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Ruth and Marinus (Rene) Spierenburg Letter

Marinus Spierenburg

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April 28, 1974

Dear Dr. E.:

We just heard of your plans for retiring at the end of the current school year. Somehow, that was one thing--retiring--that we had really not considered as one of the things you might be doing one day. Although, if there is one person who deserves the right to some withdrawing from all the activities that have made up your days, it certainly is you. We hope that you will now have the time to pursue many of your interests which you did not have before; such as, coming to New York to see some plays (and staying with us.)

May we say that we are deeply grateful for what you have done for us as individuals. The one thing that has always impressed us most about you was your conviction that the theatre was a place for individuals--in this case, young people,--to grow into a greater awareness of themselves. "Educational" Theatre was what you stood for and that has made a great difference for both of us. I shall always be grateful to you for taking an awkward, shy, proud, withdrawing boy from Canada and providing him with an opportunity to try his wings. It was an exhilarating experience for me. It helped me to gain confidence in myself and in what I could do. I enjoyed everything I took part in and so did Ruth. The choral reading, the back-stage work, the costuming, the rehearsals, the productions themselves, the special meetings we had with Alpha Psi Omega--all of them will be treasured by us for as long as we live.

Ruth also sends her fondest thanks and well-wishes. She is sitting right here in the same room with me studying her medical courses. How often we think together about the drama of how we finally got together and were married! What intrigue and plotting went on behind the scenes! What sheer madness went on at times! We laugh at it now, but at the time it was so serious and important. We appreciate your affectionate interest in us as people. Both you and Harry--who was so often a voice of wise counsel--made us believe in ourselves and in the future together.

I have often been amazed with how good a preparation for the ministry the stage experience was. I hope that I have been able to carry some of that experience into the pulpit with me. Also, the church I now serve has for a long time been used to all sorts of dramatic productions--thanks to Harold--and there is an opportunity here to get involved again in the production of plays.

Thank you, above all, for making us believe in ourselves. There is no doubt in our minds that that has made all the difference in pursuing our paths since we left Northwestern.

A great teacher is retiring this year; we will determine to be worthy of her tutelage by being better human beings that she showed us how to be.

Ruth and Rene Spierenburg

Ruth Spierenburg

Marinus P. Spierenburg