

# **Langham Court Theatre Society**

# **AGM Election Candidate Bios** as at November 12, 2021 at 12 noon

## PRESIDENT (to 2022)

Janine Longy Nominated by: Zelda Dean

Seconded by: Dick Newson

I believe I have the knowledge, skills and attitude to lead the theatre to address issues of systematic racism and open the theatre to a wide community of artists.

I have had extensive experience dealing with Indigenous and marginalized people. As a Director of Instruction and Assistant Superintendent of Schools, part of my portfolio was responsibility for multicultural and Indigenous education. My work with Indigenous peoples required consideration of competing needs and a strong emphasis on respect for many voices in the Indigenous community. As an inner-city school principal, I advocated for marginalized families at the community and provincial level.

In the world of theatre, I have provided leadership at St Luke's Players, as President and Chair of many committees. I have acted and directed.

Recently as a Langham Court Board member and Chair of the Community Outreach Committee, I have demonstrated my commitment and passion to build a strong, inclusive and safe place. Crucial to this is an understanding that all people respond best when they are heard and that what they say is respected.

### **SECRETARY** (to 2023)

David C. Bird Nominated by: Janine Longy

Seconded by: Dick Newson

Greetings Board members. My name is David Bird. I was born (1945) and raised in North Yorkshire, England, Toronto (1968) and Victoria (1975). Married (Yvette) with three grown sons and four growing/delightful grandsons. We LOVE live theatre. I have been an advocate for the Arts all my life, especially theatre, drama (directing and performing), music (I love to sing) and other creative pursuits. When our boys were very young, I had the good fortune of being able to

perform in a few Langham productions. In my professional career, I often took students through the theatre, thus giving them a realistic view of what it was all about.

Langham has a very strong following, which it has maintained over many years. It occupies a special niche in the array of theatre offerings in the city. As a result, it knows its audience and is able to provide it with a rich diversity of dramatic offerings.

I am a champion for Canadian content, Canadian talent, especially young people. Canadian writings and, that of diversity and visible minorities, along with the rich assortment of dramatic roles that I have resonated with many over the years. I see my role as one of 'encourager' to what/whom ever I am committed. Serving the LCT Board and its wider audience in whatever capacity would be both a challenge and a rich reward.

Jessica Easton Nominated by: Janine Longy

Seconded by: Dick Newson

I have recently moved to Victoria from Mayne Island. I was interested in volunteering for the Langham Court Theatre and was given a tour of the Theatre and learned of the recent history and challenges the Theatre has faced. I realized that many of my professional and volunteer positions could be helpful to the Board during this time of transition.

Let me first provide you with my personal history. Aside from being a retired psychologist, I am part of a large multi-racial family. I have learned a great deal from the challenges it has presented including marginalization, harassment, and a variety of prejudicial treatments. Consequently, structural racism has profoundly impacted my life.

Secondly, part of my interdisciplinary doctorate was in ethics. I was an instructor and workshop facilitator for the Maurice Young Centre of Applied Ethics at University of British Columbia. It was this background that enabled me to successfully represent Island Women Against Violence (IWAV) at a Human Rights Commission hearing when I was on the Board of that organization. I also was hired to conduct an ethical review of a treatment centre on Vancouver Island for two unions and the ministry.

Regarding examining the impact of structural racism and opening the theatre to all the parts of our community, I believe the Board needs to insure they are receiving feedback and guidance from a wide variety of groups that may have been disenfranchised. Rather than engaging in a complaint-based process, the Board members either need to represent the diversity of the communities of concern and/or consider a proactive process such as engaging in focus groups that do provide feedback and guidance to the Board. It is through this process that the Board does not give up its decision-making ability rather it ensures their decisions are informed from the very communities they want to represent.

### MEMBER AT LARGE (x2) to 2023 and (x1) to 2022

David C. Bird (see above)

Jessica Easton (see above)

Susan Leslie Nominated by: Janine Longy

Seconded by: Dick Newson

My name is Susan Leslie, I am 62 years old and am recently retired from the B.C. Ministry of Attorney General where I practised as legal counsel for 26 1/2 years. A seed of love for theatre was planted in junior high school when the school took us to see Cyrano de Bergerac. I was blown away by the power of life-sized breathing humans to bring passion, immediacy and relevance to words I'd otherwise only read on paper. Many years later, as a new lawyer at the Ministry of Attorney General, Kaleidoscope Theatre invited interest from lawyers for a fundraiser. I jumped on it and was involved with Lawyers On Stage Theatre (LOST) for many years, starting in 1998 until about 2010, during which time I also sat on the board of Kaleidoscope Theatre for 5 years. More recently, from 2017 to the present, I am a founding board member of LOST as an incorporated society in our own right. I think Langham Court Theatre is a treasure in Victoria and I would love to be a part of its efforts to broaden its reach to be more inclusive and reflective of our world. I am excited that institutions, including Langham Court Theatre, are responding to the concerns expressed by members of previously silenced minorities and are willing to look at how systemic racism may have led to certain undesirable outcomes. It is not easy but necessary. I think I would bring a fair, respectful and progressive voice to the table. I support outreach, policy and bylaw review for hidden biases and listening with an open mind and heart when people bring concerns forward. Finally, I just need to add that, despite my legal background, I am not in a position to provide legal advice to the board. Not only am I retired but my expertise is quite specialized so I would not be competent to provide advice anyway. Thank you for your consideration.

Carmen Morgan Nominated by: Janine Longy

Seconded by: Dick Newson

I am a playwright and a patron of theatre for many years. I believe theatre has the power to change people's minds, open their minds, and see through the eyes of characters truths about the human condition. In 2017, I wrote a play, *Apricot Stones*, about a young revolutionary trying to survive in an underground network of women fighting for their rights in Kabul, Afghanistan. I produced and stage managed the play for the Edmonton Fringe Festival.

I look forward to working with a group of individuals on the Board at Langham Court to "reinvent" the theatre and explore all the possibilities we have to open the stage to inspiring and unknown stories. As Member at Large, I will support in addressing topics such as systemic racism and with engagement with minorities and all communities, including LGBTQIA2S+, to open up our stage to a wider audience and all the possibilities of theatre.

**Ron Rubin** Nominated by: Janine Longy

Seconded by: Dick Newson

As a Winnipegger with a Bachelor's degree from Montreal, my career focused on Human Resources as HR Director with a multi-national and as a founding partner for a management consultancy delivering next generation HR strategy to clients in public and private sectors. Specializations included selection process, job analysis, performance management, organizational development, employee compensation, HR effectiveness and new manager

training. In latter years, I was retained as an "expert witness" providing HR-related testimony to the legal community and to the court.

Community experience includes neighbourhood board leadership and providing reading training to elementary school children. Currently, I am writing a non-fiction about an unknown emigrant with a dark history who contributed significantly to Canada's early 19th century growth.

My HR experience has given me not only an understanding of structural and systemic racism but, also experience in introducing policy and the practice needed to change a culture that may inadvertently incubate bigotry.

Encouraging participation from and hiring marginalized and under-represented voices in the community was key to my role at Xerox and as a member of the Mayor's committee on community diversity and outreach.

Theatre lovers, thank you for this opportunity.