

## **Actors Theatre of Louisville**

**Category : Who's Who:In American Theatre**

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Actors Theatre of Louisville along with the Alley Theatre of Texas is recognized as an important Regional Theatre company in the Southeast.

### **Actors Theatre of Louisville**

ATL was born on 1964 by **Richard Block** and **Ewel Cornett**. Block and Cornett had both formed their own companies prior to their teaming. Block having organized a group called Theatre Louisville, and Cornett, Actors Inc. The two merged their two groups and on december 18, 1964, in a small loft, ATL had officially opened for business.

ATL's first season of six productions ran for twenty four weeks, with 16,000 admissions. () They would soon receive a grant from the **Rockefeller Foundation** which allowed them to increase their second season to 8 productions for thirty weeks. The company grew rapidly under the management team of Block-Cornett. In 1967 its subscription sales peaked at 5,700 an increase of over 300 percent since 1965. The result was a budget of 198,000 nearly twice as much as they had three years prior. As a result of their success and increasing critical support the group acquired grants from the **NEA**, the **Kentucky Arts Commission**, and the **Ford Foundation**.

In 1969, Block was willingly replaced by **Jon Jory**. Jon Jory, most known for his artistic direction of the **Long Wharf Theatre**, of New Haven, CT took well to his new mission. He set about rebuilding many aspects of the theatre. Including, lighter, contemporary season, a smaller resident company, more guest performers and increased the salaries of those remaining in the company. He is also known for expanding on the theatre-going experience as a whole. For instance, attractions other than the play itself, and promoting the unification of the arts in Louisville. He also managed to increase attendance by 50 percent over 1968-1969.