

The Hinman Production Company

That new era dawned the evening of October 8, 1979. Al Eller, Hinman College staff member and proponent of HLT, hosted an organizational meeting to try to drum up interest for HLT. Only two people showed up for this meeting. One was a senior, Heidi Stern who had been involved in previous HLT productions and had experienced its golden age. The other was a newcomer, a freshman named Patrick Misciagna. At the meeting, the downtrodden Al Eller lamented the demise of HLT and the struggle he had in generating interest for it. Heidi was also sullen, for she had known of the glory of HLT's past. Patrick, on the other hand, was a firebrand. Seizing the opportunity before him, he took control of the last vestiges of HLT and made them his own.¹

Like Stan Goldberg before him, Patrick had a vision. Patrick had been involved in community theater productions since the age of 10 and had been extensively involved in theater during his days as a high school student. Knowing that he would not be a theater major in Binghamton, he still wanted to be involved in some way with theater. Like Hinman community theater members before and since, he viewed the theater department as snobbish and taking all the joy out of acting. Patrick wanted to make theater something that was fun and which everyone who wanted to could participate in.²

Patrick tells the story of how he breathed new life into a dying organization in this way. "In the fall of 1979, Heidi Stern and I were the only two people who showed up for the organizational meeting of the Hinman Little Theater. We looked at each other and decided that Heidi would be the producer and I would be the director (real simple!)."³ It may have sounded simple, but it was really far from that. The first thing Patrick decided to do was to change the name from the Hinman Little Theater to the Hinman Production Company (HPC). "I did this in

an effort to start fresh,” Patrick would say twenty-five years later, “I wanted to give it a more grandiose name, something that would make people think that it was big and could do big things.”⁴ And do big things it would.

¹ Patrick Misciagna, telephone conversation with author, October 20, 2006.

² Ibid.

³ Patrick Misciagna, e-mail message to Al Vos, June 6, 2006.

⁴ Patrick Misciagna, telephone conversation with author, October 20, 2006.