

Ed Eaton's Biography

Ed Eaton majored in Performing Arts/Theater at the Catholic University of America and the American University, with focuses on acting, directing, and lighting design. Since graduating magna cum laude from American University in 1984, Ed has put all of those skills to work professionally.

He began immediately by sharing his skills with children at the Bethesda Academy of Performing Arts in Maryland (now Imagination Stage) and as a performer at the Springside Inn Dinner Theatre in Auburn, New York (where Ed also served as Technical Director, Set Designer and Lighting Designer). Ed continued to explore his art and grow as an artist through his freelance work as a dramatics instructor, technical director, and lighting and set designer for schools in the Baltimore-Washington Metropolitan area. He soon began working at the West End Dinner Theatre, where he performed in no less than 14 shows over the years. Roles include Nathan Detroit in *Guys and Dolls*, Will Parker in *Oklahoma*, and Billis in *South Pacific*. In addition, he became the West End Dinner Theatre's Associate Production Manager and Lighting Designer from 1985 to 1989.

In 1989, Ed became a member of the Screen Actors Guild and has since appeared in numerous films and commercials.

In 1990, he joined the Living Stage Theatre Company Professional Actor Training Program where Founding Director and Artistic Director, Robert A. Alexander mentored him. Ed was the sole actor to complete this rigorous program, graduating in 1992. During this time, he also served as Living Stage Theatre Company's Technical Director. For 36 years, Living Stage Theatre Company (founded by Robert A. Alexander in 1966) was the preeminent theatre for social change in the United States. As part of his training, Ed became proficient at American Sign Language, which led to later work as Actor and Voice Director for SignRise Cultural Arts as well as performances at Gallaudet University (the world leader in liberal education and career development for deaf and hard-of-hearing undergraduate students).

Over the years, Ed continued to perform at such venues as Toby's Dinner Theatre, Source Theatre Festival, and Alliance Theatre WS, where he once again performed in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, this time as Oberon (Ed had the blessing of playing Demetrius at American University many years before).

In 1992, Ed rejoined Kaiser Permanente's Educational Theatre Programs in the Mid-Atlantic States, where he had worked for a year before his Living Stage Theatre Company training. Nationally, since 1985, Kaiser Permanente's Educational Theatre Programs has been creating award winning, professional, health and safety performances, workshops and trainings for schools and other groups as a free community service.

Ed began his career at Kaiser Permanente as an actor-educator and puppeteer. By 1993, he had been promoted to road manager and director of *Professor Bodywise's Traveling Menagerie*, which uses hand puppets and full-body puppets to empower children to make healthy choices in their lives. Over the next twelve years with Educational Theatre Programs, Ed also directed *Secrets*, an HIV/AIDS awareness play and he led the HIV/AIDS training for the actor-educators. While working with Scott Fortune, Ed helped to develop *RAVES – Real Alternatives to Violence for Every Student* and *The R-Files*, a fun, exciting and interactive program that models "The Five Steps to Personal Power." Over the years, he also enhanced the technical aspects of Educational Theatre Programs, including adding lighting as a regular part of the touring set and building a video production component. Ed continued to rise in prominence in the program, and in 1999, he became Co-Artistic Manager. For six years, he and the other Co-Artistic Manager, Scott Fortune, ran the Educational Theatre Programs department for Kaiser Permanente Mid-Atlantic States, serving as artistic directors, producers, managers, and visionaries.

Even while working long hours for Kaiser Permanente, Ed managed to find time to do outside work at the West End Dinner Theatre, Toby's Dinner Theatre, Arena Stage and elsewhere. However, over the last several years, he decided to focus his "free" time on pursuing his interest in ASL, riding his motorcycle and spending time with his 8-year-old daughter, Raina, his two year old son, Riley, and his wife, Jessica. In order to nurture his passion and love of theatre and education, Ed chooses a select variety of acting and directing projects. In recent years, he has directed *The Fantasticks* at the American University and *Les Miserables* at Musical Theater Center in Rockville, Maryland. Ed has also had the pleasure of working with his daughter in the Potomac Theatre Company's production of *The Sound of Music*.

In July of 2005, Ed resigned his position at Kaiser Permanente to move to Kaua'i, so that he and his family could live in a place where his children could spend more time "outdoors and barefoot." He is very excited about this new chapter in his life and looks forward to the challenges and growth to come. He and his family feel happy to be new members of the thriving theatre community on Kaua'i and Ed is looking forward to working with the production team, cast, crew, musicians, volunteers, and parents of HCT's *Annie*.