

## APPENDIX B

### Letters of Support

Barbara Jo Williams  
15 Braeside Drive  
Homer, NY 13077

Dr. Karen B. Zimmerman  
Chair, Performing Arts Dept.  
SUNY Cortland  
Cortland, NY 13045

March 2, 2002

Dear Karen,

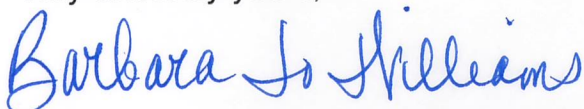
It is unusual, in my experience, to be able to sing the praises of a person one has come across in the course of life and theater, so I am taking it upon myself to do so. I have had the great good fortune to have worked with Kevin Halpin in Gypsy and Into The Woods and to have been a privileged audience member for the other productions he has directed at SUNY Cortland and at CRT.

Kevin approaches each project with vision and fashions every aspect of the project to realize that vision. I was familiar with all the plays and musicals that Kevin has produced since coming to Cortland, and yet I believe that I have had the opportunity to experience them anew because of this talented man.

Rehearsals under Kevin's management are educational experiences. As he directs, he also teaches. Kevin treats each person as an individual and a student who has come to learn. In any production rehearsal time can be arduous and occasionally stressful. I have found that Kevin maintains his composure and focus even when the pressure is on.

Kevin Halpin is an asset to SUNY Cortland and to the students who come under his tutelage. I consider myself fortunate to count myself among the latter.

Very sincerely yours,



Barbara Jo Williams

TO: Personnel Steering Committee  
Department of Performing Arts  
Tom Hischak, Chair

FROM: David Neal

DATE: March 6, 2002

RE: Kevin Halpin  
Continuing Appointment

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I am writing in support of Kevin Halpin's candidacy for continuing appointment in the Department of Performing Arts. The comments made below are intended to supplement those already submitted previously regarding his promotion.

Having worked with Kevin on *Gypsy*, as well as on the current production of *Godspell*, I can say that Kevin approaches his work with thorough preparation and total commitment. He has an astonishingly comprehensive knowledge of musical theater repertoire, history and style, and this historical awareness informs his direction in each production.

Kevin also displays a strong commitment to teaching, and to ensuring that the students in the program receive a comprehensive training in all of the disciplines of musical theater. He succeeds in striking a balance between a serious dedication to the work at hand and a rehearsal atmosphere in which the cast can enjoy the process of exploring aspects of their roles. He has consulted with me concerning repertoire choices for the upcoming season, and has consistently expressed a desire to choose repertoire that not only gives the students a broad range of experience in terms of styles but also that is appropriate to their voices and development.

The excellent reviews received by recent productions confirm the high quality of productions done under Kevin's direction. The fact that the performances are at such a high level in a program that is still very young is an outstanding achievement. I support Kevin's application for continuing appointment.

To: Department of Performing Arts Personnel Committee  
Thomas Hischak, Chair  
From: Howard Lindh  
Re.: Continuing Appointment for Kevin Halpin  
Date: February 26, 2002

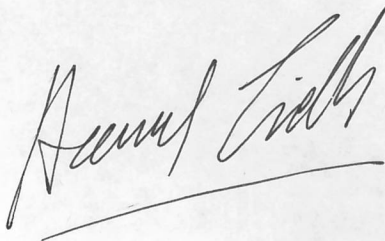
I wholeheartedly endorse Kevin Halpin's application for continuing appointment. Kevin is--simply--one of the finest directors I've had the privilege to work with. He is also an exceptional teaching-director.

Kevin and I are now in the midst of our seventh production together. I have had the opportunity to provide with him with scenic, lighting, properties and sound designs. In each and every instance Kevin has demonstrated a profound understanding of the collaborative nature of our art: he is open to ideas and respects the views of everyone involved in the production process. He deals with the inevitable frustrations associated with an understaffed, underfunded program and aging infrastructure with equanimity. Above all, Kevin brings to each production an exciting directorial vision and the skills to bring it off.

