

Wilkes University News

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Wilkes to hold 30th Anniversary of the Dorothy Dickson Darte Center for the Performing Arts

Wilkes-Barre -- Three decades of music, theatre and dance at the Dorothy Dickson Darte Center for the Performing Arts will be celebrated during a gala evening on Saturday, October 14, beginning at 8 p.m.

Wilkes University is hosting the lavish event in commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the Darte Center, which has been the University's and the Wyoming Valley's hub for the performing arts since the building opened in 1965.

The event, which is being jointly chaired by James Ruck '78 and Al Groh '41, will feature music, theatre and dance acts excerpted from performances presented in the facility. Additionally, the theatre is being dedicated in memory of Edward Darling Jr., grandson of Dorothy Dickson Darte, who provided the naming gift for the Center. In 1977, at the age of 25, Darling died in a car accident.

"The Darte Center was a gift to Wilkes, but the performances it houses are gifts to the community," said Groh. "Alumni and friends of the arts will fondly remember the productions. It will be a splendid evening."

Rhea Politis Simms '78, Kingston, and Wilkes-Barre native Joel Fischman '73 will host the evening's celebration. Simms is president of Lewith and Freeman Realtors and Fischman is vice president for entertainment at Bally's in Las Vegas.

"The Darte Center has been a hallmark in the community since it was built and is a wonderful theatre in which to perform," said Simms.

-MORE-

1ST ADD- WILKES TO HOLD DARTE CELEBRATION

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Professional opera soprano Christine Donahue '74 will sing "Dich, teure Halle" ("I Greet the Hallowed Hall") from Wagner's "Tannhauser". She will also perform "Far From the Home I Love," a reenactment of her 1974 performance in Fiddler on the Roof.

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Dr. Elizabeth Slaughter '68, will recreate her original 1966 role in Giraudoux's The Madwoman of Chaillot, which was directed by Groh. Slaughter will be joined on stage by Debbie Dunleavy '74, and Agnes Cummings '75.

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The evening's conclusion will include Edward Madden's "Touchstones," narrated by Professor Emeritus Richard Chapline. It will be performed by a combined student and alumni wind ensemble directed by Professor Jerome Campbell.

"The celebration will offer performances for everyone, from Shakespeare to Swan Lake," said Ruck. "And with Wilkes alumni returning to the Darte Center from as far away as Wisconsin and Arkansas, the night will prove to be both nostalgic and entertaining."

Wilkes alumni who have participated in both musical and theatrical performances from the past 30 years will serve as hosts at the gala. The event is part of Wilkes University's Homecoming weekend.

Tickets cost \$25 per person and can be purchased in advance by calling the Wilkes University Development Office at 1-800-WILKES-U, ext. 4300, or (717) 831-4300. A limited number of tickets will be available at the door the night of the performance.

PHOTO:

Pictured is Rhea Politis Simms '78 portraying Guinevere in a 1966 Wilkes production of "Camelot."

THE BEGINNINGS

file

Dorothy Dickson Dart Center for the Performing Arts

Ground breaking was August 11, 1964.

Dr. Eugene S. Farley, president of Wilkes College; Alfred Groh, director of theatre; and Annette Evans and Dorothy Dickson Dart, members of the Board of Trustees, brought a dream and commitment to fruition. Mrs. Dart, whose generous gift made possible the performing arts center and in 1969 the adjoining music building, preferred to remain an anonymous donor. After Mrs. Dart's death in 1969, Katharine Darling gave permission for the building to bear her mother's name.

