



Jack A. Hensley

November 14, 2011

Dr. Jack A. Hensley was born in Cape Girardeau and taught at Southeast Missouri State University for 36 years. He earned a Bachelor of Science at Southeast Missouri State University and began his teaching career in 1951 at Northeast Missouri State University, where he met his wife, Leita, at the beginning of fall semester 1957 and married her by the end of it. He completed graduate degrees at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Yale School of Drama, teaching for two years at Stephen F. Austin State in Texas before returning to teach theater history and speech at SEMO. When he bought a house on Timber Lane in Cape Girardeau in 1966, he observed that everyone else on the street had a first initial and a middle name on the mailbox, so he mischievously followed suit, putting J. Alton Hensley on his, where it remained for the next thirty years. He helped plan the construction of Rose Theatre at SEMO and directed 27 plays there, from *Candida* and *Romeo and Juliet* in 1964 to *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* and *Man of La Mancha* in the 1970s, ending his long run with *Carnival* in 1982. Theatre patrons enjoyed his affable manner at the theatre box office window, where he coordinated ticket sales for shows his colleagues directed. During his long and successful career at SEMO, Jack was a member of the State Council on the Arts theater advisory panel for 12 years, and served on the Academic Council, Alumni Council, Commencement Committee, Executive Committee of the 1973 centennial celebration, the Board of Publications and the Faculty Emeritus Committee. He taught in

London during the first year of the Missouri London Program in 1984. After retiring, Jack and Leita traveled to Greece, Turkey, Egypt, Italy, and frequently to England, in between trips all over the U.S. and Canada, visiting friends and family, touring theaters, and seeing plays. They shared their love of live performance with children and grandchildren; a week in London with them might include fourteen shows, with a matinee and an evening performance every day. Jack's last trip was to New York City in August to see the Royal Shakespeare Company. He was a patient teacher, a good croquet partner, a charming conversationalist and a thoughtful person who occasionally could not resist a joke; when he was glad to leave a party, he would heartily shake the hand of the host and say "Thank you. I enjoyed myself." He is survived by his wife Leita, of Cape Girardeau; his daughter Jeanne Hensley Griggs, son-in-law Ron, and grandchildren Eleanor and Walker of Mount Vernon, Ohio; and his son Allen Hensley, daughter-in-law Margaret and grandchildren Claire and Sylvia of Crystal Lake, Ill. A memorial service will be held at Centenary Methodist Church in Cape Girardeau on Saturday, Nov. 26 at 10:30 a.m. Gifts can be made to a scholarship in honor of Dr. Hensley at the Southeast Missouri State University Foundation, or to Centenary Methodist Church.

Tribute Wall

MS

“ We were 4 when Jack entered the family & he was so much fun! He coined "outlaw" but he is really an "in" law. He will be missed by the Fairhead family!

Mimi Fairhead Shipp - May 12, 2015 at 12:00 AM

RE

“ Jack was an excellent teacher able to see issues from various viewpoints. He was also a delightful colleague with an impish sense of humor that manifested itself in slightly wicked postcards, cleverly written memos and great stories in the teachers' lounge. Our prayer is that memories of their shared experiences and laughter will provide some comfort to Leita and family at this time. Ray & Carolyn Ewing

Ray and Carolyn Ewing - May 12, 2015 at 12:00 AM

JR

“ We have such fond memories of Jack. Such a pleasant, delightful gentleman. With sympathy, Mike & Joyce Renaud

Joyce Renaud - May 12, 2015 at 12:00 AM

JE

“ My thoughts and prayers go out to Jack's dear family and friends. He was my professor and colleague and a dear, wonderful man that I feel very fortunate to have known.

Jane Edwards - May 12, 2015 at 12:00 AM

MH

“ I am one of those distant relatives whose ancestors left Cape and never looked back, more or less. Glenn S Hensley (Sr.) was my grandfather. Wish I had known Jack - my wife would have loved sharing interests in the theatre with him. My condolences to all his survivors.

max hensley - May 12, 2015 at 12:00 AM

RB

“ Our thoughts and prayers are with you during this difficult time.

Rita Grisvard and Lexi Grisvard Buente - May 12, 2015 at 12:00 AM

BH

“ Dear Aunt Leita, Jeanne, Allen and Family: Please know you are all in our thoughts and prayers. We share in your sadness and loss of our Uncle Jack. Love, Jeanette and Brian Hensley

Brian and Jeanette Hensley - May 12, 2015 at 12:00 AM

TK

“ Jeanne: I was sorry to hear of your father's passing. I hope all is well with you and yours. Best regards. Theresa King-Hunter

Theresa King-Hunter - May 12, 2015 at 12:00 AM

KK

“ Dr. Hensley will always be remembered by me as supportive, encouraging and positive. I felt good about myself when speaking with him. His life will be remembered by many. Karen Kight

Karen Kight - May 12, 2015 at 12:00 AM