



Vesta Testimonials

1. "Vesta rings absolutely true...In fact, for some viewers, this intimate play about an elderly woman's slow journey toward the inevitable may come too close to home. Just as Vesta's middle-aged daughter, Carol, finds her mother's decline too painful to live through, many theater-goers may find it too painful to sit through. I'm here to tell you – it's worth it."

Jim Kershner, The Spokesman-Review, October 21, 1996 (Spokane, WA)

2. "Vesta. What an experience!! This play is a dynamic journey for anyone who has the opportunity to experience it. It provides humor and sensitivity for a very difficult time in all of our lives.

The staff at Gaston Hospice in Gastonia, NC presented this play as a dramatic reading and has found that it was the most effective teaching tool we have ever used. *Vesta* covers all the dynamics that families face when dealing with the experiences of aging, relationships, chronic illness and dying. We cannot begin to describe the impact this play has had on everyone who has the pleasure to listen to the words of *Vesta*.

Lee Bucci, RN, MS, CAN, Executive Director, Gaston Hospice, Gastonia, NC

3. "Ahead of his time, Harnetiaux brilliantly positioned his quill on the faint pulse of an aging population verging on explosion as he commenced penning an intergenerational scaffolding entitled *Vesta*. It is a delight to see this piece come into its own as millions of Americans struggle to deal intimately and caringly with the inevitability of their loved ones' death and dying pathways. While *Vesta's* humor rescues the audience in the present, it offers a tender hug, leaving viewers moist-eyed, thoughtful and more prepared for dialogue on the way to an ambiguous future."

Gail Goeller, author of the forthcoming book on eldercare: "Rub-a-Dub Dub, Grandma's Stuck in the Tub: Coming of Age with Aging Parents," and founder and editor of "The Complete Directory for Seniors and Their Families," (Spokane, Wash.)

4. "Join *Vesta* on her journey from wellness through aging, disability, dependence and loss; bear witness to the impact of this journey on those who care for her and about her, especially her daughter and granddaughter. A witty and fiercely independent woman, *Vesta* confronts the challenges of living with illness her way! *Vesta* became part of the Cape Cod community during LifeCare Conversations 2001, our first annual advance care planning public awareness campaign held each November. A troupe of local actors gave generously of their time and talents to bring *Vesta* to multiple locations from Falmouth to Provincetown. We plan to bring *Vesta* back each year!"

*Sally Okun, Executive Director
Center for Life Care Planning & Support, Hyannis, MA*

5.VESTA: Journey, self-discovery, will versus acceptance, word keeping

The chance to foster public discussion and catharsis is perhaps the oldest of theaters purposes. VESTA offers one of those now rare opportunities to combine art and public service. As we embody these words, this universal event of passage becomes an object of contemplation. Here I can see my mothers age, my father's passing. You in the audience; whom will you see? You may meet some you do not expect. There will be a legion of such loved one's seen in the brief passage of time we will enliven.

Truly the time of death teaches what is important about life: Relationships, integrity, community. My hope is that these performances will re-enliven active compassion in all of us. Without it we are almost dead to one another. With it, we will love and honor our elders as they prepare for passage. We can leave aside our ambitions for empire and privilege, and turn to that which endures: Love.

I feel honored to direct this piece.

Nick Hovick

6. "We have produced staged readings of *Vesta* on a number of occasions as part of our Healing through the Arts program. Each time audience members thanked us for sharing the experience but, more importantly, thanked us for giving them a safe place to express their thoughts and feelings about end-of-life issues. Our post-production dialogue session have been insightful, thought-provoking and have elicited conversations that would not otherwise have been possible. Thank you, Bryan, for creating such a beautiful piece of theater and a setting for these important real life conversations."

Vicki Nelson
Program Director
Compassionate Care Alliance of Monterey County

7. "Our community coalition produced *Vesta* several times. People left the performance deeply impacted. Many observed that viewing the play felt like a healing and support for their own experience. Others told of wanting to think and plan for their own or parent's end-of-life time. Several professionals remarked that it sensitized them to the people they were taking care of."

Salima Cobb, RN
Founder and former director of the Santa Cruz County End-of-Life Coalition
Professional Liaison, Hospice Caring Project

8. Some comments written on evaluations:

- Honest humor. It made it real.
- It was better than I thought. Surprisingly not scary.
- Brought up things I hadn't thought about.
- I appreciated the multi-generational focus.
- Everyone should see this!
- Humanizing of the whole process. As a health care worker, we step in at only one point.
- I liked the poetry and symbolism.