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## Lawmaker honors retired Bucks County drama teacher who inspired the hit TV series, 'Rise'

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Standing in front of the iconic Bucks County Playhouse State Rep. Perry Warren, left, presents a citation from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives to Yardley resident Louis Volpe honoring him on his induction into the BCP Alumni Hall of Fame.

NEW HOPE ... State Rep. Perry Warren recently recognized Yardley resident Louis Volpe with a citation from the state for his induction into the Bucks County Playhouse Hall of Fame and his professional career, which served as the inspiration for the new hit TV show, "Rise."

"The House of Representatives is always pleased to acknowledge those individuals who, through their dedicated civic endeavors and professional excellence, contribute to the

well-being of their communities and ultimately to all the people of this Commonwealth," said Warren, reading from the citation. "The House pays tribute to Louis Volpe upon his well-deserved recognition and offers best wishes for the continuation of his many worthwhile and beneficial endeavors."

A graduate of La Salle University, Volpe began teaching at Bristol Township's Woodrow Wilson High School, now Harry S Truman High School, in 1969. In his second year of teaching, he was appointed director of the drama department.

During his 43 year tenure, Volpe led the drama program to become one of the best in America, garnering a reputation for staging challenging performances, such as "Les Miserables" and "Rent." He also was the first to bring "Good Boys and True" and "Spring Awakening" to a high school stage.

Under his guidance, his students were chosen five times to attend the Thespian Festival, a prestigious high school gathering held each summer at the University of Nebraska.

He served as the inspiration for the book, "Drama High: The Incredible True Story of a Brilliant Teacher, a Struggling Town and the Magic of Theatre" by Michael Sokolove, which inspired the new hit NBC series, "Rise," which debuted in March.

The inaugural Bucks County Playhouse Alumni Hall of Fame Award was presented on stage in October 2013 by Harold Prince to Angela Lansbury, with stunning performances by Christine Ebersole, Tyne Daly, Jonathan Hadary, Justin Guarini, Kerry Butler and more. Since that day, Hall of Fame inductees have included Oscar Hammerstein II and Oscar winner Shirley Jones.