## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of TEACHERS of SINGING



## **EDWARD BAIRD**

## THE EDWARD BAIRD - BRUCE LUNKLEY FUND

PROVIDES FUNDING FOR THE NATS ARTIST AWARDS

Dr. Edward Baird was the 20<sup>th</sup> President of NATS, serving from 1985 to 1987 and was President of the NATS Foundation from 1998 until his passing in August of 2000. He was an Intern Program Master Teacher in 1993.

Dr. Baird was born in Missouri in 1933. He was the Missouri State high hurdles champion in high school and was offered college scholarships in both basketball and music. Choosing music, he earned bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Missouri at Kansas City and was the first vocal recipient of the Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the University of Michigan in 1962.

Following graduation, he joined the faculty of the University of North Texas in Denton where he served for 38 years as Professor of Voice and later Director of Graduate Studies. Three of his students — John Carpenter, Timothy Jenkins, and Mark McCrory — were winners of the New York Metropolitan Opera National Auditions.

Baird served as a NATS volunteer leader for 33 years, 23 of those at the national level. He was recognized as an imaginative and decisive leader. As Director of Workshops, he elevated the workshop format to a level of professionalism not achieved before. Imagination, creativity, and innovation were the hallmarks of his seven years in that post. A mainstay of many workshops and later the Intern Program were the vocal reading sessions conducted by Baird and Louise Lerch.

Baird's term as President of NATS was marked by a substantial growth in membership and an expanding influence of NATS both here and abroad. During his presidency, the first ICVT was held in 1987 in Strasbourg, France. After his presidency he held the post of National Convention Site Coordinator for seven years. Following the Toronto convention in 1998, he succeeded a long-time colleague and close friend Bruce Lunkley as President of the NATS Foundation.

Highly regarded as both a performer and teacher, Baird sang in 43 Fort Worth Opera productions and as a soloist with the Dallas Symphony seven times. Baird has performed with such high-profile artists as Placido Domingo and Beverly Sills. He had more than 60 opera roles to his credit, and he had appeared with more than a dozen opera companies, as well as performing as a soloist with major orchestras.

In addition to opera, Baird performed in American musicals. Performing the role of Jud Fry in "Oklahoma!" while cast alongside Betty Lynn Buckley, Leonard Drum and Robert Windsor in 1971, he was named best supporting actor at Fort Worth's Casa Mañana Summer Musicals that season. He performed several of his favorite operetta roles in productions with the Dallas-based Texas Gilbert and Sullivan Company.

As the North Texas director of graduate studies, he implemented a new artist certificate program and re-structured its doctor of musical arts degree. He received the President's Council University Service award for contributions to the graduate program in 1990, and he was named "Top Prof" at UNT in 1993.

## **GIVING to NATS**

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