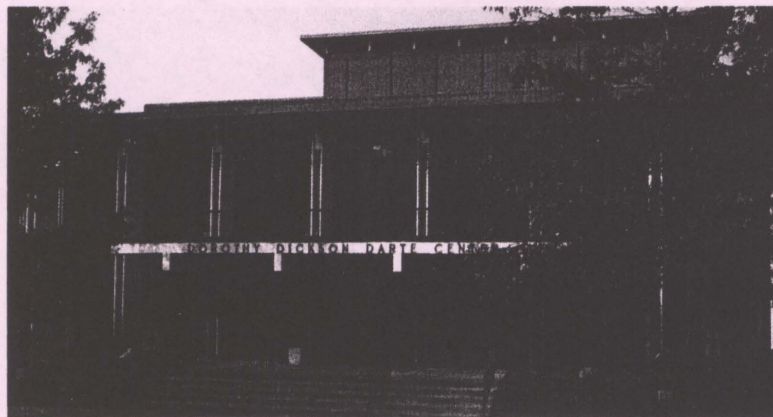
The building was erected by Sordoni Construction Company on the property deeded to Wilkes by the Wyoming Valley Society for Arts and Sciences.

Formally dedicated on Tuesday, October 26, 1965, the Dorothy Dickson Dart Center for the Performing Arts today celebrates thirty years as a creative facility whose scale and size have enabled students to operate all equipment and participate in every phase of theatre productions. A 34-foot-deep stage with a 38-foot proscenium opening and a 9-foot extended thrust stage that serves as an orchestra pit when lowered provide for showing films and for offering and televising plays, dances, lectures, concerts, and recitals. A large carpeted lounge contains crystal chandeliers imported from Sweden and a medieval tapestry imprinted on linen made in West Germany especially for the Center. Leigh Allen, brother of Mrs. Gertrude Doane, then Dean of Women at Wilkes, was the interior designer. Mr. Allen, who was the fashion consultant for the Lever Brothers Building in New York, contributed his services free of charge.



Paul Green, Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright, delivered the principal address at the dedication ceremony. Donald Oenslager, the New York stage designer who served as consultant to local architects Lacy & Atherton, spoke at the dedication dinner at the Hotel Sterling following the program at the Darte Center. When Oenslager retired, Klaus Holm, Oenslager's assistant, joined the Wilkes theatre faculty in 1969 as scene designer and technical director.

The week of October 12, 1965, Cue 'n' Curtain moved from Chase Theatre to its new home. On Sunday, October 31, the Wilkes-Barre Ballet Guild performed "Dedication," an original ballet especially created by Jozia Mieszkowski in honor of the opening of the Darte Center and inspired by the November 1964 Wilkes/Kiwanis production of *The Sound of Music*; the Committee for the Polish Room at Wilkes College presented a concert by violinist Stephan Hero on November 1; on November 20 the first theatre performance was Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story*, a Jewish Community Center production with David Fendrick, Wilkes alumnus and faculty member; and on December 1 the Wilkes production of Albee's *The Death of Bessie Smith* opened with the freshman All-American soccer player from Zambia, Edwin Manda. *Camelot*, with seven performances in November 1966, was the first Kiwanis-sponsored musical held on campus since the



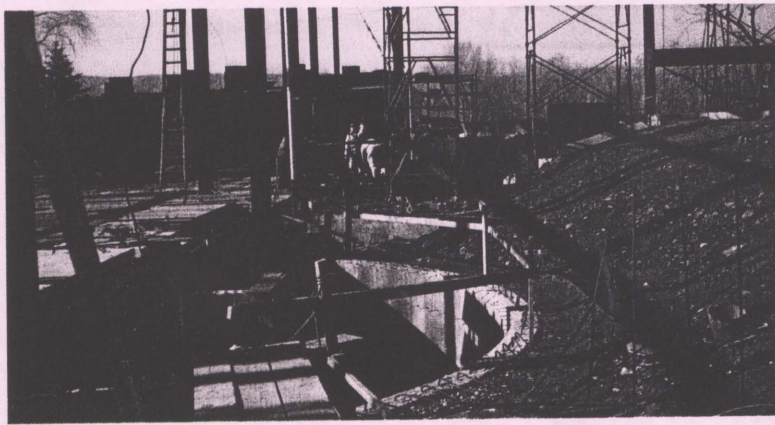
series began in 1954 with *Girl Crazy* at Irem Temple.

