

CURRICULUM VITAE: PAUL (Sparky) JOHNSON

I. PERSONAL DATA

- A. Birth date and place: **November 21, 1953; Sandakan, North Borneo.**
- B. Citizenship: **Canada and United States**

II. POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

A. Institutions Attended:

- I. **The University of Alberta** (September 1985 - April 1987)
 - 1. Thesis Topic: Canadian Theatre History
 - 2. Thesis Title: Catalyst Theatre: In Theory and Practice
 - 3. Thesis Supervisor: James DeFelice
 - 4. Awarded the degree of Master of Arts, Drama; 7 June 1990
- II. **The University of Alberta** (September 1974 - April 1977)
 - 1. First Class Standing (1977)
 - 2. Awarded the degree of Bachelor of Arts (Special) in Drama; 27 May 1977
- III. **The University of Saskatchewan** (Regina) (September 1973 - April 1974)
 - 1. Completed first year of studies in a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Acting) program
- IV. **The Lutheran Bible Institute** (Seattle) (September 1971 - May 1973)
 - 1. Awarded a 2 year diploma in Biblical Studies

III. EMPLOYMENT

Freelance Professional Work

1977- Actor, Writer, Director, Keynote Speaker, Workshop Facilitator

University of Alberta

1980-81 Sessional Instructor of Drama

Augustana University College / University of Alberta: Augustana Faculty

1986- Instructor / Assistant Professor / Associate Professor / Professor of Drama

North Carolina School of the Arts / UNC School of the Arts

2001-2010 Guest Artist for the five week Summer Program (conducting improvisation workshops).

Wisconsin Theater Games Center

2004-2007 Guest Instructor for Paul Sills' Summer Intensive Workshop

V. PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

1. Canadian Actors' Equity Association (C.A.E.A.)
2. Actors' Equity Association (United States)
3. Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (A.C.T.R.A.)

VI. WORKSHOPS GIVEN**National Conference on Exemplary Teaching: Inspiring Learner**

Engagement and Success (University of Saskatchewan, November 2006).

Session Title: Unlocking the Intuitive (The Teacher as Actor).

VII. TEACHING AWARDS

2007 Winner of the **Augustana Faculty Teaching Award**

VIII. GRANTS RECEIVED FOR TEACHING-RELATED PROJECTS

I received a significant grant from the Lutheran Life Insurance Company of Canada to participate in the 1990 LECNA African Seminar (seven weeks in Tanzania and Nigeria intended to foster more of a global perspective in our teaching)

IX. CONSULTING RELATED TO TEACHING

Together with the other participants in the Ristuben seminar to Africa, I designed and facilitated a seminar on teaching at St. Olaf College in June of 1991. As part of this seminar, I led a workshop for the entire delegation on using popular education techniques in teaching. The workshop was open to all teaching faculty in the twenty-three colleges and universities served by LECNA (The Lutheran Education Conference of North America). There were approximately 100 participants at the workshop.

I have been involved in numerous workshops for public school teachers (from kindergarten through high school). The topics have ranged from how to teach choral speech, to including theatre games and techniques as part of the standard curriculum. Most of my workshops, however, have again centred around the techniques and procedure for unlocking the intuitive and developing focus.

I have used and taught "**popular education techniques**" for participants in several Canada World Youth exchange programs. Participants in the exchange are responsible for at least one educational activity day in each of the host countries. The popular education techniques gave them some beneficial tools for teaching within this setting.

Drawing on 33 years of teaching experience, I have developed a presentation for university professors on how to use "Structured Improvisation" in the university classroom.

X. COMMITTEE WORK

For many years, I served on the Curriculum Committee. Other committees include: The Learning and Beyond Committee; The Committee on Teaching; The Student Affairs Committee.

