

2017



International Festivals & Events Association
IFE A World

LEADERSHIP — LEGACY — RECOGNITION PROGRAM

The IFEA Leadership Legacy Recognition Program recognizes individuals who have made a significant impact through their work and accomplishments in the festivals and events industry within their local community.

Throughout the year, four Leadership Legacy recipients will be selected by their peers, each being recognized in an issue of IFEA's "ie" magazine.

For more information on the Leadership Legacy Recognition Program, [Click Here](#).



Marie Atwell, CFE

**General Overview of Marie's Career
Born a Dancer. Loves the Theater.
IS an Event Producer.**

Born a Dancer: Marie was raised in Lewiston, Idaho, a small town which couldn't contain her, nor keep her off the stage. In the early 1960's, Marie attended theatrical school at the famed Pasadena Playhouse in California. She went on to participate in community theater and live television performances after she moved to Portland, Oregon in 1965. She again continued her pursuit of media, modeling and acting when she landed in Boise, Idaho in 1966.

Loves the Theater: It was Marie's love of the theater however, that led to her first, Community Outreach job. In 1975, Marie started working at the Bazaar, a family run department store in Boise, Idaho. It was here that she started to get the idea that she could benefit the community she loved and provide high quality entertainment at the same time. If New York could do it, so could Boise! She was given full rein (within budget of course) to create "events" for the store throughout the region, partnering with national sponsors like Seventeen Magazine and working with both live and taped media. Area businesses began to understand and appreciate the importance of their sponsoring Festivals & Events as part of their advertising plans. That was it! Marie was hooked!

Is an Event Producer: In 1989, the newly formed Idaho Centennial Commission lured Marie away from the Bazaar to be the Statewide Event Producer for the Idaho Centennial Celebrations to be held the following year in 1990. With 1,500 special occasions during the year, the biggest being a 43-hour celebration for the 43rd state in Boise over the Fourth of July holiday, the celebration was a great success and the beginning of the next 21 years for Marie!

Following the Centennial's success, in 1991, along with her daughter Heather, Marie formed SHOWS ETC., an event design and production company excelling in helping clients take their projects to the

next level. Labeling themselves a 'full service event agency,' SHOWS ETC. specialized in all aspects of the event industry from Event Design, Logistics, Management and Sponsorship to Original Theatricals, Theme Décor, Melodramas, three day Murder Mysteries, Fables & Fantasies Come to Life®, Promotion and Festival Consulting. Although usually a 2 person team, this small town event production company has made a big impact on many events within Boise and the surrounding area.

Over the past 21 years, Marie has worked and consulted with clients and productions in the Boise area such as: Saint Alphonsus Festival of Trees* (21 years); Burgers for Bikes, Bikes for Kids* (20 years); St. Luke's Hospital's Kid for a Night* (10 Years); The Winter Games of Idaho* (8 years); the Boise Holiday Parade (still on the executive committee after 8 years); Downtown Boise Association First Thursday (5 years); Boise River Festival River Giants Parade (5 years); The Humantarian Bowl Football Game (4 years); Idaho Capital Rededication (2 years). (*IFEA/Haas & Wilkerson Pinnacle Award Winning Events.) Marie and her SHOWS ETC. team have also worked and consulted for many corporate events such as Albertsons; Ore-Ida; Hewlett Packard; University of Idaho; Boise State University; J.R. Simplot Corporation; City of Boise; Meridian Chamber of Commerce and Idaho Public Television.

Impact through work and accomplishments Marie has made in the festival and event industry within the local community.

Marie Atwell, CFEE. BIG dreams, small communities.

The term "Event Planner" hadn't been established when Marie Atwell first began her career. She was "Community Outreach Director" or "Creative Services". Fashion shows, fundraisers, special events, galas, tradeshow all fell under her leadership during the 1970's and 1980's in Boise, Idaho. She found these events necessary for the benefit of the town, but boy, they could be fun too! Marie saw events as theatrical productions and wrote the show for the audience. She has always scripted everything down to within a second of its life. Professionally, she could have done just as well in a large city, but she truly enjoyed working with the people and resources of Boise, Idaho. They are our neighbors and friends. Marie often said about events, "It's like Mickey and Judy putting on a show to save the town, farm, library or whatever!"

