



411 W. Poplar St.
Harrisburg, IL 62946

Dr. Amy L. Dixon, Superintendent
Website: harrisburg3.org

Phone: 618.253.7637
Fax: 618.253.2095

For Immediate Release: August 18, 2023

**Hannah Drake
Honored as Recipient of the
Illinois Theatre Association's 2023 Award of Excellence in Secondary School Theatre**

On August 26, 2023 Hannah Drake (Harrisburg High School) will be honored as the recipient of the Illinois Theatre Association's 2023 Award of Excellence in Secondary School Theatre. The awards presentation will be during the **Award Luncheon** as part of the Illinois Theatre Association's Annual Members Celebration - **Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow - Into the next 50 Years** which will be held at DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Hotel & Conference Center, 2111 Butterfield Rd, Downers Grove.

Each year the Illinois Theatre Association recognizes both individuals and organizations for their significant contributions of promoting quality theatre throughout the state of Illinois. Drake was nominated by the Illinois theatre community, approved by ITA's divisional representatives, and accepted by ITA's Board of Directors. We are thrilled to provide this much-deserved recognition.

ABOUT HANNAH DRAKE

Drake has served as the Fine Arts Department Chair for Harrisburg High School in Southern Illinois since 2009. She directs the band, color guard, and choir for the high school, while serving as the primary director for all high school and middle school productions for the district. Drake has directed over 40 productions, four of which have appeared at the Illinois High School Theatre Festival. Recently, she served as the Music Director for the IHSTF All-State production of Shrek the musical. Harrisburg Unit 3 Superintendent, Dr. Amy Dixon, states, "Mrs. Drake's dedication to our students and community is immeasurable. Her talents and passion are contagious. Mrs. Drake is a respected educator and we are thrilled that she is receiving this state-wide recognition."

"Being able to be recognized is a humbling experience," said Drake. "I know all of the hard work our students put into being able to perform on stage, and am happy to play a small role in that process. And I'm extremely proud to be able to bring attention to the talented students we have all across the state, including in Southern Illinois." Under her direction, the Harrisburg High School concert band has appeared three times at the University of Illinois Superstate Concert Band Festival. In addition to her responsibilities at the high school, Drake serves as the Executive Producer and Director of Jr. Falcon Productions at Southeastern Illinois College, a K-college summer theatre program that puts on two full-scale musicals in a six-week period. In her spare time, Drake conducts various pit

orchestras in the state and serves as a costumer for area productions. She is also a church pianist/organist at St. Kateri Catholic Church in Ridgway. She holds a Masters in Music Education from Kent State University.

“I would like to thank the ITA for this honor. I would also like to thank the Unit #3 administration, Board of Education, teachers, parents, and community members for supporting the theatre program at HHS. Most importantly, thank you to all of the theatre students, past and present, for giving your time and talents to each and every show. I am continuously blown away by what you create on stage. None of our success would be possible without each of you and your dedication to our program,” Drake said.

Other recipients include:

2023 Awards of Excellence

Creative Drama/Theatre for Young Audiences

Secondary School Theatre

College/University Theatre

Community Theatre

Professional Theatre

2023 Awards of Honor

Anne Thurman Mentorship Award

Aimee Jarzembrowski

Hannah Drake

J.W. Morrisette

Deric Kilmer

Court Theatre

Michael Miserendino

Elisabeth Westphal

ABOUT THE ILLINOIS THEATRE

It is the MISSION of the Illinois Theatre Association to advocate for the art of quality theatre in Illinois.

The Illinois Theatre Association is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to advocate for the important values that theatre at all levels in the state of Illinois bring to individuals as we work to expand hearts and minds through work both on the stage and off. Our work includes the important mission to inspire, engage, challenge, nurture, educate and empower artists and audiences in order to enhance the cultural landscape of Illinois, making our state a more conscious and compassionate community. Ultimately, we look to celebrate the essential power of the theatre to illuminate our common humanity.

For more information about the Illinois Theatre Association, visit www.illinoistheatre.org or call (773) 804-8975.