The Darte Center, like other property in Wyoming Valley, suffered damage in the flood of 1972. Eight rows of seats were under water. Cylinders and gears in the hydraulic lift were badly rusted. Furniture, carpeting, 249 seats, the preset panel, and lighting dimmers had to be

replaced. Costumes and photographs were lost. Although stripped of some of its glamor, the building withstood the water and mud in majestic fashion.

Wilkes University theatre, in the spirit of the liberal arts tradition, emphasizes the humanities as preparation for a career in the teaching or entertainment professions. The philosophy of the University defines as well the character of the Center: to make educational benefits and opportunities available to all students who can profit from them and to cooperate with community leaders to enhance the social, economic, and cultural life of the region.

With the naming of the theatre in tribute to Edward Darling Jr., who died September 9, 1977, at the age of twenty-five, grandson of Dorothy Dickson Darte, Wilkes University is honoring a younger generation's commitment to an established family tradition of service to others. As production assistant on the staff of the 1976 Summer Theatre Workshop for high-school students and teachers, Eddy participated in a program that helped the campus and the community forge yet another cooperative cultural link in the relationship between town and gown.

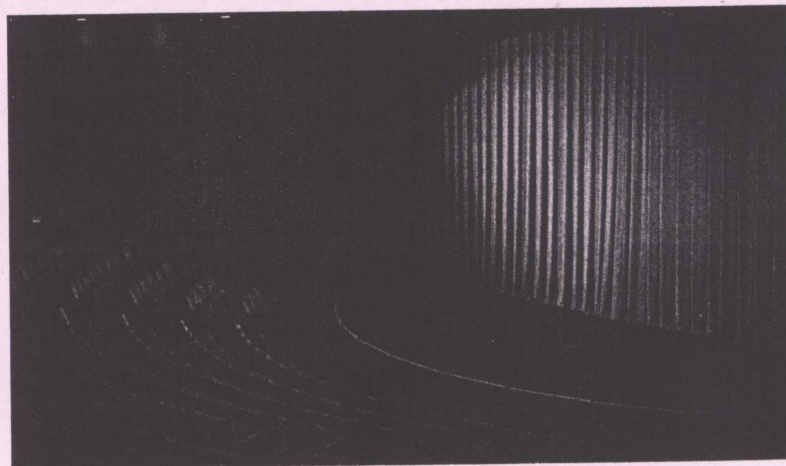


Here's a marvellous place for our rehearsal
This green plot shall be our stage.

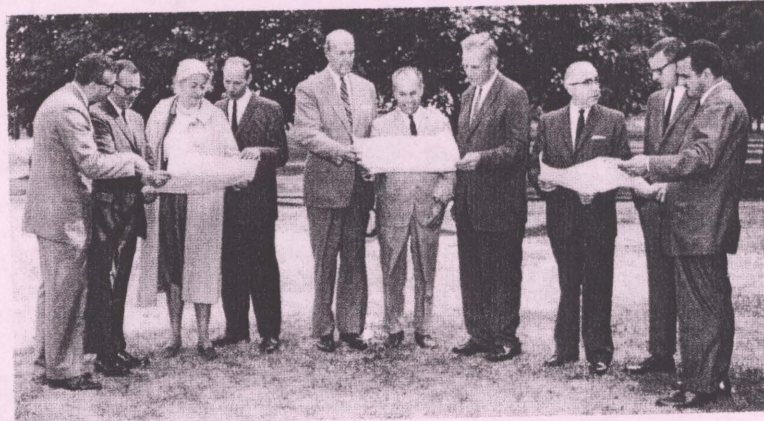
A Midsummer Night's Dream
Act III, Scene i

For thirty years the Dorothy Dickson Dart Center for the Performing Arts has inspired countless numbers of students participating in music, theatre, and dance to make the arts a significant part of their education and their lives. Discovery, exploration, confirmation, and fulfillment—students, faculty, alumni, and members of the community have encountered them all on both sides of the footlights in this “marvellous place” which is truly our “green plot.” The performing arts encourage all of us to release our creative talents and interests so that we lead fuller lives, dream greater dreams, and play a greater part in the drama of life that stretches ahead of us.

