

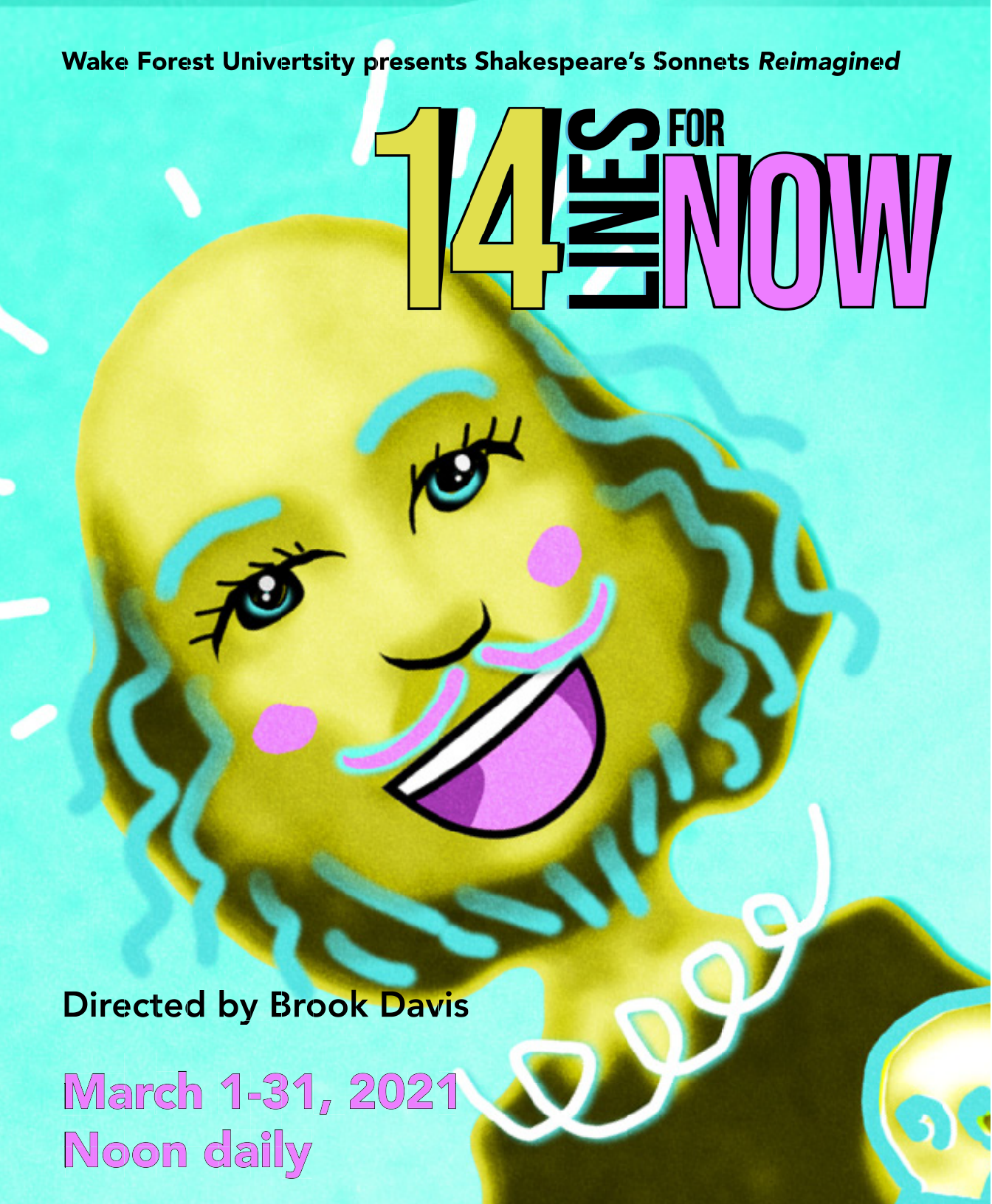
Wake Forest University presents Shakespeare's Sonnets *Reimagined*

14^{ES} FOR LINES NOW

Directed by Brook Davis

March 1-31, 2021

Noon daily



14 Lines for Now

March 1-31, 2021

Director
Brook Davis

Production Assistant
Cassidy Noble*

Social Media Manager
Gaby Gonzalez

Production Manager
Gwyneth Lonerган*^s ('21)

SONNET 97

Performer.....Kevin Frazier

Performer's inspiration: This winter has been especially cold and bitter. This feeling has been amplified by the pandemic raging around us, and how the cold and the virus cut us off from the ones we love. This sonnet compares absence from the one(s) we love to the bitterness of winter, and I thought that beginning the sonnet series in the winter and letting it end in the spring gave sonnet 97 a chance to shine in this position. In my performance, I wanted to capture the extremes of the weather, and how the intense energy of the weather compares to the intense energy of love.

