

CSM Presents Theater Instructor Jan Adair with Adjunct Excellence Award

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CSM recognizes Theater Instructor Jan Adair with its 2020 Adjunct Faculty Excellence Award

SOMD - The College of Southern Maryland (CSM) honored Theater Instructor Jan Adair, of Hollywood, with the college's 2020 [Adjunct Faculty Excellence Award](#). The award, which was presented prior to [CSM's](#) Winter Commencement Jan. 15, 2021, honors adjunct faculty for outstanding achievement in classroom teaching, contributions both to their department and the college, professional development and community commitment.

Adair has been an adjunct instructor at CSM for 14 years and before that spent 30 years teaching theater and English in the St. Mary's County school system where she is well-known for building the renowned theater program at Chopticon High School. Starting first as an adjunct English teacher, Adair moved to CSM's theater program when an opening became available in 2012.

"I've had the pleasure of working with Jan as Chair for six years, during which time she has been the senior theater instructor," wrote Acting Associate Dean of Liberal Arts and Chair of Visual and Performing Arts Stephen Johnson in his nomination form. "Jan has had excellent feedback from students throughout this period. As the lead general education instructor, Jan has consistently been flexible and willing to take on extra duties when it was for the good of the program."

According to Johnson, in fall 2019 and with the departure of the full-time theater instructor, Adair stepped up to fill in some needed slots for the Introduction to Theater class. She soon began the task of assessing the Theater 1010 class for its upcoming review. During the 2019-2020 school year, she continued working on the course and began collaborating with other theater adjuncts on curriculum design. Then COVID-19 arrived and Adair stepped up and immediately agreed to serve as Interim Coordinator for the theater program in summer 2020.

"She has proven to have boundless energy and dedication to the theater students throughout this time," Johnson said. "Now tasked with reviews for the remaining theater classes, she has led the adjuncts in the redesign of classes and a long overdue reassessment of the theater/dance degree plan into CSM's course pathways. She consistently receives high marks as a coordinator from our senior acting teacher, as well as the first-time costume, makeup, and stage management instructors. Jan has definitely made a mark on CSM's theater program and general education offerings."

"I built my course with a desire to share my love of theatre with students who might never actually get on a stage," Adair shared. "My goal was to develop educated, discerning consumers of a uniquely interactive form of storytelling."

Adair said she is also proud to have had a hand in deepening the online presence of the theater classes at CSM almost 10 years ago.

"It was quite a challenge to translate a theatre course with its exploratory classroom activities to an online format, while still maintaining the essential objectives of discovery," she shared. "I developed some innovative ways to get my students to achieve objectives in some of the practical areas like acting and stagecraft. For example, to explore effective acting, we learn about the technique, but then watch master actors in performance to see the techniques in action. I also have found some resources from professional designers to bring the tech areas of theatre to life."

Since moving to a fully remote learning environment in March 2020 due to COVID, Adair said she again had to raise the creative bar to help students find ways to attend live theatre.

"I have had students attend tribal dance demonstrations in Africa and Indonesian puppet theatre in Myanmar," she said. "I have assisted students who were TAD [temporary active military duty] in Las Vegas, and in South Carolina, to find local theatre productions that fit our criteria. When confronted with a military student who was working as a missionary in the Arctic Circle, I found alternatives for him which I since have used with students who were home-bound with illness and throughout COVID. These students would have never completed the course without the changes and I have applied the format changes to further accommodate students with disabilities.

"The online environment has never been a big deal for me, and I think my students really enjoyed it," Adair added. "When you give students the license to be creative – and online is different – it always amazes me the different ways students deliver. It has been a challenge and a pleasure to meet each and every situation so that my students could succeed," Adair said.

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