

Brommel-Barnett-Kenas-McGuckin-Nicosia-Speake Scholarship in Music

Why did I name this scholarship after five women in the Music Department at NEIU? The answers are simple; each made an impact on hundreds of students at NEIU; each shared a mission to make music more meaningful to our diverse student body.

For many years the Communication and Music Departments were on the same 6th floor of the Sachs ors.

I interacted daily with these women; came to appreciate how hard each of them worked to heighten musical understanding in undergraduates. Besides, I like music in spite of the fact I am not a good violinist or pianist - but I tried!

Virginia Barnett, a pianist, came to Chicago from Florida where she studied at the Conservatory of Music. There, Harold Berlinger became her piano mentor and later hired her at NEIU when he was chairperson of music.

Jane Kenas-Heller followed her undergraduate mentor Dr. Ron Combs from Wisconsin to NEIU for her masters degree. There she remained as staff accompanist the next decades, beloved by all music majors, for she played weekly in all voice lessons, as opera accompanist and for faculty recitals.

Marie McGukin taught introductory classes and specialized in the use of the recorder to learn music. She loved classical guitar and taught generations of students to play. Marie graduated from Duquene University first and then from De Paul with a masters. She performed then and still today in her ethnic Croatian Folk festivals.

Dolores Nicosia taught a variety of music classes with a specialty in music education. She had done her undergraduate degree at Marycrest College in Davenport, I owa, where she remained for a few

years teaching piano. Then she finished a masters and doctorate. Early in her piano studies she also