SONNET 15

Performer.....Marilla Morrison*

Performer's inspiration: I selected this sonnet because I was struck by its first two lines: "When I consider everything that grows / Holds in perfection but a little moment." The contraction and expansion of time constantly intrigues me. Similarly, the vastness and timeless timeliness of Nature. How wonderful it is that an eon can encompass many moments, yet a single moment can contain an eon! Forests exist within time the same way as each leaf of each tree. All of it - ALL of it, including me and you- holds elusive Perfection. For just a little moment - one of the quick ones in a long eon - but still ALL of it holds Perfection.

In this sonnet Shakespeare seems to claim that youth is but a little moment of perfection, and that it is extinguishable. I partly expected "Out, out, brief candle!" to show up beside "at height decrease." However, within his own morbid language we find a pleasant possibility of carpe diem. Youth is what we make it: "the conceit of this inconstant stay, / sets you most rich in youth before my sight." You, dear viewer, and me, no matter our bodily age, can live in the "day of youth." Then, we will truly be the envy of Time's affection. We can choose to live in both the contraction and expansion of moments. It is true, though, that we cannot escape Decay.

My mantra is a maxim that my grandmother gave me: "Do not go ahead of grace by an imprudent eagerness, but quietly await its movements. And when it comes to you, go along with it with great gentleness, humility, fidelity, and courage." I immediately connected it to those first two lines and eventually to my interpretation of the entire poem. Fate, Grace, Decay, Time, whatever you want to call it- it exists. Yet, we have the choice to mourn its existence and resist, or go along with it and enjoy what moments it gives us. Of all the fun ideas I considered for my presentation of this sonnet, grand movements and depictions of our current struggles felt contrived. So, I give you just me existing with the forest and the leaves for a moment.

*Anthony Aston Players member

^sPresidential Scholar in Theatre

SONNET 139

Performer.....Lainey Drake*§
Props.....Alice Burton Barsony
Videographer.....Alexander McIntyre

Performer's inspiration: Olivia Rodrigo's Drivers License gave me all the break up feels without actually having to go through a break up. I choose this sonnet as my cathartic outlet for those feelings.

SONNET 49

Performer.....Sophie Thomas*§
Videographer.....Sean Jones*§

Performer's inspiration: I selected Sonnet 49 because I loved how different it was from most of Shakespeare's other sonnets. I've always thought of Shakespearean sonnets as being full of "ooey-gooley" romantic and flowery language, so I was surprised to come across this coldly logical and pessimistic approach to writing about love that still includes a flair of the dramatic. When thinking about how to deliver my sonnet, I just tried to come up with something that would make me smile while doing it, because life needs a little more joy right now. I'm excited to share this with you, and I hope you enjoy! I would like to thank Sean Jones for his help filming. He is such an incredible person—so creative and so ready to support his friends in whatever crazy adventure they come up with. Much appreciation and so much love for him!

SONNET 130

Performer.....Michael Huie ('84, MA '93)

Performer's inspiration: I heard James Dodding perform this sonnet during a class I had with him at Wake, and I couldn't believe how funny and heartfelt it was.

SONNET 28

Performer.....Elinor Grage*
Music....."Black Screen" by Soundsystem

Performer's inspiration: Sonnet 28 is all about time, and the battle between day and night. I chose this sonnet because I was really excited to explore the vulnerability that lies in the middle of the night.

I also want to credit my Acting Shakespeare class for how they helped me digest my sonnet.

SONNET 44

Performer.....Christina Tsoules Soriano
Costume Designer.....Alice Burton Barsony
Videographer & Film Editor.....Cassidy Noble*

Performer's inspiration: As someone who is 44 years old, I also loved that my sonnet is the 44th. But more, I loved this piece because it is loaded with movement images and a clear sense of longing, nostalgia, and ultimately, acceptance of the present moment. This felt personally specific and also so very timely given where we are as a performing arts community during this dreadful pandemic. I am so grateful to Brook Davis for her patience and enthusiasm and, most of all, her encouragement. I loved this process!

SONNET 18

Performer.....Ian Davis-Huie*

Performer's inspiration: Sonnet 18 has a timeless description of the fleeting quality of nature and guarantees a spectacular legacy to whomever it is addressed. Revisiting a classic poem like this that is so beautifully written has been an honor and a privilege.

