



Dr. Peter J. McCarthy

February 24, 1938 - November 12, 2017

Dr. Peter J. McCarthy, 79, of Albany, NY, passed away with his daughter by his side on November 12, 2017 in Leesburg, VA. Dr. McCarthy was born on February 24, 1938 in Albany, NY to the late Donald and Janet McCarthy. Following graduation from Christian Brothers Academy (CBA), he joined the Marine Corps and was promoted to Sergeant in the First Marine Aircraft Wing, stationed in Iwakuni, Japan and Treasure Island, CA. Peter attended Potsdam Crane School of Music and was a Woodrow Wilson Fellow at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC where he earned his doctorate in musicology. He received a prestigious Rockefeller Foundation grant to study choral conducting. Throughout his career, Dr. McCarthy studied with conductor-composer Virgil Thomson, Helmut Rilling, the legendary Nadia Boulanger, Otto Werner-Mueller, and Ifor Jones, former conductor of the Bethlehem Bach Choir. In August 1988, at the invitation of the Salzburg Music Festival, Austria, Dr. McCarthy conducted Bruckner's "Mass in E Minor" in the Salzburg Cathedral. Jubilieren, a choral ensemble based in Newark, DE under Dr. McCarthy's direction, performed Beethoven's "Ninth Symphony" at Carnegie Hall in May 1996. Peter was a certified choir master of the American Guild of Organists. Dr. McCarthy was named Professor Emeritus after 26 years of service as Professor of Music at the University of Delaware. Peter was a co-founder of the Delaware Singers and the Brandywine Singers. In addition to his musical expertise, he was a Master Gardener of Delaware, had his private pilot's license, and had an encyclopedic knowledge of innumerable subjects. Most will remember (and miss) his captivating charm, and his brilliant, quick wit.

Dr. McCarthy is predeceased by a brother, Thomas E. McCarthy, III.

Dr. McCarthy is survived and adored by his daughter, Dr. Anne Stewart, his son-in-law Dr. David Stewart, and 3 grandchildren: Abigail, Baker, and Benjamin (Round Hill, VA); his brothers, Kevin and Mary Armao McCarthy (Loudonville, NY) and Donald F. McCarthy, Jr (Albany, NY), his sister, Janet and Jim Kurposka (Voorheesville, NY), five nieces and a nephew. He had an enormous impact on all who were blessed to know him; and he remained lifelong friends with many including Jack McCartney and his bunk, Bill Denyer. A memorial mass will be celebrated at Christ the King Church, 20 Sumpter Avenue, Albany, NY on Saturday, February 10, 2018 at 10:00am.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Ride-on-Ranch, LLC (<http://www.rideonranch.org/donate>), a non-profit therapeutic riding organization that provides therapy for Dr. McCarthy's grandson with hemiplegia and epilepsy.

The family wishes to extend their gratitude to the nursing and administrative staff members of Spring Arbor and Heritage Hall, both of Leesburg, VA and INOVA Loudoun Hospital for their tender and compassionate care.

Comments



“ A kind and funny gentleman, he led the orchestra with warmth and heart which made all the difference in how we felt the music.

Kaia Kaukeinen - March 01, 2020 at 09:42 PM



“ I was blessed to have Doctor McCarthy..."Doc"....as one of my music professors as an undergraduate at the University of Delaware. He was a mentor and idol of mine. Insanely passionate about what he did and how important music is in all of our lives. One of the funniest people I've met. I truly loved him...as did all of us who were so fortunate to be taught by him. I am late writing this because I was looking him up online so I could contact him and visit him. I guess I believed he would always be here. Doc, you made such a positive difference in my life. Thank you so much. I will carry your lessons forever.
- Dennis Sheehy ("Scruffy")

Dennis - February 15, 2019 at 08:45 AM



“ Dr. McCarthy was one of my Dad's best friends and one of my favorite characters. My memories of him are so funny and quirky that they are difficult to describe. For instance, he would join me in the elevator at the music building, hold his music next to his head and say, "Please don't let her see me. Please don't let her see me." I heard another student describe how he would play scales for his class and fall off the bench at the end of the keyboard. I remember him as a kind, fun and funny person. -
Jan Hogenson Ballman

Jan Ballman - April 27, 2018 at 11:17 AM



“ I met Peter when I joined Jubilieran at the UD and later Cantabile - his second venture. Sitting in his choir was a cross between AMAZING learning - beautiful, inspirational music, and improvisational comedy in the music genre! He WAS our "favorite leprechaun" - and we often dropped by on St. Patty's Day and left an anonymous little St. Patty's gift at the door for him. Yes - his laugh was infectious! And he was SO PROUD of his daughter and grandchildren! When I missed hearing from him at Christmas I got up one night and googled him - and found what I was afraid of - he had passed away! TOO YOUNG! He had SO MUCH to give others - and he readily gave it! I know he is cracking up the angels in heaven - plus getting the singing in line! He was SOOOO special! We will miss him!

