



**Thea Lifetime  
Achievement Award**

# *Barry Upson*



During his career – spanning over 40 years – Barry Upson’s quiet and steady leadership and influence has been felt in venues ranging from World’s Fairs to theme parks and zoos. As a young architect, Barry was a key member of the design team for the 1964 Seattle World’s Fair. Not long after that, he found himself at Universal Studios, where the idea of putting people on trams and giving them a “Back Door” look at movie making was just taking shape.

At the time, not many people could see what that tram tour would become. But Barry was there – and became the first general manager of the Universal Studios Tour. Having established the tour as a bonafide Hollywood tourist attraction, Barry went on to pursue other challenges: first as president of Smith and Williams Architects, the firm that developed many of Universal’s early attractions, and later as one of the designers and general manager of a whole new kind of zoo, the San Diego Wild Animal Park.

Returning to Universal in the late 70s as head of the creative design group for the company, Barry was involved in the first plans for new theme parks in both Japan and in Florida. While it took a few years and a lot of patience, the Universal franchise continued to grow until those parks and others became a reality.

Under Barry’s creative leadership, the planning and development arm of Universal (now known as “Universal Creative”) grew and thrived as it led the company from its initial beginnings as a straightforward “industrial tour” to become one of the recognized leaders in the theme park world. For his leadership, guidance and contribution to the expansion of the world of themed and experiential entertainment, the THEA Nominations Committee and the TEA International Board are pleased to present the Thea LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD to Barry Upson.