James Ruck



Principals at the ground breaking for the Dorothy Dickson Darte Center, August 1964: Dr. Francis Michelini, Walter Mohr, Annette Evans, Alfred Groh, Charles Waller, George Ralston, Dr. Eugene S. Farley, Louis Shaffer, John Whitby, William Gasbarro



In naming the Dorothy Dickson Darte Theatre in memory of Edward Darling Jr., Wilkes University is acknowledging the significant role local family members have played in our past progress. Also, we are saying thank you to the



Dr. Eugene S. Farley with student leaders Cathy DeAngelis, '65, and Simon Russin III, '66, at the ground breaking

next generation for their loyalty and commitment in helping us to better prepare young people for their future.

We wish to express our gratitude to all those who have enabled us to meet our challenges in fulfilling the educational mission of our founding families. We especially want to convey our appreciation to Dorothy Darling Mangelsdorf for so ably representing the younger-and-still-caring generation of Wilkes University alumni and family supporters. This theatre and tonight's program are a testimonial to the human spirit and to what we can accomplish as individuals and together.

Dr. Christopher N. Breiseth
President, Wilkes University

EDWARD DARLING JR.
THEATRE

Named at the

Thirtieth Anniversary Celebration

of the

DOROTHY DICKSON DARTE
CENTER FOR THE
PERFORMING ARTS

in tribute to

EDWARD DARLING JR.

and

with appreciation and grateful thanks to

his sister Dorothy

for their friendship and commitment

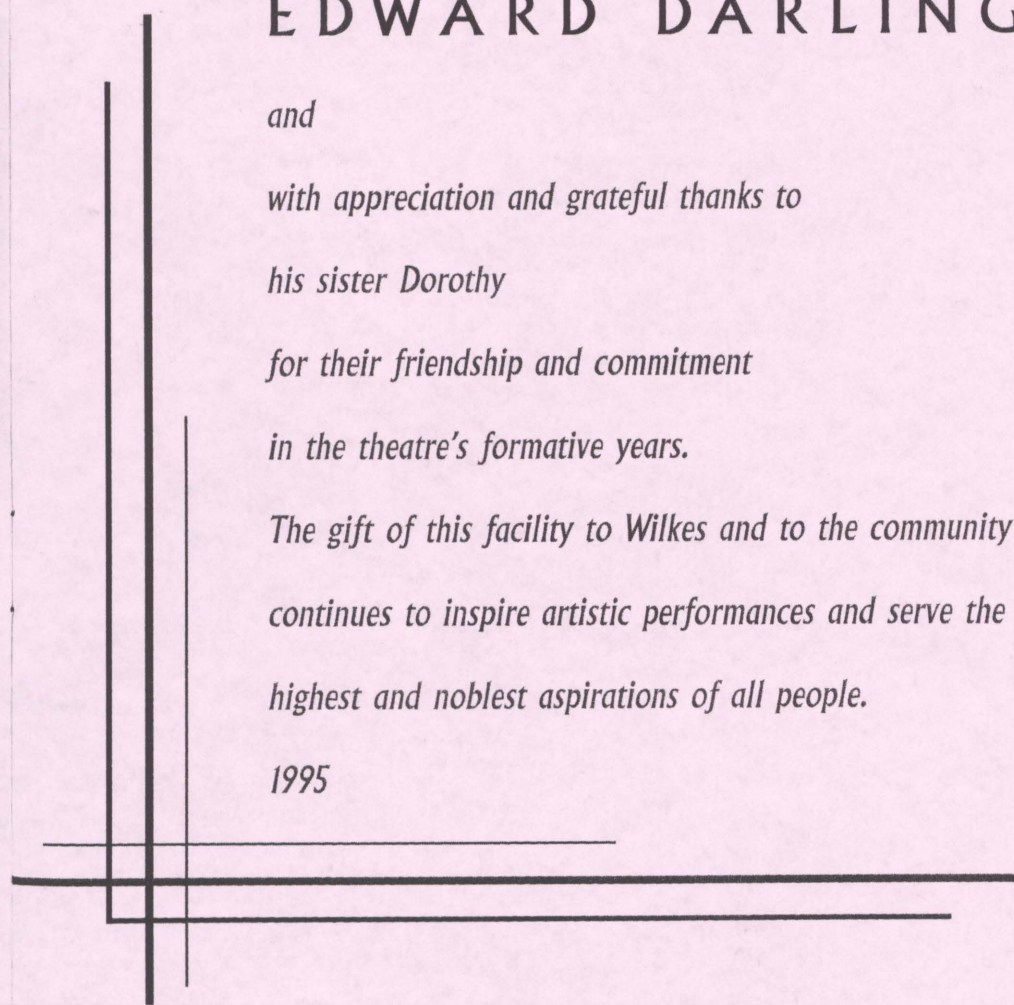
in the theatre's formative years.

