

## In Memory of Mike Lamitola

The road was his home  
The theater was his heart  
A place to be together  
Even when apart  
His gifts and love are timeless  
Ever present  
Always here

Mike Lamitola passed away on Tuesday, May 27th while on a road trip visiting family and friends. His wife Linda was at his side along with his dog Smoky and traveling companions.

Mike was a theater professional in the truest sense of the word. He knew the power of theater to transform. It had transformed his life as a deaf man and as a deaf artist. His passion and his dedication was to make theater that creates change. He loved to act and was a visible force on the stage. As a director he had bold visions, and was insightful and generous with actors. He loved new work, whether he created it himself as a playwright or collaborated with writers to bring it to life. No one who had seen him as a solo performer of "The Seed" would ever forget the humor and humanity he so easily shared. As a teacher he brought light to the eyes of his students, whether sharing the skills of the actor, the power of visual theater or the beauty and strength of his great love of American Sign Language.

Mike's performance of "The Seed" serves as an ideal metaphor for his life. What would those who knew him as a kid think of this talented, mature artist performing a nonverbal piece steeped in the traditions of deaf culture? Mike shared "The Seed" with deaf and hearing audiences around the world. Wherever he went, whether it was Calcutta, Johannesburg, or Mexico City, Mike carried with him a joy for his work and a joy for life. His passion for his work was infectious. His performances, the pieces he directed, and his workshops planted seeds in young deaf people around the world. It was particularly gratifying for Mike to meet his young protégés years after he had first trained them. Members of the Sena y Verbo Theatre Company in Mexico City and The Action Players in Calcutta credit Mike for their growth and success.

He was an advocate for equal access to education for deaf students. Most recently, as the Artistic Manager of NTD, he worked to present deaf culture and American Sign Language with clarity and power to every audience. Through his

efforts, the NTD summer school for the training of young deaf actors was revived, and he established a Deaf Culture Series to present the work of deaf artists to audiences at large.

We at Quest are proud to have been a part of Mike's journey. Mike has been and will always be an integral part of the Model Secondary School for the Deaf (MSSD) Performing Arts program and the Quest family. Each summer, we looked forward to our reunion at the Young Scholars Program (YSP). All of us involved in that marvelous program knew that the program was just as much about our artistic and cultural challenge as it was for the students.

Working with Mike this past winter on "The water falls." was particularly rewarding for Quest. Mike broke new ground in visual theatre and faced the challenge of directing Willy Conley's powerful play with great relish. His ideas for the show stretched the creativity and abilities of everyone involved. It was rewarding to see the team respond with such commitment and enthusiasm. This response emanated from our love and respect for Mike and the joy of being part of such a rich, creative process. Enthusiastic audiences confirmed Mike's bold vision for the show.

In a note, Mike thanked me for the opportunity to direct "The water falls." and spoke of his artistic rebirth. Mike planted seeds even in one of the coldest and most snow-driven winters the Washington area has ever seen. Quest is committed to nurturing the seeds of Mike's efforts.

The Quest: arts for everyone Board of Directors has passed a resolution stating the following:

Whereas Mike Lamitola has provided invaluable guidance and commitment to the formation, development, and programming of Quest: arts for everyone; and has served as an advocate and leader for the rights of deaf people; and has contributed significantly to the presentation of work created and performed by deaf artists; and has nurtured the artistic and personal development of deaf and hard of hearing youth from around the world, the Quest: Board of Directors does hereby resolve on this day, Friday, May 30, 2003 to:

- Dedicate all Quest programming over the next year in honor of Mike Lamitola
- Pay tribute to Mr. Lamitola on the Quest website
- Establish a Mike Lamitola Fund to support training and experiences in theatre for young and emerging deaf artists

It is the Board of Directors' intent through this resolution to demonstrate in some small way the respect, camaraderie, and love the Quest family feels toward Mike and that his presence will be felt in all that we do.

Quest: arts for everyone  
Board of Directors  
May 30, 2003

Mike is survived by his wife Linda, his dog Smoky, his mother Vivian, a deaf sister Donna in Florida, his brother Tony in Oklahoma, his brother Ray in Long Island, and his sister Vicki in Utah. Additionally, he leaves a large loving extended family, and a huge circle of friends throughout this country and the world who laughed with him, cherished him, and will never forget him.

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Linda and the Lamitola Family gratefully acknowledge all the monetary gifts already received from friends and family which made Mike's final East Coast Trip possible.

In lieu of flowers, Linda and the Lamitola Family have selected Quest as one of two recipient organizations for donations in Mike's name:

The Mike Lamitola Fund of Quest for Arts, Washington, D.C. has been established to underwrite training and experiences in theater arts for young and emerging deaf artists. In addition, the 2003 theater season and all its programs have been dedicated in to the memory of Mike Lamitola.

Quest: arts for everyone is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organizations and all donations are tax exempt to the fullest extent of the law.

Please send your donation to the following address (note in the memo field: "In Memory of Mike Lamitola")

Quest: arts for everyone  
7414 Newburg Drive  
Lanham, MD 20706  
[www.quest4arts.org/company/resolution.htm](http://www.quest4arts.org/company/resolution.htm)

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Memorial Service Information:

Tuesday, June 24th at 2 PM in New York City at the John Houseman Theatre on 42nd Street.

If anyone needs a hotel that night (Tuesday 6/24), there is a block of rooms (15 to 20) at the Milford Plaza on 45th and 8th. They gave us a good deal. Each room will be \$109.00 plus 13.625% hotel Tax. You can get a single or a double

for the same price.

To get that room rate call a woman named **Alison** directly. Her number is **212 642-4602** and ask for one of the Lamitola rooms.