

Bill Warfel

February 12, 1933 - May 28, 2017

This obituary has been included in our Class Memorials at the request of **Art Bloom** and **David Birney**, who were privileged to have Warfel as a Dartmouth mentor.

From: Office of the Dean <ysd.alumni@yale.edu>
To: Alumni - Yale School of Drama <itscomm2@yale.edu>
Sent: Tue, May 30, 2017 4:21 pm
Subject: Sad News Regarding Bill Warfel

Dear Alumni,

I write with great sadness to inform you of the death on Sunday, May 28th of William B. Warfel, Professor Emeritus of Theater Design.

Born February 12, 1933, Bill received his BA from Yale College in 1955, and because he had already taken several courses at the School of Drama, earned his MFA here in 1957. He then spent five years as **Technical Director of the Dartmouth Players at Dartmouth College**, where he also taught. In 1962 he went to work for Century Lighting, beginning a career in architectural lighting, fixture design, and theater consulting, that lasted for more than 40 years with several companies, comprising hundreds of projects, including work for the Carnegie Science Center, Chapel of St. Thomas More at Yale University, Paul Mellon Arts Center at Choate-Rosemary Hall, **Hood Museum of Art**, Machu Picchu Museum, and Puerto Rican Traveling Theater, among many others.

In 1967, Bill joined the YSD faculty in the Design department and became Lighting Director at Yale Repertory Theatre—he was co-chair of Design from 1972-1993, and he lit many productions at Yale Rep, including *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, revived on multiple occasions at Yale and later at American Repertory Theatre, and the 25th Anniversary production of Athol Fugard's *The Blood Knot*, which also played on Broadway. Bill was also the author of *Handbook of Stage Lighting Graphics* and of *Color Science for Lighting the Stage* (with Walter Klappert), as well as articles for *Architectural Lighting and Educational Theatre Journal* and other magazines; notably, he wrote the influential software GelFile, which pioneered an approach allowing users to predict how gel colors would interact with each other when lights overlapped.

Bill was profoundly dedicated to teaching and to the well-being of his students. The significance of his achievements as a designer of stage and architectural lighting and theater consultant are especially complemented by the accomplishments of so many field leaders who studied with him, and he will long be remembered for his excellent work and kindness. Throughout his career, his generosity of spirit and vitality were beautifully matched by those of his wife of 62 years, Phyllis Warfel '55, who survives him, along with their daughters, Arden Lowe of South Hadley, MA and Katherine Trudeau of East Hartford, CT, four grandchildren, and three great grandchildren.

There will be a memorial service at Christ Church New Haven, 70 Broadway, on Saturday, June 3 @ 2:30. The service and reception afterwards are open to all. In lieu of flowers, the family wishes memorial donations to be directed to the [International Festival of Arts and Ideas](#). Please type Bill Warfel in the notes section.

Should you wish to join me in sending condolences to the family, there will also be an electronic guest book set up on the Hawley Lincoln Memorial website. The main page is <http://www.hawleylincolnmemorial.com/>

Sincerely,

James

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