Teaching Contributions

2.1 Teaching Responsibilities

- 1981-82 University of Alberta
Drama 249 (Introduction to Dramatic Process).
- 1986-2019 Camrose Lutheran College/Augustana University College/Augustana Faculty, University of Alberta
Drama 201 [101] (Play Analysis: 30-50 students)
Drama 202 (Theatre History & Theory: 30-40 students)
Drama 249 [241, 141, 144] (Introduction to Dramatic Process: 12-24 students)
Drama 251 (Dramatic Process for Drama Majors)
Drama 353 (Acting: 12-24 students)
Drama 275 (Production Workshop: 5-10 students)*
Drama 359 [340, 244] (Improvitational Workshop: 12-24 students)*
Drama 376 (Theatre in Education: 12-24 students)*
Drama 378 (Design and Production: 5-10 students)*
Drama 222 (Theatre History and Theory)
Drama 360 (Dramaturgy: 5-10 students)*
Drama 439 (Touring Company: 6-10 students)*
Drama 321 (Religious Expression in Drama: 5-10 students)*
Drama 341 (Popular Theatre: Community Theatre for Education and Action: 12-24 students)*
Drama 344 (Applied Improvisation: 8-20 students)*
Drama 1/2/3/409 (Script Analysis and Production Preparation: 8-20 students)*
Drama 1/2/3/439 (Theatre Company: 10-30 students)*
Drama 1/2/3/448 (Community Theatre: 2-4 students)*
Drama 395 (Theatre Festival Tour: 5-12 students)*
Drama 444 (Improvisation Intensive: 8-12 students)*
Drama 437 (Senior Showcase: 6-12 students)*
Drama 431 (Acting For the Camera: 8-12 students)*
Drama 396 (Spolin Theater Games: Transformation through Playing and Teaching)*
- * indicates new course development
- 1988-94 Camrose College of Auctioneering
Public Speaking
- 1990-92 Maskwachees Cultural College (Cree Reservation in Hobemma, AB)
Drama 241 (Intro to Dramatic Process)
Drama 342 (Drama in Education)
- 2001-10 North Carolina School of the Arts
Five week Improvisational Workshop (5 sections of 12-20 students each)

2004/06/07 Wisconsin Theatre Game Center
 Theater Game Intensive (25 hour workshop for actors, theatre
 students, and teachers)

2.2 *Supervising and Advising Students*

I have been involved, in a supervisory capacity, with Banff National Park's initiatives to hire and train Augustana students in innovative approaches to National Park Interpretation. Over the past two summers, seven students have been employed by the park and, together with park staff, colleague Glen Hvenegaard and myself, have developed programs that have been given high evaluations from the park supervisors.

Together with Glen Hvenegaard I have served as an advisor to a student who presented at the Trails to Sustainability conference on the environment, held in Kananaskis in May of 2007.

Reflections on and Assessment of Teaching

3.1 *Documentation of Results of Teaching*

My student assessments have always been strong and mostly positive. The student assessments continually point out my energy, dedication and passion for the subject matter. Written comments are almost universally positive. The following is a sampling of all comments from one semester of teaching, separated by class.

Drama 138/238/338/438 (Fall production: Godspell):

This course was the highlight of my semester. Sparky challenged us to grow and expand our knowledge and skills

This is my last production, and it saddens me that I will never get to work with Sparky again. He has been such an inspiration in my time here at Augustana. We learned so much in the creation of Godspell. Thank you for a great experience. It was hard, but it was worth it.

This was a fantastic course. It was enjoyable and challenging. This course has been the highlight of my semester.

I have never put so much of my time into any class before. This was very challenging, but I loved every minute of it. One of the most life-changing courses I've ever had.

This course was truly a highlight of my university career. It was extremely difficult, but I loved every minute of it.

I was so happy to be part of this production. Sparky is an amazing instructor and director. This was a challenging and enjoyable project. "Godspell" made me a stronger singer, dancer and actor.

The class was a great time. Thanks!

Sparky, you are loved. The course was really super. Let's do this again.

It was such a privilege to be a part of this production. Sparky allowed us all to learn on so many levels – I've learned so much, not only about theatre and music, but about community, commitment, and about myself. Thank you.

Sparky was really supportive of everyone in the group. When there was a problem it was dealt with using style and grace. I learned a lot from this experience and feel that Sparky was dedicated to the production.

This experience in Godspell was one that cannot be matched in any other course. I learned many life lessons and also many things which I can apply to my future theatre experiences. FANTASTIC.