SONNET 104

Performer.....Frances Gray Riggs
Videographer.....Evan Shuster

Performer's inspiration: I absolutely adore Shakespeare. I selected Sonnet 104 because I wanted to draw upon the rich language which referenced the natural world. I am so inspired by the vivid symbolism of Shakespeare and wanted to create an art piece which is also symbolic in design. I was motivated to create a tangible interpretation of nature and Sonnet 104.

SONNET 62

Performer.....Girnar Anand*
Prop Master.....Alice Burton Barsony
Videographer.....Cassidy Noble*
Lighting Designer.....Kevin Frazier

Performer's inspiration: In 1961, Sylvia Plath wrote her famous poem "Mirror". In 2016, young poet Girnar read the poem for the first time- and fell in love with it on a first read. Sylvia Plath described the mirror as "not cruel, only truthful". Shakespeare in his sonnet 62, too speaks of a similar sentiment "But when my glass shows me myself indeed; Beated and chopp'd with tanned antiquity". Hence I view the poem as an ode to my first poetic love and to a timeless sentiment: the mirror as a symbol of the truth. The sonnet also resonated deeply with me, as it beautifully swings between the antithesis of youth and old age, eventually uniting them in the last quatrain. The play with lighting and a solitary mirror in the piece, serves a dual purpose: minimizing background and setting elements draws the attention of the viewer to just the performer; and helps bring to life my favorite line from "Mirror": "Faces and darkness separate us over and over."

SONNET 12

Performer.....Jack Touchton

Performer's inspiration: I picked this sonnet because I think Shakespeare's viewpoint on the passage of time is fascinating. A man whose work has withstood the passage of time longer than most anyone else's ever has can offer a perspective on time that few others understand, and I found that particular part of this sonnet fascinating.

SONNET 125

Performer.....Michael Votto*
Videographer.....Evan Daane

Performer's inspiration: Sonnet 125 speaks on the impermanence of much of what we value as a culture, and in rejection of this, it seeks to provide an earnest proposal for love that will be more fulfilling and more lasting than most anything else. I know that during a time like this, I have thought a lot about the things that bring purpose to my life, and again I am reminded that the relationships I have, and the love I have in my life, is what keeps me going. I knew that I wanted to include Wake Radio since I first signed up for this project, and I understood it as a unique way to include the activities I am passionate about on campus in one project.

SONNET 14

Performer.....Tommy Taylor

Performer's inspiration: Sonnet 14 stood out to me because of its theme of "astronomy", which we would likely consider astrology today. Astrology has a significant presence in today's popular culture especially in the realm of relationships. This common theme helped me connect to Shakespeare and the sonnets' original audience. I realized that while we are so far removed from the Elizabethan period; there are some common mysteries that people in both eras must contend with. Specifically, the nature of love and human relationships. Building off the idea of love as an unexplainable phenomenon, I focused my thinking about the text around the idea that the speaker has come to that same conclusion, rejecting what was the objectivity of his day and embracing the inherent subjectivity found in things like love, beauty, and interpersonal relationships.

SONNET 82

Performer.....Georgia Orchid[§]

Performer's inspiration: I selected this sonnet because I felt like it was very genuine. I think it's purpose is special because it isn't blatantly tragic or comedic- the tone is up for the artist's interpretation.

SONNET 8

Performer.....Jordana Keller

Performer's inspiration: I selected Sonnet 8 because the connection between music and love pulled me in.

SONNET 25

Performer.....Kaylah Bozkurtian*

Location Scouts.....Brook Davis & Mary Foscett

Music....."O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (traditional Christian hymn for Advent)

Performer's inspiration: I read Sonnet 25 as more of a psalm than a romantic poem, though in both interpretations it is very much a celebration of love. I chose it because it highlights what is, for me, the greatest comfort of the Gospel: that my human failings and weaknesses aren't enough to separate me from the God who loves me. This idea is one that I've long wrestled with as a perfectionist and chronic overachiever, but the past year of coronavirus lockdowns has forced me to come to terms with the fact that my worth isn't determined by productivity or public success. It was my reading of the sonnet as a psalm that led me to the form of my performance; after all, what better way is there to marry the Shakespearean and the scriptural than to set the text to a liturgical melody?

SONNET 29

Performer.....J. K. Curry

Performer's inspiration: Who hasn't felt the sting of failure or envy at others' success? How easy it is to move from one disappointment or set back to a sense that everything is terrible and will never be right again! Part of the appeal of this sonnet is the speaker's melodramatic wallowing in the feelings of despair. But that's not the end of the story. The speaker is loved and returns to hope and contentment when recalling what is truly of value. In pandemic times, we all have had reason to rail about losses large and small. Yet, life goes on and focusing on our blessings may be the best way to endure.

