

Donor Profile: John Moller & Betsey von Summer Moller

By Jessica Simon

John Moller and Betsey von Summer Moller are members of the Lobero Theatre Foundation's Ghostlight Society. The efforts of strong, steady donors such as the Mollers help to ensure this vibrant theatre will never go dark.

Betsey has been involved in theatres throughout the country since 1980. She started out in Connecticut and moved on to work with theatres in New York and Washington DC. The Mollers moved here from Los Angeles seven years ago and now they are sharing their love for the arts with Santa Barbara.

When she lived in Manhattan, Betsey would often walk to the theatres. "I would try to see any musical that I could get to. I really miss that," she reminisces. "The Lobero is so important because to me it is like a New York theatre – its size, its beauty, its history – it's everything that you want, right here in Santa Barbara."

Betsey is not the only family member with a love of the theatre. John and Betsey's youngest son, Jack, has been with the Adderley School for the Performing Arts since he was three-years-old. Now 10, Jack has been in many Santa Barbara Youth Ensemble Theatre (SBYET) productions. The Mollers also have a grandchild who has been on stage with SBYET.

As part of the Lobero Theatre's Performing Arts Initiative, SBYET has been able to have annual productions on the Lobero stage. Betsey is now



President of the Board at SBYET, which has just recently been granted non-profit status. "John and I feel very strongly about SBYET because it has done so many wonderful things for our son. I also can't say enough good things about what it has done for the community. The theatre is the place where people are happy. They go there and they have a good time," she comments. Her passion for children's performing arts is apparent through her tireless work to support it. "I'm totally focused on making this Youth Ensemble work," she pledges.

The Mollers' good work is not limited to the arts. Their foundation has been involved with children's community service, social service and education programs in the Dominican Republic for 30 years. John was recently there to have 1,800 children fitted for hearing aids. Betsey comments, "You're there when they hear their first sound. They entire family shows up and by the time they're done everyone is crying. They are so excited and relieved. It's a big deal."

The Lobero Theatre Foundation is lucky to have such passionate, involved donors as the Mollers. Their dedication to the arts is inspiring. Betsey sums it up best. "I've just had a life-long passion for the theatre, so supporting the beautiful Lobero Theatre is so key to me. We have nothing else like it."