Paul Johnson spent a lot of time and effort ensuring that the cast was always comfortable and knowledgeable about the script and material they were dealing with. He spent big hours building an amazing set, and challenged all of our abilities (as a result) to finally put on an incredible show.

This was the best production I have been in. Sparky took on a huge task, and I hope he receives the credit that is due. Doing this course was a bit of work. The retreat was a good time to get some serious rehearsal time, as well as the cast had a chance to bond. I think this should be a requirement for all productions. Sparky brings a lot of experience to Augustana. I enjoy the classes, and his direction.

Drama 141 (Introduction to Dramatic Process):

Paul "Sparky" Johnson knows his craft very well. He is an excellent teacher for this introductory class because he creates an environment that abandons inhibition and nourishes creative freedom.

I found Paul to be an excellent instructor of Drama. His directions were crisp and perfect. He orchestrated the class like a conductor of the Chicago orchestra. Bravo, Paul Johnson! This class will push me to new heights in my life – oh, yes. Paul, this class was like a warm hand on a cold day.

WebCT program was not always sufficiently working – made assignments a hassle. Enjoyed class to the max! The instructor loves what he teaches – so I love it too. So prepared and organized! Environment friendly, safe and enjoyable.

I really enjoyed this course. It was a very fun way to learn and Paul Johnson made it easy to learn, instilling enthusiasm in all the students! He played the games with us which made it easier to understand. I would recommend this course to anyone, but especially those interested in pursuing the performing arts. Many valuable lessons were learned.

For this course we used WebCT and (well) it didn't always work. It needs a lot of work in my opinion. The course itself is excellent. I almost wish I would fail it so that I could take it again. It's that much fun!

Sometimes class time was really eaten up by disruption. We have a "special needs" student. I'm not convinced that this individual contributed a fraction of what he took away from the class. This is no fault of the instructor, of course.

I feel that I have greatly improved in this subject – much more than I expected. The class was fun to participate in, but provided many challenges. This has been a first rate course.

Sparky, you rock my socks!

Drama 244 (Improvational Workshop)

Sparky is inspiring!

I really enjoyed the instruction in this class. I loved the expressive stories and amusing suggestions. Can't wait to take more of your classes!!

Every opportunity I have to be taught by Paul is an absolute honour. Sparky is so cool. He is my favorite teacher. He is inspiring.

Paul Johnson is a wonderful professor. His course is excellent. It helps us in theatrical performances. The games we play inspire us creatively.

Prof. Johnson has good feedback, but doesn't necessarily give it prompt or in time. In it's place he side-coaches which is very helpful. "Sparky – In this life of anarchy – I always know that I can see – In your face – The meaning of living in the space."

Sparky is a very interesting instructor. All of his stories help an actor progress. Every story has some sort of value to what we are learning...

The professor was very good and his comments were very helpful. I enjoyed this course very much. I only wish we would play more improvisation games toward the end of term. The professor's enthusiasm was encouraging and helped us to feed off his energy.

I thoroughly enjoyed the course. I know the skills I have learned will further attribute towards my university career. The instructor has created a fun, mutual learning environment and has demonstrated his superior knowledge of the works of Viola Spolin. I hope this class will continue to inspire students as it has me. Cheers, Sparky!

Fantastic class. Sparky is hilarious and cool. Keep it up Sparky and Viola.

3.2 Reflections on Teaching and Student Learning

I really love teaching what I teach and I believe that passion is instilled in my students. I know no other way of teaching than total involvement. Some teachers of "lab style" courses will give an assignment and then leave the students while the students work out the problem; coming back at the end of class to evaluate what they come up with. I don't work that way. I am always there with the students during class time. Most assignments where students are sent out to work on their own (projects) are done outside of class time. I am always there with students in the midst of a game. I have learned that, in order to be an effective side-coach, the teacher has to be even more focused than the player. Players soon learn that I am there with them (being present in more ways than one) and they feed off of that. What I teach is not static but part of an ever evolving flow. I have to stay involved and focused to be in touch with that flow. Someone once responded to Viola's side-coaching by saying: "But that contradicts what you said in the book..." Viola replied: "Forget what I said in the book. That was then; this is now." As soon as you lock something in as being the correct way to do something, it becomes "technique;" and technique is a trap; an "in the head" focus.