*Anthony Aston Players member

[§]Presidential Scholar in Theatre

SONNET 78

Performer.....Evan Daane

Performer's inspiration: I chose sonnet 78 because I liked the subject matter. It makes me reflect on the fact that there have been a lot of people that have helped me create, and it felt right to take some time to give them credit.

SONNET 83

Performer.....Cassidy Noble*

Performer's inspiration: The creative inspiration for my piece was a conversation about body image and beauty standards for men and women that I'd had the week before choosing my sonnet. When I came across sonnet 83, it stood out to me as one that I might be able to connect artistically to that conversation. I followed that creative impulse, and it brought me to this final product!

SONNET 107

Performer.....Evan Souza*[§]

Performer's inspiration: I have a small book of all the sonnets in order, and I flipped to a random page. Sonnet 107 was what I landed on!

SONNET 32

Performer.....Yaser Salamah*[§]

Performer's inspiration: Nearly every interaction I've had with Shakespeare was reimagining his works into new contexts, and I wanted to do the same for this project. When I saw the line "compare them with the bettering of the times" in Sonnet 32, I was inspired to take this and make it a letter from activists and civil rights leaders of the past to activists and leaders of the present—essentially saying "remember us and what we accomplished, and keep going to finish our fight."

Special thanks to Adarian Sneed, who is helping me with research.

SONNET 42

Performers.....The Studio Series cast of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*
Director.....Emma Szuba*
Studio Series Stage Manager.....Freya Zheng
Costume Designer.....Clare Parker
Advisors.....Mary Wayne-Thomas & Cindy Gendrich

Performers' inspiration: Sonnet 42 resonates with many of the central themes of Shakespeare's early comedy, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, which we are currently rehearsing for this spring's Studio Series. Two Gents follows the friendship of Valentine and Proteus, which becomes disrupted when Proteus falls in love with the woman Valentine is already betrothed to; Sonnet 42, which is believed to have been written around the same time, is from the point of view of a man whose love has been stolen by his friend. As a cast, we have challenged ourselves to explore and present the same basic story twice - once as our play in April, and once for you in just 14 Lines.

*Anthony Aston Players member

[§]Presidential Scholar in Theatre

SONNET 60

Performer.....Anna Broaddus

Performer's inspiration: I picked this sonnet because it discusses time. Since before I could remember, time has been a major source of anxiety for me. Through his 60th sonnet, Shakespeare notes that it is painful to experience the "ravages" of time, but there is always a glimmer of hope. Combining the power of yoga flow, something that helps ease my anxiety, I wanted to show that the flow of our lives stop for nobody, just like time.

SONNET 126

Performer.....Steve Morrison

Performer's inspiration: This sonnet fascinates me as the misfit of Shakespeare's sonnet sequence. It contains only twelve lines (and two bracketed blanks) and follows a simpler rhyme scheme than its peers. Some see Shakespeare's sonnets divided into two large sections, with 126 as the end of the first section. Every other sonnet ends with a rhymed couplet. As an end to the sequence, 126 entirely consists of a series of endings, and the final ending is silence—those haunting brackets. Just before we reach that silence is the enigmatic line "her quietus is to render thee." As a visual artist, my ears prick up at the word "render" followed by a blank canvas crying out to be filled in. I imagine the speaker of the sonnet "rendering" a portrait of his beloved in that space, entombing his beloved in that space. Or perhaps he is finally reaching the end of what can be spoken and cracking open the door into what can only be imagined, beyond representation and beyond time.

SONNET 94

Performer.....Adarian M. Sneed*[§]
Artistic Director.....Houston Booth
Videographer.....Mariama Jallow
Music....."Rose in Harlem" by Teyana Taylor

Performer's inspiration: Sonnet 94 ~ A Weed in Winston
Shakespeare's Sonnets have stood the test of time. Its words have the ability to resonate through many different lenses. A Weed in Winston sees it through the eyes of Black people in 2021. Black people are the original. The creators. The blueprint. However, the world continually fails to see this. Instead they see this originality and this creativity and proceed to take, profit, and claim. This piece is a call for us to see the ways Black people have been appropriated and then give them the appreciation that they deserve.

