

# Robert Prosky dies at 77

Continued from page A1

Lundy in "Mrs. Doubtfire" and Hilton Barber in "Dead Man Walking."

Though Prosky is probably best known for his portrayal of the kindhearted desk sergeant Stanislaus "Stan" Jablonski on "Hill Street Blues," a part he played from 1984 to 1987, he also had several other recurring roles. An example of such roles was a priest accused of murder on the ABC legal drama, "The Practice." Prosky also played Kirstie Allie's father on two different sitcoms, "Cheers" as well as "Veronica's Closet." Prosky performed in many guest appearances and

television films over his career. His final television appearance was in the 2006-2007 season of "ER," in which he played a victim of Alzheimer's disease who had just lost his son in an accident. Incidentally, the part of his son was played by Prosky's own son, Andrew.

Bob Prosky was a strong supporter of the local artistic scene. Since he owned a house in Cape May Point, Prosky could also be seen at several functions and fundraisers in the area, lending his name to bring awareness to local artistic organizations. His final attendance at a local event was last month during the Cape May Film Festival, an organization to

whom he had given his lecture "An Evening with Robert Prosky" several times over the years.

Ed Henry, president of the Cape May Film Festival, said, "Cape May has been blessed to have the presence of Robert Prosky in this community. He was an outstanding actor, true professional, and a great friend. Bob was an integral part of our Film Festival, from being the first featured speaker we've ever had - and we've hosted several other notable Hollywood favorites - through various benefits during the years, right up until this past festival last month where we had an inaugural special recognition award in his name for one of the film selections he particularly enjoyed. Of course his son, Stefan, our curator of films, makes a regular impact on our audiences and especially our Young Filmmakers year after year. Bob will be missed. Our condolences go out to his entire family."

He is survived by his wife of 48 years, Ida, and three children, Stefan, John and Andy as well as loving grandchildren.

Funeral arrangements were

incomplete, however a memorial service is planned in Cape May at a future date. Instead of flowers, the fami-

ly is asking for donations to The Actors Fund or for people to "just go see a play," his son Stefan said.



Photos by Tina Gaimo

Above, Robert Prosky, center, in a Cape May Stage production of "The Price." At left, Prosky and wife Ida at a Cape May Stage fundraiser.



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## CM Stage will miss Robert Prosky

CAPE MAY - Cape May certainly feels the void. Robert Prosky, a character actor with hundreds of credits on stage and screen including "Mrs. Doubtfire" and "Hill Street Blues," passed away Monday evening, five days shy of his 78th birthday.

A summer resident of Cape May Point, Robert Prosky left an indelible mark on the Cape May arts community in a variety of ways. Lovers of television drama will remember him as the good-humored sergeant, Stanislaus Jablonski, who greeted the rank-and-file cops at the start of each shift in the final seasons of "Hill Street Blues."

Movie fans might recall his dependably sturdy supporting turns in a range of films, from "Broadcast News" to "Mrs. Doubtfire." Broadway playgoers will reflect on the formidable impression he made as a Soviet arms negotiator in "A Walk in the Woods," or the wake of despair he left as a has-been real estate agent in "Glengarry Glen Ross." Both earned him Tony nominations.

Cape May Stage audiences will likely remember him most from making appearances at the stage and at the theatre's annual fundraisers. In 2006, Cape May Stage's production of Arthur Miller's twice Tony-nominated play "The Price," featuring Prosky alongside his two sons, Andy and John.

After opening night, Ed Wismer, theatre critic for the Cape May Star and Wave said, "The Proskys, father and sons, are an accomplished theatrical dynasty and their interaction in their roles in Miller's play is fascinating to watch. When the cast is as good as this one is, you come close to perfection."

At the end of the Equity company's highly successful 4-week run, Philadelphia's Walnut Street Theatre picked up the entire production for 8 weeks in January 2008 followed by a four-week run at Theatre J in Washington D.C.

Previous to his appearance in "The Price," Robert Prosky appeared in Cape May Stage's one-night benefit productions of A.R. Gurney's "Love Letters" once in the early 90s with Grace Gonglewski and also in the spring of 2000 with Oscar award-winning actress, Estelle Parsons.

Prosky later appeared in a short documentary about Cape May Stage's capital campaign Project Encore and played a role in launching the start of the theatre's 4-year restoration project. Prosky also served as a member of the theatre's Artistic advisory board and often frequented the Stage in the summertime with his wife Ida.

"It was always exciting to see the two of them outside the Playhouse getting ready to see a play. He'd enter the building and you'd just feel this unwavering presence in your midst. He was an approachable, gentle, man and at the same time a virtuous force in the theatre world," said Cape May Stage marketing director Alicia Grasso. "I know we will all miss him here at the Stage."

Cape May Stage's ex-officio board president Connie Felicetti added, "Cape May Stage has been very fortunate to have someone of Bob's stature and talents be so supportive of our work for so many years. His high regard for the quality of our productions culminated in his asking us to produce 'The Price' at our theatre, starring he and his two sons, Andy and John in 2006."

Felicetti continued, "In my personal conversations with Bob I always found him to be warm, down-to-earth, thoughtful, gracious and helpful."

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