

Spirit of Liberty 2014 – JENS LUND

Today the Ethnic Heritage Council recognizes and honors Jens Lund, a humble man, full of passion and love for his adopted country and its cultural diversity.

Lund's father worked for a Danish immigrant in Stamford, CT, from 1929-1937, having come to the US with his parents just in time for the Depression. His father returned to the US via ship from Denmark in June 1949, when he had the opportunity to work for another Danish immigrant who had been his father's business partner back in the '30s. Jens' mother followed via ship in January 1950. Shortly thereafter, Lund joined his parents, flying alone and landing at Idlewild (now JFK) Airport, when he just 6 weeks short of his fourth birthday!

His family lived in a multiethnic neighborhood surrounded by Italians and Poles, as well as African Americans, Jews, Irish and a smattering of other ethnic groups, many of them recent immigrants speaking their native languages at home. Lund grew up speaking Danish at home. He remembers their home - progressing from a 3 room second story railroad flat, then to a 6 room apartment, and to a 3 bedroom house a little farther from the center of the city. While he was an undergraduate his parents moved to a larger house in a more suburban area – all classic American upward mobility and living the American Dream.

His parents and his sister returned to their homeland in the 1970's but Lund chose to stay in the USA doing undergraduate work at the University of Connecticut. He earned a M.A. in American Studies at Bowling Green State University in Ohio and a Ph.D. in Folklore & American Studies at Indiana University.

He came west to Washington State in 1984 and has lived here ever since. From 1984 through 1990, Lund was the director of the Washington State Folklife Council. He also developed and researched Washington State Centennial's statewide folk art exhibitions, *"For As Long As I Can Remember"*, developed the *Washington Governor's Ethnic Heritage Award* and served on the Centennial Ethnic Heritage Committee.

Lund developed, researched and produced a series of heritage-based audio tours of highways in Washington and Utah. Using interviews and field recordings of performances, the tour tapes

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gave the traveler a look at the otherwise invisible cultural landscape through which they passed, driving the state's designated "Heritage Corridors".

From 2004 until his retirement in 2013 Lund managed the Folk and Traditional Arts in the Parks Program for the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission. In this capacity he organized 266 events, including festivals, concerts, storytelling sessions and traditional arts demonstrations in thirty-three state parks throughout the state of Washington.

He conducted video interviews of Northwest Coast Native American carvers for the Northwest Native America Carvers Gathering Project of the Evergreen State College's Longhouse Education and Cultural Center.

In 2004, Lund's colleagues in the America Folklore Society honored him with the annual Benjamin A. Botkin prize "for significant achievement in public folklore".

Recently he delivered the Benjamin A. Botkin Lecture, "I done what I could"; Occupational Folk Poetry in the Pacific Northwest," at the Library of Congress American Folklife Center.

Jens Lund is adjunct faculty in Scandinavian studies and folklore at the University of Washington. There is so much more to say about Jens Lund and what he has contributed, not only to the State of Washington, but to all of America, in developing and encouraging cultural diversity with integrity.

Jens became a citizen at the US District Courthouse in Bridgeport CT on May 26, 1964, retroactive to April 27, 1959, which was the date his folks were naturalized.

It is my honor, on behalf of the Ethnic Heritage Council, to present Jens Lund with the "2014 Spirit of Liberty Award".