

Beginnings

Contributed by Web master
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In 1976 a group of Abbeville natives interested in theatre found themselves back home after having lived or studied away from their home town. With a desire to continue performing, Ted and Lynette Winter Cessac and Dave Pierce formed the Abbey Players and staged Neil Simon's Last Of The Red Hot Lovers at the Abbeville Country Club. So successful was the first venture that the founders of the Abbey Players decided to incorporate the group as a tax exempt non-profit corporation. On February 1, 1977, Lynette Cessac, Wayne Summers, Dave Pierce, James E. Fontenot, and Lila Tritico executed the Articles of Incorporation of Abbey Players, Inc., as incorporators.

For the next five years the Players, with neither capital nor permanent location, but well supplied with creativity and enthusiasm, continued to produce plays. Six Rooms RIV View was mounted in the auditorium of Vermilion Catholic High School. James Fontenot's home, the former Wells Fargo Building, became the theatrical setting for Ten Little Indians and Arsenic and Old Lace. Witness For The Prosecution was appropriately presented in the courtroom of the Abbeville City Court.

With the ever increasing public and critical support, the Players rented the old Reaux Lumber Company building at the corner of Lafayette and Main Streets, from Representative Sammy Theriot. Ingenuity transformed this warehouse into an arena theatre, complete with backstage area and upstairs dressing rooms.

A homemade lighting system was installed and the group was ready to produce Cat On A Hot Tin Roof, The Rainmaker and The Man Who Came To Dinner. Patrons' Night was instituted with an opening night festivity at which regular supporters enjoyed both a performance of the play and champagne and hors d' oeuvres. Patrons' Nights were adopted as standard procedure and the Players were assured not only ever increasing popularity but solvency.amet.