



Madolyn Douglas Fallis

March 30, 1934 - January 20, 2019

Madolyn Douglas Fallis passed away on Sunday morning, January 20th from lung cancer complications. A long-time organist, pianist, harpsichordist, and choir director, she will be remembered with great love by her family, her many friends and musical colleagues, as well as by the many San Antonians for whom she performed at concerts and for whom she played for family events.

Born in 1934 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Madolyn learned to play the piano and organ from age 5. Born an only child in the middle of the Great Depression, from parents representing both ends of the socioeconomic spectrum – a vivacious and playful Daddy from a humble farm family of 12, and a focused and determined Mother, an intelligent, energetic and well-educated educator / librarian – Madolyn always felt loved and supported. In her early years of exposure to the keyboard, when she tired of practice, her mother would offer that she do chores instead. Shortly after, the sound of practice would continue. Her father, an amateur singer and owner of a retail store, encouraged her by singing along with popular tunes of the day – Mairzy Doats, Indian Love Call, Tea for Two, and Pistol Packin' Mama.

Starting in adolescence and entering her teenage years, her performance talent was recognized and encouraged through the ubiquitous Gospel Radio programs of that era. She performed professionally as a teenager, accompanying Oklahoma City singing pastor R.T. Williams by playing the

organ for his radio and T.V. programs.

Knowing that she would continue her music into adulthood, she took her energy into the college years at Bethany Peniel College (now Southern Nazarene University) with a music degree. She continued to perform and support her church community.

With her professional career on hold, Madolyn married and brought into the world two sons in the 1950s, Greg and Mike. Realizing that she needed to continue to broaden her musical chops, she would pursue a Masters in Music in the 1960s at the University of Oklahoma, and ultimately relocate to San Antonio in June, 1966, the beginning of a prolific 50-year relationship with the professional church and classical music community. She contributed her talents to the worship programs of (in no particular order) Christ Episcopal Church, University Methodist Church, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, and University Presbyterian Church, among others. She performed at thousands of weddings, funerals, and church services, playing at almost every church of almost all denominations across the area.

In the area of classical music, her credits included performances with the San Antonio Boys Choir, San Antonio Symphony, Mastersingers, and chamber music ensembles.

In 1973, Madolyn met the love of her life, Edward O. Fallis, and his son, Paul, who became the little brother in this new family. All the boys graduated high school by the end of the decade, which released her to move deeper into her love of performance, theater, church, choral and varied professional music gigs to include musicals. She earned her second Masters, this one in Conducting, from UTSA, and moved energetically into every venue of professional music in Texas and beyond.

The 1980's brought the beginning of her role as mother-in-law, joyfully receiving Cindy (Hanavan) and Malú (Menes) as part of the family, quickly followed as grandmother, with Alicia, Christopher, and David Wright, and then in the 1990's with Alessandra and Danny Fairchild. The small 3-person family she grew up in in Oklahoma City, as an only child, swelled into many personalities that she so enjoyed. Her cheerful presence influenced the atmosphere of all family occasions as Madolyn's effervescence always flourished in a crowd.

Through all this time, Madolyn loved and supported Ed with his hobbies of golf, flying and singing tenor at every opportunity. She was able to say goodbye to Ed in 2012, knowing the love they shared would continue. They had fulfilled a shared dream of living the Texas hill country life in their unique ranch home with pool and three German Shepherds. The long drive to Boerne area rewarded friends with a beautiful setting for fun parties and live performances in their living room.

There was no sign of Madolyn slowing down even into her 70's, taking on leadership roles in the American Guild of Organists and other professional groups, finding opportunities to travel with friends and family to Europe to see (and play!) historic organs, and exploring her Scottish heritage (the Douglas tartan figures prominently during this time). Some of her favorite memories came from these trips travelling with close friends, musical colleagues, and her beloved granddaughter.