The gift of this facility to Wilkes and to the community

continues to inspire artistic performances and serve the

highest and noblest aspirations of all people.

1995

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At 30, Dart Center to offer gala

By MIKE RUBINKAM

Times Leader Staff Writer

WILKES-BARRE — Dorothy Dickson Dart was a "quiet philanthropist" who told then-Wilkes College President Eugene Farley to keep her \$900,000 donation toward a new performing arts center a secret.

Thus in 1965, the new building on South River and West South streets was named, simply, the Center for the Performing Arts. It included a state-of-the-art, \$196,000 lighting system, an orchestra pit on a hydraulic lift, modern dressing rooms and a seating capacity of 500.

Dart's secret legacy was quite a step up from the old performance space, a converted garage.

"She was just a good friend of the arts and of Wilkes," recalled Al Groh, the cen-

ter's first theater director. "She was a quiet philanthropist."

Upon Dart's death in 1969, Wilkes renamed the center for the woman who made its construction possible.

Tonight, the university will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Dorothy Dickson Dart Center for the Performing Arts. The gala, which begins at 8 p.m., will feature re-creations of some of the theater's most memorable performances.

"Alumni and friends of the arts will fondly remember the productions. It will be a splendid evening," said Groh, 74, the event's organizer.

Additionally, the theater is being dedicated in memory of Edward Darling Jr., Dart's grandson. Darling died in a car accident in 1977 at 25.

The performance will include excerpts from Neil Simon's "The Good Doctor"; a re-

prise of the 1977 Wilkes production of Eugene Ionesco's "Rhinoceros"; and the musical selection "Everybody Ought to Have a Maid" from "A Funny Thing Happened On the Way to the Forum."

WYOU-TV Channel 22 anchor Debbie Dunleavy, a 1974 Wilkes graduate, will appear in Giraudoux's "The Madwoman of Chaillot," which was first directed by Groh in 1966.

The 2½ hour show also will feature music and dance.

Tickets cost \$25 per person. A limited number of tickets will be available at the door tonight.

Ten years ago, a 20th anniversary celebration drew a standing-room-only crowd of 600. Groh said he expects similar numbers this time, with people coming from as far as California, Arkansas and Las Vegas.

TL 10/14/95

'Splendid evening' planned for Darte Center's 30th birthday

Three decades of music, theater and dance at Wilkes University's Dorothy Dickson Darte Center for the Performing Arts will be celebrated during a gala affair Saturday, October 14, beginning at 8 p.m.

Wilkes is hosting the event in commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the Darte Center, which has been the university's and the Wyoming Valley's hub for the performing arts since the building opened in 1965.

The event, which is being chaired jointly by James Ruck '79 and Al Groh '41, will feature music, theater and dance acts excerpted from performances presented in the facility. Additionally, the theater is being dedicated in memory of Edward Darling Jr., grandson of Dorothy Dickson Darte, who provided the naming gift for the center. In 1977, at the age of 25, Darling died in a car accident.

"The Darte Center was a gift to Wilkes, but the performances it houses are gifts to the community," said Groh. "Alumni and friends of the arts will fondly remember the productions. It will be a splendid evening."