I have observed Kevin's work with actors during countless rehearsals and Kevin is always keenly aware that rehearsals for a college production are part of a larger teaching and learning enterprise. He works well with performers of varying skills and abilities, always encouraging, teaching and eliciting the best performance each is capable of. Kevin's emphasis on discipline and technique is always appropriate for the production at hand and for the objectives of the Musical Theatre Program. He provides a supportive and engaging rehearsal environment that is always professional.

Kevin Halpin is a very talented and committed director and teacher. He is an asset to this program, this department and this college.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Howard Lindh", with a horizontal line underneath.





BILL WHITING  
4050 WESTMORE LANE  
CORTLAND NY 13045  
706 753 1812  
billit@clarityconnect.com

20 October 2001

Dr. Karen Zimmerman  
SUNY Cortland  
Cortland NY 13045

Dear Dr. Zimmerman:

I am a retired actor, educator, and director of over 80 amateur productions, and I am writing this letter to express my profound admiration for Kevin Halpin.

Although SUNY Cortland has always had a good theater department in the past, something wonderful happened when he arrived on the scene. I missed his first production, *THE LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS*, but was told by everyone who saw it that it was an outstanding experience. We were not therefore surprised when we attended *CABARET* and found it an overwhelming experience. We had seen that musical on Broadway, at CRT, and in many other regional theaters, but it had never had the impact that that production had. Apart from some problems with the sound system, it was pure perfection -- the kind of thing that arouses the envy and admiration of an old director of musicals.

Then came *INTO THE WOODS*, and I thought, "This guy is a magician!" We have been subscribers to the Ithaca College Theatre for years and have always been impressed by the productions there -- but those students are already on their way to professional careers, and they are nearly all theater majors in a department that has two full professors, seven associates, nine assistants, and thirteen instructors and lecturers, with a correspondingly large number of students and seemingly unlimited funds to draw from. Their production of *INTO THE WOODS* a few years ago couldn't hold a candle to Cortland's. We had seen the original Broadway production in 1987; Halpin's production was fully its equal in the staging, choreography, and sheer energy.

But surprise! At CRT this past summer, it turned out that he was not only a song-and-dance guy. *BAREFOOT IN THE PARK* was a delectable production of an old war-horse, which he managed to infuse with freshness and wonderful spontaneity. You could tell that there was a choreographer at work as well; the production had an infectious rhythm of its own.

I have known some of the participants in his productions, and they have told me what the secret of his success is (which is only too obvious in the finished product): an unlimited drive for sheer perfection and a total dedication to his art. This man is a valuable asset to SUNY Cortland's faculty and the community's cultural life. I hope you can hold on to him forever.

Yours truly,

Bill Whiting

4030 Kinney Gulf Road  
Cortland, NY 13045  
July 16, 2001

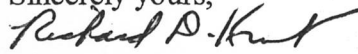
Dr. Karen Zimmerman,  
Chair, Performing Arts Department  
Cortland College  
P. O. Box 2000  
Cortland, NY 13045

Dear Dr. Zimmerman:

I recently had the pleasure of working with Kevin Halpin in the Cortland Repertory Theatre's production of Neil Simon's "Barefoot in the Park." Kevin directed the play in which I had a small part. Rehearsals were always businesslike and Kevin's direction was always clear and supportive. The cast got along very well and I feel that was due in no small matter to Kevin's positive leadership. I was the only non-professional actor in the group and was constantly made to feel a part of the proceedings. It was a most rewarding experience.

I am a retired professor in the Education Department who is always impressed by fine teaching. Since directing a play is certainly a form of pedagogy, I am delighted by Kevin's demonstrated ability in this capacity. The College is certainly fortunate to have him as a member of the faculty.

Sincerely yours,



Richard D. Kroot, Ph.D.



