

## June 2017 Client Corner: Pageant of the Masters



Ray and Karen were introduced to KFM about three years ago through their good friends, Art and Terry. Ray and Karen are quite the go getters with their respective careers as well as their dedication to fun and travel. Even with their busy schedules, they have found time to volunteer and participate in the Pageant of the Masters in Laguna Beach, California.

For those not familiar with the Pageant of the Masters, it is arguably one of the most unique productions in the entire world. On each evening of the Festival of Arts summer schedule, guests are amazed and enchanted by ninety minutes of tableaux vivants (living pictures), incredibly faithful recreations of classical and contemporary works of art, with real people posing to look exactly like their counterparts in the original pieces.

An outdoor amphitheater, professional orchestra, original score, live narration, intricate sets, sophisticated lighting, expert staff and hundreds of dedicated volunteers have won recognition for the Pageant of the Masters as the best presentation of its kind. This 2017 summer season will be Ray's 10th season and the 16th for Karen.

Karen got her start while living in Laguna Beach. Every January she would regularly see the casting call signs throughout Laguna. One year, she decided to take a chance and try out. Evidently she made the right impression as she was called a few months later and cast in a painting by Winslow Homer called "The Lifeline".

Ray got involved several years later. When Karen and Ray started dating, Karen explained to him that she volunteered every summer and that was how she spent her evenings in July and August. During their first summer together, Ray went with her to the Pageant each night and sat on the cast patio watching from behind the

scenes. While getting to know many of the regulars, he learned they had a mutual friend who just happened to be cast as “Jesus” in the Last Supper. That marked the beginning for Ray as he couldn’t have received a better endorsement than that!

The following January, Ray decided to join in the fun and try out. A few months later, they got a call to be cast together in a sculpture called “Fiesta”. The presentation showed a man and woman doing a Mexican hat dance, a perfect beginning for the two of them. Karen and Ray both agree that was their favorite year. “It was Ray’s first year, we were dating, we were in love and



we had lots of fun. It made it a very fantastic summer.” *(Image of “Fiesta” by Luis Jimenez to the right)*

To get prepared each year, Ray and Karen are called in May or June for a costume fitting. They are put into the actual set to double check sizing and comfort with their designated pose. After that, there is a daytime walkthrough rehearsal with the entire cast to fine tune timing. A week before the show begins, there are two dress rehearsals with full makeup, costumes and lighting. Each performance requires 20 to 30 minutes of preparation before the show, which includes full makeup, costume and a headpiece. The actual performance time for each show varies each year but usually entails a minimum of 90 seconds to as much as five minutes. There have been years when Ray and Karen have been cast in multiple pieces, which require them to do quick changes and causes them to remain at the Pageant quite a bit longer.

In case you are interested, Diane “Dee” Challis has been the Director/Producer of the Pageant since 1995 and makes all final decisions. Diane will allow cast members to be a part of the annual research committee, which is also very fun and educational. There is full-time, year-round staff that creates the costumes, headpieces and makeup. Some are re-used, but most are created new each year. The parts are assigned by the Casting Director. No one is guaranteed a part, and everyone must try out every year. They

start by building the sets and then figure out the people that will best match the set. Cast members range anywhere from four years old to people well into their nineties. Anyone can try out. The casting call is generally three evenings in the first or second week of January. If you cannot make the casting call, you can call the casting office to make an appointment. *(Image to below: Ray and Karen in “National Statuary Hall” at the 2015 Pageant of the Masters. Ray was King Kamehameha (far right) and Karen was Esther Hobart Morris (second from right).)*



The most difficult year was the year Ray was cast as “Sasquatch” in a live action sequence on the hillside. He had to take off the costume before coming back into the casting area because he scared the small children! Karen’s most difficult year was when she volunteered to be a backstage runner and had to herd eight little kids into their costumes in the dark and get them to not talk and stand still.

They have never needed to take time off work to be a part of the Pageant. All rehearsals are on week nights at 7:00 pm, and summer performances are at 8:30 pm. They have had so many great memories as volunteers. “Once you’re cast, you very much become family. We’ve made friends for life, celebrated birthdays, graduations, weddings and even mourned the loss of many over the years. We feel very fortunate and grateful to be able to participate.”

Karen and Ray would encourage everyone to try out if you have an interest. “It’s a substantial time commitment in the months of July and August, but worth every

minute when you get to be a part of a one of kind show. It's a family atmosphere and once you're in, you become a family member and you'll want to return each year."

For those of you that would like to attend this year's Pageant of the Masters that will run July 7th to August 31st, look for Ray in a Duke Ellington Statue that will rotate next to the main stage and Karen in a sculpture titled "Apollo and the Nymphs". While Ray and Karen have many favorites over the years, "The Last Supper" painting is traditionally done each year at the close of the show. Diane and I plan to attend this year so that we can see Ray and Karen perform first hand.

Thanks Karen and Ray for sharing your Pageant of the Masters experience with all of us!