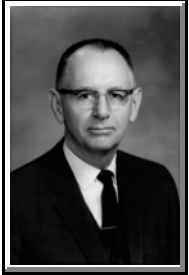

MYRON J. ROBERTS was born in San Diego, California, moving to Palo Alto at the age of nine. He developed a love for piano and organ, studying piano, then organ, with Stanford University organist, Warren Allen.

Mr. Roberts completed his undergraduate studies in 1935 at the College of the Pacific (now the University of the Pacific) in Stockton, California, studying with Allen Bacon. He completed a master's degree at the School of Sacred Music at Union Theological Seminary, studying with Clarence Dickinson.

After two years as an organist in the Greater New York area and interim organist in Richmond, Virginia, he joined the faculty of the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, Nebraska in 1940 where he taught organ and music theory for 34 years. He held positions in Lincoln as organist at First-Plymouth Congregational Church U.C.C., Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, and the Roman Catholic Cathedral of the Risen Christ.



Myron Roberts

Mr. Roberts was married to Virginia Woolfolk. The couple had no children. Mr. and Mrs. Roberts retired at the same time and moved to Rio del Mar on the Monterey Bay in California. After his wife's death in 1975, Myron continued to live in Monterey and became long-standing friends with Anthony Antolini, who was teaching at Cabrillo College in Santa Cruz County. When Professor

Antolini moved to Maine in 1991, Mr. Roberts decided to join them and moved to Cushing in 1993 where he built a home with a view of the St. George River.

Mr. Roberts was nationally known not only as a professor of organ, but also as a composer of organ and choral music, and music for organ and instruments.

After moving to Maine, Mr. Roberts continued to compose and teach organ on a limited basis. He volunteered at the Cushing Community School where he greatly enjoyed teaching third-graders who called him "Mike" because he considered "Myron" or "Mr. Roberts" too formal a name. He also maintained a lifelong interest in astronomy and gardening.

Mr. Roberts was a communicant of the Episcopal Church of St. John the Baptist in Thomaston, Maine, where he took an active part in the work of the organ search committee. In 2003 the committee selected the Bedient Pipe Organ Company, Lincoln, Nebraska to build its new organ. The president and founder of the company, Gene Bedient, was a student of Mr. Roberts at the University of Nebraska in the 1960s.

Myron Roberts died May 15, 2004 at the age of 92, after a brief illness.

[*The American Organist* magazine, August 2004 issue, printed an obituary of Myron J. Roberts, written by Dr. Anthony F. Antolini, Acting Chair, Department of Music, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine. Permission to reprint excerpts from the obituary were granted by *The American Organist* and Dr. Antolini.]

Compositions by Myron J. Roberts

— All compositions are for organ, unless noted otherwise —

- 1936 *Alleluia
1937 *Sierra Nevada (Sequoia Gigantica)
*Choral: Psalm 148
1938 Choral: The Storm on Lake Galilee - Antiphon
1940 *M 31
*M 57
M numbers refer to a catalogue used by astronomers to identify nebulous objects
*Prelude on Veni Emmanuel
1942-45 *Prelude
1945 *Pastorale and Dance
1946 Choral: The Storm on Lake Galilee (chorus, baritone solo)
1947 Carillon
1949 In Memoriam
1956 *Choral: The Day of Resurrection
1958 Litany
1961 Prelude and Trumpetings
1964 Improvisation on the Agincourt Hymn
Carillon: Prelude for Carillon (for Ronald Barnes)
1965 Choral: O Lord, We Beseech Thee
*Choral: Te Deum (Based on the text from the Episcopal liturgy, but found it's first performance at the dedication of Lincoln's Cathedral of the Risen Christ
*Canzona (Homage to A. and G. Gabrieli)
1966 *Choral: Psalm 24
1967 Dialogue (Oxford University Modern Organ Music, Book 2)
1968 Improvisation on "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen" – revision of the 1939 original
Carillon: Prelude for Carillon
1969 Pastorale and Aviary
1971 *Fanfare (Tucket)
Handbells: Three Pieces for Handbells (Lauds, Angelus, Dance Jubilate
(Commissioned by Westminster Presbyterian Church, Lincoln)
*Five Scintillas for Organ – #5 Tucket (for Michael Beattie)
1972 *Mass of the Risen Christ
*Three for Organ and Two Horns
*Choral: Mass for Men's Voices and Organ
1972-73 Scintilla, No. 3
1973 Nova
Sarabande
*Scintilla, No. 3 (for Mildred Andrews)
1975 Five for Organ and Marimba
1976 *Choral: Jubilate Deo (O Be Joyful)
"Blessed Assurance" Varied for the Pipe Organ
*Choral: My Soul Doth Magnify the Lord (Magnificat)