Dr. Thomas Lickona  
Center for the 4th and 5th Rs  
SUNY Cortland  
P.O. Box 2000  
Cortland, NY 13045  
Tel. 607/753-2455; Fax 607/753-5980

4/19/00

Kevin -

Just a line to say how grateful our family was for your wonderful production of "The Music Man." My Parents, in their mid-80s, moved to McShaw last summer because of declining health and don't get out much — and the play was a real treat for them. My mother commented afterwards about "how much work it must have been." We spent the whole dinner Sunday night talking about all the things we enjoyed — the songs, the acting, the directing, the sets... Thanks again for a superb show.

God bless,  
Tom Lickona

# Cortland

State University of New York College at Cortland

■ *Physical Education Department*

To: Mr. Kevin Halpin  
From: Thomas Fuchs  
Date: April 18, 2001  
Re: Into The Woods

Dear Kevin:

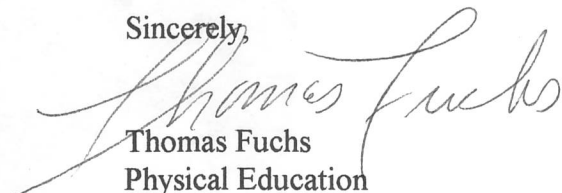
As always, it is a delight to be part of a wonderful theater production here at Cortland but the pleasure I derive is from watching our students grow and explore their lives through the avenue of theater. Ultimately, their successes all come from the expert guidance and mentoring of you, and this, to me, speaks to the power and effectiveness of your teaching.

I see educational theater at its best and it is only through your efforts and dedication that the experiential learning process takes place. You prepare your students thoroughly and with a love and caring not often seen from teachers. Both you and Cindy welcome the students into your lives as family, and because you care, your advice (at times) extends outside the realms of the production. The few teachers that have made a lasting impression in my life (and ultimately having the biggest effect on how I live and work) have done the same things. I wish to thank you for giving so unselfishly of yourself.

The work is hard, the hours are long, the attention to detail is never-ending but the influence you have in shaping the lives of others is worth every last second and ounce of energy. In addition, please extend my thanks to Cindy, who's help and support in every way seen and unseen have also contributed not only to a great production, but to the student's lives as well.

Here's to the continuance of a superb program and once again, my heartfelt thanks for all you do!

Sincerely,



Thomas Fuchs  
Physical Education

cc: President Judson H. Taylor  
Provost Antoinette Tiburzi  
Dean John Ryder  
Dr. Karen Bals





October 29, 2001

Promotion and Tenure Committee  
State University of New York—Cortland  
Cortland, New York 13045

Dear Promotion and Tenure Committee:

Mr. Kevin Halpin has requested a letter from me supporting his application for tenure and promotion at your institution. While I know nothing of your standards and procedures for such a decision, I do feel qualified to comment on Mr. Halpin's abilities as a teacher and stage director. My comments are the products of three years of observing Professor Halpin at Millikin University as an Assistant Professor of Theatre and Dance and as the director of our dance minor program.

Mr. Halpin's stage productions are very polished and energetic. He creates a musical performance style that accounts for all the elements of a musical and is often able to conceptualize a production in such a way as to veil a script's weaknesses (lack of coherency, dated material, etc.). Mr. Halpin's stage work is often part theatre production and part cabaret, but his work always effectively tells the central story and works to enliven the overall theatricality of a production.

Mr. Halpin directed 3 successful productions during his tenure at Millikin University. His first main stage production was *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying* and his second show was *Anything Goes*. Both of these productions were in our large auditorium. Mr. Halpin staged and managed both productions in such a way as to successfully meet the demands of this challenging space. His final production was of Stephen Sondheim's musical *Assassins*. His work on this project was quite good and, in contrast to his first two efforts, Mr. Halpin showed an ability to work in a style requiring very detailed work with actors. This production also allowed Mr. Halpin to work in a smaller space, which required a subtler approach in style to his previous productions.

