



## Dr. Robert Sutherland Lord

June 4, 1930 - July 24, 2014

### In Memoriam

Dr. Robert S. Lord

(1930-2014)

Dr. Robert Sutherland Lord, teacher, scholar and organist, passed away Thursday, July 24th, 2014, at the age of 84.

French organ music of the 19th and 20th centuries was the center of Dr. Lord's interests. He was a recognized authority on the music of Charles Tournemire who had been a student of César Franck; Tournemire in turn had taught Jean Langlais. Dr. Lord studied improvisation with Langlais in Paris and enjoyed a close friendship with him for over 30 years.

Dr. Lord also maintained a close friendship with Mme. Alice Tournemire, the composer's widow. Grateful for Lord's efforts to make her late husband's legacy better known in both Anglophone and Francophone musical circles, she entrusted him with valuable research materials from her personal collection. Mme. Tournemire's assistance eventually made possible the publication of Lord's ground-breaking essay in 1984: "Liturgy and Gregorian Chant in L'Orgue Mystique of Charles Tournemire," a study that remains essential reading today for any Tournemire scholar. One month before Lord's death, this essay was reprinted in a volume dedicated to Tournemire studies,

preceded by this dedication: “In recognition of its seminal importance, this classic contribution to Tournemire studies is reprinted here three decades after its initial appearance.”

During the last year of his life, Dr. Lord returned to a project which he had left behind two decades earlier. In 1989, Lord had been contacted by the director of the music library at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. He asked whether Lord might consider undertaking the analysis of a musical manuscript of Tournemire (spanning nearly 1300 pages) that had been recently donated to the national library. Dr. Lord accepted the offer and spent the next three years on this monumental task. In 2012, after a twenty-year hiatus, Dr. Lord returned to this study and undertook the painstaking work of preparing the complex text for publication. It appeared in print exactly one month before his death: “Catalogue of Charles Tournemire’s ‘Brouillon’ [Rough Sketches] for L’Orgue Mystique, BNF., Mus., Ms. 19929.”

These important Parisian masters – Franck, Tournemire, and Langlais -- had been the titular organists at the Basilica of Sainte-Clotilde in Paris, the site of several of Dr. Lord’s organ concerts. He also played several concerts at the Cathedrals of Notre-Dame in Paris and in Chartres, where his interpretations of French music received critical acclaim in the press. For his concert at King’s College, Cambridge University, Dr. Lord was asked to play the music of Tournemire.

Dr. Lord was Professor Emeritus of Music and University Organist at the University of Pittsburgh’s Heinz Chapel. His course on the history of Western music attracted nearly 800 students each year. Upon his retirement in 1999, Dr. Lord’s students honored him as an outstanding teacher. Over 45 years, he performed more than 160 organ concerts and played for more than 4,000 weddings at the Chapel.

Dr. Lord was also organist and choirmaster at Christ Episcopal Church in the North Hills for 22 years and served as the first Chairman of the Board of the Northland Public Library. During the 1970s, he annotated a weekly program of organ music for WQED-FM called "Lord on Bach," a series that was rebroadcast over other PBS stations. Dr. Lord was invited to give a recital at the Cathedral of Blackburn in Lancashire, England, where his great-grandfather Daniel W. Lord, who emigrated to the United States in 1864, had been a church organist.

Dr. Lord received a Bachelor of Arts degree in music from Dartmouth College and was the first music major to be named a senior fellow. Later, Dartmouth honored him with a Reynolds Fellowship for International Study. He earned his MA and PhD degrees in music history under the supervision of Leo Schrade at Yale University. Other organ teachers included Maurice F. Longhurst (Dartmouth College), Clarence Watters (Trinity College), Heinz Wunderlich, and André Marchal.

Dr. Lord is survived by his wife Martha W. Lord; four children: Benjamin Webster Lord, Wendy Lord Vlahakis (John), Beth Lord Esmont (Jeff) and Holly Sutherland Lord (Rich); seven grandchildren: Elynor Wilson, Sarah Brennan, Joseph Esmont, Mark Esmont, Emilie Esmont, Martha Vlahakis, and Michael Vlahakis; and great granddaughter Margaret Wilson.

There will be a Memorial Funeral Service for Dr. Lord on August 14, 2014 at 11:00AM (with a music prelude beginning 10:30AM) at Christ Episcopal Church located at 5910 Babcock Boulevard, Pittsburgh, PA 15237.

In lieu of flowers and to honor Dr. Lord, we ask that you make a donation to the following organizations:

Christ Episcopal Church Endowment, Attn: Treasurer, note in memo: Dr. Lord

The first tracker organ donated by Andrew Carnegie and in need of restoration.

