

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION *of* TEACHERS *of* SINGING

Robert E. Grooters

THE ROBERT AND RUTH GROOTERS FUND

PROVIDES FUNDING FOR THE NATS ARTIST AWARDS

"He was one of those people who, by coming into a room, illuminate it. He was a beloved personality and had a tremendous impact on our school." - Jeffrey Cornelius, dean of the Esther Boyer College of Music at Temple University.

Robert E. Grooters was a singer, choir director and much-loved professor at Temple University. Mr. Grooters' effect on students could be profound, and not only because of an extraordinary ability to help singers develop their voices and correct mistakes. One of his most successful Temple pupils, Hugh Panaro, who sang the romantic lead of Marius in a national company's production of *Les Miserables*, once said that Mr. Grooters was "the greatest guy," as good for the soul as for the vocal cords.

"He was a very encouraging teacher," recounts one of his former students. "He knew precisely what was needed to get the desired effect. He knew how to evoke from singers the qualities that made the voice sound as it should."

Mr. Grooters, a tall, slender Bing Crosby look-alike when younger, was a dedicated and successful teacher. He joined the staff at Temple in 1951, teaching voice and, in particular, diction. He always insisted that singers pronounce words clearly enough to be understood in whatever language they were singing. Forced to retire in 1981 at age 67, he immediately rejoined the staff on a part-time basis and continued to teach there until the 1994 spring semester.

"And they would have had him longer if I hadn't insisted it was time to retire at age 80," said his wife, Ruth Boylan Grooters.

Mr. Grooters grew up around Vincent, Iowa, where he was born, and arrived in Philadelphia in 1937 with a scholarship to the Curtis Institute of Music. A bass-baritone, he studied voice and graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1941. For many years, he was a choir member and soloist at First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, a prominent musical church whose choir performed an oratorio 32 Sundays a year. Between 1970 and 1980, he conducted the choir at

Second Baptist Church in Wilmington, where Ruth was the organist. He also served as music director and choir conductor at Swarthmore Presbyterian Church.

On his 80th birthday, when more than 100 friends and family members gathered at his home for a party, he led them all in an impromptu concert that featured some of his favorite music: "He Watching Over Israel" from Mendelssohn's Elijah and "How Lovely Is Thy Dwelling Place" from Brahms' Requiem.

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