

Memorial Resolution

Keith Brown

1933 – 2018

Keith Brown, Jacobs School of Music professor emeritus of music (trombone) was a member of the Jacobs faculty from 1971 to 1997. He helped establish numerous programs that continue to flourish and contribute to the musical life of both the university and the community.

Keith was born in Colorado Springs, Colorado, on October 21, 1933, the son of Audrey and Kenneth Brown. In 1951, he began studies at the University of Southern California (USC), where he was eager to study trombone with legendary master teacher Robert Marsteller, principal trombonist of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. In 1953, Keith's studies were interrupted by a call to service in the U.S. Army. In 1956, he returned to USC, and, in August 1957, he graduated cum laude and received the USC School of Music Alumni Award.

After graduation, Keith's music career developed impressively as trombonist with the Aspen Music Festival faculty, New York Brass Quintet, Symphony of the Air, Casals Festival Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Marlboro Festival chamber music series, and the New York Chamber Orchestra's Mostly Mozart concerts.

Keith's career continued to flourish as he began conducting at Temple University and then Indiana University (orchestra conductor and professor of trombone); Bloomington Symphony Orchestra (artistic director and conductor); Music Academy of the West (conductor and chair of the brass department); and the Camerata Orchestra, Bloomington (artistic director and conductor).

His discography includes all recordings made by the Philadelphia Orchestra during his tenure there. Among the dozens of commercial recordings on Columbia, RCA, and other major labels, special mention must be made of several historic recordings: those with Pablo Casals and Igor Stravinsky conducting their own works; The New York Brass Quintet in Concert; a solo recording in the Golden Crest Recital Series; three solo recordings in the Music Minus One Laureate Series; and Music for Organ, Brass, and Percussion with E. Power Biggs, among others.

In addition to his musical duties with the Philadelphia Orchestra, he organized and pitched for the orchestra's softball team. This team gained considerable fame by defeating college and university intramural teams when the orchestra toured the United States. His trombone students often affectionately referred to him as "Coach," and to enter his teaching studio at Indiana University, one had to step across home plate.

During his three-year tenure with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, he also served on the faculty of the Manhattan School of Music, teaching trombone, conducting the orchestral repertoire class, and completing, in 1964, a Master of Music degree he had begun in 1958. He also organized and pitched for the Metropolitan Opera's softball team.

Keith served as advisor to several music organizations. His international commitments included assignments as guest conductor, coach, and advisor to orchestras in Venezuela and Spain. He was one of the very first westerners invited to the People's Republic of China to give master classes, lectures, and recitals at the country's two major conservatories in Beijing and Shanghai. In 1990, he was a special guest conductor of the Sapporo Symphony Orchestra at the International Tuba-Euphonium Conference in Japan.

Keith's concern for the training of students in solo, chamber music, and orchestral repertoire prompted him to edit and publish with the International Music Company more than 80 editions of solo materials, works for brass ensemble, etudes, and study materials, including 10 volumes of orchestral studies for trombone and tuba.

Throughout his career, gifted young trombonists and other brass players sought him out for private lessons and career counseling. Among the legion of his devoted former students are winners of international solo competitions and holders of principal positions with leading professional orchestras throughout the world.

As the following tributes will document, Keith Brown had a far-reaching and everlasting impact on his students. He was also an esteemed colleague and valued friend to many.

Douglas Yeo, Bass Trombonist, Boston Symphony Orchestra (1985-2012) writes:
"Patiently, systematically, and with great care, he shaped me as an artist/musician/bass trombonist, gently informing me of things about my thinking and playing that I had never considered. I remain grateful to this day for the things Keith Brown taught me, not only about music, but about making a difference in the world. In this he was my first exemplary role model."

From Nate Zgonc of the Atlanta Symphony:

"Keith Brown, Mr. Brown, Coach Brown. My mentor was known by many names, my favorite happened to be on the back of his license plate, 'KB ESQ.' Mr. Brown was a man of conviction and confidence. None can ever replace the style in which Mr. Brown instructed. Through teaching or conducting, Mr. Brown had an influence on every student at the music school. If you knew him at all, you knew he loved baseball. I can recall crossing home plate to enter a lesson, and especially when leaving. The trombone world will miss Mr. Brown, and I will forever miss 'KB ESQ.'"