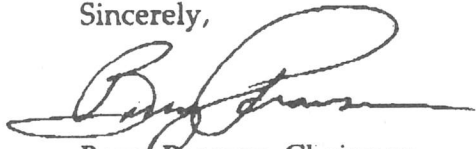
Mr. Halpin made strong improvements in his teaching in the areas of course organization and use of class time. Students' responses indicated and supported that these two areas, over the course of his three years at Millikin, significantly

DECATUR, ILLINOIS 62522-2084  
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improved. My own assessment of his teaching supported this fact. As Mr. Halpin became more organized and thorough in his preparation, his ability to enhance student achievement also improved. This fact was most evident in the senior performance class, Acting for the Musical Stage (AMS), which he taught regularly. AMS is exclusively for senior musical theatre students in our BFA program. It's a yearlong course and culminates in large performance projects. Mr. Halpin's teaching was most significantly challenged in this course. The advanced nature of the students tested his ability to critique their work in a manner that pushed them to new levels of achievement. Over his time here, Mr. Halpin was able to intensify his teaching of AMS to meet the needs of the senior students.

Mr. Halpin was always a good colleague. He was amiable and considerate in working with other faculty members. Mr. Halpin was upbeat and positive and contributed to the work of the department in substantial ways. In service to the University there was not a lot of opportunity to see Mr. Halpin's work. Had he remained at Millikin University, based on his work within the department, I believe that Mr. Halpin would have done quite well as a member of any of the four standing governance councils.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barry Pearson', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Barry Pearson, Chairman  
Department of Theatre and Dance  
Millikin University

# Cortland

State University of New York College at Cortland

♦ *Department of International Communications and Culture*

September 30, 2000

I am pleased to write this letter in support of the reappointment of Kevin Halpin to the Department of Performing Arts. I have come to know Kevin through my participation in two campus musicals, and have thus had the opportunity to see him in action in this aspect of his work.

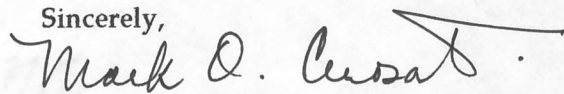
From the outset, I was tremendously impressed with Kevin. His creative vision, talent, expertise, and experience were all immediately evident. Kevin possesses wonderful abilities on a number of levels: production manager, stage director, acting coach, and choreographer — as well as the ability to easily move back and forth between these roles, in a wonderful synergistic fashion that ultimately serves to enhance the results he obtains. One quickly perceives that he knows what he wants, and, more importantly, how to get there. During our rehearsals for "The Music Man", I was constantly amazed by the imaginative, sophisticated, and mature staging he developed for the show, by his ability to translate the staging into reality and teach it to a diverse group of amateur actors, and, lastly, that he did not shrink from challenging the cast to rise to new levels of excellence in learning and perfecting that staging.

I have been further impressed by the breadth of Kevin's experience. That he brings to the college a wonderful combination of stage and teaching experience, which can only be the greatest of assets to the new American Musical Theater major, is an already established and recognized fact. However, his expertise and experience beyond these obvious areas are equally worthy of note. During conversations I have had with Kevin, I have been impressed, for instance, that he instinctively knows the academic needs and program requirements to help establish the new major. On another count, I was amazed to see that he knows without hesitation the technical requirements and needs for the department's dance studio, right down to what kind of flooring is required. A faculty member who can knowledgeably and effectively address all these areas is a wonderful asset indeed.

Lastly, I would be remiss were I not to comment on and draw attention to another of Kevin's qualities. With his work on the musicals, I have found Kevin to be a tireless and dedicated worker, putting an enormous amount of time and energy into the production (he spends something in the neighborhood of 20-25 hours per week in rehearsals alone), and for what I feel is a rather paltry one-course release. He approaches his work with a professionalism and total dedication that are most admirable, and which only serve to ultimately enhance the reputation of the program. And in this same vein, I would hasten to point out another important aspect of Kevin's approach to his work: as an integral component of his work with the college students, he makes continuous efforts to inculcate in them the professional attitude and discipline toward their craft that the department undoubtedly wants to develop in its graduates.

