



## Mrs. Margaret L. Budd

April 7, 1930 - September 22, 2024

Margaret Lothrop Budd, who spread the joy of music and community throughout Baltimore and Chicago's North Shore during her 94 remarkable years, passed away peacefully in her Roland Park home on Sunday, September 22, 2024, surrounded by family.

Margaret's life was centered on family, music, faith, and community. Most knew her from her more than 60 years as a celebrated church organist. Her command of the instrument inspired many to join voices in worship weekly, welcoming them to the service with her vast repertoire from Bach to Messiaen; engaging them in hymns with her mastery of registration, voicing, variation, and modulation, swelling to the final "Amen"; and concluding the service with a burst of joy, whether Widor or another dose of her favorite Johann Sebastian. Many would stay in the pews until the last note of the postlude had faded, and then greet her at the organ console to be inspired by her smile, gratitude, and fellowship. Her church career began in 1949 at a small Methodist church in Wilmette, IL. Many followed, with her longest engagements at the Glenview Community Church in Glenview, IL (1955-1971), Second Presbyterian Church in Baltimore (1972-2002), and Roland Park Presbyterian in Baltimore (2007-2017).

In 1987 she founded and managed one of the most inspired and enduring concert series in Baltimore, the Second Presbyterian Concert Series,

renamed Community Concerts at Second in 2002. It is now in its 38th season and as healthy as ever. With the stated mission of “World Class Music, Free To All,” the Series has presented a range of renowned artists including Leon Fleisher, Awadagin Pratt, Simone Dinnerstein, Dame Gillian Weir, Fred Swann, many members of the Baltimore Symphony and, of course, Margaret Budd. Since 1990, the same organization has presented the annual Russell C. Wonderlic Memorial Competition to develop the talents of young piano and vocal talent in the area. Notable past winners include pianists Awadagin Pratt and Eric Zuber; and soprano Hyunah Yu. The concert series is now run by a volunteer board of up to twenty-five members, along with a full-time Managing Director. As stated on the series web page: “Now in its fourth decade, Community Concerts at Second’s history demonstrates how one person’s vision and dedication can inspire the contributions and involvement of countless others. Community Concerts at Second has a vibrant future as an organization that will continue to strengthen and enrich the Baltimore community for countless years to come.”

Margaret Sarah Lothrop was born in Evanston, Illinois in 1930 to Marguerite James Lothrop and Everett Lothrop, the youngest of four children, including brothers Everett, Don, and Jim. She demonstrated early musical talent on the piano and was quickly steered to private instruction at Northwestern University’s prep department. After skipping kindergarten and playing viola and violin in grade school, she got more serious about the piano and went on to Oberlin Conservatory in 1947 where she majored in piano and minored in organ for two years, studying under organist Grigg Fountain. It was there that she met Leslie Budd, Jr., who was two years ahead of her in his studies. Margaret was captured by both the pipe organ and Les while at Oberlin. Oberlin advised her in her second year that she couldn’t switch from piano to organ major. At the same time, Les proposed to her as he graduated and headed to Northwestern. So she followed him there in 1949, switching to organ studies under Thomas Matthews at the Northwestern School of Music.

Margaret and Les were married at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Evanston in August of 1950, with Thomas Matthews at the organ.

Margaret earned her Master's degree in Organ Performance and Church Music with highest honors, including Phi Kappa Lambda, from Northwestern. She was granted a Fulbright Scholarship for organ study in Europe with the renowned Flor Peters, but instead decided to (in her words) "combine teaching, performance, and church work with the raising of our wonderful family" of five children. She taught hundreds of piano and organ students, and performed to acclaim throughout the Chicago area, the East Coast and Europe. Highlights of her European tours included performances at the 1988 International Church Music Conference in Geneva and a 1992 church service at St. Thomas, J.S. Bach's church in Leipzig. She accompanied the Second Presbyterian choir to England in 1994, serving as organist-in-residence for a week at Gloucester Cathedral. An associate by examination in the American Guild of Organists, Margaret served on many national committees, helped found the North Shore (Illinois) AGO Chapter, and was Dean of the Baltimore Chapter. Local organ lovers knew her as a regular participant in the annual Baltimore Bach Marathon.

She recorded a CD on Second Presbyterian's Casavant organ in 1996. "In Concert" is a compilation of pieces by Bach, Handel and Vaughan Williams, among others. Included is Elam Ray Sprenkle's "Four Vignettes on the Hodie From the Vespers for the Nativity," composed for Margaret when the Casavant organ was installed in 1980. The Baltimore Sun's music critic Tim Smith described her in 2006 as "one of the shining lights of Baltimore's cultural life." After her retirement in 2017, Margaret's light continued to shine as she carried her music ministry to the Roland Park Place community, playing for multiple public functions, and entertaining all requests on her constant companion at home, the Model B Steinway Grand.

Margaret relished her time with family, as well as frequent trips to the Chautauqua Institution, the Bethlehem Bach Festival, the Ravinia Music Festival, and Cape Cod. She was also an avid fan of Scrabble, Sudoku, double solitaire, Roger Federer, and Orioles baseball. More than this and her musical talent, though, Margaret will be remembered for her welcoming and giving spirit, and her deep devotion to family, friends, and community. She was a treasure to all who knew her.

Margaret is survived by four sons, David R. Budd and Lawrence R. Budd (Sandra), both of Baltimore, Dr. James L. Budd (Holli) of Rochester, NY, and Steven W. Budd (Olenna Truskett) of Brewster, NY; a daughter, Nancy Budd Culpepper (Joel) of Baltimore; and six grandchildren, Erin Budd Barry (Keenan and sons Luke & Rowan), Elizabeth Wyatt (daughter Anna), Carly Heisler (Chris and daughter Emma), Gillian Buck (Ryan and daughter Cayleigh), Alec Budd, and Peter Budd. Husband Leslie Budd, Jr. died in 2000.

A Memorial Celebration will be held at Second Presbyterian Church on November 23, 2024, at 1:00pm. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Community Concerts at Second (<https://www.cc2nd.org/support.html>), the Baltimore Symphony Musicians Foundation (<https://baltimoresymphonymusicians.org/foundation>), and Neighbors Near and Far (<http://www.neighborsnearfar.org/>) (in support of Haiti relief efforts).

Please see additional tribute to Margaret published in The Baltimore Sun on October 3, 2024 at this link: <https://www.baltimoresun.com/2024/10/03/margaret-budd-organist-and-concert-pioneer-dies/>

# Previous Events

## Memorial Celebration

NOV **23**. 1:00 PM (ET)

Second Presbyterian Church  
4200 St. Paul Street  
Baltimore, MD 21218