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"The Darte Center has been a hallmark in the community and is a wonderful theater in which to perform," said Simms.

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Professional opera soprano Christine Donahue '74 will sing *Dich, teure Halle* ("I Greet the Hallowed Hall") from Wagner's *Tannhauser*. She also will perform *Far From the Home I Love*, a reenactment of her 1974 performance in "Fiddler on the Roof."

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The evening will conclude with Edward Madden's "Touchstones," narrated by Professor Emeritus

Richard Chapline. It will be performed by a combined student and alumni wind ensemble, directed by Professor Jerome Campbell.

The celebration will offer performances for everyone, from Shakespeare to "Swan Lake," Ruck stated.

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Wilkes to celebrate theatrical history

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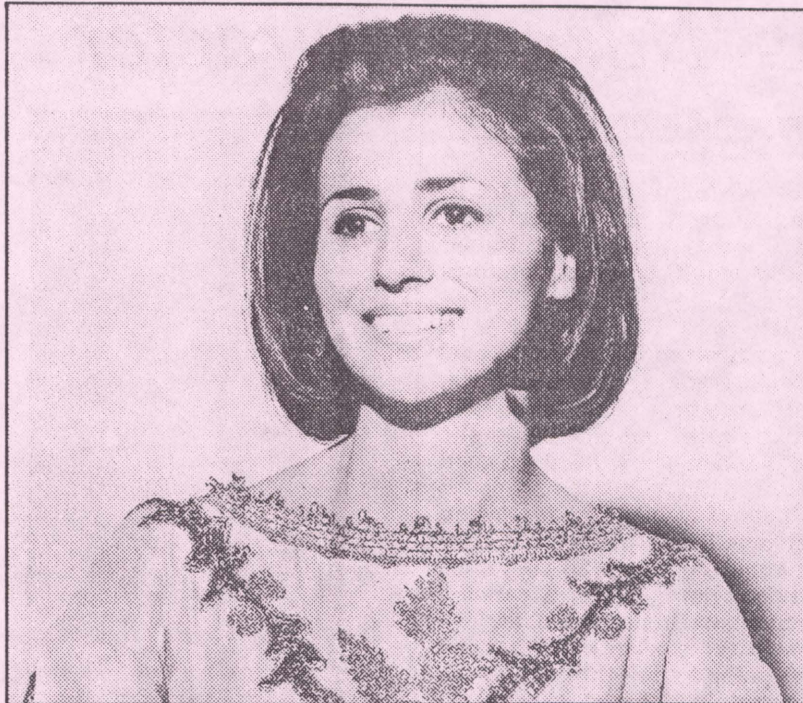
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Darte Center gala to be held Oct. 14

9/15/95

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Simms

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**"A Gala Evening of Music,
Theatre, and Dance,"** a celebration of
the 30th anniversary of the Darte
Center. South and River Sts.,
Wilkes-Barre. Saturday, Oct. 14, 8 p.m.
831-4300.

9/15/95

"Something Different: Cabaret."

STANDARD-SPEAKER

HAZLETON, PA
DAILY & SUNDAY 24,400

FRIDAY
OCT 13 1995

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Next, Wilkes music faculty

Please see DARTE, page 7

Darte

(Continued from page 6)

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WILLIAMSPORT SUN-GAZETTE

WILLIAMSPORT PA
DAILY 33,347

Thursday
OCT 12 1995

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Exhibits

Decoy Exhibit, through the end of October, Slifer House Museum, Lewisburg United Methodist Homes, Lewisburg.

Decoy Carving Demonstration and Exhibit, by Maryland decoy carver Jimmy Frey, 1:30 p.m. Sunday, Slifer House Museum.

Wayne Miller: Photographs of Tokyo, Yokohama, Hiroshima, now through March 10, Penn State University, Palmer Museum of Art.

"Layers of Study," by Ruth Anne Miller, fibers instructor in Mansfield University's art department, now through Nov. 4, Mansfield University, Manser Hall, University Gallery.

Concerts

Kandinsky Trio, "Tales of Appalachia," 8 p.m. Saturday, Penn State University, Schwab Auditorium.