In conclusion, then, all of the strong points highlighted here — expertise, experience, and dedication — would seem to make Kevin precisely the kind of faculty member the Department of Performing Arts would wish to retain. I see Kevin as a wonderful complement to Tom Hischak, and I am convinced the program would be well served by Kevin's continuing presence. I urge the Department to reappoint Kevin without reservation.

Sincerely,



Mark O. Cerosaletti

Lecturer, International Communications & Culture

P.O. Box 2000 Cortland, New York 13045-0900

(607) 753-4303 ♦ Fax: (607) 753-5965



■ *Political Science Department*  
*Robert J. Spitzer*  
*Distinguished Service Professor*

September 27, 2000

Dr. Karen Bals  
Department of Performing Arts

Dear Karen:

I am writing to comment on elements of Kevin Halpin's teaching and professional expertise, as I had the unique opportunity to be a student of his during the Spring 2000 semester as a cast member in "The Music Man." In particular, I can comment on his teaching methodology, and his professional skills and knowledge pertaining to his area of expertise, theater. These observations are based on my participation in two months of rehearsal, extending to well over 200 hours of class time, and based also on my admittedly amateur dabbling in theater over the last 30 years.

I observed from the outset that Kevin faced the extraordinary challenge of mounting a large-scale musical theater production, incorporating a cast of over 50. Most of these actors lacked experience, and ranged in age from small children to old people like me. Thus, Halpin had to not only coordinate the training of this cast, but teach rudimentary theater principles at the same time. This he did with singular skill, care, and persistence. Kevin managed to turn this ebullient but unfocused and inexperienced cast into a disciplined troupe that delivered performances that, literally, drew an unprecedented overflow crowd by the end of the show's run. Kevin exhibited nearly inexhaustible patience in teaching the cast blocking, movement, and stage presence. Most remarkable was his encyclopedic knowledge of theatrical technique, witnessed by the fact that he almost never worked from written notes, but simply from his own memory, as he positioned and moved dozens of cast members around the stage, as though working a large chess board. It was abundantly clear from the start that this man knows his business.

Despite numerous behavioral lapses on the part of some cast members, Halpin never lost his temper or his patience. This alone was remarkable. Yet he was also firm when he needed to be – not by throwing temper tantrums or engaging in other immature behavior, but by counseling with these individuals, and when necessary, dismissing cast members when they repeatedly failed to attend rehearsals, for example. Kevin had clearly warned cast members from the start what was expected of them, and in insisting on professionalism from them, he was also making his job more difficult by having to re-cast some of the roles, when it might have been easier for him to simply accept their immature behavior, and keep the cast as it was. At the same time, he was also teaching them, and the cast as a whole, that putting on a theatrical production involved more than prancing about on stage. It requires skill, training, commitment, and careful thought – the very values Halpin exhibited or "modeled" throughout the production.

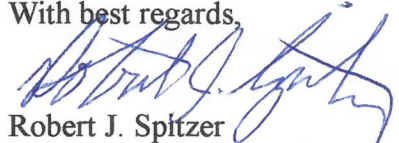
P.O. Box 2000 Cortland, New York 13045-0900  
Voice: (607) 753-4106 ■ Fax: (607) 753-5979  
E-mail: [spitzerb@snycorva.cortland.edu](mailto:spitzerb@snycorva.cortland.edu)



In sum, Kevin exhibited a high degree of expertise in his subject area of the theater. His pedagogy was flawless, even though it was delivered under conditions that would stretch most faculty members' patience to the breaking point. Moreover, he has already set a very high standard for the Musical Theater program he was hired to build, in that he has won the loyalty and respect of the students, produced high quality productions, and exhibited the theatrical expertise that undoubtedly made him the right man for the job. And his deep sense of caring for his students is the hallmark of a fine teacher. It is difficult to imagine that the Performing Arts Department could find a more caring and competent faculty member.

