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IWU Senior Wins Prestigious Costume Design Award

March 16, 2006

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. - As theatre design majors from all across the country packed into a room in Orlando this month at the Southeastern Theatre Conference (SETC) Design Competition, Illinois Wesleyan senior theatre arts major and Watseka, Ill., resident Janessa Styck meticulously set up her presentation for her original costume designs for IWU's January production of *A Man of No Importance* by Terrence McNally. To her surprise, after a very careful presentation of her work, Styck would win second place in the very prestigious costume design competition.

The competition is an annual part of the SETC conference and allows students to have their work in costume design, scenic design, lighting design, and crafts and technology reviewed by a board of prominent judges. Founded in 1949 in Chapel Hill, N.C., SETC is the largest and most active regional theatre organization in the United States. SETC affords college theatre students a chance to find internships and jobs in year-round and summer stock theatre and is annually held in a different part of the country.

For the competition, Styck was required to present six color costume renderings with matching fabric swatches. The renderings are to be mounted on a presentation board and can include pictures of the actualized design, additional sketches, or a "bible," a book containing all the information necessary to make the costumes for the specific play including actors' measurements, contact information, calendars, and expense records. The competition also required a written design summary explaining the vision of the designer. The catch was, all of these things must fit within a two and one half foot square area.

For the competition, Styck spent months in preparation painting renderings, mounting pictures and finding that one perfect font for the presentation board titles. "It was a long process, but when you are a perfectionist and you are preparing for something this important, you are waiting for 'the click' and for those 'happy accidents' that make everything come together," said Styck.

"When I won, I didn't know how to feel at first. Then my 'cheering section' stood up and they were all yelling for me. The whole department just came together to support me just like they were my family. It felt so amazing," said Styck.



Janessa Styck

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