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## **Memorial Resolution of the Faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison On the Death of Professor Emeritus Howard Karp**

Howard Karp, Professor Emeritus of Piano and internationally acclaimed pianist, died of complications of cardiac arrest on June 30, 2014 at the Medical Center of the Rockies in Loveland, Colorado, close to his beloved summer home in Estes Park. He was 84 years old.

Howard Karp was born in Chicago on October 12, 1929. His early musical training emphasized a strict technical regimen that permitted the study of great music only as a reward for many hours of finger exercises. Instead he found inspiration in hearing the music that other students were playing, and in the rich concert life of Chicago in the late 30s and 40s. Horowitz, Rubinstein, Schnabel and Rachmaninoff were among the pianistic giants he heard during these formative years, and he loved to share with his students and colleagues his vivid memories of the Great Ones, and could remember in detail the contents of every concert he attended.

Karp attended Oberlin Conservatory, where he studied with distinguished pedagogue Jack Radunsky. In Radunsky's studio he met another outstanding young pianist, Frances Reiche. A year after graduation the couple married, beginning a musical and life partnership that lasted 62 years. After Oberlin, the Karpes went to New York, where Howard studied with the legendary Rosina Lhévinne at the Juilliard School of Music. Later, as a Fulbright Scholar he went to Vienna for studies at the Akademie für Musik and to Positano, Italy for master classes with the great Beethoven pianist Wilhelm Kempff.

Karp's college teaching career spanned nearly a half-century. After having taught at the universities of Kentucky and Illinois, he joined the UW-Madison School of Music faculty in 1972. Karp was motivated by the challenge of addressing the needs of the still-growing School of Music. For the next 28 years, until his retirement as Emeritus Professor in 2000, Howard Karp served the University community as a beloved and dedicated teacher, whose former students are on the faculties of colleges and universities throughout North America and Asia.

A fearless and selfless performer of the great heritage of Western classical music, Howard Karp brought joy and enlightenment to those who were fortunate to hear him. His performances throughout North America, Europe and Asia garnered rave reviews. Karp's performing career included appearances at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Vienna's Musikverein and London's Wigmore Hall, the Shenyang International Music Festival in China and the George Enescu International Festival. He gave solo recitals throughout the United States, including appearances at the American Liszt Society and the Maryland Piano Festival as well as many memorable recitals at UW's Mills Hall. His collaborations included duo piano performances with Frances, sonata performances with 'cellist son Parry, and chamber music with the Pro Arte Quartet and Karp-Manoogian Trio. Karp performed concertos with many distinguished orchestras, including the Minnesota Orchestra, Amsterdam Philharmonic, Hague Residence Orchestra, and the Madison Symphony Orchestra.

A 6-CD set of concert recordings spanning his career was issued just two months before his death. Enthusiastic response to these performances came not only from former students, colleagues and friends, but also from The New York Times and other prestigious music journals. The recordings, compiled by son Christopher, provide lasting mementos of Karp's thrilling interpretations of some of the towering monuments of the piano repertoire from Bach to Copland. In 2000 the University of Wisconsin School of Music issued *The Art of Howard Karp*, live solo recordings that also received critical acclaim. Other recordings include *Concert Performances of a Half-Century of Music-Making*, music for two pianos and piano duet with Frances Karp; *Late Romantic Music for Cello and Piano* with Parry Karp; the Bloch Piano Quintets with the Pro Arte Quartet; and *Piano Trios* by Joel Hoffman with the Karp Trio.

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The annual Karp Family Labor Day concerts, instituted in 1976, became an eagerly anticipated Madison institution and an ongoing testimonial to a remarkable musical dynasty. Each year Howard and Frances, Parry, and physician/scientist/violinist and pianist Christopher would team up with Parry's poet/photographer/violist wife Katrin Talbot, members of the Pro Arte Quartet and other friends to present a rich array of chamber music in various combinations. The concerts eventually included readings by granddaughters Isabel, Natasha and Ariana. In keeping with Karp's dedication to the new and the challenging, not a single work was repeated in those 38 years of concerts. On August 31, 2014, the day before Labor Day, in Mills Hall, a tribute event was held in Howard Karp's memory, during which former students, colleagues and family members spoke of his warmth, kindness and extraordinary artistry. In addition to live performances by family and friends, those in attendance heard Karp's own playing, drawn from his legacy of recorded performances.

Howard's teaching reflected his own inimitable musicianship and mastery of the piano and its vast repertoire. He was an incredible listener to sound: the balance of textures and ways of orchestrating chords and counterpoint so that everything was heard in perfect proportion. His own sound had a luminous and translucent quality that he strove to share with his students through long and generous lessons. He demanded a high level of precision and craft from his students, with constant attention to detail, and insisted on every note being placed in its ideal context. Beyond that he asked that the spirit and soul of the music shine in every moment. He would often say "Make it special" and would refer to the "magic" of a particular passage. He himself was a tireless worker and expected the same from his students. They learned by his example: that the greatest music demanded infinite care and imagination and love, as well as respect for the composer's text and an understanding of his world.

Howard Karp's kindness and humility inspired a deep love and devotion not only from his family and close friends, but from his students, many of whom kept in close contact with him through the years and who cherished the memories of their time under his patient and sympathetic tutelage. They remember Howard and Frances opening their home for Thanksgiving feasts and studio gatherings, Howard's playfulness and sense of humor and his love of nature. He knew the Latin scientific names of every tree and shrub. He loved baseball and was an avid fan of the Chicago Cubs. Above all, he took great pride in the achievements of his family, and loved to attend Shakespeare plays performed by his three gifted granddaughters.

Howard Karp was a great teacher, a wonderful mentor and a magnificent and unique musician. All who knew him will cherish his memory. He was a vital presence in the cultural and intellectual life of the University, and will be sorely missed. He is survived by his wife, Frances; sister, Myrna Soled; sons Parry and Christopher; daughters-in-law Katrin Talbot and Marsha Wills-Karp; and grandchildren Ariana, Natasha, Isabel and David.

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