Historic Roberts Organ Restoration Fund

P.O. Box 840

Urbana, Ohio 43078

<http://www.weddingchapel-urbana.com>

Animal Friends 562 Camp Horne Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15237

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

AUG **14**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Christ Episcopal Church, North Hills  
5910 Babcock Blvd,  
Pittsburgh, PA 15237  
<http://www.christchurchnorthhills.org>

# Tribute Wall



“ *Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of Dr. Robert Sutherland Lord.*



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August 13, 2014 at 09:33 PM



“ *Dear Martha and family*

*I was so saddened to receive your letter informing Rod and I of Bob's passing ..... all the wonderful memories came flooding back of our family gatherings when you were over here in England. Although we were distant 4th cousins once removed, we were much closer friends!*

*Our sympathies go out to you and all your family ..... I will be writing a personal card directly to your home address.*

*Thinking of you all with sympathy and much love  
Judith & Rod Sellers*

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**Judith Sellers** - August 08, 2014 at 03:13 AM



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**Holly Lord** - August 02, 2014 at 08:47 PM

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**Holly Lord** - August 02, 2014 at 08:18 PM

DM

“ *To Martha and her children, grandchildren and great grandchild. Oh how I will miss Dr. Lord. He was not only an amazing organist, incredible teacher, trusted advisor but also a dear friend. I will never forget my first trip to Paris with Martha and Dr. Lord watching over me like parents and introducing me to the wonders of the city and the magnificence of the organ at Notre Dame. I will love you both for guiding me through my college years and beyond and for the love and respect of music which Dr. Lord instilled in me. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.*

*Diane Selvaggio Melder and Bob Melder*

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**Diane Melder** - August 01, 2014 at 05:57 PM

DR

“ Dear Martha and all the family,

*We miss Bob dearly. He was a mentor, an inspired guide to music of the ages for generations of students at Pitt, a colleague, and a marvelous organist. I recall experiencing rare frisson, the goosebumps, when he played the Heinz Chapel organ--whether in delicate and crystalline clarity, or stone-shaking force when I could see dust from the vaulted arches come drifting down. He could be absolutely practical in discussions about departmental courses, and inspiring and visionary when planning the improvements to the chapel's organ. He was a force for good, and his influence resonates still.*

*--Deane Root, Professor, Music Department, University of Pittsburgh (and former Heinz Chapel Administrator)*

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**Deane Root** - July 30, 2014 at 07:23 AM

KW

“ *To anonymous who posted.... Couldn't have said it better. I had to give my senior organ recital shortly after my father had passed... And during a Bach piece I got totally lost. Of course, he knew it, Ashe say next to me listening as I improvised my way out of the situation. I was so sad, thinking of my dad, and he say there, patiently waiting. I found my way back, finished the piece, and received an "A"! A great teacher and mentor to all!*

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**k Walsh** - July 29, 2014 at 07:13 PM

“ Dr. Lord...what can I say, my mentor and favorite teacher and great friend. He was THE authority on the history, musicology and interpretation of the works of Tournemire. He was a close personal friend of Tournemire's wife who with Langlais passed on the spirit of Tournemire's music.

He was a master at improvisation, and the spirit, style and harmony of Langlais often came out. He also was a composer, who left some beautiful gems of music behind--I hope they will be published. No other student of Langlais had the gift of improvisation which Dr. Lord had.

Dr. Lord also remained a faithful friend with Langlais until his death.

Thousands of students were touched by Dr. Lord's enthusiasm for music. He told me a story of one Jewish girl in his class who took an interest in Catholicism after his lecture on the role of Gregorian Chant in Western Music...but after telling her of the reality of modern Catholic music (in most cases abandoning chant), she re-thought the situation.

I know that some of his research had been stolen or usurped. But not to worry, after time the truth comes out and the labors of those who are genuine are brought to light.

For many years Dr. Lord lamented that his research was not appreciated by his colleagues. But, at 84, he began to see that his work was of tremendous value and has laid the foundation for many generations of Tournemire scholars to come.

Dr. Lord was a devoted husband and father. And his love for his family was so evident in the end, as his family, even from a distance returned his love by caring for him and his wife.

I will miss talking to you Dr. Lord, taking you to AGO meetings and listening to you improvise...but I will see you again some day!

**Anonymous** - July 26, 2014 at 10:39 PM

**BB**

*One of the most profound influences in my life. His superior intellect and dry humor did not suffer fools gladly - apparent from the first day I had the privilege of meeting him and later, both sitting in his classroom and at the organ console under his tutelage. What he saw in me that motivated him to take me into his inner circle remains a source of wonder to me. Teacher, scholar, mentor, friend, a part of me has died with you.*

**BB** - July 29, 2014 at 07:43 PM