

June 21, 2013

TO: Steve Rasmussen, Superintendent
Ron Thiele, Associate Superintendent
Michelle Trivunovic, Executive Director, High Schools

FROM: Josh Almy, Principal

RE: Naming Liberty's New Auditorium

I'm happy to provide some background on Jill Landback, former drama teacher at Liberty High, and to share some of the input we received from the community regarding naming our new auditorium after her.

Jill Landback was an original staff member when Liberty opened its doors in 1977. She was the originator of the Patriot Players Drama Club, as well as taught theatre and Drama courses at Liberty. Over the course of her career at Liberty, she built a drama and theatre program from the ground up until her retirement in 1996 when she handed the baton to Katherine Klekas.

In 1990, then ISD Superintendent Kateri Brow honored Jill with the ISD's Superintendents Award for Excellence. Even after her retirement the program continued to build, and all total has now garnered more 5th avenue nominations and awards than any other high school in Washington. All of this was made possible by Jill Landback and the program that she built over almost 20 years.

When the Liberty High School Theatre Naming Committee met, it was decided that the first and most important step was to solicit the community for input. An ad was taken out in the Issaquah Press as well as an e news message for suggestions. Over the next month, the amount of requests to name the theatre after Jill Landback was overwhelming. Just a few pieces of those responses are as follows:

- I was a student at Liberty High School from 1978 to 1982. I was involved in numerous activities and groups at Liberty, including being active in student government, National Honor Society, Computer Club, and Spanish Club, and I was honored to be one of the valedictorians for the class of 1982. Of all my activities during high school, those that I remember most fondly, and those that had the deepest and longest lasting impact on my life all have one common denominator: all were led by Jill Landback. Memories of my participation in plays and other drama-related activities, and in the Thespian society (which I served as president), and the classes I took from Mrs. Landback are those that I, and I know countless other students who had the honor of knowing her, treasure the most.
- I know Jill poured her entire being into the Liberty drama program — putting in long hours and putting up with a bunch of rambunctious high schoolers. For that alone they should name the theater after her. In my current career, I've given a number of invited talks at

companies, universities, and conferences. I've spoken at Apple, IBM, Google, Yahoo, Qualcomm, Lockheed Martin, Texas A&M, and Indiana University. This September I'll be giving a talk at a conference sponsored by Microsoft. Jill had a huge impact on my life, one of the most influential people in my life. The skills I learned in high school from Jill have served me well, and I know I'm not alone.

- In 1985 Jill escorted me and a small group of Drama students to London for a tour of the city and surrounding sites and to take in a few plays. This was my first trip abroad (and on an airplane). It was a marvelous time and I will always remember Jill as one of my favorite “roommates”.
- Three years later I went on a backpacking trip around Europe for 2 months. Three years after that I volunteered for two months in Calcutta, India. Fast forward 28 years and I am currently serving in the Peace Corps in Macedonia.
- I am forever grateful to Jill Landback for her love, generosity, sense of humor, patience, wisdom, and understanding. I am especially grateful to her for inspiring in me a love of travel, adventure and desire to serve others.
- I cannot think of a better honor for Jill, or for Liberty High School. Jill touched several generations of students at Liberty. She played an integral part in shaping the children of the Issaquah School District into well rounded, conscious adults who are making a difference in the lives of others.

After receiving over 50 letters and correspondences from community members, we found that they were essentially saying the same thing, that Jill Landback was worthy of having the new theatre at LHS named after her. Committee members who know Jill or know her legacy supported the idea, and it was decided that the recommendation of the group would be to name the new theatre “Landback Auditorium” due to the space being used for so much more than just drama.

I look forward to answering any questions the Board may have about this recommendation at the June 26th board meeting.

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