Cathy & Ben Raphael, Newark

Cathy & Ben Raphael - April 07, 2018 at 04:39 PM



“ I long ago sang with Peter, first with the Delaware Singers, then with Jubilieren briefly until I had to move away from the area. What a joy to sing with him, he was such fun, and such a wonderful musician! I had wanted to go on that Salzburg trip, but couldn't wrangle the time off from work, and I left Delaware before the Carnegie Hall gig as well, though I've cherished the times that I did have singing with Peter. To this day, I can still hear him entreating us to sing the word "our" as a two-syllable word every time I come across the word in a piece (Ow-er, OW-ER!)

Marc LaBranche

Marc LaBranche - January 11, 2018 at 09:43 PM



“ We called him "Uncle Pete". He was an extended member of our family. I met him at UD and we became fast friends. My children loved him and all you could do was laugh when Uncle Pete was around. I remember helping him pack up his home on Lovett and then helping him shop for furniture for his new house which he loved (not shopping but living there!). He would be an emergency sitter for our kids when they were little if we got in a pinch and oh the adventures they would have and how much Uncle Pete would laugh as he told me or my husband about the day. We really missed him when he moved to live with his "real" family but he was always full of stories about his daughter and her family so I know it was the best thing for him. Uncle Pete gave both my children their first bibles on their Christening Day and I know he has gone home. We will miss him but always remember the love and great times we shared. Tara, Kurt, Cameron (17) and Sidney(15) Manal

Tara Manal - December 05, 2017 at 12:13 PM



“ Dr. McCarthy was one of the dearest men I ever knew - a brilliant musician and my favorite "leprechaun". He worked hard with me one summer doing piano lessons at his home on Lovett Avenue in Newark - and managed to get me proficient with a Bach piece (I love to listen to Bach - I dislike performing Bach intensely) - and to enjoy it. I will always remember his wonderful smile - his WHOLE FACE smiled. He will be missed.

Helen Spence - November 26, 2017 at 02:26 PM



“ In the category of “the music world is a small one,” I wanted to share my memory of Peter McCarthy. Ever since I started at UD I had always been curious about an encounter I had in the early 90’s with a Delaware conductor I met at Le Domaine Forget Festival in NW Quebec province, Canada. He had told me that he was a professor at the University of Delaware and I remember being curious about the program. Who knew that one day I would call this department home?!

We both participated in the festival for two summers; first under Pierre Hetu and then the following year with Otto-Werner Mueller. These were transformational times for me as a young, wet-behind-the-ears student and I remember Peter being very supportive. Speaking to his sense of humor, I recall greeting Peter at the beginning of the second year and hearing him remark, “Well, hi there, Jim. You’re like a bad penny...you keep turning up!”

Unfortunately, we didn’t stay in touch, but I always remembered him with fondness. When I accepted the job at UD almost 20 years later I tried to find out who that person was, hoping to renew the acquaintance, but I couldn’t remember his name. I had not realized his principal position at UD was with the choir, so perhaps I was asking the wrong questions, but when I saw the picture in the obituary and read his bio, it all came flooding back.

I’m sorry we didn’t reconnect - I would have loved to hear him call me a bad penny again - but I’m grateful for those moments where he helped a young conductor feel like they had a unique musical voice. One never really knows how a kind word in passing can influence, at least in part, the growth of a fellow human being. I suspect there are many lives that Peter impacted in this way and I’m grateful to count myself among them. Requiescat in pace, maestro.

James Allen Anderson, DMA
Director of Orchestral Activities
•Passion •Precision •Purpose
University of Delaware
Conductors Guild - Advisory Council member and former President
www.JamesAllenAnderson.com (Website)

James Anderson - November 22, 2017 at 03:52 PM



“ It is with great sadness that I heard of Peter's passing. Although I did not have the pleasure of working alongside him at UD, I have occupied his office in the Department of Music for the last 17 years. During my first years at UD he stopped by on several occasions to see how I was holding up in his office and the job. I will always remember his infectious smile and laughter, as well as his jokes, stories and boundless energy. Being from Scotland, he reminded me of many of my countrymen back home.

Dr. Jennifer M. Barker, Professor of Music Composition, University of Delaware

Jennifer M. Barker - November 22, 2017 at 12:43 PM