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8-27-2015

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Morgan Ingle

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Recommended Citation

Ingle, Morgan, "New Professor Joins GWU Theater Department" (2015). GWU-Today. 171.

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New professor joins GWU theater department



New GWU Theater Arts professor, Andy Rich. Photo by: Taylor White

By: Morgan Ingle

Andrew “Andy” Rich is Gardner-Webb University’s (GWU) new professor in the theatre department. He teaches Theatre Survey and any courses involving technical theatre, such as scenery, lighting, costumes, makeup, etc. Rich will also do the scenery and lighting design for both of GWU’s upcoming plays: “The Children’s Hour” and “I-YA-I-YA-O.”

Professor Rich is married and has two sons. His family recently moved from Selinsgrove, PA, where they lived for the last 16 years, for his wife to take a great job in Hendersonville. While searching for a new job nearby, his current position became available.

“I like small liberal arts colleges, so this was a good fit for me,” Rich said. “I’m very into working with students first and foremost, and I also like to get my hands dirty and paint... I hope that we can continue the foundational work that Dr. Nelson has brought to the program here.”

Andy Rich got his B.A. in theatre at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. He then continued on to graduate school at Indiana University in Bloomington to get his M.F.A. in theatre with a concentration in scenic design and a minor concentration in lighting and technology.

“My graduate professor, Wes Peters, in Bloomington, Indiana was probably the most inspirational person in my life from college,” Rich said. “He taught me how to not only create a great design, but also balance a healthy family life, as well. A lot of times artists get consumed by their work and he taught me how to balance all of that so I can still have my family, which is hard to do.”



As someone who likes small liberal arts school, Gardner-Webb is “a good fit” for the new Theater Arts professor. Photo by: Taylor White

While living in Selinsgrove, PA, Professor Rich began his teaching career at Susquehanna University. He also worked professionally during the summers with several groups such as Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble and Pennsylvania Youth Theatre.

“It’s been very easy [transitioning to working at GWU] because everyone’s been very nice and everybody talks to you, which is a change from living in the northeast,” Rich said. “The first time I went to CVS Pharmacy and the clerk called me ‘honey’ it was very disconcerting at first. I knew about the South, but we lived up north for so long I forgot what it’s like. I still feel like I’m getting my sea legs for understanding how everything works.”