



## Charles H. Webb

February 14, 1933 - April 13, 2026

Charles Webb, former Dean of the Jacobs School of Music from 1973 to 1997, died peacefully at his home in Bloomington, Indiana, on Monday, April 13, 2026, surrounded by family. He was 93 years old. During his deanship, Webb bolstered the school's reputation from nationally respected to internationally revered.

As a pianist, Webb appeared as soloist on several occasions with the Dallas and Indianapolis symphony orchestras and formed a duo act with pianist Wallace Hornibrook, a faculty member at Jacobs, with whom he performed recitals and concerts with major orchestras all over the world. As an organist, Webb accompanied the choir at the First United Methodist Church in Bloomington for 62 years, as well as serving as a consultant for numerous organ installation and renovations.

He made recordings on the IU Faculty Series and Coronet labels. In print music, he is particularly known for his free harmonizations and descants to well-known hymns.

Charles Webb was born in Dallas, Texas, on Valentine's Day, 1933, to Charles Haizlip Webb, Sr., a banker, and Marion (Gilker) Webb, a homemaker. Adept at learning music by ear, he obtained his first paying job at the age of five, playing the organ at the Hillcrest Cemetery mausoleum. Initially encouraged by his parents and grandparents, he was later discouraged from studying music in college until the legendary chorus master Fred Waring intervened on his behalf with his parents, who relented after he agreed to also study English

in preparation for a potential career in banking or law.

Enrolled at Southern Methodist University (SMU), he was a member of the Texas Delta chapter of Phi Delta Theta. After graduating from SMU with undergraduate and master's degrees in 1955, Webb served for two years in the Air Force. Stationed in Big Spring, Texas, he was introduced to Kenda McGibbon while playing a duet with her at the local Methodist Church. They married in 1958 and moved to Bloomington, Indiana, immediately after for Charles to attend graduate school. He joined the Indiana University faculty in 1960. He was appointed assistant dean in 1964 and associate dean in 1969, before being named dean in of the IU Jacobs School of Music in 1973. Kenda and Charles were indefatigable entertainers, once estimated to have served over 30,000 meals to guests in their home over the years, advancing the interests of the school and their church as well as charities.

He was chairman of the board of advisors of International Music Festivals Inc. and was appointed in 1976 by Governor Bowen to the Indiana Arts Commission. A member of the board of trustees of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, he also served on the recommendation board for the Avery Fisher Prize and was a director of the Busoni Foundation, a member of the advisory board of the Van Cliburn Piano Competition, and a member of the national advisory board of the American Guild of Organists. He received the Distinguished Alumni Award from SMU in 1980.

In 1983, Webb was named a member of the prestigious Indiana Academy. He also served as a judge for international music competitions on several continents, including the Liszt-Bartok Competition in Hungary, Busoni Competition in Italy, Munich Competition, Hamamatsu International Piano Competition in Japan, Chopin Competition in Warsaw, Marguerite Long-Jacques Thibaud Competition in Paris, and Carl Flesch Competition in London.

Webb received the Thomas Hart Benton Medal from IU in 1987 and the President's Medal in 2000. He also received three Sagamore of the Wabash awards, Indiana's highest award for meritorious service, from governors

Bowen, Orr, and O'Bannon.

From 1985 to 1989, Webb served as an appointed representative on the Hymnal Revision Committee of the United Methodist Church. He published over 100 descants, free harmonizations, and hymn arrangements for Abingdon Press. In 1989, he received the Governor's Award for the Arts from Indiana governor Evan Bayh. In 1989, he also received the Distinguished Alumni Award from Highland Park High School, Dallas, Texas. In 1997, he was named an honorary member of the Alliance of Distinguished Professors of Indiana University. He also received the Rocking Chair Award for meritorious service from the Society of Professional Journalists and was honored by resolutions of the Indiana General Assembly and the U.S. Senate. The Rotary Foundation of Rotary International named him a Paul Harris Fellow.

In 2004, he was named a "Living Legend" of the State of Indiana by the Indiana Historical Society and was appointed to a congressional committee by Colin Powell, "Committee to Advise the Secretary of State on Cultural Diplomacy." In 2005, Webb was elected to the board of directors of the American Symphony Orchestra League and received the Distinguished Alumni Service Award from Indiana University, Bloomington.

