

Rochester Theater Hall of Fame: Adele M. Fico

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City Newspaper congratulates Adele M. Fico, the inaugural inductee into the Rochester Theater Hall of Fame. For more than 50 years Fico has worked as an actor, director, producer, stage manager, public relations-marketing director, and in other capacities in the local theater scene. She currently encourages the next generation of local theater talent in her role as the director of the arts center at the Rochester Central School District's prestigious School of the Arts.

Fico first became engrossed by the theater at the age of 13, when she was a freshman at Mercy High School. "I was walking down the hallway," she says, "and I felt a tap on my shoulder. It was a nun. She said to me, 'Hi, my name is Sister Pious, and you need to be in my play.'" The show was "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Fico auditioned, got the part of Starveling the Tailor, and "from that point forward never looked back," she says.

Since then Fico has worked with Blackfriars Theatre, Geva Theatre Center, TYKES - Theatre Young Kids Enjoy, Rochester Children's Theatre, Shipping Dock Theatre, JCC CenterStage, the Mercy McQuaid Players, University of Rochester, Great Atlantic Picture Company, and Great Lakes Productions, among others. Memorable roles include Mama Nonna in "Joey and Maria's Comedy Wedding," Babe in "The Queen of Bingo," Mae Peterson in "Bye Bye Birdie," and Queen Aggravaine in "Once Upon a Mattress." She was also a founding member of the comedy troupes A Fish in Your Pants and EstroFest, and directed the first-ever show at The Downstairs Cabaret.

Fico says that the highlight of her career thus far has been doing her one-woman show, "May God Strike Me Dead...If I'm Telling a Lie!" which she started writing in 2002 and opened in 2004; it has played on several area stages. "It was the realization of a dream I'd had for many years," she says.

Fico remains passionate about the stage, and in encouraging up-and-coming actors and theater professionals. "Don't give up," she says. "Don't ever let someone tell you that you can't do it. Don't ever let somebody rain on your parade. Don't let somebody diminish you in any way, because there's always something that can be done. There's always room for any talent in the theater, whether it's building something, or painting something, or being on stage, or moving scenery. So don't let anybody tell you no."

The Rochester Theater Hall of Fame was created this year by City Newspaper to recognize the accomplishments of the local theater community. It will honor the actors, directors, set designers, musicians, stage managers, etc. who have dedicated their careers to working on or behind the Rochester-area stage, inspiring others through their efforts.