

I've known Michael since I joined the Village Players and Clearlake Chorale in 1991. His presence is woven through the tapestry of my life over the last 22 years because of our common thread of friends and interests. I worked with Michael on many, many shows with the Village Players, most of them as stage manager. He always had a good eye for direction and how things should look on stage, but he was also a consummate actor albeit a nervous one until time to go on. He had a wonderful bass voice and he sang "Sunrise, Sunset" at Corky's and my wedding reprising his role as Tevye in "Fiddler on the Roof". It was a moment I'll never forget.

Michael was a terrific teller of stories-after shows, after meetings, after rehearsals, on the bus-wherever. Most of the time these were funny stories about things that had happened to him. He wasn't afraid to poke fun at himself. Sometimes months would go by without seeing Michael except in his little Smart car on the road. Then all of a sudden there he would be-offering to direct, act or be on the board of directors of Village Players. I always enjoyed his company and was grateful for his input.

I'll miss him and I know I'll be wondering where he is when he hasn't shown up in a few months.

Diane Ducret Mork

As a friend of Michael's and a former colleague (I was H.R. Assistant at Huggins Hospital for 16 years), I am donating in memory and honor of him. Michael and I always shared the love of theater and it was a privilege to work with him at Huggins as he was a dedicated and loyal employee. He will be greatly missed by all who were fortunate enough to call him a friend. May happy memories of the heart help you all through this difficult time.

Mary Louise Eaton

There was man that I sincerely liked, respected and had many great times with in the theater. Another "One of a kind" that has left us all too soon.

Mark Pierce

Michael Wilkes was one-of-a-kind. His passion was anything to do with the theater. He was a talented performer with a wonderful speaking and singing voice. Remember his Tevya and Henry Higgins?

As a director he knew what he wanted from his actors and kept plugging until he got the effects he wanted. His great sense of theater in all its aspects was evident in the many plays he directed for The Village Players. He loved designing and building sets, leaving the set decoration and props and costumes to others so he could concentrate on the whole picture.

He loved going to plays and movies. He often attended plays in other communities, even to Boston and occasionally to New York. He had a treasure trove of stories about old movies. He remembered the smallest details and loved to talk "theater".

Michael loved to eat. On the occasions when the gang went out to eat, Michael often ordered whatever looked interesting on the menu. He brought yummy take-out to the cast parties.

Michael was president of VP when we bought the old Masonic Temple. I remember the day we passed papers and toasted the event with sips of champagne from paper cups.

There was much work to be done before we could use the theater for performances and Michael pitched in with other volunteers for do-it-yourself projects. He was up on the stage roof with the guys, hammering in new shingles so we could deal with the mushrooms-on-the-stage problem.

He was a generous supporter of our fund-raising to get our building in shape.

He served on the Board for many years and was a Board member when he died.

Michael was a funny guy with a wry sense of humor.

It hardly seems possible that he is no longer with us. He was such a part of Village Players. We will all miss him terribly.

Willie Mork

Please accept my deepest sympathies to your organization upon the untimely passing of Michael Wilkes. In my capacity as a volunteer at Huggins, I had lunch a few times with him, and he was certainly enthusiastic about the Village Players.

David Bentley

Being a relative newcomer to Wolfeboro and to The Village Players, I met Michael for the first time only about four years ago. Within that short time I had the distinct pleasure of being directed by him, collaborating with him as an actor and working beside him as a fellow VP board member. Through it all, I must admit that it was our heady conversations after a rehearsal or board meeting that I enjoyed the most and are what really allowed me to get to know a little bit about Michael as a person. His unique combination of qualities made him a force to be reckoned with: Intelligence, talent, candor, humor, eloquence, passion AND kindness. I had the honor of experiencing that force. For that, I will be forever grateful. I'll miss you, Michael.

Christian Boudman

Michael was not my only friend but he was my best friend. I have wonderful memories of he and I going to movies and dinner every Sunday and various plays and concerts at other times during the week. I shall miss our stimulating conversations during our drive times. (imagine the voice of Charlie Chan-his favorite) "I am truly saddened to hear of the passing of one of the most brilliant men I have ever known. Very very sorry indeed!