If you require other information, please feel free to contact me.

With best regards,



Robert J. Spitzer  
Distinguished Service Professor

# Cortland

State University of New York College at Cortland

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■ Physical Education Department

To: Mr. Kevin Halpin  
From: Thomas Fuchs  
Date: April 17, 2000  
Re: The Music Man

Dear Kevin:

Wow!! I wanted to say thank you to you for the opportunity to perform in The Music Man. I've thoroughly enjoyed myself these past two months (it went fast) and I'm looking forward to the personal internal reflective debriefing that always accompanies large and worthwhile experiential undertakings.

What a pleasure to have you and Cindy join the faculty at Cortland and give the Department of Performing Arts a wonderful energetic boost. The services you provide for the students, faculty & staff and the community are immeasurable when you look at all the aspects of the production.

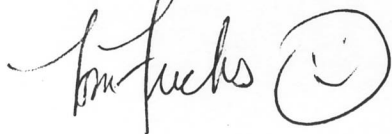
Here's what I see...

- ... the fantastic learning experiences for the Cortland students, their ability to become professionals in every way and grow into performers that give their all to the craft.
- ... the chance for the college to see and understand the positive influence a professional production can bring to the College, students and community.
- ... the superb relations between the College and community, bringing them together within a positive atmosphere and helping all understand that good people do get involved in activities that are joyous and uplifting.
- ... a reinforcement of the adage, "What you pay attention to, grows!", and how the support of a strong theater and performing arts program enhances the College's reputation for a commitment toward excellence
- ... your personal dedication and love for the theater is expressed through your professionalism, your love for the students and their talents as well as your endless creative energy and high quality work.

Plato says "The beginning is the most important part of the work." You've had a most wonderful beginning but most of all, it speaks to the extraordinary future you will bring to Cortland, the students and the community. It has been a pleasure working with you and I look forward to great things to come.

All the best to you and your family!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Fuchs". To the right of the signature is a simple hand-drawn smiley face consisting of a circle with two dots for eyes and a curved line for a mouth.

Thomas Fuchs  
Physical Education

cc: President Judson H. Taylor  
Provost William Sharp  
Dean John Ryder  
Dr. Ralph Dudgeon

# Cortland

State University of New York College at Cortland

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April 16, 2000

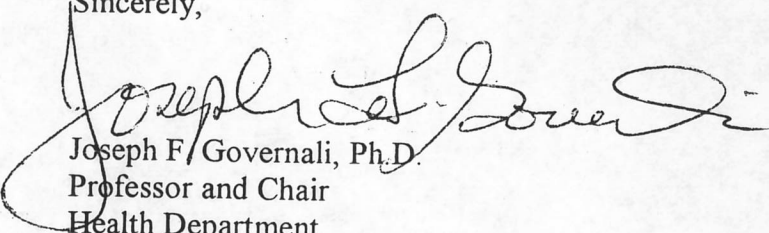
Kevin T. Halpin, Assistant Professor  
Department of Performing Arts  
SUNY Cortland

Dear Kevin,

I attended a performance of "The Music Man" last weekend and I am writing to tell you how much I enjoyed the production. The singing was wonderful, the dancing exciting and the quality of acting exceptional. You did a great job of directing and choreography. I have also spoken with a number of parents whose children acted in the play and they are all extremely pleased with the work you did with their children. I am looking forward to your next production.

Thanks for enriching the performing arts on campus.

Sincerely,



Joseph F. Governali, Ph.D.  
Professor and Chair  
Health Department

Cc: Dudgeon ✓  
Ryder

P.O. Box 2000 Cortland, New York 13045-0900





# Cortland

State University of New York College at Cortland

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■ Center for Continuing Education

4 June 2001

Kevin Halpin  
Performing Arts Department  
Dowd Fine Arts Building  
SUNY Cortland  
Cortland, NY 13045

Dear Kevin,

Just a note to thank you for taking the time to give a lecture to our dinner theatre group before "Into the Woods". I can't imagine how you manage to direct a show, give a lecture, and rush to the theatre to make sure everything is o.k.