Compositions by Myron J. Roberts

- 1976 *Flourish and Voluntary on Sheridan (to Corwin and Alice Moore)
- 1977 Choral: Alleluia (to John Moran, Michael Veak, and the Choir, Cathedral of the Risen Christ)
- 1978 Exultate (Jon Spong Collection of Organ Music)
*Pastorela & Invention – Duo for electronic piano and pipe organ (for Phyllis Tremmel and Austin Lovelace)
*Four Pieces for Organ – ???, Ants On A Möbius Strip, Astronomical Clock, Tucket [no title was listed for the first of the four pieces]
- 1979-80 *Sonata for Organ and Trumpet – 3 Tuckets
- 1981 *Three for Organ, Clarinet and Bassoon – Amabile, Carezzovolo, Gioviale
*Four for Trumpet and Organ – Canonics, Cantabile, Badinage, Tuckets (for Dennis Schneider and John Levick)
- 1983 *Concerto for Organ (to Dr. Joy and Dr. George Ritchie)
- 1983-88 *Carillon: Suite for Carillon – Improvisation, Nocturne, Waltz, Sarabande (for Ronald Barnes)
- 1986 *Choral: I Am That I Am – Chorus, Baritone Solo, and Organ (for Mary and Robert Baker) – revised 1988
- 1987 *Fantasy for Organ (to Robert Baker on the occasion of his retirement from Yale Institute of Sacred Music)
*For Trumpet and Organ – Duo, Cantabile, Festivo
- 1988 Homage to Perotin – a revision of the 1956 original
*Choral: Nunc Dimittis – revised 1989
*Scintilla, No. 7 (for Quentin and Mary Murrell Faulkner)
*Church Sonata – Prelude-Fantasy, Pastorale-Nocturne, Postlude-Sonnerie (commissioned by San Francisco AGO)
*Prelude for Organ and Piano – Prelude, Communion, Postlude
- 1989 *Church Sonata for Piano and Organ – Prelude, Communion, Postlude (Centennial Music for the Church of St. John the Baptist – Capitola, California)
*Carillon: Suite for Carillon – Improvisation, Nocturne, Waltz, Sarabande, Whiplash
- 1990 *Choral: Kyrie Eleison (to the Cabrillo Chorus, Dr. Anthony Antolini, Director)
- 1991 Fanfare and Tuckets
*Choral: I Will Give Thanks (Commissioned by the Lincoln Chapter AGO in honor of long-time member, Mary Alice Snider)
The Juggler for Two Organs – Premiered by Chenault's, published. 1995
- 1992 *Choral: Psalm 117 (in memory of Nathalie Levick)
*Carillon: Fantasy for Carillon (for Ronald Barnes)
- 1995 *Epiphany Sketch (Homage to the Camels)
*Nativity Scenes (for Raymond and Elizabeth Chenault)
*Church Sonata – Prelude, Communion
*Fanfare
- *unpublished

- PROGRAM -

The Works of Myron J. Roberts

Opening Remarks: Dr. George Ritchie – Emcee: Michael H. Veak

Homage to Perotin Gene Bedient, *Organist*

Choral: Alleluia John Carter Cole, *Director*
Nancy Miller Anderson, *Accompanist*

In Memoriam Nancy Miller Anderson, *Organist*

Improvisation on “Agincourt Hymn”

Pastorale and Aviary Loretta Tubbs Love, *Organist*

Nova Charles Ore, *Organist*

Choral: O Lord, We Beseech Thee John Carter Cole, *Director*
Nancy Miller Anderson, *Accompanist*

Carillon C. Richard Morris, *Organist*

Prelude and Trumpetings Charles Ore, *Organist*

Litany Joy Schmidt Maag, *Organist*

Choral: I Will Give Thanks James J. Lytton, ChM, *Director*
Tom Gunther, *Baritone* — C. Richard Morris, *Accompanist*

Improvisation on “God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen” C. Richard Morris, *Organist*

- ▶ *Today’s choir is made up of members and friends of the Lincoln Chapter AGO, former organ students, and choir members from the churches that Myron Roberts served during his years in Lincoln:*

First-Plymouth Congregational Church U.C.C.

Church of the Holy Trinity, Episcopal

Cathedral of the Risen Christ, R. C.

- ▶ *All performers are former students of Myron Roberts*

- ▶ *Program narration written by C. Richard Morris and Michael H. Veak*

— A reception will be held in the Courtyard Hall following the concert —

REMEMBRANCES

~ When I decided to formally study organ as a minor in 1963, I was disappointed to learn that Myron Roberts was on sabbatical and I would have to wait a year! I suppose Myron and I first had a connection beyond that of teacher/student, because we were both fascinated with everything technical and musical that constituted a pipe organ.

