

Biographical Resume, Barbara Leigh, Ph.D., Co-founder/Producing Director Milwaukee Public Theatre; Creativity Unlimited Free-lance Artist, Teacher, Grants Writer

Barbara Leigh is an originating artist, born in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. In 1971 while obtaining a Ph.D. in French Theatre from the University of Wisconsin-Madison she founded the London Theatre Workshop, Ltd. and studied Mime in London and Paris, with workshops in Marcel Marceau's School and that of Etienne Decroux.

Upon her return from study abroad, she became the Associate Director of the Wisconsin Mime Theatre in Spring Green, Wisconsin. In 1974 she completed her Ph.D. dissertation, *Jacques Copeau's School for Actors, L'Ecole du Vieux Colombier*, and she and Mike Moynihan co-founded Friends Mime Theatre—renamed Milwaukee Public Theatre in 1992.

As Artistic/Producing Director of MPT Dr. Leigh co-created/produced over 100 original theatre and video plays and revues with the company, touring and giving workshops and talks on acting, ensemble creation, diversity, healing and disability issues throughout the country and in Canada. Ms. Leigh's work was supported by grants and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Wisconsin Arts Board, Milwaukee County and many private foundations, corporations and individuals.

After suffering partial paraplegia in a serious accident in 1987, she became very active on issues dealing with healing, disability and diversity, including creating *The Survival Revival Revue*, a one-woman musical comedy, and *ADA*, about the Americans with Disabilities Act. Working with Karen Stobbe, she developed workshops and performances that focus on Alzheimer's Disease and the trauma and challenges faced by caregivers. Dr. Leigh also performed in and produced *Unclothed...the naked truth—Stories of Sexual Abuse and Healing*. She also collaborated with NAMI to tour a high-school version of *Pieces, In My Own Voice*—about mental illness and suicide prevention, and with the Center for Applied Theatre to create and tour shows dealing with violence prevention, drug abuse and staying in school.

Dr. Leigh has worked as an Artist In Education throughout Wisconsin since 1975 and has developed hundreds of workshops and collaborative performances, including keynotes for diverse clients. From 2009-2016, she co-produced **Cultivating Community Through Public Art** projects, including the **All-City People's Parade**—a community arts project inspired by the work of In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre in Minneapolis. The goals of the Cultivating Community projects were to bring people together across barriers of race, class, culture, age and ability.

As a member of Milwaukee County Commission for Persons with Disabilities Dr. Leigh initiated "Tap the Potential"—free-to-the-public performances by artists with disabilities. Although Milwaukee Public Theatre ended its 45-year run in 2019, Dr. Leigh continues to work as an actress, teacher and free-lance consultant through "Creativity Unlimited", collaborating with Quasimondo Physical Theatre, Optimist Theatre and Dance Circus. She recently worked with AbilityFestUSA/ every1in—a virtual event with/for persons of all abilities. She is also an advisor to Milwaukee County CAMPAC, continues to serve with the Milwaukee County Commission for Persons With Disabilities and is available for keynote and other presentations on *Humor and Healing* and *The Art of Healing from the Patient's Point of View*, which include excerpts from *Survival Revival Revue*.

Dr. Leigh is also an advisor to Milwaukee County CAMPAC and is an advisor to "Bee the Change"—a theatre arts program to bring awareness to the plight of our pollinators, currently facing 70% extinction rates. Programming will take place this Spring with Pollinator Parades at the First Unitarian Church on Sunday, April 24th and Friday, May 20th by youth from Hillside Boys and Girls Club at Golda Meir School, following an original theatrework by students at the school. Events are free and open to the public.