

Cynthia (Cindy) Ripley

Bio

Those who can, teach!

Cynthia (Cindy) Ripley's dedication to making a difference at a remote school in the rural school district of Gowanda, New York, has led her to become a nationally recognized educational consultant in music and theatre arts.

During her 33 years as a vocal educator and music department chair of the Gowanda, NY, Central School district, Cindy initiated Gowanda's musical theatre program. She produced and directed over 60 productions, compensating her lack of a budget with creativity and enthusiasm. By the end of her tenure, the all-school musicals were receiving a "football" response. The talent of the students was the talk of the town and many community members lent a hand in contributing their resources and/or expertise to productions.

Cindy's commitment and spirit caught the attention of leading theatrical licensor Music Theatre International (MTI) and, in 1995, Gowanda was selected to pilot a production of *Annie Junior*, the first-ever title for MTI's new theater for schools division. Gowanda's cast went on to perform the show's national premiere at the 1996 MENC Convention in Kansas City.

Cynthia also worked with MTI Education to create the *Annie Junior* Teachers Production Guide. This book outlined everything educators needed to know to put on a successful *Annie Junior* show in their community. As MTI's Educational Division expanded to include shows for elementary, middle and high school students, Cindy continued to play a role in the development of corresponding show-specific resources for teachers. Gowanda's students also continued to pilot new shows, including *Dear Edwina Junior* and Disney's *The Jungle Book Kids*.

Cindy is a contributing author of the musical theatre curriculum for grades one through eight for the MacMillan/McGraw-Hill "Spotlight on Music" textbook, which repositions the study of American musical theatre from being an extracurricular activity to a part of the core curriculum. She serves as a collaborative author on the Disney Theatrical Productions and MTI partnership, which adapts classic animation titles such as Disney's *101 Dalmatians*, *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Aristocats*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Mulan* and *Aladdin* into stage versions for children to perform.

Cindy's achievements received national attention when she was selected as one of 39 educators nationwide on *USA Today's 2005 All Star Teacher Team*. Cindy has served for 25 years on the Board of Directors of the Erie County Music

Educators Association. She is a member of The American Choral Directors Association and is listed in the "Who's Who of American Educators and American Women." She was the 1999 recipient of the Erie County Council of Music Administrators and Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra Award for Excellence in Classroom Music. Cindy serves on the education committees of the Buffalo Philharmonic, Shea's Performing Arts Center and the Arts in Education Institute of Western New York.

Currently Cindy directs and develops new educational musicals with iTheatrics in New York City. Her work as an educational consultant and workshop presenter for the "Discover Theater" national tours empowers teachers and school districts across the country to create more arts opportunities for their students. She also spearheaded BPS Goes Broadway, a yearlong collaborative program promoting youth and musical theatre with Buffalo Public Schools, iTheatrics, Shea's Performing Arts Center and MTI.

Cindy earned a Bachelor of Music degree from The Crane School of Music, State University College at Potsdam, and completed her graduate work at The Crane School, SUC at Fredonia and The Eastman School of Music.