From my first lesson in 1964 until his death in 2004, there was never a time that Myron and I were out of contact. We always maintained a lively correspondence at those times when we did not live in the same city. Our mutual interest in organs sometimes traveled down the same highway and sometimes not. Regardless, he was always supportive of me and my efforts as engineer, musician, composer, craftsman, organ builder and as a person.

It was Myron who introduced me to the writings of J. R. R. Tolkien long before they became popular. As I traveled the world seeing organs and places and writing my findings to Myron, he dubbed me his personal 'Charles Burney!' We also shared a somewhat deranged sense of humor! Because he admired craftsmanship and because he and Virginia always had need for something special that had to be made, I was often called upon to render special creations.

Because I commenced studies at UNL in the College of Engineering, some faculty in that college knew me to be their student. Myron, of course, knew me to be a music student. He and his good friend, the late Jim Blackman, who was Dean of the College of Engineering would have friendly arguments about whose student I was!

If anyone has ever questioned the color of the organ studio at Westbrook Music Building, the answer is: it is Myron's color. He and Virginia had a penchant for a very light green wall color and the first thing they would do upon moving into a different residence was paint it 'organ studio green'!

I visited Myron in California after he moved west and later, I visited him several times in Maine, after he moved east for his final years. He had a life-long love of learning and never stopped attending lectures, concerts, and seminars until just shortly before his death. The care givers at the assisted living center in Camden, Maine, loved Myron because they found him to be such a gentle person and such an interesting one. In a conversation with me one morning, he railed against the 'entertainment' that he was sometimes compelled to attend! We were fellow Francophiles. Even in the last years, if I wrote him something in French and didn't have the grammar precisely correct, he would call it to my attention!

Those professors with whom one finds a kinship in the early years often become life-long friends, mentors, and advocates. Myron Roberts and Larry Lusk were two very special friends for life and I miss them both greatly. ~ *Gene Bedient*

~ Myron's open, genuine personality invited me into his world, fully. I immediately felt like more than just a student. I was given an important window on the world through my relationship with him. His influence was both direct and indirect. One of my first assignments was the first of the Dupré *Antiphons*. After a little practice, I balked at the somewhat contemporary nature of the music and he very directly, but kindly, helped me understand that the piece had been written some 30-40 years prior and that it was time to embrace the 20th century. It took him about one and a half sentences! Indirectly, the things he stood for had a great influence on me; his collegial nature, his wonderful sense of humor, his interest in quality in his surroundings, his creative spirit, his constant graciousness, his calm demeanor. I remember being immediately impressed by his office – not a fluorescent light bulb in sight! His interest in things other than

the organ world was also a strong influence on me. I even have recipes from dinner parties at his home with Virginia. In short, he taught me about much more than playing the organ. ~

Michael Beattie

~ The greatest experience during my college years was to be assistant organist to Mr. Roberts at Church of the Holy Trinity, Episcopal, from March 1962 until August 1964. Since the church was on his way home from the University, all of my lessons were at the church near the end of a day. And, because I had such a nice organ to practice on, he had me give recitals in my sophomore, junior and senior years, with only the senior recital being required. ~ *Michael H. Veak*

~ Mr. Roberts had a way of gently encouraging and persuading his students to attempt things they might not otherwise try. That certainly was the case with me, anyway. When I was a graduate student in 1969-70, he announced one day at a lesson, "Vine Congregational Church needs an organist. Why don't you play there?" So I did. Several months later he asked, "Why don't you give a recital there? Those folks would love it!" So I did, even though work towards a master's degree with the education option did not require a recital. Ten years later in 1980 I returned to Vine United Church of Christ and have been there ever since. To Myron Roberts I owe the opportunity for musical growth, experience, and the just plain fun of playing on a fine pipe organ for an appreciative congregation. I'm glad that I didn't say "no" to his suggestions. ~ *Joy Schmidt Maag*

~ What do I remember about Mr. Roberts? The three pairs of glasses. Rubbing his shoulders that must have hurt. The tweed jackets and bolo ties. The typed notes and letters. The twinkle in his eye. His constant encouragement and patience. The red colored pencil marks on my music that carry so much unspoken meaning, even today. Wonderful, warm memories. ~ *Nancy Miller Anderson*

~ Three very strong memories are etched in my mind when I think of Myron Roberts.

