



Photo provided by Susan Frick

**Ron McDaniel** in the lobby of DLO Musical Theatre Backstage. Behind him is part of the display of program covers from the more than 200 shows DLO has presented. There are currently 10 frames altogether. Ron began this display in 1991 and has updated it every year.

# Longtime DLO board member reflects on time with group

STAFF REPORT

DANVILLE — For six decades, Ron McDaniel has been a part of DLO Musical Theatre.

According to DLO Musical Theatre President Paul Strain, DLO Musical Theatre on July 10 had its first meeting in 57 years without McDaniel as a regularly elected board member. McDaniel elected not to run in the last election, effectively retiring from the board, but will still attend meetings as a past president.

Strain said McDaniel's longevity on the board and his constant presence in local community theatre is noteworthy.

McDaniel reflected on his time with DLO.

"DLO Musical Theatre (formerly Danville Light Opera) has been a major part of my life. I joined the group in 1961 as part of the ensemble

for Annie Get Your Gun. So far, 43 of the 54 community theatre shows I've appeared in have been for DLO. I have also directed three DLO shows. In 1966 I was elected to my first three-year term on the board of directors. At the end of each term I was reelected and thus served 57 years on the board. At various times I held the offices of president, vice president and treasurer and served on virtually every committee. Of the 35 persons who have held the office of president since the group's inception in 1955, I have known and worked with all but the first two. This year, when my term expired, I decided not to seek reelection. As a past president, I can still remain active and attend and participate in all board meetings. However, all past presidents present at a meeting share one collective vote. I plan to continue as the group's historian and

with the sale of program advertising."

He continued, "I have seen DLO through the best of times and the worst of times. My tenure on the board has been both rewarding and challenging. Throughout most of its history, DLO has been a nomadic organization, moving from place to place for rehearsals, set building, storage and performances. For many years I served on the Site Committee, always searching for new locations, as rents increased, facilities deteriorated or others outbid DLO for particular spaces. Production activities and most storage usually involved different locations scattered throughout the city. In 1986 DLO purchased the old St. Joseph's Catholic Church, with hopes of turning it into a small theatre. However, the costs of bringing it up to code became overwhelm-

ing. Fortunately the organization was let out of its contract. One of the saddest days in my association with DLO was when the beautiful former church was demolished."

McDaniel said, "While reading the Commercial-News on Sunday, Jan. 19, 2020, I spotted a notice that Danville Township would be accepting bids for the sale of its building at 141 N. Walnut St. The detailed description made the facility seem like a good fit for DLO. I immediately contacted the board, and President Paul Strain set up a tour. Everyone saw great potential in the building. On Feb. 27, 2020, the 64th anniversary date of the organization's incorporation, DLO submitted the accepted bid on the building. On May 14, 2020, DLO closed on the property, and a dream came true. Under

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## DLO

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the guidance of the late Gary Lickfett and with funds from grants and generous donors, contractors and volunteers transformed the building into a fabulous facility now known as DLO Musical Theatre Backstage. It is used for all DLO functions except performances—rehearsals, set

and costume construction and storage, board meetings and box office. Having a building of its own, of course, presents DLO with a whole new set of problems, mainly related to maintenance and repair.”

He continued, “With the goal of acquiring a home for the organization accomplished and with a slate of excellent nominees, the time seemed right for me to step aside and open a seat on the

board for a new individual. My sincere wish is that the community will continue to recognize and support this invaluable and irreplaceable arts organization. The costs of producing musicals are enormous, and many of these are invisible to audiences. Royalties for performance rights, rental fees for performance sites, insurance and building upkeep are but a few. Ticket sales cover only about 40

percent of DLO’s expenses. The balance must come from grants (which are decreasing post-COVID), sponsorships, program ad sales, donations and legacy gifts.”

McDaniel added that DLO offers so much to so many and welcomes everyone.

“The camaraderie and the long-term friendships I’ve developed are what I treasure most from my years on the DLO board,” he said.