SONNET 19

Performer.....Sean Jones*[§]

Performer's inspiration: Well, I knew that Sonnet 18 was one of Shakespeare's most famous, so I was interested to see what he followed it up with. I really liked how descriptive but clear this sonnet was--Shakespeare is usually kind of dense and I was excited to find a sonnet that was beautiful but still accessible. Also, I liked the symmetry of the Roman numeral XIX!

I was inspired by old film noir detective movies. I thought that this sonnet sounded so accusatory and as if it were listing out all of the crimes Time has committed... it made me want to pretend that Time was some elusive villain and I was some disgruntled detective who has made it his life's work to catch it.

*Anthony Aston Players member

[§]Presidential Scholar in Theatre

SONNET 1

Performer.....Ekkiosa Olumhense
Music.....“Signum Magnum” (Chant of the Mystics) by Patrick Lenk
Video Clip.....The Eruption of Vesuvius from the feature film *Pompeii* (2014)

Performers' inspiration: As a film student learning about realism and formalism, I really like experimenting with combining the two visually, and Sonnet 1 gives me good content to work with. I'd like to juxtapose the everyday struggle to be beautiful and 'better than we are' with an outside world of natural disasters and catastrophe.

SONNET 109

Performer.....Leah Elyce Roy
Costume Designers.....Alice Burton Barsony & Clare Parker

Performer's inspiration: I love the sentiment of the piece, plus it's got some fun rhymes in Original Pronunciation.

SONNET 48

Performer.....Badr Merdassi

Performer's inspiration: This sonnet is about traveling and leaving our most precious possessions behind. For me, these precious possessions are my family, my friends, my country, and my childhood memories, to whom I dedicate this sonnet.

To Brook: Thank you for this opportunity, for your patience, and your enthusiasm!

SONNET 23

Performer.....Maggie Zhang
Pure Music.....“Red”

Performer's inspiration: The comparison between love and acting is heartfelt. The tongue-tied reactions opposed to the fierceness of love reminds me of my favorite Chinese teleplay, Red, recounting the overpowering love between the protagonist in the most turbulent 1930s in WWII, wherein the protagonist, Tian, is resilient to speak out his affection for the girl while turning it into protective actions during the war.

SONNET 27

Performer.....Michael Kamtman
Original Music.....Jeremiah Kamtman

Performer's inspiration: This sonnet triggered recollections of how my wife Leslie and I dealt with geographical separation in the early years of our relationship. I was fortunate enough to be a working actor, and that work would sometimes take me thousands of miles away for months at a time. And so, exhausted from full days and nights of rehearsals and performances, feeling at times like a "stranger in a strange land", I would lie in bed at night and think of her, and she would inspire my waking hours and my peaceful nights.

PRODUCTION STAFF

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Instructional Technology Consultant & Digital Distribution.....	Ryan McCollum
Staff Assistant.....	Richard Williams
Audience Services Coordinator.....	Leslie Spencer
Production Artwork Creator.....	Steve Morrison

*Anthony Aston Players member

§Presidential Scholar in Theatre

JAMES DODDING SCHOLARSHIP FOR THEATRE

Mr. Dodding, professor emeritus of theatre, died in March 2018 at his home in Garstang, England. You may be one of the fortunate ones who had the opportunity to learn about the craft of theatre, and the joy of living, by working or performing in one of his masterful productions. From Gilbert and Sullivan comic operas, to Shakespeare, to the WFU Passion Play, and any number of other first-rate memorable shows, Jim Dodding was a force for good and for good theatre at Wake Forest University.

Now it is time for us to remember this remarkable man and rise to a challenge that helps create a lasting legacy for this beloved professor.

We are asking for your help by joining us in supporting the James Dodding Scholarship for Theatre that has been established in his honor. Already a group of Mr. Dodding's former students and friends have raised \$61,000 to date towards an endowed scholarship celebrating his life and ensuring his name remains a part of Wake Forest Theatre for generations to come. In order to complete the endowment, we need to reach \$100,000 in funding. Of course, we want to exceed this minimum so that the scholarship generates the highest possible funding. We hope you will support this effort to honor a remarkable scholar, actor and teacher and to ensure his legacy for generations of talented Theatre students to come.

It's easy to give! You visit <https://forms.secure.wfu.edu/giving> for giving instructions. Please be sure to indicate that your gift is for the Dodding Scholarship. In addition, please contact Beth McAlhany for assistance and to share your stories about Professor Dodding and his impact on you -- Beth would love to hear from you.

We appreciate your consideration of support for this tribute and the impact it will have on generations of Wake Forest thespians to come.

--Steve (MA '87, P '15, P '18) and Sue Nedvidek ('87, P '15, P '18)

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2020-2021 Season

February 26, 2021

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