1. My first organ lesson as a transfer student when Myron asked what I wanted to gain in my studies with him. I told him that I particularly would like help with registrations. And in typical Roberts style, he used as few words as possible and said, "use your ears." And he was absolutely right.
2. My wife and I invited Myron and Virginia Roberts to our home for a Thanksgiving dinner. They arrived and much to the delight of our very young son, Myron produced a super ball which he and Rick vigorously bounced around the room, somehow missing the good china. All we could do was laugh – what fun!
3. From 1964-1966 I served as choir director along with other duties at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church where Myron was the organist. His improvisations were always memorable and appropriate. He taught me so much by example, and I treasure those times.

Myron Roberts was a teacher and a friend and always gave quiet encouragement. What an honor to have known him. ~ *Dick Morris*

~ Several years after he retired, I had the pleasure of a visit with Myron in my home. We had a long chat about Holy Trinity and the Reuter organ while my toddler daughter vied for his attention with books and toys. They were fascinated with each other, and I can still see Myron patiently and gently commenting to her. That same caring approach with his students (and his marvelous sense of humor) are what I remember about Myron. ~ *Loretta Tubbs Love*

~ The 'UPTURNED TOE AWARD' is representative of Myron's sense of humor. At some point during his travels, he saw these little carved feet with the upturned toe. He was fascinated and purchased several with no particular plans for them. He later presented them to some of his students upon their graduation, remarking, "I have no idea of the significance of this little sculpture, but I thought you should have one!" ~ *Gene Bedient*



~ I had the honor to be Myron's unofficially adopted son in the last two decades of his life. We became friends shortly after Virginia died. Myron was seeking a singer to perform on an organ recital and I got the job. We became close friends immediately. His relationship to me was not only professional but he gladly assumed the role of honorary grandfather to my two little daughters. This took place in Santa Cruz County, California. When I changed jobs and accepted a position in the music department at my alma mater, Bowdoin College, in Maine, Myron decided after visiting us here that he would like to sell his condominium in Capitola and move to Maine. He built his dream house on our property on the St. George River in Cushing. His request of me when we closed the deal was, "I need a car, a house and a dog . . . in that order." He accomplished all three and lived happily in his house until his health failed and he had to move to a retirement home nearby.

As Myron aged, his mind began to play tricks on him. The medical authorities were never sure if it was classic Alzheimers disease or something akin to it. He didn't know really where he was and was frequently confused about who people were, but his charm and good humor didn't fail him. He invented a world that suited him and made the best of a situation that others would have found depressing. Instead of an old folks' home, he told people that he was living in a seminary where the old ladies were the spouses of his deceased colleagues. He admired the generosity of the system that took care of spouses so nicely. The staff admired the fact that he dressed in suit and tie every day and always had a pleasant word for everyone.

And he didn't lose his ability to teach and criticize musical performance. I ended up being his last organ student. Although he couldn't remember the names of people sitting around him in church, he could give me a critique of the articulations in my playing on the way home. When listening to my choral groups, his advice and judgment was always useful. At rehearsals he preferred to sit in the back. When I asked him why he did this he explained, "Distance lends enchantment."

Myron also never lost his enjoyment of going out for dinner. He had a favorite Thai restaurant that provided a whole evening's entertainment. One night I had driven him there in my (then) new Saab station wagon, which Myron greatly admired because it had heated leather seats. He was fond of saying, "Those Swedes think of everything." The roof rack was, in his opinion, not a luggage rack, but a railing for older people to hold onto as they put their walkers in the back. When the server brought him his favorite Thai beer, "Singha," Myron, ever the punster, once again extolled the wonders of the Saab as he poured his beer and began singing softly to the rest of us, "Singha, Swede chariot." ~ *Tony Antolini*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Church of the Holy Trinity, Episcopal
Dr. Anthony Antolini, for sending Roberts manuscripts
Dr. Anthony Antolini, for his care of Myron for many years
William Stibor, "Friday Live" – NET Radio – KUCV 91.1 FM, Lincoln
Choir members, First-Plymouth Congregational Church U.C.C.
Choir members, Church of the Holy Trinity, Episcopal
Choir members, Cathedral of the Risen Christ R.C.
Choir members, members and friends of the AGO
Choir members, former students
Directors and accompanists of the choir
George Ritchie, for his opening remarks
Organ performers
Church of the Holy Trinity hospitality committee
Jan Wahl, hospitality
John Cutler, publicity
Sinda Dux, publicity

AGO COMMITTEE FOR THIS EVENT

Nancy Miller Anderson
Gene Bedient
Sinda Dux
Loretta Tubbs Love
Joy Schmidt Maag
C. Richard Morris, Chair
Michael H. Veak