

GMTA TEACHER OF THE YEAR 2006



Naegeli von Bergen Metcalf

The recipient of the 2006 GMTA Teacher of the Year Award is Naegeli von Bergen Metcalf. Born in York, Nebraska, Naegeli Metcalf began piano lessons at the age of seven with Mrs. Glen George for \$.50 a lesson. She moved to Lincoln at age nine and studied with Ethel Owen until age eleven, when she began studying with Margaret McGregor, who is still living at the age of 104. Mrs. McGregor taught at the Beth Miller School of Piano and at age thirteen Beth Miller and Margaret McGregor decided Naegeli should attend Rocky Ridge Music Center near Estes Park, Colorado. This was the first

of thirteen summers she spent at the camp. As an older camper, Naegeli taught piano, theory and was a chamber music coach. During this time she played duo piano recitals with Robert Kelligar and also gave solo recitals.

When Naegeli was a senior in high school, she began teaching in The Beth Miller School of Music. (An interesting aside: Beth Miller was always very active in MTNA and was responsible for starting the National High School Auditions. Beth Miller was also a student of Josef Lhevinne, the acclaimed Russian pianist of the early 20th century.) Naegeli received the Nebraska Church School scholarship that enabled her to attend Nebraska Wesleyan University, where she continued studying with Beth Miller. While a student there, Naegeli won the Lincoln Symphony Concerto Competition and performed the Liszt Concerto in E-Flat Major with the orchestra. Many years later, Naegeli was honored to receive the Nebraska Wesleyan University Music Alumni Award of the Year (1991).

In 1953, Naegeli's mother became ill with cancer, and Naegeli stayed out of school for a year to care for her mother. During this time, Naegeli continued teaching and became the youngest MTNA Certified teacher in Nebraska. In 1954-55, Naegeli attended The Juilliard School where she studied with James

Friskin. At Juilliard, only seniors were allowed to take piano pedagogy. But because Naegeli had already taught for some years, she was allowed to take the course. Naegeli returned to Nebraska Wesleyan University in 1955 and completed her music studies, graduating in 1956 with a Bachelor of Music degree with a major in piano performance.

Naegeli began graduate school at Indiana University in 1957, where she received a Graduate Assistantship. She studied with Bela Nagy and graduated with Highest Distinction. During this time, Naegeli continued her private teaching and taught twelve hours a week.

After completing her graduate studies, Naegeli taught at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota from 1957-1964. While there, she had many outstanding students, including Lillian Tan from Indonesia. Lillian went on to graduate studies at Indiana University and holds a teaching position at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

Naegeli's next college position brought her to Georgia, where she taught at Wesleyan College in Macon from 1964-1969. During this time, Naegeli held a variety of positions in GMTA and MTNA including State Auditions Chair, Southern Division College Auditions Chair, and even GMTA President! Two of her students at Wesleyan College include GMTA member Nancy Dyes and noted pedagogue Jane Magrath. Even though Jane only studied one year with Naegeli, that one year had a lasting impact on her life, and she and Naegeli have stayed in touch ever since. Several years ago Jane Magrath wrote an article for a piano magazine about Naegeli's teaching of adult students. Jane also listed Naegeli in the Acknowledgements of her book, *The Pianists' Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature*.

After marrying, Naegeli and her husband lived in various locations in the southeastern United States and even in Germany for several years before settling in Savannah, where she remains today. Naegeli joined GMTA once again and began a private studio. She became the Auditions Chair for the Savannah Symphony for several years. She was asked to speak to several music groups in town and taught music teachers groups. Naegeli was also asked to teach part-time at Armstrong Atlantic State University during 1984 and 1985.

Naegeli still maintains a large studio of children from pre-school through high school, as well as adult students. During the 2005-2006 session, Naegeli taught fifty children and ten adults. Her students have regularly participated in the Guild, GMTA Auditions, GMEA All-State Piano Auditions, and concerto competitions, to name a few. Through the years she has had many students receive top ratings in auditions and competitions. As a 4th grader, Angie Chien won the Savannah Symphony Concerto Competition. Kay Shields, Jody Krepel, Maji Chien and Gina Florio have also been winners of the Savannah Symphony Auditions. Angie and

Maji Chien have both performed complete concerti with the Beaufort Symphony. Alexander Zhang will perform with the Beaufort Symphony in 2007. Christy Chu and Angelica Zhang were winners in the 2004 Hilton Head Youth Orchestra Concerto competition. In 2005, Maji Chien, Alexander Zhang, Gina Florio and Daniel Holliday were all winners in the Hilton Head Youth Orchestra Competition and all performed with the orchestra. Naegeli's students have also played in master classes for Seymour Bernstein, Alexander Peskanov, Marvin Blickenstaff, Mordecai Shehori, and many others.

Congratulations to Naegeli von Bergen Metcalf on being GMTA's 2006 Teacher of the Year!