In general, as a faculty member, my focus is on teaching. I do what I can to ensure I am always at the top of my game (as a teacher). That includes the workshops I did for Paul Sills in Wisconsin and the guest instructing I do for the University of North Carolina School of the Arts summer program. Both these teaching opportunities provide me with a different population of participants. The Wisconsin workshops are populated with professional actors and professional teachers. The UNCSA program is for High School students, aged 15 – 19 years, who come from high school drama programs throughout the United States. Each population triggers a different energy in me as I work to bring these groups into focus. Just as I learned from my "special needs" student in Drama 141, I learn from each and every situation I am in and from each and every student I teach.

I am widely regarded as one of the foremost scholars and practitioners in the work of Viola Spolin and, as such, am able to share my rich knowledge of the discipline with my students.

My work influences the larger intellectual community in that each summer I teach a number of teachers from universities and colleges in the United States.

Under the category of “engaging the mind of the student,” some may say I work, rather, to disengage the mind. I would argue that I work to free the intuitive self (mind and body) from the repressive traps found in a solely intellectual approach. Viola once said: “A child is born into this world and knows everything; and then they go to school.” The intellectual self is full of judgment – of right and wrong; success and failure – while the intuitive self is liberating and free of judgment – it just is. That said, I strongly believe that the intuitive self can and needs to be fed. That is why I love teaching in a liberal arts setting. The more an individual can feed their intuitive self, the more they have available to set free when they enter into focus. Viola played her games with students of all ages but noted that the creative flow coming from adults was far richer than that unleashed by children.

I think it is clear from my student assessments that the students and I have a mutual respect for each other – that I am providing a good climate for learning.

XI. RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVE WORK

B. Unpublished papers that have been presented

Presentation of the paper The Popular Theatre Actor: A Special Breed at the 1987 International Popular Theatre Festival in Sydney, Nova Scotia.

C. Creation of original artistic works

As can be seen from the listing below of my freelance work, I have written a considerable amount for television and radio especially. Everything that is listed in these categories has been produced and broadcast regionally. In many cases the works were broadcast nationally; and in the cases of the educational programs, internationally.

As part of my first sabbatical year (1994-95), I wrote the script and lyrics to a full-length musical entitled: “Tatterhood and the Hobgoblins”. Gordon Hafso wrote the music. The musical was taken to production and performed as part of the 1995 Camrose Theatre Festival. I have since rewritten the book into a “Story Theatre” format (2000). This reworked version was also taken to production. My intention is to again go back to the script for additional reworking and rewriting and hopefully bring it to a form that will have some appeal outside the Camrose constituency.

I first tried my hand at “Story Theatre” by taking some of Hans Christian Andersen’s stories and adapting them into a script for production in the 1997 Camrose Theatre Festival. Subsequently, I developed a “Story Theatre” script of selected tales of Edgar Allen Poe. The process involved workshopping the stories with my Drama 244 class; writing several drafts of the script; taking it to performance in 1999 as the Augustana fall production; then reworking and rewriting several more drafts of the script. Pacific Theatre in Vancouver and the Goodman School of Theatre in Chicago have each requested copies of this script.

My most recent adaptations have involved the use of classic short stories: Somerset Maugham's Rain; Isak Dinesen's Babette's Feast; Oscar Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray; Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's A Study in Scarlet.

D. **Presentation of artistic works**

1. Public presentations of one's own creative work

Back to Borneo 2011; (International tour of solo performance: dramatic storytelling and highlighting the work of Viola Spolin and Paul Sills.)

