

NEWS > LOCAL NEWS

# James D. Young, 93, founded CSUF theater department

By **RICHARD CHANG** | Orange County Register  
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James D. Young, longtime theater professor and founding chairman of Cal State Fullerton's Department of Theatre and Dance, has died. He was 93.

Young, who died Friday, was part of the founding generation of academic theater in Orange County. He joined CSUF in 1960, shortly after the first classes were offered in fall 1959, when it was known as Orange County State College. Young established the theater and dance department, served as associate dean for the School of Letters, Arts and Sciences in 1970 and served as associate vice president for academic programs from 1973 to 1979.

Young returned to teaching in 1979 and continued to teach part time after receiving emeritus status in 1986. He co-founded and co-chaired the campuswide It's Our University faculty/staff/emeriti campaign, raising funds for CSUF programs, scholarships and departments.

"He was a remarkable human being," said Joe Arnold, dean emeritus of the College of the Arts. "His contributions to education and the community can't be underestimated. He was a very warm, generous, astute and thoughtful person."

Young was a key fundraiser and donor for the Clays Performing Arts Center, contributing \$50,000 in 2003. The 250-seat James D. Young Theatre in the center bears his name.

“The plays that he put on were just first rate,” said Lawrence de Graaf, former CSUF history professor and author of “The Fullerton Way: 50 Years of Memories at California State University, Fullerton.”

“In various ways, he really gave a great deal of himself to the university,” de Graaf said. “He was the one who really got the university going, involving faculty in fundraising.”

Young also was engaged with organizations beyond the campus. He assisted several public and private colleges in the development of their theater programs and was active with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Fullerton and the Muckenthaler Cultural Center.

He served as district governor of the Rotary Club of Fullerton and led the group as president in 1981 and 1982. Young developed and performed a one-man show based on Rotary founding President Paul Harris, which he presented internationally for various Rotary Clubs and conferences.

“I was at a Rotary luncheon today, and there wasn’t a single person out of 60-70 people who had not been affected by Jim Young,” Arnold said.

Young obtained his bachelor’s degree from Pepperdine University and his master’s and doctoral degrees from USC. He began his career as head of the Department of Speech and Drama at Pepperdine from 1947 to 1955. Before coming to CSUF, he was a professor of language arts at Cal State Los Angeles.

According to James Taulli, interim dean of CSUF’s College of the Arts, the department of theater and dance is dedicating its entire 2014-15 season of plays and musicals to Young’s memory.

Young was married to Dorothy Rea Young, who died in January, for 70 years. He is survived by his son Doug of Oakland, daughter Vicki of Denver, three grandchildren and one great-grandson.

Gifts in his memory can be made to the Dr. James D. and Dorothy R. Young Founder’s Scholarship Endowment at Cal State Fullerton, c/o the CSUF Philanthropic Foundation, 2600 Nutwood Ave., Suite 850, Fullerton, CA 92831.

**Contact the writer:** 714-796-6026 or [rchang@ocregister.com](mailto:rchang@ocregister.com)

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