As Madolyn approached the milestone of 5 decades in San Antonio, and turning 80, she would remark that retirement had kept her busier than ever. She kept her little black appointment book filled with upcoming performances, weddings and funerals. Always the social person, she even found the time and energy to help plan parties for her condo building.

After the stroke that sidelined her in late 2014, the love, support and boundless energy that embodied Madolyn was returned to her when a far-flung and a close-by community would lovingly visit almost daily, bringing the uplifting sounds produced by some of the best musicians in the area to her quiet assisted living community. Staff and residents alike anticipated the visits and outright joy her presence and circle of friends and family would provide.

Even in her last months, Madolyn retained her love of life and her positive personality in the face of a cancer diagnosis. Never succumbing to self-pity, she was cheerful and loving with visitors and caregivers. Her stroke hampered speech but did not prevent her from saying "I love you!" to many. And, of course, her ready smile and bright eyes needed no words. She passed away peacefully on January 20th, resolutely cheerful until the end.

She will be remembered with joy by her many friends, with appreciation by the many people whom she helped and mentored, and she will always be loved by her family.

A memorial service will be held at Christ Episcopal Church on Friday, February 1st, at 10:30 a.m. The family would request that you remember Madolyn by contributing your talents or funds to the music program of your choice, or to the music program of Christ Episcopal Church.

EULOGIES FROM HER SONS:

My Rockstar Mom, Madolyn, aka "The Human Sparkler" aka Madsue, I and everyone loves and adores you... and will miss you, terribly. 75 years of non-stop playing (5-80). Heaven got extremely bright and loud all of a sudden... with all the countless inhabitants shouting, "Uh, what just happened?!" You introduced beauty to me--practicing 8-10 hours p/day on

piano, harpsichord and, by far, pipe organ(s), while I--your firstborn--was forming in the womb (listening from inside), then you continued onward after my birth (so much easier to hear), in the form of transcendent, eternal music. We're not always talking tame music for the timid! You never shied away from bold and bombastic pieces by J.S. Bach, Frédéric Chopin, Sergie Rachmaninoff, Maurice Duruflé (our shared favorite), Marcel Dupré, César Franck, Charles-Marie Widor, Louis Vierne, Léon Boëllmann and many more. However, you imbued nuance and ethereality into my sensibilities. You gave voice lessons to Mikey and me on those long road trips; far more interesting than counting telephone poles. We woke up as kids to you loudly performing Christmas carols as we leapt out of bed in our pajamas and ripped open presents under the tree! You so got it! Whenever you came home, it was a celebration because you were so cheery! You were our Rockstar. All that fun and beauty has literally showed up in every aspect of my being: my writing and hearing (discerning) complex harmonic structures with all the goosebumps... and tears. It's sewn into my DNA, which opened up ALL the artistic expressions to include language and communication skills, strengthening relationships, and even how I intimately love and connect with God Himself. Unabashed beauty transforms the soul, and your playing filled the air of every home we grew up in, until 18, and then followed me to the present as I continued to listen to your music through recordings. You are why I've maintained the stance of one foot here—the other in heaven... but, honestly, leaning much more toward heaven. Mom, 75 years of gigging led up to this, your grandest performances ever... that will go on forever... uninterrupted... ~Greger

Previous Events

Memorial Service

FEB 1. 10:30 AM (CT)

Christ Episcopal Church
510 Belknap
San Antonio, TX 78212

Tribute Wall

AH

“ From 1975/6 we lived in San Antonio while Richard was on Sabbatical leave from London University at UTSA and we worshiped at St Luke's Episcopal Church where Madolyn played the organ so splendidly. She and Ed became good friends in that year when we shared different kinds of music together. When we returned twenty years later she and Ed entertained us in their lovely home in the hill country. We often think of her and the joy her music making gave. Today (April 28th 2019), on a whim, I Googled her name to find she sadly had died. We would like her family to know that she will always be remembered with great affection by us in England.

Richard and Annabelle Hancock.