Catalyst Theatre (Edmonton):

All productions were collectively created by the acting ensemble; most involved extensive tours of several months duration

- Drinks Before Dinner 1977; (documentary theatre on alcoholism for general audiences)
- Black Creek Project 1978; (participational drama on substance abuse for Junior High students)
- Name of the Game 1980; (participational drama on lifestyle choices for Junior High students)
- City Slickers 1980; (Cabaret style comedy on lifestyle choices for general audience)
- Talk is Cheap 1983/85; (Representational drama with audience participation on parent/teen communication for inter-generational audience)
- Numerous Conference Shows 1978-85

CBC Television:

- Canadian Express 1979
- Tommy Banks Live 1982
- Edmonton File (23 Episodes) 1983-84

The Second City:

- For a Good Time, Call... 1980
- Alberta Crude 1980
- On the Waterfall 1981
- Honk If You Love Alberta 1981
- Fuzzy Dice, Fried Rice and You 1981
- There's No Prime Like the Present 1982
- The Rates of Wrath 1982
- Micro-Chip Dip 1982

The Comedy Commission

- Western Canada Tour: warm-up act to "Gerry and the Pacemakers", 1984
- Comedy Cabaret Review: Edmonton Fringe Festival, 1984
- Edmonton and Area Pipeline and Utility Operators Committee Safety Seminar, Comic sketches on safety and the workplace, (12 engagements as featured presenters), 1984 - 2002.
- Northern Telecommunications Conference, Comic sketches on issues specific to the conference, 1986.

- The Alberta Book Fair, Comic sketches specific to the event, 1987.
- Pacific North American Gas Association Annual Conference, comic sketches specific to the conference, 1992.
- “Partners in Protection” Fire Safety Conference, cabaret style performance on theme, Jasper Park Lodge, September, 1992
- City of Edmonton, Transportation and Streets, Comic sketches on safety and the workplace, (seven engagements as featured presenters), 1999-2002
- City of Edmonton, Water and Sanitation, Comic sketches on safety and the workplace, (6 engagements as featured presenters) 1998-2003.
- National Energy Board, Bi-annual Conference in Niagara Falls, ON., Comic sketches on issues specific to the conference, 2000.
- Alberta Long-term Care Association, Calgary and Edmonton, Comic sketches specific to their seminars, (Four engagements as featured presenters) 2000-01.
- Capital Health Region Safety Retreat, Comic sketches specific to the seminar, 2002-10.
- Teresin Pipelines Merger Celebration, Calgary, Comic sketches specific to requests of the engager, 2003.

CTV Television

- Canada A.M. 1981
- Only At Dani's 1986

Radio Commercials

- Jeffrey's Food Circus (5 spots) 1982

Independent Film

- Universiade 83 (training film) 1983

CBC Radio

- Radio Current Affairs Special 1984
- Edmonton P.M. (4 episodes) 1985

ACCESS Television

- Action Options: Drugs, Alcohol and You 1985
- V.A.S.H. (5 episodes) 1988-89

Television Commercials

- The Edmonton Sun (3 spots) 1986

2. Performances of creative works of others

ACCESS Radio (CKUA)

- James and the Giant Peach, 1977
- All That I Can Be, 1984

Workshop West Theatre

- Henrik Ibsen on the Necessity of Producing Norwegian Drama 1978
- Alice Through the Looking Glass 1983

Television Commercials

- 17th Exciting Season, Citadel Theatre, 1981
- Greatest Stereo Sale, International Stereo, 1982.
- tour de South Side, Heritage Mall, 1983
- City Slicker, (3 spots), Westgate Chevy Farm, 1984
- All You Need to Know, CBC 740 Radio, 1984
- Showcase, Esso, 1985
- Charbroil BBQ, Macleods, 1986
- The Winning Ticket, The Provincial Lottery Corporation, 1988

CTV Television

- Bush Pilots, 1982

ACCESS Television

- Speak Easy, (5 episodes), 1982
- Communicating With a Purpose, 1983.

The Council of Edmonton Lutheran Churches

- Martin Luther (for an area wide event celebrating 500 years since Luther's birth) 1983

Elk Island National Park

- Island on the Road 1983

CBC Radio

- Alberta Anthology, 1984

Northern Light Theatre / Alberta Theatre Projects

- New Play Festival (Morality play; Closing Time) 1984

National Film Board

- Dramalab '85 (Rockin' T-birds; Dreamboats) 1985

Harvest Media (Film)

- Captain Safety to the Rescue 1986
- Sexual Harassment: The Campus Power Play 1988

The Camrose Theatre Festival

- Remember Where You Started From 1993
- Henrik Ibsen on the Necessity of Producing Norwegian Theatre 1993
- The Tempest 1994
- The Heartless Troll 1994

The Churchmice Players

- Annie 1997
- The Boyfriend 2002

American Folklore Theatre

-Kettle of Fish 2000

Studio Theatre, University of Alberta

-Exit the King 2018

3. Directing performances

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever (Barbara Robinson)
Augustana Faculty, University of Alberta, 2017.

