



## 2008 Teacher of the Year

### Aurelia Campbell

The recipient of the 2008 GMTA Teacher of the Year Award is Aurelia Campbell from Hartwell. She is a native of Georgia. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Piano Performance from the University of Georgia where she studied with Despy Karlas and took several classes under the renowned Hugh Hodgson, founder of the UGA Music Department. At graduation, she was awarded the Sword of Honor, the highest honor that can be bestowed upon a member of the music fraternity SAI. She has done considerable further study especially in piano pedagogy.

Aurelia has the distinction of being the first music teacher in Georgia to be Nationally Certified by MTNA. She has held membership in GMTA and MTNA since her days as a university student. As of 2008, she has 52 years of professional membership and has been a full-time independent piano teacher since that time. In 2004, her colleagues in Georgia and Southern Division elected her a "Fellow of MTNA Foundation." She has served as state piano chairman for GMEA and was the organizer of such projects as the performance of a piano concerto by a high school student. When public school had a piano division of the literary events, she had a student reach the state level for ten years. She has also had several students selected to attend the Governor's Honors Program. She has also been a member of the National Guild of Piano Teachers and has had many students earn the National Certificate. She has served GMTA through her local association, and has held numerous offices in GMTA over the years, including President, Vice-President of Auditions, and Secretary. She revised the Auditions handbook while serving as Vice-President of Auditions and typed the entire final draft for printing. (GMTA had no computer at the time!!!!) She also served on the Southern Division Executive Board while President of GMTA. Her students have received numerous awards over the years and many have received the Outstanding Performer rating at the state level of auditions. Many students have also received the rating of Outstanding Theorist when taking the state theory exams. She has attended most GMTA Conferences since beginning membership in 1956. She has attended all MTNA Conferences since 1984, except for one, due to illness.

Aurelia has participated in the MTNA Music Study Award Program which she co-created with Wayne Gibson, MTNA President, the Studio Festival Program and the Music Achievement Award Program annually since their inception. Many of her students have continued their piano study on the college and graduate levels. As of 2008, about 35 students who have studied with her have had a parent who studied with her as well!

Her colleagues speak highly of her: "She is known for her ability to think through to the end of every idea and proposal, and organization is her middle name. Her leadership and service are beyond comparison." "She has been and continues to be a real role model for the private piano teacher." One of her former students comments: "Her influence on my life runs deeper than the music she imprinted on my soul. Her standard of excellence, the discipline she instilled in me,

sacrifices and choices I made when it came time to practice or perform, have become some of the very characteristics that make up who I am today."

As a part of her community, she is a member of the Regional Arts Council and the local YMCA. Over several decades, she has prepared many programs by student performers for church, civic and social organizations. Many of her former students currently are serving as church musicians in her county and elsewhere.

Our Teacher of the Year for 2008 was nominated by Wayne Gibson. She has touched countless lives as a piano instructor and is regarded as highly influential among her professional peers. Congratulations, Aurelia, on your many accomplishments and contributions. We applaud you as GMTA's Teacher of the Year for 2008.

## **Teaching Tips from GMTA 2008 Teacher of the Year Aurelia Campbell: Organization in the Music Studio and the Music Lesson**

Random House's *Dictionary of the English Language* defines *learning* as, "knowledge acquired by systematic study," and *systematic* as, "having a plan." We as teachers need a plan, and we need organization. Teaching should be presented in an organized environment and in an organized way. Likewise, I think it is very important that we instill in our students the art of organization.

Listed below are a few ways in which I organize in (A) The Music Studio and (B) The Music Lesson.

### **A. ORGANIZATION IN THE MUSIC STUDIO**

1. Orientation: I arrange a time for a new student and at least one parent to come to my studio where I show them my teaching facilities, go over my Studio Policies and answer any questions they may have. If I am taking in several new students at one time, I usually have orientation in a group setting.

#### 2. Registration Forms :

a. Registration form for new students: This form asks for the student's full name, birth date, school grade, which school, home telephone and parents' cell phone numbers. The parent signs this form enrolling the student for the nine-month regular term with no dropouts during the term unless the student moves out of town, then two months notice to the teacher and with pay. At the end of each regular term, the student has the option of continuing lessons for the next term or discontinuing lessons.

b. Registration form for returning students: If continuing lessons, the parent signs the form enrolling the student for the next term with no dropouts (same policies as stated in the new student form.)

c. I have a different registration form for an optional six-week summer term and a different registration form for adult students.

3. Studio Policies: I put in writing everything that I think parents and students need to know about my policies. This includes: fees (when and how they are paid), make-up lessons, keeping

fingernails short, the system of music purchases, the holidays we observe, recitals and rehearsals, written notices that will be sent from time to time, practice time and what is required, etc. I urge teachers to put everything in writing concerning their policies and procedures.

4. Swap List and Make-up Lessons: In my policies, I state my procedure concerning make-up lessons. In order to avoid having to do make-up lessons, I allow students to swap lesson times with each other when they have an occasional conflict with their lesson time. I prepare a list showing each student's name, lesson day and time, and home telephone number. Each parent is given a copy of this list.

In the heading of the swap list, I state other procedures as:

- a. The parent is responsible for working out the swap without contacting me.
- b. I am not responsible for any mix-ups involving the swapping.
- c. I do make up some lessons if the student is ill and cannot work out a swap, and I am notified in advance. (Of course, I make up lessons if there are unavoidable circumstances such as a death in the family.)

Note: I have a swap-list form that is given to the parents of each new student at orientation. The parents must sign the form, giving me permission to include their name and telephone number on this list.

I update the swap list on a regular basis, especially when a student changes lesson times with another student for the remainder of the term. I must approve this change in advance.

## **B. ORGANIZATION IN THE MUSIC LESSON**

1. Assignment Book: At the beginning of the fall term, all students are asked to purchase an Assignment Book. (I buy the books and they reimburse me.) In this book, the students record their practice time, I write in their assignments, I list scales learned and pieces memorized, etc., and I also use the book for billing for lessons and music I purchase for them. At the end of the term, the student has an organized record in this book of much of the year's work.

2. Planning the lesson: I try to be consistent at each lesson as to the order I hear the assignments. I encourage the student to follow the same order when practicing at home, so all assignments will get practiced.

3. Learning a new piece: When beginning a new piece, including even the beginner level, I go over the form of the piece with the student. We look to find what lines or parts of the piece are the same or maybe the same pattern but in a different key, etc. In sonatinas and sonatas, we write in "Exposition," "First Theme," "Second Theme," "Development," "Recapitulation," "Coda," etc., and we write in the various key changes. In Fugues, we mark the voices, etc. All of this makes the learning of the piece more interesting for the student and helps when memorization is begun.

4. Goals: I believe that it is important for teachers to help students set goals for the term in order to organize their work and achieve more. When the students have reached their goals, it is encouraging for them to receive token rewards. In my studio, the students and I use two great programs for goal setting: the MTNA Achievement Award Program and the MTNA Studio Festival Program. These programs are valuable to my studio and me since I can use the guidelines as provided by MTNA, but structure the programs according to the needs of my individual students. I have successfully used both programs since their inception, and each year I make changes to meet my needs. The students are rewarded for their participation in these programs with the MTNA award

pin and the MTNA Studio Festival medal with the program's logo, "the soaring star," as well as the MTNA certificate.

I urge teachers to look into the possibility of incorporating these programs into their studios. Contact MTNA via toll-free number or via email for the guidelines.

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