(In case you're wondering about the name SHOWS ETC., remember Mickey and Judy saying "Let's put on a show!")

Being from a smaller community, often times Marie has had to make an idea hap-

pen that everyone else said was impossible. But Marie has indeed made big things happen! Marie has always had the belief that all events, large or small, could be better, follow best practices, improve their communities and let those in attendance, for just one minute, forget their everyday worries. Following the IFEA philosophy of idea and resource sharing, Marie has learned and 'borrowed' many ideas and strategies from larger, international events over the years and brought them back to her local community and other producers to help them achieve those big things.

Focusing on the local community events throughout her career, Marie may not have had major 'international' impact in the events she has produced, but she has however had an impact of international proportions within her local community! And it is those local event producers, producing the smaller community events, that are the bread and butter of the Festival & Events Industry. For every one large major event there are many more local event producers just like Marie, who want to make their communities a better place to be. There is one thing that makes Marie stand out above all the rest however, and that's the fact that she was aware so early on in her career, and continues to do so today, of the value of the IFEA, the impact it could have on events and how beneficial it was for her to be involved.

Through her many years as an Event Producer and the knowledge gained from IFEA Conventions on elements such as safety, contracts, transportation, media and more, Marie has learned how to do things right. Events in Boise and throughout Idaho have always had that small town "Let's Put on a Show" can-do spirit but had little history of emergency planning and communication. Marie has always insisted on the best practices for all events to ensure the well-being of each attendee and volunteer, and has brought these points to the forefront for all events she has consulted on since.

Marie has helped small town committees like the Boise Holiday Parade, that with smart sponsorships, they too could have the same quality entertainment as the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade®! You can now see small, medium and large inflatable balloons all over the state of Idaho in parades and at events, because Marie showed them how. Marie also insisted event producers adhere to the proper training and safety strategies the "big cities" use. When Boise Music Week, est. 1919, was losing steam and sponsors in 2008, Marie advised them to act like they had something to sell, package it and go out and get it! 2018 will be the event's 100th anniversary!

Marie is probably best known in the local community however, for 'bringing the fun' to the event! There have been parades since the dark ages, but did those leaders wear

roller skates and a propeller beanie to access the parade from start to finish? Marie did!

Every community has a Marie Atwell, CFEE. But Boise, Idaho has the original. Although over the past few years, her health has slowed Marie down a little, the impact Marie has on local events and the local community she serves, has not slowed down one bit. Not retired at all, but maybe with a "more relaxed schedule," Marie will keep being involved with not-for-profit groups/local festivals and events community and will be the biggest cheerleader for the IFEA, for as long as they'll 'let' her!

If you know Marie . . . you have most likely have often heard her share her personal motto . . . "This is not a dress rehearsal!"

Level of involvement Marie has had with the IFEA during her career.

While in the midst of planning the Idaho Centennial Celebrations, Marie knew she had a short timeframe to accomplish everything, so she joined the IF(E)A to learn how to maximize her time, budget and goals. Attending her first IF(E)A Convention in San Antonio in 1993, Marie jumped right in to being part of the IFEA family. Never one to sit on the sidelines and let someone else do the work, as an attendee at the Convention Marie has always been ready, willing and able to help in any way she can, ranging from acquiring silent auction items, setting up, decorating and tearing down the Foundation Auction event to setting up Pinnacle Awards, displays, flags, banners and whatever else was needed. The last several Conventions Marie has been asked to be part of the IFEA team in an official capacity. Her background in visual merchandising and theater has certainly come in handy for displaying those one of a kind items so often donated for the Silent Auction.

Alongside working with the IFEA, Marie was one of the first Presidents of the Rocky Mountain Festivals and Events Association, a regional chapter of IFEA. Marie believed whole-heartedly in giving back and nurturing new Event Professionals, and did so enthusiastically through the RMFEA.

Perhaps Marie's biggest contribution to the IFEA though, is as a supportive and informative active member who seeks out the new, unsure, quiet attendees and makes them feel at home. She goes out of her way to encourage them to utilize the IFEA network and resources to their fullest. Marie is without a doubt one of IFEA's biggest cheerleaders!

Marie Atwell, CFEE. At five foot something, small Marie has had HUGE success!