

*Mary Anne Burkhalter
in her*

Tribute To Mae West





**When she's good she's very good . . .
but when she's bad *she's better!***

Mae West was the screen legend that set Hollywood on its ear and her fans coming back for more. Notorious for her snappy wit and controversial characters, she rose from vaudeville to Broadway to Hollywood, where she became an international celebrity and established a legacy for which she was named one of the top 15 actresses of the century and the "most quoted woman in history." In an industry dominated by men, Miss West wrote her own plays and screenplays, in which she never let a man put anything over on her "except an umbrella," and for which she waged infamous battles with the censors.

Mary Anne Burkhalter takes great pride in keeping the great comedienne's work alive in her "Tribute to Mae West." She has portrayed Miss West across the country for nine years, and brings rare songs and material to the show. Mary Anne's comedy does not stop at the stage lights but carries over into the audience, where she performs her unique brand of walkaround humor with patrons and even involves them in on-stage comedic skits. Her tribute show is an ongoing project with material varying in length for audiences at libraries to trade shows to theaters -- everyone loves the wild West! Over an 80-year career Miss West said she had "been things and seen places," and Mary Anne would like to take you on a tour of a great life, and face-to-face with an American legend!

Mary Anne Burkhalter has staged her Mae West tribute show at the Chicago Cultural Center and the White Pines State Park and Dinner Theatre, as well as for numerous civic and social organizations. She performed for years on the dramatic stages of New York, Chicago and Houston before establishing her own company, Characters To Go, providing celebrity impersonations and other entertainment for corporate events. Since then, she has appeared across the country as Miss West, Marilyn Monroe, Liz Taylor, Dolly Parton, Sophia Loren, Carmen Miranda and numerous other specialty characters, at corporate parties, trade shows, grand openings, fairs and private parties. She also performs with other "stars of yesteryear" in her successful vaudeville show, and appeared weekly (for 9 years) as Miss West at Hollywood Casino in Aurora, Illinois. Her act is featured in "Best of the Best IV," a library resource guide (inclusion by recommendation only). For her appearance schedule and bookings, she can be reached through her website at <http://members.aol.com/char2go> or at (630) 341-0743



Mae West was born August 17, 1893, in working-class Brooklyn, New York, the first child of a boxer and a corset model. Her mother, Matilda, exerted a profound influence on the child, instilling generous amounts of self-confidence and ambition and pushing her onto the vaudeville stage at the age of seven. West quit school after the third grade and for the next two decades lived the rough-and-tumble life of a stage performer, appearing on Broadway, vaudeville and burlesque stages across the country. She finally gained national notoriety in 1928 for writing and staging her play "Sex" in New York, which led to her widely publicized trial on obscenity charges, culminating in one week of incarceration and a lifetime of fame. After several more controversial plays, West was signed by Paramount Pictures in 1932, where her success is credited with keeping the studio solvent. With the Hayes decency code in effect, West (who insisted on writing her own screenplays) was forced to couch her risqué material in innuendoes and double entendres, which became a trademark of her comedic style; nevertheless, by the mid-1940s, West's films and popularity were so compromised after her bouts with censorship that she could no longer find work in Hollywood. In the next decades, she returned to the stage with several original plays and a wildly successful nightclub act, wrote a bestselling autobiography in 1954, and made appearances on records, radio and television, several of which were marked by the same controversies as in her early career. West returned after a 34-year absence to star in two motion pictures during the 1970s. After a series of strokes, Mae West died in 1980, celebrated as a Hollywood legend.



Characters To Go

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