Long-time member of the New York Chapter’s Board of Directors, “Shirlee Emmons was an American classical soprano, voice teacher, and author on vocal pedagogy. She began her career in the early 1940s as a concert soprano, eventually becoming one of the original singers in the Robert Shaw Chorale in 1948. She branched out into opera in the 1950s, performing mainly with regional companies in the United States. She achieved several honors as a performer, including winning the Marian Anderson Award in 1953 and an Obie Award in 1956.

In 1964 Emmons abandoned her career as a singer to begin a second career as a voice teacher which lasted until her death 46 years later. She taught on the faculties of several universities, including Boston University and Princeton University, and gave masterclasses and guest lectures at schools like the University of California and Westminster Choir College. Several of her students have had successful singing careers, including Metropolitan Opera stars Harolyn Blackwell and Hei-Kyung Hong. She co-authored 4 books on the art of singing, penned a biography on tenor Lauritz Melchior, and contributed articles to numerous music publications.” - From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Emmons earned her Bachelor of Music, Lawrence University, 1947 and Doctor of Fine Arts, Lawrence University, 2000. She wrote a regular column in the Journal of Singing called “Voices from the Past,” was one of the first judges for the Art Song Composition Award, and served twice as a Master Teacher for the NATS Intern Program. Following her death, her estate established the Shirlee Emmons Endowment at NATS.

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