



Spring 2013

A True Classic

Tim Obermiller
Illinois Wesleyan University, iwumag@iwu.edu

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Recommended Citation

Obermiller, Tim (2013) "A True Classic," *Illinois Wesleyan University Magazine, 2002-2017*: Vol. 22 : Iss. 1 , Article 7.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/iwumag/vol22/iss1/7>

This is a PDF version of an article that originally appeared in the printed Illinois Wesleyan University Magazine, a quarterly periodical published by Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact iwumag@iwu.edu.

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A True Classic

Marilyn Keiser's achievements as world-class organist acknowledged in gala event.



A 1963 Illinois Wesleyan graduate, Keiser was honored by the American Guild of Organists for her devotion to organ music.

Organist Marilyn Keiser '63 was honored for her lifetime devotion to the instrument at an April gala and recital sponsored by the American Guild of Organists. During the event, she performed a solo recital featuring works by Alec Wyton, Herbert Howells, Margaret Sandresky, Josef Rheinberger and Louis Vierne at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in New York City. The church's organ, dating to 1911, features 151 ranks of pipes, 118 speaking stops and 8,514 pipes on seven divisions spread over four manuals and pedals.

Marilyn has traveled throughout the United States performing organ recitals and leading workshops. "She represents to the organ world what the late Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis did to America: the epitome of taste, dignity and elegance. An immediate standing ovation followed, with extensive applause," *The American Organist* wrote in a review of one of her recent performances.

A 1963 Illinois Wesleyan graduate, Marilyn majored in sacred music and served as president of Sigma Alpha Iota during her time at IWU. She went on to earn a master's degree in sacred music in 1965 and a doctorate in 1977, both from Union Theological Seminary.

She is Chancellor's Professor of Music Emeritus at Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University in Bloomington, Ind., where she taught courses in sacred music and applied organ for 25 years. She previously served as organist and director of music at All Souls Parish in Asheville, N.C., music consultant for the Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina and associate organist and choirmaster of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. In 2002, she was awarded a Doctor of Humane Letters from Illinois Wesleyan.

Marilyn performs frequently in concerts around the country sponsored by churches, colleges and the American Guild of Organists, of which she is an active member. Outside of the U.S., she has appeared as featured artist for the International Congress of Organists in Cambridge, England, and in concert at the Royal Victoria Hall with the Singapore Symphony, the American Cathedral in Paris, the Southern Cathedrals Festival in Winchester, England, and the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil.

"Marilyn is one of the most respected organists in the country (and beyond)," says classmate Karl Bruhn '72. "I have been a church organist since I was in high school and I studied organ at IWU and still play every Sunday. Marilyn is one of those humble people us mere mortal organists have looked up to for years."

She has released several albums; the latest, *The Music of Dan Locklair*, gained rave reviews last year. "Marilyn Keiser performs Locklair's music with passion, imagination, precision, energy and understanding. This recording should become a classic," *The American Organist* wrote.