



Marie Willett Humphrey

Marie Willett Humphrey was born in West Monroe, Louisiana and started her piano study with her older sister, Crystal, at age five. The family later moved to Knoxville, Tennessee where she studied with Mrs. Guiltz. There were intervals of time without a teacher and Marie taught herself as much as she could because she dearly loved to play the piano. The family moved to Raleigh in 1982 and she studied briefly with three teachers on the west side of town. During this time, she bravely won a battle with cancer, a brain tumor, which increased her faith and values and left her being a more tenderhearted and thoughtful person. In 1986, the family moved to Knightdale, NC. She and her mother found a teacher near Knightdale, Alma Sparks. Her lessons began with Mrs. Sparks as a ninth grader. From ninth grade through twelfth grade, she earned many honors in her piano study.

Marie became an active participant in the auditions and competitions of the Raleigh Piano Teachers Association. As was the custom in Marie's time, the Ensemble Festival included competitions for solo piano and piano duet. She was the Junior High Soloist for the Festival in 1989 and Senior High Soloist in 1991. In the Young Artist Auditions, she won First Place in Senior I, Princess, Concerto III, Concerto IV, and Honorable Mention in Queen. She was the winner of the Marion Cable Scholarship in 1991. She was awarded Superior Ratings in the NCMTA Piano Contest-Festivals, as well as an Honorable Mention in the Greensboro Piedmont Piano Competition. Mrs. Sparks presented her in a Senior Piano Recital in Carswell Concert Hall at Meredith College and Marie was awarded a full four-year music scholarship to Meredith College where she received a music degree in piano.

At Meredith, Marie studied with Mr. James Clyburn and was one of the winners of the coveted Raleigh Symphony Orchestra Concerto competition, winning twice! She was the winner of the Theodore Presser Scholarship for Excellence in Music and was given an Honorable Mention in a Campbell University Piano Competition. While at Meredith, Marie gave Sophomore and Junior Recitals. In her Senior year, she gave a Graduation Recital as well as a Lecture Recital on Carnival Music, focusing on Children's Carnival Music by Amy M. Beach and Robert Schumann's Faschingsschwank aus Wien, Op. 26. She was inducted into Pi Kappa Lambda and also served as chapter president of the music sorority, Sigma Alpha Iota.

Marie is also a very talented artist and crafter. In 1989 she won the Grand Prize of \$500.00 for a portrait sketch of her father. She painted murals for the North Raleigh Nazarene Church and also for the Raleigh Rescue Mission. Members of RPTA have witnessed many other evidences of her artwork and handcrafting, even with food items!

RPTA has also been blessed with her talents at the computer, such as printing YAA certificates, giving new formats to certificates and entry forms and presenting many new ideas in several areas of our organization. She restructured the procedures of the Young Artist Auditions into a simpler, more workable plan. She has been a joyful volunteer on many occasions when help was needed. In addition to serving on many committees and in many official positions, she served as our president from 2012-2014. Marie also served on the NCMTA Board as District Piano Contest-Festival Chair for several terms and also served as State Piano Contest-Festival Chair. She has been deeply involved with the Federation of Music Clubs as well. In 2011, she was given the Ruggero Teacher Merit Award. Marie has been a loving, creative and motivating teacher using new and refreshing ideas with many students through the years – many of whom have received honors in auditions and some continuing to pursue music as a career. Also, she has adjudicated numerous auditions throughout the state and given programs for other piano associations.

After college, in addition to her teaching, she has always been a church secretary during the morning hours at churches in Raleigh. Most of the time this also included a position as the church pianist. She did this for many years at North Street Baptist Church in downtown Raleigh which eventually moved to Clayton and was renamed the Quest Church. In 2014 Marie married Jeff Humphrey at Quest and she continues to be active in local and state music organizations until today.