

Kristin CHENOWETH

Class of 1986



The international fame enjoyed by Kristin Chenoweth comes as no surprise to Broken Arrowans who were dazzled as far back as the 1980's by the "little girl with a big voice" who sang in church, was the featured artist at a number of community events and excelled in a variety of theatrical productions at Broken Arrow High School.

Recognized by colleagues with some of the entertainment industry's most coveted awards, Chenoweth's fans back home have honored her with induction into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame and recently gave her a standing ovation as she returned home to see the stage at Broken Arrow Public Schools' new Performing Arts Center named in her honor. Now an international star who still proudly tells reporters "I'm from Broken Arrow, Oklahoma," she represents the Class of 1986 as one of this year's Great Graduates.

If talent is Chenoweth's hallmark, versatility ranks a close second. Critics note she is one of the few entertainers today who can effortlessly transition between stage, television and film and achieve acclaim in all three venues.

For her work on the small screen, she received an Emmy Award for best supporting actress in the ABC series "Pushing Daisies." Her resume also includes highly praised roles in the Fox hit "Glee" and "West Wing." Additional credits range from playing Mrs. Noodle on "Sesame Street" to starring in her own series, "Kristin" on NBC.

Theatergoers will long remember her Tony winning performances in "You're A Good Man Charlie Brown" and the role she originated

as Glinda the Good Witch in "Wicked." Also on her list of credits is the musical "Steel Pier," which earned her a Theatre World award.

On the silver screen, Chenoweth recently completed production on the movie, "Ed Zwick's Family Weekend." She has also been seen in the Disney movie "You Again" alongside Jamie Lee Curtis and Kristen Bell and provided the voice of Rosetta in Disney's "Tinker Bell and the Lost Treasure" and "The Great Fairy Rescue."

Never straying far from the music she loves, Chenoweth has released three albums and four CDs and continues to captivate sell-out crowds in London and across the nation.

On top of all that, she is now a published author, making a national splash with "A Little Bit Wicked," a book she wrote that chronicles her life to date.

But no matter how many books she may write, sold-out concerts she may play or awards she may earn, family members insist she will always be a home-town girl who is quick to recognize grade school music teacher Clydia Forehand who was the first to recognize her talent; Max Smith who gave her the opportunity and encouragement to showcase her talent; intermediate high school music teacher Larry Thompson who connected her with Oklahoma City University; and her professional mentor and vocal coach, Florence Birdwell.

What's ahead for this Great Graduate is anybody's guess. But should a producer want to create a television program, Broadway musical or movie entitled "Local Girl Makes Good," Kristin Chenoweth is a shoo-in for the lead role.

