

YOUR NEIGHBOR: Paula Sackett, 60

Theater takes center stage in Wellington woman's life

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Paula Sackett's life has centered on stage and behind it. "I've tried it all: backstage, on stage, singing, acting, teaching, even the business side of theater," said Sackett, the artistic managing director of Studio Wellington in the Wellington Commerce Park.

The Studio Theatre opened in January 2006. Sackett, 60, has been working with it since its inception, but theater was part of her life long before then. Sackett attended New Trier High School in Winnetka, Ill., the same high school as Ann-Margret and the late Charlton Heston. Sackett became a

professional stage actress in her 20s in Chicago. At 19, she married Jim Sackett, who's been an anchor at WPTV-Channel 5 since 1978. The couple moved to Wellington 24 years ago after living in other areas of Palm Beach County, as well as Chicago, Germany, Washington, and Maine. Sackett has been in operas, musicals, and singing in quartet-style groups, worked backstage and in almost every other facet of theater arts. She worked at the Wellington Worth Playhouse as executive director and still volunteers





CYDNEY SCOTT/Staff Photographer

Paula Sackett is the managing artistic director of Studio Theatre of Wellington, which opened in 2006. Sackett organizes shows, teaches acting classes and directs the children's summer camp. Her life has always revolved around theater, she says.

that passion and continue an artistic career. Although the theater seats only 40 people, Sackett said the services it provides are greater than can be seen.

"It's a true black-box theater," she said. "It's the only one of its kind in Wellington."

Sackett organizes shows at the theater, teaches acting classes and directs the summer camp.

"I'm pretty busy during the months before the school of the arts auditions," Sackett said.

There are classes throughout the year, although Sackett said

the most popular time of the year for children is during the winter.

"But training isn't all we do here," she said.

"We try to present some sort of production each month. Most of my time outside of the theater is spent reading plays. I choose plays we are going to present for play readings as well as the play we do each year during our summer camp."

The theater will stage a reading on May 19 of *A Trip to Bountiful*.

The theater has presented *Zoo*

Story, Love Letters and The Complete Works of William Shakespeare Abridged. It also presents an annual reading of 10-minute plays written by local playwrights.

Theater founder Lee Harris and several musicians teach music lessons throughout the week at Studio Theatre. The theater also holds concerts performed by its music students and professional musicians.

Sackett said tickets for theater and concerts are about \$20 per person and refreshments are included in the price.

Sackett said Studio Theatre wants to bring in a theater improvisational group in the future. Sackett said she would like the theater to be enlarged to 50 seats and to make enough room for a grand piano.

Right now, Sackett is reading plays and preparing for summer camp. The summer camp is for ages 8 to 12 and presents a short musical at the end of the camp.

"When I think back, I've done a lot of stuff," she said. "I've had a diverse life."

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ward Stage Door Theatre and various theaters in the Miami area. Her list of favorite characters played includes Nelly Lovett in *Sweeney Todd*, Weezer in *Magnolias* and the baker's son in *Into the Woods*. After her children moved out of the house, Sackett earned a bachelor of arts degree in theater from Florida Atlantic University in 2005. Her daughter Elizabeth, 35, is an actress in New York City and her son Mick, 37, is a sound engineer in Orlando.

Each member of our family is involved in some sort of performance," she said. "I've never seen a film. I leave that to Jim."

Sackett said her creative mind is fueled by sharing theater with her community, and the Studio Theatre provides a way to share