

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

JOHN LOESSI

John Loessi, Associate Professor of Music at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, died January 1, 1993, at St. Joseph Medical Center. He was 62 years of age. Memorial services were held on January 7 at First Wayne Street United Methodist Church, where he had been Director of the Choral Program since 1965, and on January 25 in Neff Auditorium on the campus of IPFW. The Music Department wanted to hold a second, university-sponsored memorial in honor of its beloved and valued colleague.

John greatly expanded the music program of First Wayne Street Church, and was responsible for the church's purchase of a world-renowned Beckerath German Tracker organ. In celebration of his Silver Anniversary in 1990, First Wayne Street United Methodist Church provided him with a trip to Cambridge, England, to attend the Christmas Service of Lessons and Carols at King's College. In addition, the church commissioned the leading composer, Gerre Hancock, of St. Thomas Church, New York City, to write a composition in John's honor. It is soon to be published by Oxford University Press.

John's musical career included serving as Director of the Philharmonic Chorus from 1979 to 1989 and preparing choruses for the noted conductors Thor Johnson, Max Rudolf, and Josef Krips in Cincinnati and for Lukas Foss with the Tanglewood Festival Orchestra. He was a guest conductor of the Indiana Chamber Orchestra and for choral festivals and seminars throughout Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Georgia. He taught and conducted the choruses for ten years at the prestigious Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.

In the IPFW Music Department, John was known for being a superb musician and inspiring educator. In addition to setting a rigorously intellectual standard for his students, he communicated a true passion for his art. He would as often yell about the "guts and fire" as he would about intonation. This personally modest, even shy man could become a demon on the podium, with a gleam in his eye that would mesmerize his performers into making beautiful music.

John's true legacy, however, will be a result of his basic humanity—the neckrubs he gave to weary staff, the hugs to those he sensed were down, the books and clothes anonymously given to students who were in financial difficulty, the frequent counseling, compassionate yet honest, offered to students in trouble. A small example of both the personal support he gave to others and his commitment to professional standards is his almost perfect attendance record at concerts given by faculty and students of the Music Department, despite the inconvenience of arranging transportation to the campus since he did not drive.

John loved life, utilizing each moment to the utmost, much as he planted his 5' by 10' front yard with all the landscaping possible. He would bring one of his wonderful culinary creations—"comfort food"—to what we all knew would be a difficult faculty meeting. Even such a little thing as a new technique for humanely trapping his cats to wash them would excite him.

He never let ill health interfere with his work. Several times he conducted both rehearsals as well as concerts with health problems such as a high fever or having his hand in a cast. It is, therefore, no surprise that he conducted a Christmas Eve rehearsal while in great pain, postponing a trip to the hospital emergency room until after the rehearsal. He later apologized for the inconvenience he had caused to those left behind to perform without him.

The spirit with which he lived his personal and musical life will warmly endure for the many people who had the privilege of knowing him or experiencing his magic on the podium.