In 2009, he chaired an international panel at IU on "USA, Politics, and Culture;" he also received the Elmer Stefen Award from the Indianapolis Symphonic Choir for extraordinary service to music and the choir he conducted for 13 years.

His autobiography, "The Emergence of a Musical Life: A Retrospective on Charles H. Webb," was published in 2021.

Survivors include four sons: Mark (Lee Ann Smith), Kent (Danielle), Malcolm, and Charles III (Lisa) as well as 10 grandchildren. He enjoyed gardening, walking, crossword puzzles, travel, and caring for his classic cars. He often walked the mile between home and work, which helped him stay fit—despite his love of sweets, especially chocolate and ice cream.

A memorial service will be held on May 16, 2026, at 10:30 a.m. at the First United Methodist Church. A reception with family will follow in the Great Hall of the church. In memory of Charles, donations may be made to the Charles H. Webb Music Scholarship (P370006018), care of the Indiana University Foundation, P.O. Box 6460, Indianapolis, IN 46206-6460, or to the First United Methodist Church, 219 E. 4th St., Bloomington IN 47408 (Charles H. Webb Music Endowment).

Allen Funeral Home and Crematory 4155 South Old State Road 37 has been entrusted with the arrangements and online condolences, photos and memories may be shared with family and friends at [www.allencares.com](http://www.allencares.com)

The services will be live streamed through the FUMC YouTube channel at the following link:

<https://youtube.com/live/UzDwalyHQBE?feature=share>

# Upcoming Events

## Memorial Service

MAY **16**. 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM (ET)

First United Methodist Church  
219 E 4th St  
Bloomington, IN 47408-3503  
(812) 332-6396

# Tribute Wall



“ *Gracious Lavender Basket was purchased for the family of Charles H. Webb.*



---

Yesterday at 03:37 PM



“ *My condolences to the family. Dean Webb led an extraordinary life. He will be missed.*

---

**Linda Scott** - April 29 at 09:54 AM

FM

“ I was a student at the IU Music School in the late 70's, for one of them as president of the Student Representative Committee. I will always look on Dean Webb as one of the stellar people I have known. He was one of those people who always kept in mind the needs of the institution — not always an easy task with the egos and personalities of the many high-powered people at the school. I deeply regret never telling him how much I admired his selflessness. Some of my most beautiful memories of him: he would regularly attend SRC meeting where the students would air our many often picayune gripes. After one meeting I realized I had lost my sweater! He drilled me about where I might have been and actually went around the building with me searching for it! Another memory: even though he wasn't supportive of a benefit concert that a bunch of us students organized, he drove me to his rehearsal at his church in Indianapolis so that I could ask his chorus members to volunteer to sing in it — — incredibly big of him as he really was not supportive of the project which had political overtones. There are many other events that always make me smile, where he represented the school but with humanity, humor and joy. Even though he was a wonderful musician in his own right, he always spent more energy working on other people's spotlights. While we all look up to those who never compromise and stand up for 100% the right thing, I actually have come to treasure more those who roll up their sleeves and work within the confines of real world situations, but continually push the needle toward the good. That was Dean Webb.

---

**Fred Moyer** - April 27 at 05:05 PM

KP

“ Please accept my condolences on the passing of Dean Webb. I remember him first as a child while studying piano with Kenda. Then as a music student at the IU school of Music in the later 70's. Whenever he was encountered, he was a friendly congenial person, no matter the circumstance. He was a master musician, and I'm sure he will be missed by family and friends.  
Sincerely,  
Kent Pellerite

---

**Kent Pellerite** - April 19 at 03:50 PM

EM

“ So many memories, from my wedding to Sunday church to Dad's funeral and beyond. Quietly making every special moment count. I've always missed being at First UMC and watching him play. He and your mom were an integral part of my life. Knowing there's a great reunion going on i heaven. All my love and prayers. Elyce Marris Meador

---

**Elyce Marris Meador** - April 19 at 03:31 AM