



GRINDSTONE AWARD



1981

William A. Allman

As one observer put it, "Bill Allman has bestowed a great treasure on the city of Berea. BST (Berea Summer Theatre) is a jewel in the crown of our city." Indeed, Allman, through BST, has influenced the lives of hundreds of Bereans - actors, writers, directors and crew - with whom he has worked and thousands more who have enjoyed fine live theatre entertainment for many years.

Bill - actor, director, impresario and friend and inspiration to three generations of Baldwin Wallace students - was presented with the 1981 Grindstone Award as Berea's Outstanding Citizen of the Year. It was fitting that the award was made at this time, for 1981 marked the 25th year of Berea Summer Theatre.

Bill Allman's Ohio roots are deep. He was born in Tiffin and was educated in rural Ohio schools. He has degrees from Heidelberg College and Ohio University and is taking additional graduate work at Ohio State University.

He arrived on the Baldwin-Wallace campus in 1955 as an instructor in Speech. Starting with little more than his own enthusiasm and a WW II quonset hut on the college campus, Bill started BST, the first "straw hat" theatre on Cleveland's west side, in 1957. Before long, at Bill's invitation, famous playwrights, like Lawrence and Lee, John Patrick and Lindsay and Crouse, came to Berea in connection with a "season" of their works. From the beginning Allman, pipe in hand, adopted what has become his trademark, per-

sonally greeting and welcoming the audience at each performance.

He encouraged new talent, launching many theatre directing and acting careers as a result. Five plays and three musicals have, had their world premiere performances at BST.

He played an important part in the planning and development of B-W's new Art and Drama Center, completed in 1972, where now over 50,000 people attend performances each year.

Allman has a strong sense of community. Organizations can have fundraisers at BST. Drama students, and often Bill himself, perform in Berea schools. Many Bereans have accompanied him on his annual New York and London theatre tours.

Bill Allman is a member of St. Thomas Episcopal Church and presently is a full professor of Speech and Theatre Arts at B-W.

Bill and his wife Mary Lou raised three sons in Berea. The family home is now on Tampico Court.

They say that theatre is magic. If so, William A. Allman has provided a touch of magic to the lives of many Bereans, enlivening and enriching them all.

Presented February 23, 1982

Holiday Inn, Middleburg Heights, Ohio