

The Community Theatre of Howell announces six performances of the “drop-dead” funny comedy

DEARLY DEPARTED

By David Bottrell and Jessie Jones

Enjoy an award winning comedy that’s outrageously funny and at the same time poignant and touching. *Dearly Departed*, set somewhere south of the Mason Dixon line, tells the story of Bud Turpin’s funeral. This husband and patriarch of the Turpin Clan, was not exactly God-fearing, or even perhaps likable and, as a result, his extended family has a variety of unexpected responses to his passing. When his widow, Raynelle, is asked by the preacher, to describe her husband, the widow succinctly replies that Bud was “mean and surly”. From the moment Bud keels over at the breakfast table right on through his burial in the “Gentleman Farmer” coffin, *Dearly Departed* makes it clear that there’s more to living and dying in the Bible Belt than you can shake a corn dog at. *Dearly Departed* is a humorous look at the uniquely human relationship called “family” and the truth to the adage, “blood is thicker than water”.

Dearly Departed premiered in New Haven CT in 1991. That same year it received great critical acclaim in its Off-Broadway opening at the Second Stage Theatre in New York. The New York Daily News said that “*Dearly Departed* is drop dead funny...but don’t take our word, see it yourself.” *Dearly Departed* was then produced in Los Angeles where it received six Drama Logue Awards including “Best Production” and “Best Playwriting”. It has been subsequently produced in hundreds of theaters in the UK, Australia and the US and has received the highest rating by the American Association of Community Theatres in audience approval. Authors David Bottrell and Jessie Jones are both Kentucky born actors. This was their first produced play. *Dearly Departed* was re-written as a screenplay for the movie, *Kingdom Come*, starring Whoopi Goldberg. Bottrell continues his acting career and Ms. Jones has written for television sitcoms and for Walt Disney Productions.

The CTH production of *Dearly Departed* is directed by Rebecca Dilworth, Produced by Linda Peasley, and Amy Wimbrow as Assistant Director. Additional members of the production staff include Bruce Grotenhuis as Tech Director and Stage Manager; Bob Skrobot as set build lead, Michelle Skrobot as set dress lead, Kathy Perlberg as props mistress, and Diana Fox as costumer.

The cast includes: Kim Sullivan, Kevin Rogers, Nick Stoddard, Mallissa Bossardet, Michelle Skrobot, Kara Waite, Ryan Johnson, Erin Kathleen Wilmoth Hooks, Christopher Woltman, Todd Nielson, Kaitlyn Rose, Mark Hlavach, Gil Bazil, Jack Sheppard, Laura Sosnowski, Robin Uicker, Sarah Kenney, Mackenzie Horton, Tori Rogers, Thomas Nielson, Caleigh Barnaby, Katie Mazulllo and Makenna Usher. The Joy of Life Gospel Singers are directed by Melinda Towns, accompanied by organist, Stevie Koehn with singers Shari and Hannah Schmidtke, Dirk, and Justin Brandt, Julie Skrobot, Emily and Mark Mazzullo, and Rachel Dziabuda

Performances take place February 6th, 7th, 13th, and 14th at 8 pm and on Feb 8th and 15th at 2 pm.

Tickets are \$13 for adults and \$11 for seniors and students if purchased in advance. They are \$2 more if purchased at the door. **Group Discounts are available.**