Frank Bader

Michael was the director for my very first production with the Players in 1998. He also directed "Run for your wife" the show in which he cast me opposite my now husband Tom. Michael THANK YOU so much for casting us and teaching us all that it took to put together such great shows for so many years! I will never forget you!

Especially when a cast member to a show goes out for a makeup check, with the same makeup they had on the night before, but tonight there wasn't enough lip or eyebrow. You had a great view of how things should look from sets to make up, and everything in between. You were too young to leave us, but it is an amazing tribute, seeing how many people's lives you touched in yours.

Delina Bickford

I'm deeply saddened to know we've lost a really good friend and important part of our village Players family. I'll miss his humor, his talent and dedication. What a loss!

Dan Charlton

I just finished reading some of the earlier comments on the Memorial page. I have so many fond memories of Michael from our many mutual musical endeavors over the years. I will never forget his playing drums in a priest costume for the 1993 staging of "Nunsense". What a pair we were....Sister Mary Catherine and Father Michael!! He was always able cover in those little "unexpected" moments and never missed a beat. Let me close by saying simply: Best. Tevye. Ever! If the VP is indeed doing this show again in 2013, someone has mighty big boots to fill.

Cathy Marker

My husband, Clark Cowen, who passed away 8 years ago on Valentines Day, 2005 thought Michael Wilkes was terrific! Michael was a dedicated worker for the Village Players as well as at Huggins Hospital - as was Clark. WHAT A LOSS! Michael was SO young! VERY SAD!

Joan Cowen

I will always remember Michael Wilkes as an absolutely wonderful Tevye-- my first show with The Village Players. While the rest of the cast was nervously gabbing and giggling before the curtain rose to "Fiddler on the Roof," Michael would always be off by himself at the end of aschool corridor -- getting into character, I presume. I still can hear him singing "If I Were a Rich Man" -- and he certainly was -- both in talent and in theater know-how. He'll be greatly missed by us all.

Kathleen Whitehead

What can I say. I am at loss for words with the sorrow I am feeling right now. I've known Michael since 1986 and worked with him in all aspects of the theater. He always encouraged me, praised me when I needed it, and trusted me with some major roles like Adelaide in *Guys and Dolls* and Dolly Levi in *Hello Dolly*. He was a mentor to me and we always had a great theater relationship. We worked together in numerous plays and on the board.

Michael was president when we purchased the theater some time ago and helped make it happen. He will be greatly missed at the theater, at the hospitals where he worked so hard, and around town by all his friends and family.

I am truly grieving his sudden death and he has left us much too early. He will always be a "star" to me.

Diane Sullivan

I met Michael Wilkes in 1994 when I joined Clearlakes Chorale. I was lucky enough to have him as a director when I was a part of Pirates of Penzance in 2004. What a talented man he was! I always enjoyed seeing him perform on The Village Players stage.

Linda Williams

Although I haven't seen Michael in a couple of years, my memories are strong. I've been his wife, daughter, sister, housekeeper, and cheering section backstage. He was such a presence even when he said nothing. I know people come and go and are missed or not, but Michael's absence will be felt for years to come.

Nadine San Antonio

I am stunned by Michael's passing. He directed a couple of shows I was in and also was in a couple of shows with me. He was a theatre person

in every phase of any show he participated in. He was a real professional and a gentleman and he will be so missed by everyone.

Gay-Ann Cooney

I have many fond memories of working with Michael. He was a great actor/director, friend. Michael was very dedicated to The Village Players and will be sorely missed.

Bonnie Bergeron

We are all "rich men" for having known Michael.

Barbara Neville Wilson

This is such a shock, and so sad. Michael also directed the first show I ever did w/The Village Players-"Arsenic and Old Lace". So glad to have known him, and worked w/him...he will be sorely missed!

Joyce Wood

I remember us breaking up and not being able to get through the scene during rehearsals for My Fair Lady when he was shoving marbles in my mouth and making me talk. Also I remember a time when he felt he was invisible to women. Michael, you were far from invisible. : ) (ed. Note – there is a photo of this happening on our past productions page <http://www.village-players.com/plays/myfair/myfair.html>)

Patricia Fuller Nelson

In 2002, Michael directed *The King & I*, my first show with VP. He took a chance on an unknown and changed my life forever. Thank you, Michael, for being the catalyst for so many of my most treasured friendships and memories. He was not one to dole out compliments lightly, so you always knew if he offered praise, you truly earned it. We'll save you a seat in the audience, Michael, and no, we won't expect you to hang around afterward and tell us we were brilliant... unless we were!