Stephen Fissel of the Seattle Symphony adds:

"I used to listen to his recording on the Golden Crest label and knew every little detail of nuanced and subtle phrasing that Mr. Brown used. The phrasing was so interesting and

musical, the sound warm, pleasant, and inviting. Never garish, the musical elements, ever present, were the most important part of his product. There was plenty of technical precision but never just for the sake of flashiness. Mr. Brown's playing was always exquisitely tasteful and in his teaching he stressed this as a paramount quality of being a 'good' player."

From Peter Ellefson, professor of trombone and brass department chair of the Jacobs School: "I feel very fortunate to have known Keith Brown. His door was always open to me, and I learned a great deal through his master classes and brass literature class. He was a legendary pedagogue, prolific editor, and fabled performer. I felt exceptionally fortunate to have had access to him. When I joined the IU brass faculty (in his former position, lineage-wise), I enjoyed our new relationship through lunches together, again tapping into his experience and knowledge. His was a persona not easily forgotten. His legacy will live on through his hundreds of students and through his singularly significant contributions to the trombone repertoire."

M. Dee Stewart, professor emeritus of trombone, Jacobs School, remembers:

"Keith Brown could be considered my colleague and compatriot for our entire careers. We both began our orchestral careers in 1957. We played duets as we prepared for our first jobs. A few years later, I became Keith's successor in the Philadelphia Orchestra when he left to go to the Metropolitan Opera. Keith went to IU and, in 1980, I joined him there. Not only was he an excellent trombonist and musician, but Keith was able to pinpoint voids of pedagogy and performance that offered great meaning to students and performers worldwide. His numerous publications contributed greatly to the musical and technical development of thousands of aspiring musicians - an outstanding legacy."

From Edmund Cord, professor of trumpet, Jacobs School:

"I first knew Keith Brown as a new member of the faculty when I was a student, and I have always been grateful that I had the opportunity to benefit from his vast experience at the highest levels of the music profession. His infectious laughter and his enthusiasm for the art of music and the work of his students will long be remembered with deepest admiration and appreciation."

Richard Seraphinoff, professor of horn, Jacobs School adds:

"I have fond memories from my student days at IU of playing in orchestra concerts conducted by Keith Brown. He was a fine conductor and musician, and as brass students, we benefited greatly from his knowledge and understanding of brass playing and his friendly encouragement. Later, after joining the faculty of the Jacobs School of Music, I had the opportunity to play with him again when he was the music director of the Bloomington Camerata Orchestra. It was also a great honor to inherit his doctoral brass literature course after his retirement."

From James Pellerite, professor emeritus of flute, Jacobs School:

"I met Keith in 1950 while in the Indianapolis Symphony. Later, in the Philadelphia Orchestra

we became close friends. His impeccable technical performance on trombone, with outstanding musicianship, remains memorable. His many performances as conductor offered unique programming for the students at IU, and his concerts with the Camerata Orchestra attracted the Bloomington audiences. Over the years our tenure with the Jacobs School of Music cemented our friendship. He was indeed a dear friend."

And, from Charles H. Davis, Ph.D., Senior Fellow & Adjunct Professor (retired), IU School of Informatics and Computing, Friend of Keith in the Lawlis tennis group and in the ROMEO group (Retired Old Men Eating Out):

"I forget the year, but we Lawlis Racketeers were still playing at Bryan Park. There was always some banter and bragging, and on this particular occasion, Keith hit a really good serve at precisely the moment that a big old birch tree fell over, and Keith laughingly said, "Did you see how strong my serve was?!"

Carl Lenthe, the writer of this resolution, felt very welcomed by Keith upon joining the Jacobs School trombone faculty, and values having known him as a retiree and neighbor, and in his final years and months. He gladly attests to the aforementioned power of Keith's tennis serve (and forehand) - remembers also luring the retiree out to play softball one summer afternoon, only to register his disappointment that we were playing *slow* pitch. "Get behind the plate.", he told me. "I'll show you something". And he did: commanding and accurate *fast* pitch.

Rest in Peace, Keith.

Keith passed from this life on May 9th, 2018 at the Hearthstone Health Facility. He is survived by wife, Maggie; stepdaughters Susanne and Lena; step granddaughter Anna; his three children, Bob (Tammy) in San Jose, Lise in Michigan, and Kris (John) in St. Louis; and grandchildren Maria, Jacob, Hannah, Colin, Ian, Alec, and Alyson.

Carl Lenthe
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