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Finding Aid to the M. Joy Erickson Papers

Erickson, M. Joy

M. Joy Erickson, Papers, 1981-1997

1 linear ft.

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OVERVIEW

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Provenance: Donated by M. Joy Erickson, 2006 (Acc. 592, Acc. 597)

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Citation: [Identification of item]. M. Joy Erickson Papers, University Archives, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

BIOGRAPHY

M. Joy Erickson's artistic vision has made a lasting impact at NDSU. Whether as costumer, research associate, director, lecturer, senior lecturer, advisor, NDRT Secretary, managing director, business manager, assistant director, or grant writer, Erickson's dedication to theatre has always guided her work. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Biological Sciences at Goucher

College [1967] in Towson, Maryland, and her Master's of Philosophy in Biology (Molecular biology and biochemistry) from Yale University [1969]. Erickson married Moorhead native D. Bruce Erickson (Whom she had met at Yale while singing with the Bach Society) and moved to Fargo, where she earned a teaching certificate and began teaching at Agassiz Junior High; she also directed theatre.

Erickson had been involved in theatre from first to 10th grade, and remarked that "once I started directing and designing costumes, I realized that theatre was where I really wanted to be." (*Spectrum*, 3/19/1982). Erickson had promised herself that by the time she was 35 she would be doing something she really enjoyed. So after teaching life science and directing the drama program at the junior high school for five years, Erickson attended a summer workshop for school drama directors at SU, and decided to enroll and get a degree in theatre, mainly for costume design. She "intend[ed] to go back to the public schools to teach." (*College of AHSS Alumni Newsletter* 2005 p 16)

Erickson began work on her degrees at North Dakota State University (NDSU) in 1980, and finished with a M.S. in Textiles and Clothing and a M.A. in Speech and Drama in 1983. Within a year of enrolling, Erickson became manager of the Little Country Theatre (LCT) costume shop. While working on her Master's degrees, Erickson was involved in numerous plays. Her first costume work at NDSU was for *Dracula* in October of 1981. For her final Master's project, Erickson designed and constructed costumes for the May 1982 production of *Candide. Bus Stop*, in January 1986, marked her directorial debut.

Beginning in August 1982, Erickson was hired as the costumer for the Red River Dance and Performing Company (RRDPC), where she worked until April, 1984. In September 1983, she began working as costumer for the LCT, and held the position until the following September (1984). In the summer of 1984, Erickson taught elementary stage makeup for students at Trollwood Performing Arts School (TPAS).

From 1984 to 1986, Erickson was employed by NDSU, in the Department of Textiles and Clothing, as a Research Associate. She designed a computer cataloging system for the department's historic costume and textiles collection to facilitate its accessibility. Simultaneously, in September 1984, Erickson was hired as a lecturer in Theatre Arts. She taught classes, developed an upper level sequence in theatrical literature (as well as a three-credit version of costume construction), and designed costumes for Main Stage, North Dakota Repertory Theatre (NDRT), Annex Theatre, Opera Theatre, and Opera Workshop productions. Erickson also directed main stage performances, advised students, served as Secretary for the NDRT Advisory Committee (1984-1987), and supervised the costume shop. Erickson held the position until December 1988 when she was promoted to Senior Lecturer in Theatre Arts.

Erickson was involved in free-lance professional work throughout the 1980s, and did work for the RRDPC, Fargo South High School, and TPAS. She has presented papers at numerous conferences, and has held professional memberships and offices in the United States Institute for Theatre Technology (USITT)

In 1990, NDSU added managing director of theatre to Erickson's list of titles, but after three years, the workload became overwhelming; in the previous nine years, Erickson had never enjoyed a school

holiday, and was constantly cutting and designing costumes for the upcoming production. Erickson wanted one nine to five job, and in 1993, Don Stowell (former Director of the Fine Arts Division, NDSU), named Erickson his business manager. Later, current director John Miller named her assistant director. She was with the division during a long period of financial problems, as it was “chronically in the red;” but Erickson’s skills helped her overcome the limitations. She brought with her an “analytical mind,” experience in management, and skills honed from graduate accounting classes. Resourceful and prepared, Erickson kept the division in the black and provided faculty with the tools needed to perform their jobs. (*College of AHSS Alumni Newsletter* 2005 p 16)

As the division’s primary grant writer, Erickson helped start many important projects, including the NDSU Governor’s School for the Performing Arts (summer program for high school students) and NDSU’s children’s theatre productions (Children’s Museum at Yunker Farm, Fargo, ND). She also managed all contracting and business for NDSU’s Festival Concert Hall which included performances of the Fargo-Moorhead Opera and the Fargo-Moorhead Symphony.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS

The collection contains oversized drawings, sketches, photographs and swatches from *Candide*, *Hayfever*, *The Robber Bridegroom*, and *Quilters*.

SEPARATIONS RECORD

BOX AND FOLDER LISTING

Box/Folder	Content
1/1	<i>Candide</i> drawings/swatches – May 1982
1/2	<i>Hayfever</i> drawings/swatches – summer 1985
1/3	<i>The Robber Bridegroom</i> drawings/swatches – summer 1985
1/4	<i>Quilters</i> photograph – February 1990