



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 11, 1988

Tickets for the University Theatre's production of Lanford Wilson's Fifth of July are on sale at the Fine Arts Ticket Office between 1:00 and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The play opens Friday evening, February 19 at 8:00 p.m. in The Playroom of the Doudna Fine Arts Center.

Fifth of July is a non-assertive play, an understated, warmly comic, often poignant story about fading relationships and the end of innocence. In this case, a group of people who were all thrown together during the turbulent 60s are again together in the mid-70s. Their early aspirations and ideals have dimmed and changed but, more important, their feelings toward each other have changed. Their lives were once intertwined. Now, though characters remain dependent on other characters, we are shown that each is terribly alone, hidden, uncommunicative.

The play takes place on a farm near Lebanon, Missouri, on Independence Day, 1977, and the following day, when the second-rate fireworks are over. We meet Ken, Gwen, John and June, Ken's sister, who were all involved with one another - ideologically or physically, homo- or heterosexually - in their antiwar, pro-hippie sixties' student days at Berkeley. Now Gwen (Jill Taylor, Charleston) is a nutty millionairess trying to become a Nashville pop star, and is living with the opportunistic John (Patrick Clayberg, Charleston), who manages her affairs and satisfies her complex libido. Ken (Michael O'Brien, Collinsville), who loved and was let down by both of them, has lost his legs in Vietnam, and is now an English teacher living with gentle Jed (T. James Estep, Sidell), a dedicated botanist. June (Alison Eudeikis, Bemidji, MN) has an illegitimate daughter and, with her promiscuous days behind

her, has turned into a cynically wisecracking mother and intermittent homebody. Shirley (Anne Lloyd, Streamwood), the daughter, is a bright but foolish teenager, a movie buff aspiring to greatness of an as yet unspecified sort.

There is also Aunt Sally (Eileen Sullivan, Charleston), a jovial, mild eccentric who carries about (and sometimes misplaces) her husband's ashes in a candy box, and cannot quite resolve to scatter them as she was instructed to do. And there is Weston Hurley (Robert Poe, Teutopolis), Gwen's country-music writer from New Jersey, a guitar-strumming simpleton who is the butt of everyone's jokes when not telling preposterous stories that make him his own patsy.

Put all these people together on Ken's inherited farm that Gwen wants to buy and convert into a recording studio and you have a clash of rememberances, recriminations, interests, and expectations.

Ken's farm setting has been designed by Michael O'Brien with costumes designed by Jack A. Smith.

Directed by Terry Allen, the play is [R] rated for strong language and is considered the precursor to The Big Chill.

Tickets are \$4 for adults, \$3 for senior citizens and youth, and \$2 for EIU students. Tickets can be held at the Fine Arts Ticket Office by phoning 581-3110 during ticket office hours. There are no reserved seats available.

Performances are at 8:00 p.m. Friday, February 19, and continue February 20,22,23,24 and at 2:00 p.m. Sunday, February 21.