

April 30, 2010

To the Board of Directors of Broom Street Theater:

This letter is my official letter of resignation from my position as Artistic Director of Broom Street Theater. It will be effective on July 31, 2010, though if necessary I am willing to stay on longer while the Board works to find a replacement.

Since the gift of my heart attack I have looked at my life and examined my priorities. I have been processing this for a long time and believe that now is the time. I first started with this theater as an actor in 1983, as a director in 1985, as a writer in 1993, and as the Artistic Director in 2005. I started my work here because it was a great place for me creatively. I need at this time in my life to return to my creative roots. Right now I have several books I am working on, several plays, and other volunteer work. I cannot fulfill myself creatively while burdened with the minutiae of bureaucracy.

I also need to consider my health. The job can be very stressful, particularly with personnel issues, which every group has. I feel I have dealt evenly and fairly with everyone, but it has sometimes tired me out. Even with leaving this I am still overcommitted in my life, but I do not want to follow in Joel Gersmann's footsteps all the way to the end.

For the most part I have enjoyed my tenure as the Artistic Director of this vibrant and creative theater. This place has been my home since 1983. I've been the Artistic Director since 2005. While there have been challenges, meeting those challenges has been extremely rewarding.

When Joel Gersmann passed away in 2005, after running the theater for more than 35 years, many people thought that the theater would die with him. Nobody expected it to continue, let alone thrive. But those of us who were there during the transition period from an autocracy with Joel at the helm to the return of a member-driven collective, worked our butts off to ensure that not only would the theater survive but that we would leave it in a place where it could survive no matter who left or who replaced them. I believe we have achieved that. I believe that five years

is enough time for me to do the work I needed to do in this position.

I am proud of what we have accomplished in the last five years. Many of our accomplishments were enumerated when it was my turn to speak at the annual membership meeting in February. But I want to restate them because I am leaving this position feeling proud of all that we have done. This is not an exhaustive list, and it is definitely all of us together who have done these things:

- Revised and updated the bylaws
- Returned the theater to a member-drive organization
- Reintroduced annual meetings
- Introduced more women playwrights (1 in 2006, 2 in 2007, 3 in 2008, 2 in 2009, 5 in 2010; Joel had one in 1995 and one in 2002)
- Created a more diverse membership (Sol Kelley-Jones' play alone had greater diversity than most seasons in the past)
- Had our first-ever African-American Board President
- Had our first-ever female Board President
- Landscaped the front of the building
- Replaced the old bleacher seating with new seats
- Redid the floors
- Created an Artistic Director's newsletter
- Became more involved in the neighborhood and started going to neighborhood fairs
- Won multiple awards, including Madison's favorite theater in *Isthmus* and *Madison Magazine* (1<sup>st</sup> time ever)
- Operated in the black every year since 2005
- Fixed the driveway
- Held our first-ever playwriting contest
- Gave writing slots to 14 first-time Broom Street playwrights (most of those first time ever, and that's through 2010–2011 has not yet been announced)
- Started showing videos of old shows
- Held a movie screening for the first time in years
- Brought in a traveling production for the first time in a couple decades
- Celebrated our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary; it was a year-long celebration; as part of it we received commendations from the City of Madison and from Dane County

- Received articles and publicity from every major Madison media outlet
- Worked with Dan Levin on a film biography of Joel Gersmann (still being worked on as of this writing)
- Created an art exhibit on the life and work of Joel Gersmann which was named as one of the best art shows of the year in 2005
- Restored the signage on and in front of the building
- Had the work of several of our playwrights get published or produced elsewhere
- Created a building use policy
- Built an actors' patio behind the building
- Created a personnel policy manual, which includes a harassment policy and more
- Introduced ticketing
- Instituted reservations
- Changed the Sunday night performances to Sunday matinees
- Instituted welcome meetings with all new productions
- Instituted directors' meetings
- Started a mentoring system for new directors
- Brought in several writers not affiliated with the theater
- Instituted online ticket purchases
- Fixed the basement
- Introduced a seminar series (first one to be held this summer)

I was a part of all of these changes, but so were most of the current Board members and many, if not most, of the current members. This much and more can be accomplished in the next five years with the people who are already members. I believe I did my part in getting us to this point. I'm okay with someone else taking their turn now.

Much love,

Callen