



Charles Thomas Gaines

February 13, 1932 - November 11, 2018

Charles Gaines was born to Nina Luella Dahlgren and Omer Thomas Gaines in Peoria, Illinois. There he and his sister Joanna Gaines Walton (Tom) grew up. He graduated from Woodruff High School in 1949 and proceeded to attend Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington, Illinois, where he graduated with a Bachelor Degree in Music Education and a Masters of Music in Piano. In 1953 he married his college sweetheart, Jean Marilyn Reichert, and they celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary this year. (Each year he would sing to her “The Sweetheart of Sigma Chi” song.)

Fresh out of college, Dr. Gaines was Supervisor of Elementary Music in the Ottawa (IL) Public Schools and Choirmaster of Wesley United Methodist Church (where he developed a multi-choir program). He was Director of Music and Organist at New Utrecht Dutch Reformed Church in Brooklyn (NY) and supervised Master’s degree candidates while he pursued his doctoral degree at Union Theological Seminary. In 1971 he earned a Doctorate of Sacred Music Degree in Musicology and Conducting.

In 1965 he began his academic career at Presbyterian College in Clinton (SC), and remained Chairman of the Department of Fine Arts until shortly before his retirement in 1998. At Presbyterian College he formed the Presbyterian College Choir and the Madrigal Singers, and also added Broadway Cabaret performances to the College’s musical offerings. In 1972

he began directing trans-Atlantic tours for the choir to many locations in Europe and the Holy Land where they had opportunities to sing in amazing cathedrals, including St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. A special tour in 1978 enabled his students to work with the renowned choral conductor Robert Shaw as they prepared for three concerts of Beethoven's Missa Solemnis under Shaw's baton in France and Switzerland. Dr. Gaines retired from Presbyterian College in 1998 as the Charles A. Dana Professor of Music.

During his years at Presbyterian College, he held positions as Director of Music at First Presbyterian Church, Clinton (SC) and then at the First Presbyterian Church in Greenwood (SC) from which he retired in 2002. In 1975 he founded and directed the Laurens County Chorale, retiring in 2009. At this retirement he was honored by former South Carolina Governor Mark Sanford with the conferring of The Order of the Silver Crescent in recognition of his exemplary community contributions and achievements for the benefit of South Carolina and her citizens. In 2012, the South Carolina Legislature also recognized his leadership in a proclamation honoring his role in founding and directing the Greenwood Festival Chorale. The mayor of Greenwood also announced that June 15, 2012, would officially be known as Charles T. Gaines Day, in recognition of his commitment to the Greenwood Festival Chorale, thus commemorating the day of his final concert. For Dr. Gaines, the relationships he worked to build with his students and choral members were more important than the perfection in diction and musicology which was the standard he set for them to achieve. To this day, many of these students and singers communicate profound gratitude for the way he shaped their hearts, minds and voices.

While these accomplishments and honors were feathers in his cap, his true love, Jean, and his 3 children, Deborah (Ned Abbott – Jacksonville, FL), Steve (Charlotte – Columbus, OH), and Betsy (Dan Bone – Orlando, FL) were his pride and joy. Eight grandchildren, Rebecca, Christopher, Daniel, Emily,

Gwyn, Jeffrey, Brooks, and Eric kept him immensely involved, forcing him to stay current with technology so he could be up to date in all their various sports and activities. He was immensely proud of his three children, their spouses, and his grandchildren (and spouses) and all of their accomplishments. He wasted no time in telling people about them. In 2014, he and his wife moved to Winter Park (FL) to be closer to his two daughters. He immediately became an active member of the Mayflower Retirement Community by participating in the chorus and becoming editor of their monthly newsletter. Winter Park Methodist Church became his church home where he sang in the choir and joined a weekly men's Bible study.

He leaves to all who knew him a legacy of love for family, faith, and music, a respect for leadership, and a desire to give back to their community.

A Celebration of Life will be held for Dr. Gaines on Saturday, December 8 at 3:00 at the Mayflower Retirement Community, Winter Park, FL. (<https://thamayflower.com/>) and on Saturday, February 2nd, at Broad Street United Methodist Church, Clinton (SC) at 2:00 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to the Charles T. Gaines Music Scholarship Fund at Presbyterian College. (Online giving is at presby.edu/giving/ways-to-give or by check to Advancement Office, Presbyterian College, 503 South Broad St., Clinton, SC 29325).

Cards can be mailed to Jean Gaines at: Mayflower Retirement Community, 1620 Mayflower Court Apt. B-124, Winter Park, FL 32792. More information about this can be found at degusipefuneralhome.com.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

DEC 8. 3:00 PM (ET)

Mayflower Retirement Community
1620 Mayflower Ct.
Winter Park, FL 32792

Tribute Wall

MF

“ *I fondly remember Dr. Gaines. I worked in the administration building at PC for many years. He was well respected by all who knew him. Sending my sympathy. Maudelle Finley, Mountville, SC.*

Maudelle Finle - February 17, 2019 at 11:45 PM



“ *On behalf of the staff at DeGusipe Funeral Home, please accept our condolences. It is an honor to serve your family.*



Luke Spalding - November 13, 2018 at 09:43 AM