

'Fifth of July' closes show Wednesday with full house

By MATTHEW MAYNARD

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Eastern's production of Lanford Wilson's "Fifth of July" closed out its run Wednesday night with another full house.

The play, directed by Terry Allen, ran at 8 p.m. Friday through Wednesday in the Doudna Fine Arts Center. Each night sold out the 120-seat playroom.

"We could have run another week with no problem," Allen said.

"Fifth of July" is the first of a trilogy of plays that Wilson has put together that deal with the life and times of the Talley family. The second, "Talley's Folly," takes place a generation before, and the third is "A Tale Told."

The Talleys are a fictitious family

from Lebanon, Mo., that are forced to cope with a different world than they grew up in. As one character put it, "No more care free Berkley days."

The play centers around four people who grew up in the radical era of the late 60s and early 70s. Two of them went to Europe, one to fight in Vietnam, and one stayed to fight the battle at home. None of the characters forgave one another for the choices they made.

Along the way the Talleys deal with death, a physical handicap, homosexuality, disillusionment, drugs, record deals and a garden that wouldn't materialize for several years.

It was obvious to the audience that both director and characters did their

homework when preparing for the play.

Allen, who grew up in Missouri, visited Lebanon earlier this year to get a feel for the town. "I wanted to see what the town looked like. One character shows another the town. I wanted to see what the characters saw."

Senior Mike O'Brien, who plays a paraplegic Vietnam veteran, took his role to the people.

O'Brien started using his crutches two months before the show. "One time, I went to a bar with my crutches. I had to relearn the way to interact with people."

O'Brien also said he learned something else about the handicapped while he was at the bar. "It's hard enough to be physically challenged, but

the real obstacle is the unnecessary pity. It's so detrimental."

"I read gardening books out the wing-wang," said Tim Estep, a junior, who spent a good portion of the play constructing a victory garden.

Estep said preparing for his role was also a physical challenge. "I was kind of pudgy. I started a schedule of working out for an hour every day."

Senior Alison Eudeikis learned a little about a maternal relationship. "I never been a real big kid fan. My part stirred a maternal feeling."

"Fifth of July" dealt with many relevant social issues, but O'Brien said the play's idea was on a more personal level.