Teen Band Night, for grades 7 and up, 8 to 11 p.m. Saturday, Lewisburg Area Community Center.

Violinist Gregory Fulkerson and Pianist Gary Boerckel, 3 p.m. Sunday, Lycoming College, Clarke Chapel.

Events

Poetry Reading, Ellen Bryant Voigt, 8 p.m. Wednesday, Bucknell University, Bucknell Hall.

ZooAmerica Creatures of the Night, Friday through Sunday, Hersheypark.

Jerry Garcia Tribute, 11 a.m.

Calendar

until park closing Saturday, Indian Park, Pavilion 4.

Dorothy Dickson Darte Center for the Performing Arts 30th Anniversary Celebration, 8 p.m. Saturday, Wilkes University, Darte Center.

Altoona Railfest, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum, Altoona.

Shows

Dance Theatre of Harlem, 8 p.m. Friday, Penn State University's Eisenhower Auditorium.

Films

"Last of the Dogmen," 8 p.m. Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Wednesday and next Thursday, Oct. 18, Community Arts Center.

Darte-Darling Families Honored at Wilkes Dinner



Shown are: Dr. Christopher N. Breiseth, honored guests, Edward Darling Esq., Dorothy Darling Mangelsdorf, Jack Mangelsdorf Jr., Thomas Darling.

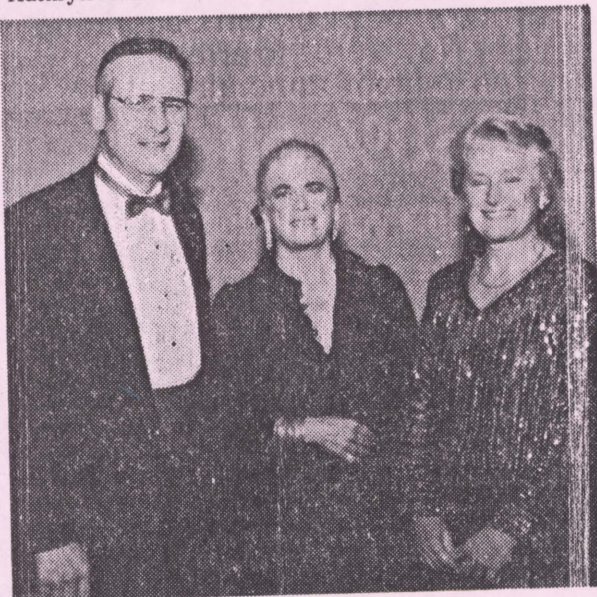


Among guests attending: Dr. Robert S. Capin, President Emeritus, Wilkes College; Mrs. Libby Capin, David Hall, Mrs. Kathryn Hall.

On Wednesday evening, Wilkes College President Dr. Christopher N. Breiseth, the Board of Trustees and their guests paid special tribute to the Darte-Darling families at the College's annual John Wilkes Club Dinner.

The entire program, which included a reception, dinner and a recognition ceremony, was held this year in the Dorothy Dickson Darte Center for the Performing Arts beginning with cocktails at 6:30 p.m.

In addition to honoring the memory of Dorothy Dickson Darte, whose generosity made the building of the Center a reality, the college and its Board of Trustees especially acknowledged the important contributions and continued support that Mrs. Darte's heirs have made since the Center was dedicated in 1965. The building, which has become the cultural hub of the community, was rededicated during a ceremony honoring the memory of Kitty Darling and Edward Darling, Mrs. Darte's daughter and grandson.



Richard Charles, Mrs. Martha Harris, Mrs. Patricia Davies.

Mrs. Darling's daughter, Dorothy Darling Mangelsdorf, and her father, Edward Darling Esq., accepted the plaque. Mrs. Mangelsdorf said, "Twenty years ago my grandmother had a dream... a place where presentations in all performing arts could be enjoyed by the community. She also had a great devotion to Wilkes College, through whom she made the dream a reality. Tonight we celebrate the fulfillment of her dream."