But I'm grateful that you do manage it. We get very good feedback on these dinner theatre events.

So, thanks again.

Sally

P.O. Box 2000 Cortland, New York 13045-0900

Phone: (607) 753-4214 ■ Fax: (607) 753-4212

9 August 2001

73

Dear Kevin,

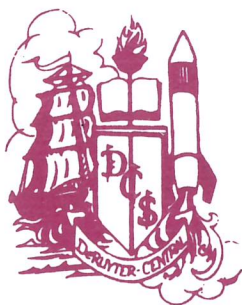
On Wednesday afternoon my wife and I saw the Merry-Go-Round Playhouse production of Cabaret. We did not think -- better than your/Cortland's own. Indeed, I thought some things in your production were better, e.g., Jeff Brooks was at least as good as Mc and in some ways better; your production was raunchier and thus better; your in deference (I suspect the Playhouse production was toned down audience would revel in the raunchiness.)

About the picture on the reverse: I've missed getting to see a production at La Fenice; I thought I'd make it the last time I was in Venice ... two years ago -- but, alas, it had burned down and has yet to be rebuilt.

Best wishes,  
Robert Rhodes

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Foto: Archivio Storico

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# DeRuyter Central School

711 Railroad Street, DeRuyter, NY 13052

Fax: 315-852-9600

**Dennis W. Wright**  
Superintendent

District Office  
315-852-3410

Elementary Office  
315-852-3405

Secondary Office  
315-852-3400

May 24, 2000

Mr. Kevin Halpin  
Performing Arts Director  
Drama Department  
SUNY Cortland  
P.O. Box 2000  
Cortland, NY 13045

Dear Mr. Halpin:

I just wanted to thank you for giving me the chance to see what a performing arts director does. I wanted to thank you for your time, and tell you I had lots of fun.

I enjoyed the tour of the campus and your description about what a performing arts director is responsible for. I am starting to think about taking Theatre in college along with other courses.

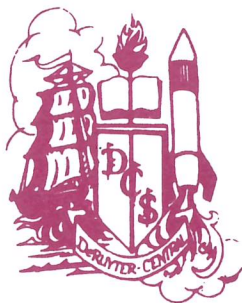
Once again I would like to tell you that I appreciated the time that you gave to help me learn more about the work you do. It seems like a very exciting job. I hope you will continue to support our job shadowing program.

Sincerely

Nicole Miller

*DeRuyter Central School = Developing Competent Students*

**Board Members:** Bruce Revette, Pres., Glenn Forshee, V.P., Raymond DeWolf, Ann Marshall, Lucann O'Hara, Donald Smith, Richard Sutherland



# DeRuyter Central School

711 Railroad Street, DeRuyter, NY 13052

Fax: 315-852-9600

**Dennis W. Wright**  
Superintendent

District Office  
315-852-3410

Elementary Office  
315-852-3405

Secondary Office  
315-852-3400

May 30, 2000

Mr. Kevin Halpin  
Performing Arts Director  
SUNY Cortland  
PO Box 2000  
Cortland, NY 13045

Dear Mr. Halpin

Thank you very much for taking the time to talk with me about your job responsibilities. I really appreciated this job shadowing experience. I enjoyed hearing you talk about the theatre department and the things that you're involved in there. I think I now have a better idea about choosing theatre as a career or a hobby, and I really thank you for helping me with that.

Sincerely

Alison Judd

*DeRuyter Central School = Developing Competent Students*

Board Members: Bruce Revette, Pres., Glenn Forshee, VP, Raymond DeWolf, Ann Marshall, Lucann O'Hara, Donald Smith, Richard Sutherland