Phoebe VanScoy-Geissler

My fondest memory of Michael Wilkes will always be the one of when I chose him for my directorial debut of "If Men Played Cards Like Women Do". I will never forget how he struggled with that part- He wanted to get it right and would ask my opinion and try over and over again to "understand" how a woman would do this part- but still be a man. I probably gave him the one part that puzzled him incessantly. Finally, he just threw his hands in the air and said "I just have to do it as I would do it"! And he did- with great gusto. He was a wonderful man with an infectious laugh I will never forget. You will be missed Michael, sorely missed.

Theresa Crowell

As a relative newcomer, I was honored to be part of Michael's final two shows. He was a pleasure to work with on all aspects and though I only knew him a short time, I found him to be very genuine and truthful. The Village Players Theater is filled with great people, but today, that number is one less. However, we were all better for having worked with him and surely as we move on with future productions, he will remain alive inside the walls of the theater. RIP Michael.

Joshua Spaulding

Dear Michael,

You are one of the founding members of "The Village" that raised me. You were wisdom when I needed it, someone to laugh with, a teacher, mentor, and best of all friend. I will cherish all the years I've had with you....always.

Megan Rohrbacher

Keep thinking about "green bean casserole", and how much Michael hated it. And for one VP potluck a few years back at the theater, at least three of us made that dish, just to see if he would try it. ... he didn't touch it and went straight for the crock pot of meatballs I made! : ) - good memories.

Jeannette D'Onofrio

Great actor. Great Director. Great Set builder. Great Drummer. Great Person.

James Cross

Anyone else experiencing this kind of almost "flashback?" These tiny random Michael thoughts and memories keep popping into my mind: This morning's was how Scott and I made sure that one of the layers of our wedding cake would be NOT chocolate because of \*his\* allergy to chocolate (which I hear disappeared years later.)

Rosemary Lounsbury

Mr Wilkes,

I didn't have the pleasure of knowing you as well as most of the people who call Wolfeboro, and the Village Players, home. However, the short time I did spend in the building with you was a pleasure. You were clearly as driven and 'professional' as anybody I've worked with, and your passion for theatre was contagious.

It has been said over and over again these past 24 hours, but it is obvious from the outpouring here, you will certainly be missed. May your final curtain call be peaceful.

Keith Belanger

Michael.....all I can say is thank you

Russ Ellis

Today our town and our little theater experienced a very big loss. Michael Wilkes was truly one of those "Larger than Life" people and he will be missed.

Mandy Ferriman

It's a sad day today, after hearing of the loss of Michael Wilkes. He was an amazing man and such a huge part of the Village Players. I had the privilege of working beside him in 2000 on "Rogue of the Railway". Even when he wasn't on stage, he was always a part of something at the theater. Michael, your presence will be greatly missed. Thinking today, of all the many Village Players that have been and are in my life. You ALL are inspirational to me. May Michael Rest in Peace. Love to you all.

Kim Brennon

I can not put into words how our friend, Micheal Wilkes, presence will be missed in our Village Players family. He made himself a part of every aspect of the theater and in doing so a teacher and mentor to many, including me. I hope he knows that is he is one of many who gave me the reason for doing what I do every day.

Athena Ellis

Michael....you are gone much too soon. There are not enough words that could even express how much you meant to everyone in the theater community. Thank you for being such a wonderful light in each and every one of our lives. We all love you very much and you will be very sorely missed. ♥

Kaylin Dean

I met Michael when my mom directed him as Henry Higgins in My Fair Lady for the Pittsfield Players and thought he was very handsome; I had the opportunity to be directed by him when the Pittsfield Players put up Noises Off and thought he was brilliant...and a little scary; I got to be on stage with him briefly during the VP's production of Don't Drink The Water and realized he was funny; and finally had a second chance to be directed by him in VP's Leading Ladies last summer and discovered a mutual respect. It was always Michael's reponses to the shows I was involved in that seemed to matter most. I can't believe he's gone.