A Study in Scarlet (Sir Arthur Conan Doyle & Adapted for
the stage by Paul “Sparky” Johnson) Augustana
Faculty, University of Alberta, 2016.

The Picture of Dorian Gray (Oscar Wilde & Adapted for
the stage by Paul “Sparky” Johnson, Augustana
Faculty, University of Alberta, 2014.

The Trip to Bountiful (Horton Foote) Augustana Faculty,
University of Alberta, 2014.

Haroun and the Sea of Stories (Salmon Rushdie),
Augustana Faculty, University of Alberta, 2013.

Ibsen’s Children (Catrine Telle and Ivar Tindberg,
translated from the Norwegian by John Johansen),
English language premiere, Augustana Faculty,
University of Alberta, 2012.

Somerset Rain (Somerset Maugham & Adapted for the
stage by Paul “Sparky” Johnson), Augustana Faculty,
University of Alberta, 2010.

Babette’ Feast (Isak Dinesen & Adapted for the stage by
Paul “Sparky” Johnson), Augustana Faculty,
University of Alberta, 2008.

Springs Awakening (Frank Wedekind), Augustana
Faculty, University of Alberta, 2008.

Peer Gynt (Henrik Ibsen), Augustana Faculty, University of
Alberta, 2007.

Godspell (Stephen Schwartz), Augustana Faculty,
University of Alberta, 2005.

Ti-Jean and His Brothers (Derek Walcott), Augustana
University College, 2005.

Look and Listen (adapted by Paul “Sparky” Johnson),
Augustana University College, 2003.

Six Characters In Search of an Author (Luigi
Pirandello), Augustana University College, 2003.

A Christmas Carol (Paul Sills), Augustana University
College, 2001.

Tatterhood (Paul “Sparky” Johnson & Gordon Hafso),
Augustana University College, 2000.

Poe (Paul “Sparky” Johnson), Augustana University College,
1999.

- I Remember Mama (John Van Druten), Augustana University College, 1998.
- Hans Christian Andersen: Story Theatre (Paul “Sparky” Johnson), Camrose Theatre Festival, 1997.
- Bousille and the Just (Gretien Gelinias), Augustana University College, 1997
- Into the Woods (Stephen Sondheim & James Lapine), Augustana University College, 1997
- Camino Real (Tennessee Williams), Augustana University College, 1996
- Tatterhood and the Hobgoblins (Paul Johnson & Gordon Hafso), Camrose Theatre Festival, 1995
- The Heartless Troll (Larry Christianson & Gordon Hafso), Camrose Theatre Festival, 1994
- The Skin of Our Teeth (Thornton Wilder), Augustana University College, 1993
- Brand (Henrik Ibsen), Camrose Theatre Festival, 1993
- Translations (Brian Friel), Augustana University College, 1993
- Creatures of Habit (Collective), Prairie Fire Theatre Company, 1992
- Dreaming and Duelling (John and Joa Lazarus), Augustana University College, 1991
- The Lion and the Jewel (Wole Soyinka), Camrose Lutheran University College, 1991
- The Visit (Friedrich Dürrenmatt), Camrose Lutheran University College, 1989
- The Diary of Anne Frank (Frances Goodrich & Albert Hackett), Camrose Lutheran College, 1989
- The Ranger Ned Story (Scott Hafso), Camrose Lutheran College, 1989
- The Diary of Adam and Eve, Camrose Lutheran College, 1989
- The Dining Room (A. R. Gurney Jr.), Camrose Lutheran College, 1987
- Listen to the Wind (James Reaney), Camrose Lutheran College, 1987
- Energize ‘83 (Collective), Catalyst Theatre, Edmonton, 1983
- Changes (Scott Hafso), ‘Harmony’ Youth Program, Centennial Library Theatre, Edmonton, 1979