

The Littlest Wiseman – The 100-year-old Holiday Tradition Returns for 57th Consecutive Annual Run

FORT WORTH, Texas, Dec. 4, 2017 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – The Fort Worth production of *The Littlest Wiseman* started as a modest junior high school play about the humble birth of Jesus. Now in its 57th consecutive annual run, the play has evolved into an elaborate production that is one of Fort Worth's longest-running Christmas season entertainment events.



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“It’s a very simple heartfelt story set against amazing visuals and stunning scenery,” said Assistant Director Suzi McLaughlin, a 44-year veteran of the production who was director for 17 years.

But the production wasn’t always so elaborate as it is now, a cast member of the early years said.

“The play was a lot simpler – ‘pretty much bare bones’ – during the first years when *The Littlest Wiseman* was staged at McLean Junior High School,” said Lloyd Walsh. “It was short and simple and didn’t have singing and dancing. It was just a simple junior high play.”

Walsh's parents, the late F. Howard and Mary D. Walsh, first saw the play in Colorado Springs, Colo. [The Littlest Wiseman](#) was written by the Walsh's longtime friend, the late Dr. Lloyd Shaw, superintendent of Cheyenne Mountain School District in Colorado where the play was staged for many years beginning in 1917. Shaw included poetry written by his wife, the late Dorothy Stott Shaw, throughout the script.

"My parents were very close with the Shaws," Walsh said, and they thought the play 'was so special' that "they wanted a Christmas pageant here [in Fort Worth] to give as many people as possible exposure to the story of Christmas."

The late Joe Cleveland, music teacher at McLean, produced and directed the initial Fort Worth production. It was his idea to add a bell choir to the school's music curriculum and to include the bells in a carol service before play performances. The Walshes agreed and purchased a set of bells for the school. Lloyd Walsh was among the original members of the bell choir, which was formed in 1964 and first participated in "[The Littlest Wiseman](#)" that year. In honor of their friend, the Walshes named the group [The Dorothy Shaw Bell Choir](#).

"In 1966, the production moved from McLean to the newly opened Scott Theatre. The move offered opportunities for the production to expand and add more elaborate staging," said Walsh.

A grant from the Walsh Foundation funds all aspects of the production, which is truly a gift to the community because every seat at every performance is free.

Reserved tickets are still available for each of the remaining nine 2017 performances.

December 2 – 3 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

December 3 – 3 p.m.

December 5 thru 8 – 7:30 p.m.

December 9 and 10 – 3 p.m.

Performances are in the Fort Worth Cultural District at the William Edrington Scott Theatre located within the Fort Worth Community Arts Center, 1300 Gendy St., Fort Worth, TX 76107.

Tickets may be reserved at <http://www.thelittlestwiseman.org/>.

Learn more about The Dorothy Shaw Bell Choir at:

<http://www.dorothyshawbellchoir.org/>

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Audio file (mp3):

<http://www.thelittlestwiseman.org/Content/Downloads/track01.mp3>