Annabelle Hancock - April 28, 2019 at 04:33 PM

DN

“ The music world of San Antonio has sustained a great loss with the passing of Madolyn Fallis. As a fellow musician I had the pleasure of working with her on numerous occasions and admired her for her outstanding musicianship. At the same time her engaging personality made it a joy to know her. She will be sorely missed.

Doris Norton

Doris Norton - February 02, 2019 at 02:24 PM

PD

“ Peggy D. purchased a sympathy card for the family of Madolyn Douglas Fallis.



Peggy D. - January 30, 2019 at 09:23 AM

LP

“ Madolyn is my dear and long-time friend. When I lived in San Antonio, she accompanied me in many concerts in which I sang, and she took voice lessons from me at UOP. When I moved to Europe she told me, "If you ever return from Europe and need a home, you can live with us." I will never forget her generous offer. She and Ed came to visit me in Switzerland shortly after I'd moved there, and every time I came back to visit friends in San Antonio Madolyn and I got together and had great times sharing with each other as if no time had elapsed. After she had her stroke, I would go see her with Linda Poetschke whenever I came to San Antonio. She always recognized me immediately and we'd both cry for joy at seeing each other again. I will never forget how Linda and I sang "Amazing Grace" with her at the home she was living in, and we were astounded that she could remember all the words. I will miss her dearly, but I know I'll see her again, and then we'll once again make music together.

Linda Psaute - January 30, 2019 at 08:44 AM

PD

“ 1 file added to the album *Fallis Tribute Wall*



Peggy Dettwiler - January 30, 2019 at 08:15 AM

KT

“ Our journey with Mad Sue began when we attended St. Luke's Episcopal Church while Dave was stationed at Kelly Air Force Base. She quickly embraced our family, shared her love of music, included me in many of her musical out reaches as we sang in the choir, performed for community groups. We share many get togethers and stood with Madolyn and Ed at their marriage. Our friendship extended over those early years and she and Ed became godparents to our first daughter, Gabrielle. Unfortunately, Gabbi was no sooner born than we were transferred to upstate New York. But the miles did not put any damper on our friendship as we would gather together whenever possible.

Once on a visit to her parents when we came for a visit, she managed to convince Gabbi, then about four years old, to stand before the audience to sing a song during one of Madolyn's many organ recitals. "You can do it, just look at me." she coached Gabbi. Gabbi did in fact, sing her song to her Godmother, Mad Sue.

We were blessed to visit with the German Shepherds in the hill country, to stroll the gardens with Ed and Mad Sue, and of course enjoy to sounds of the harpsichord, piano and organ.

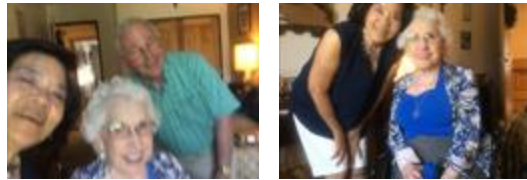
During our last visits her enthusiasm and joy at our arrival, taking us to meet with her friends, giving us a full tour of the Heritage Assisted Living building, then taking us back to her room to show us family pictures. She loves her family so intensely and was so proud of each and every one of you. Before we said our good byes, she share her talents on that precious organ. Heaven is booming with the lilt of her voice and the joy of her praises. We are so rich because of the joy and love of music she shared with us.

Thank you for all the memories.
Dave and Karen Testerman

Karen Testerman - January 29, 2019 at 10:42 PM

KT

“ 2 files added to the album Fallis Tribute Wall



Karen Testerman - January 29, 2019 at 09:23 PM

LP

“ My dear, precious Madolyn.... how you will be missed by SO many! We will miss your constant smile (did I ever see you when you were not smiling?), your infectious giggle, your always positive attitude even when life was far from perfect, and your love and support for everyone. You exemplified Jesus in the flesh to everyone you met and you were a true blessing to me and so many others. I am so thankful for all the music we made together. You made sure everything was perfect, but always FUN! I know you are talking non-stop with all the angels in heaven! They are in for a treat! “ I will thank my God on every remembrance of you!”
Linda And Edward Poetschke

