein](#).

Since its renovation, significant productions include [Terrence McNally's](#) "*Mothers and Sons*" starring [Tyne Daly](#), which moved to Broadway and was nominated for two Tony Awards, and "*Misery*" by [William Goldman](#) based on the [Stephen King](#) novel which also went on to a Broadway run in the 2015-16 season. Two of the Playhouse's recent productions -- "*Company*" starring [Justin Guarini](#), and [William Finn's](#) "*The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*" -- were named by Wall Street Journal to its "Best of Theatre" list for 2015. The Playhouse's productions of "*Steel Magnolias*" and "*Buddy: The [Buddy Holly](#) Story*" broke box office records in 2016. The record was broken again with its production of "*Guys and Dolls*" in Summer 2017. Thanks to the Bridge Street Foundation and its vision for the New Hope waterfront, the Playhouse is currently in construction as it adds a 4,000-square foot riverfront cafe and bar that will open in 2018.