Meggin Dail

I joined the Village Players as a young teenager - and there was a group of "grown ups" who always made me feel welcome, included, respected - they encouraged me - and I never felt like "the kid in the group" because of them. (I realized, many years later of course, that I didn't always know all the inside jokes and ins and outs of the politics and relationships - but I never forgot feeling like I was part of the group.)

Michael Wilkes was part of that group of "grown ups" who made me feel so very much a part of the Players. I am thousands of miles away, and a whole lifetime away from those days, but I am truly saddened to hear of Michael's passing. I am thinking of his family, and of you all, my extended VP family. I have nothing but warm, fuzzy memories today.

Jenna VanValen

A very lovely light in community theater was extinguished last night. Michael Wilkes will be long remembered for his outstanding contribution to the Village Players and as a supporter to many other theater companies including Perform It! We will miss you Michael!

Jan Croteau

The Granite Stage extends sympathies to the family and friends of Michael Wilkes, who passed away last night after suffering a heart attack. Michael was a member of with the Village Players of Wolfeboro.

The Granite Stage

Michael Wilkes . . . I never got to work closely with him, but his impact on my friends and family will be missed at the Village Players. God grant him rest eternal.

Keith Belanger

Lost another friend today: Mike Wilkes, glad to have known you; mentor, director, actor and friend. So lucky to have experienced your direction this past summer and for all the kind words and encouragement that meant so much.

Meggin Dail

Michael Wilkes. Friend and mentor. My Yoda. Miss him I will

Jay Sydow

I wish I could be there to add my tributes to Michael. He directed the first VP I ever did and several others thereafter. I worked on sets with him and spent many hours talking various subjects. He was passionate about VP and showed it. I too will miss him.

James Cross

Michael, it was a pleasure to have worked with you. Your talents will be missed. Rest peacefully.

John Savage

Rest in Peace, Michael Wilkes. (My first "Tevye.")

Rosemary Lounsbury

My heart goes out to family and friends of Michael Wilkes. I was so lucky to have such a kind man and great director to inspire and guide me in my first on stage production. Memories were made to forever be cherished.

Eric Martin

Dear Michael, I first met you as Tevia in the production of *Fiddler on the Roof* many many moons ago. You were the best Tevia I've ever seen!! We will miss seeing you and your gentle sweet smile. My heart is so very saddened and goes out to all your many friends and family. You will truly be missed ♥

Sherrie Hoover

I have known Michael since 1985 when I produced *Play it Again, Sam*, which Michael directed. In the almost 30 years since. we have worked and played together many, many times and I am finding it very hard to accept this loss. Sometimes he directed me, sometimes I directed him. I am working on his memorial for our website and when you see the list of the shows that he directed, starred in, or worked on, you will understand what a huge loss this is to The Village Players. He is gone too soon.

Carol Bense

I miss Michael; seeing him in the cafeteria and around the hospital. I will miss him when I go into the Theatre again. This is a great loss to the Players. So sad.

Judy Breuninger

I met Michael in 1987 but first worked with him when I directed him in *Fiddler on the Roof*, 1988. Often post-rehearsal, he and I were both "wired" and would chat for an hour or more because neither could just call it a day...I learned a lot from him. When we chatted last November about the 2013 *Fiddler*, he was all over it and couldn't wait to be part of it. You WILL see him, and some of his influences in the 2013 *Fiddler*. I promise.

Rosemary Lounsbury

I got to know Michael when we sang together in the Clearlakes Chorale. I still remember the moment when he accompanied us on the drums in some sort of jazz/swing number. It was fabulous. Now I'm always trying to get my son to "play like Michael Wilkes." And when watching *Fiddler on the Roof*, I always think, "Well, Michael did that better." Michael, feel our love and enjoy that better place you're in. We will miss you a lot.

Stefanie Marsh

How saddened I am to learn about Michael's passing. He was a director with an even temper and great character. Later in life I could always count on seeing Michael at [The Barnstormers Theatre](#) as I came out of my stage manager booth. He'd be sitting on the aisle seat in the balcony about two rows up and we'd always have a quick conversation about something theatre. I will miss that as I return north this year. My thoughts are with The Village Players and his family.

Darrell Keene