Linda Poetschke - January 28, 2019 at 11:52 PM

DB

“ I first met MadSue as the mother of my good friend, her son, Mike. As a church musician myself, I became acquainted with Madolyn on a professional level. I have always been impressed with her professional, as well as her friendly and helpful nature; easy to work with along with a beautiful mentoring personality. She was a gem of a person with a heart of gold. Bless her in her eternal dwelling place, and bless her family, friends, and community who will miss her dearly.

Don Bernhard - January 28, 2019 at 05:38 PM

“ *SAN ANTONIO, TX, June 9, 2009 /24-7PressRelease/ -- Madolyn Douglas Fallis, Classical Musician, has been recognized by Cambridge Who's Who for showing dedication, leadership and excellence in all aspects of music performance.*

Inspired by her mother, who was a pianist and music teacher, and by her father, who was a singer, Ms. Fallis embarked on a lengthy, fruitful musical career 59 years ago. She is classically trained in the organ and keyboard. Now recognized throughout her community as "The Wedding Lady," she has become a popular organist for weddings and is known for playing the large pipe organs at historic old churches. She also performs at the funerals of various notable personalities.

Active in numerous organizations, Ms. Fallis was elected Councillor for the American Guild of Organists. In San Antonio, she is Artist-in-Residence at Christ Episcopal Church and directs a professional choir for weddings, funerals and special occasions. A veteran performer, she is on the concert circuit, performing solo and duo-organist concerts in nearby cities. Ms. Fallis attributes the success and longevity that she has enjoyed in her career to the cultural setting in which she grew up, to her parents and teachers who encouraged her at all times, and to the inspiration and instruction she received from Mildred Andrews, a musical icon in Oklahoma..

Ms. Fallis received her Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting in 1985 from the University of Texas, San Antonio, her Master of Music degree in Organ Performance in 1966 from the University of Oklahoma, and her Bachelor of Music Education degree in 1956 from Bethany Nazarene College (now Southern Nazarene University). She is a member of the Alamo Chapter, American Guild of Organists and Sigma Alpha Iota Music Fraternity. Recognitions with which she has been honored include Outstanding Music Alumnus Award from the University of Texas, San Antonio in 2007 and Outstanding Alumnus Award from Southern Nazarene University in 1984. Ms. Fallis aims to continue serving the

community through the various musical and cultural organizations.

Michael Wright - January 28, 2019 at 01:25 PM

MW

“*Madolyn Fallis (1934-2019) was a force of nature. Between her boundless energy and her smile as big as all of Texas, she endeared herself to everyone she met. As many of you know, she was highly revered as AGO Southwest Regional Councillor (Region VII in those days). I was honored to be elected to that position when she concluded her terms of service. Shortly after I took office, she sent me a large cardboard box full of AGO regional documents and information, all neatly filed and labeled. When I commented on how much material there was, she informed me that she had culled it down from six boxes!*

Not only was she a devoted member of the AGO and a respected church musician, teacher and recitalist, but she was a class act in every sense of the word. Her degrees of professionalism and respect for each individual person set her apart from the norm. With Madolyn, what you saw was what you got. She always had a kind word for everyone, along with pats on the back and positive reinforcement. Like a gentle mother, she shepherded me into the regional councilor position, and was always just an email or phone call away when I needed support and encouragement. With a warm spirit and a kind heart, she kindled a flame in all of us to do our best work.

Dear Madolyn, I join many in saluting you and thanking you for the example you set for us, as well as the high standards you achieved. May angels sing you into the arms of God, where you will be welcomed with great joy into the Kingdom of Heaven. You will always be one of the bright Yellow Roses of Texas!

Michael Bedford

AGO National President

Michael Wright - January 28, 2019 at 01:24 PM