

DORIS PARDINGTON

Founding Member of The Little Theatre Of Winston-Salem

My nomination is Doris Pardington, who, with other prominent members of the community, met on the evening of October 3, 1935, to organize a theatre that would go on to entertain and enrich generations in the Triad: The Little Theatre of Winston-Salem. Her tireless efforts over the next 36 years to bring quality performances to the community, encourage children and teens in the theatrical arts and provide opportunities for volunteers from every walk of life to participate in live theatre are without question the reason The Little Theatre succeeded then and continues to do so today.

From the beginning, Doris was a mainstay of both the organization and the community. While she taught speech and drama for a brief period at Salem College, she became quite occupied with a growing family (4 children). Her theatrical interests in the 1930s and early 40s, as such, were confined to acting and directing with the growing Little Theatre. Rehearsals, in fact, often took place in the Pardington's living room, along with the Trotman House on Fifth Street and a drafty barn on Robinhood Road (performances were held in a number of facilities, including the West End School, Reynolds Auditorium and the second floor space over the Moxley Piano Company).

With the US entry into World War II and the drafting of radio announcers, station WAIR persuaded Doris to join their staff. In 1942, Doris was the first woman announcer in the city and state and the first woman program director at a radio station. During these years, she continued to work actively in many capacities of The Little Theatre, helping to nurture and grow the organization.

As it grew, providing increasingly popular plays with more and more volunteers, The Little Theatre established a reputation for giving back to its community. From performances taken to schools in rural areas, to War Bond campaigns and help given to the Red Cross, the Children's Home, churches and other civic organizations, The Little Theatre – and the people behind it – showed their heart for their community.

In 1945, Doris Pardington became the first woman president of The Little Theatre's Board of Directors and in 1946, its first two-term president. In 1950, she left her position at the radio station to take the position of managing director – the first to be employed by The Little Theatre on a full-time, professional basis. From this time, until her retirement in 1971, Doris directed every Little Theatre production. In addition to this, she devoted a great deal of time and energy to working with children in Little Theatre sponsored workshops and in the productions of the Children's Theatre Board.

If it had not been for the passion Doris had for all facets of theatre work and the devotion she had for this theatre, The Little Theatre would not be where it is today, 84 years later. Therefore, having worked with Doris in the past, both on stage and off, I highly recommend Doris Pardington for The Winston-Salem Arts, Culture and Entertainment Memorial Walk of Fame.