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Erika Mantz

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UNH Junior's Play Chosen as One of the Best in the Country

By [Erika Mantz](#)
UNH News Bureau

February 15, 2001

DURHAM, N.H. -- University of New Hampshire junior Lindsay Joy had the 10-minute play she wrote for a class selected as one of the eight best in the country in the Northeast regional competition of the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival last month.

"Life, Love and a 7-11" was performed before an audience of hundreds in the festival's regional competition held at UNH the last weekend in January. In its 32nd year, the festival promotes theater in college and universities and celebrates the best work. The competition is not limited to undergraduates, so Joy competed against graduate students from most of the Ivy League colleges in the country, as well as the best conservatories. More than 18,000 students from 600 academic institutions participate each year.

"This is a tremendous accomplishment," says David Kaye, the UNH assistant theater professor who taught Joy's class. "To have any play produced is extremely difficult, but to have a play rise to these ranks says a great deal."

Kaye, a playwright himself, attributes a lot of Joy's success to her theater training and ability to observe human nature and human behavior. "Her talent is she's able to bring that to the stage as an actor, and now as a playwright. I believe we've never had a playwright selected for the region let alone go on to the Kennedy Center."

In April, Joy will travel to Washington, D.C. for the national competition.

"I've always loved writing, but I don't think I ever let myself believe I was any good at it," she says. "I think

writing almost bares more of you. A part of me would rather be nude on stage with no lines than to speak my own words.â

Acting since she was a junior high student in Hudson, Joy said she believes the root of good acting is to reveal as much truth and honesty. âBut, the rejection that goes along with acting is easily explained. It's easy to justify with superficial reasons, like you just weren't right for the part because your hair is the wrong color. With your words, it works or doesn't work because of what you wrote. There's nothing else to blame.â

In addition to being a full-time student and an active member of the theater community, Joy works full-time as a waitress and bartender at The Library Restaurant in Portsmouth. She returned to UNH last semester after two years off for personal reasons. It was during this time she started writing.

âI auditioned and got into Boston University, but I couldn't afford it,â she says. âMy freshman year I felt I was better than UNH, but I've come to realize there's a freedom here that I wouldn't have elsewhere. I would have had to decide one or the other: acting or playwriting.â

Kaye believes Joy's award is âa great testament to the virtues of liberal arts.â

âIf Lindsay was a student at the Boston Conservatory or NYU or even Boston University, she'd be an actor. She would be isolated to that and get tremendous classes, but she wouldn't be pushed to develop all of the other seeds of her abilities and talents. I think, in her own way, she had an advantage.â

Joy agrees.

âI'll be sitting in a weather class hearing what happens in an equinox and I'll think "what a great idea for a play," or file the information away because maybe one day one of my characters will be a scientist and he'll need to know this,â she says. âI'm here (at UNH) to experiment and explore, to try new things. I have the freedom to fail, and the forum to try things like playwriting.â

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