

On October 2, 2005 at the annual Illinois Theatre Association Convention in Chicago, our own Marty Lazarus and Todd Koepl received the ITA Professional Division Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Association and to Illinois Theatre and Theatre Education. In her announcement of the award to the members gathered, Tina Salamone had these words to say:

*Dignity.
Compassion.
Balance.
Integrity.
Vision.
Excellence.*

Accolades often attributed to those theatre artists whose work is clearly visible: actors, directors, authors. - Not so much with the tech people.

Oh, designers, sure Not so much for the guys who run the cables. These guys run cable and a whole lot more.

If you're not in business to make money, you have no business doing business. So, yes, they have to generate revenue and yes, attendance at the High School Theatre Festival and the annual convention are great ways to spend marketing dollars, network and be good businessmen.

But, they don't have to offer hours of free advice; or use some of their factory "gimmes" having ITA logo gobos cut; or create mood lighting at our convention cocktail parties and late-night cabarets; or work so patiently with tech theatre students across the state; or step in when no one else will to call in favours on behalf of the all-state show, be it taking on design and tutelage, rustling up theatre cronies to flesh out a production team or documenting and promoting the process in industry publications.

Oh yeah. And besides all they do for theatre students and high schools and colleges throughout the state, they also do some lighting and stuff for a couple of other little spots like the Rialto Square Theatre, the Lyric Opera and Millennium Park.

For all they do and for who they are, it is my great honor to present the last professional award for excellence to Marty Lazarus, Todd Koepl and Team Chicago Spotlight.

In accepting the award, our own Marty Lazarus presented this to the congregation of ITA members:

Creating an environment for collaboration, growth and learning is not a new concept. Each of you probably does this every day as part of your regular routine, perhaps without even realizing that you do it.

To be good at what we do, we have to find a way to create this collaborative environment in our business. When I purchased Chicago Spotlight from Peter Mitchell, I learned that a solid business base was an important prerequisite to creating this environment. We have to have the resources - the money, the people and the gear - first, and then we would be equipped to help others with the latest ideas and technology. Our company gets closer and closer to this goal every day.

Students, teachers and professionals need access to this technology in the entertainment equipment field to be able to practice their craft and enhance their creativity.

It is for these reasons that all of us at Chicago Spotlight are pleased to support the ITA and the Illinois High School Theatre Festival in whatever ways that we can. This is an organization and an event that we believe in and we share benefits with.

I am especially proud and appreciative that Todd is also being recognized here today. With the support of our company, Todd continues to improve his skills and his craft.

I am flattered and very pleased to accept this award personally and on behalf of all the employees of Chicago Spotlight.