

Robert E. Stoll

December 22, 1929 - January 26, 2020

Robert E. Stoll died peacefully on January 26, 2020, at the age of 90. He was Professor Emeritus at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music.

Born in Rochester, NY on December 22, 1929, to Herman Stoll and Dora Eiffert Stoll, he was preceded in death by his parents, his sister Elizabeth Terry, and his brother Herman Stoll, Jr. He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Christel Johnson Stoll; by daughter Laurie Stoll and her sons William and Ian Grimshaw; and by daughter Lindie Stoll Nall, her husband Alan Nall, and their children Benjamin, Mia, and Luke.

Mr. Stoll grew up in a home filled with music. His father was a cellist with the Rochester Symphony Orchestra, his aunt was a concert pianist, and the family hosted weekly Abendmusik concerts in their home for the area's German immigrant community. He studied at the Eastman School of Music while in high school, then received his Bachelor of Music degree from the State University of New York at Fredonia in 1952. While there, he was Assistant Director of the Gentlemen Songsters, a chorus that performed a weekly radio show in Rochester. He served in the US Army for two years during the Korean War as an entertainment director for Special Services, then completed a Master of Music degree at Syracuse University. He was a high school teacher, an administrator for professional summer stock, and a director in community theater before moving to Bloomington to pursue doctoral studies

at the IU School of Music in 1960.

He joined the faculty of the IU School of Music as Assistant Professor in 1963 and retired as Professor of Music in 1995. He was renowned among his students for his meticulous insistence on vocal excellence, on musical integrity across all styles and genres of music, and on the importance of ensemble and professionalism. He believed deeply in the importance of his role as faculty advisor. He encouraged his students to take initiative and to develop leadership skills, and was immensely proud of their ongoing successes as professional musicians and educators, and in many other endeavors. He had appointments in the departments of Choral Conducting, Music Education, and Opera Production; and for all 32 years, he was Director of the Singing Hoosiers.

Under Mr. Stoll's leadership, the Singing Hoosiers became known as one of the premier collegiate concert show choirs in the country. They toured extensively throughout Indiana, and in 26 other states and internationally, including five tours for the USO to Europe, Asia, Greenland and the North Atlantic, and the Caribbean. They appeared with preeminent performers including Duke Ellington, Hoagy Carmichael, Bob Hope, and Pete Fountain; with several professional symphonies; and at the prestigious national conventions of the American Choral Directors Association and Music Educators National Conference. He also prepared the group to serve as the chorus in School of Music productions including Carmen, Parsifal, Faust, and Mahler's Symphony No. 2.

Mr. Stoll and the Singing Hoosiers had a rich collaborative partnership with Maestro Erich Kunzel and the Cincinnati Pops, including concerts, four recordings on the Telarc International label, two Grammy nominations, and, in 1995, a concert at Carnegie Hall commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Cincinnati Pops.

During his tenure, Mr. Stoll served as music director for over thirty musical theater productions for the IU School of Music including Brigadoon, Carousel, Candide, and A Little Night Music. For 24 years, he was the music director for the adult choirs at the First Christian Church in Bloomington. And for many years following his retirement, he worked with the Bloomington Pops Orchestra as music director, conductor, and board member in presenting the traditional Christmas with the Pops and 4th of July Picnic with the Pops concerts, and others.

Among his honors, he was elected to Pi Kappa Lambda, Phi Delta Kappa, and Phi Mu Alpha, and received two Leather Medal Awards and the IU Alumni Association President's Award. He was designated State of Indiana Distinguished Hoosier, and was appointed Sagamore of the Wabash, the highest award for service to the State of Indiana.

And now the purple dust of twilight time
steals across the meadows of my heart...

— Hoagy Carmichael and Mitchell Parrish, "Stardust"

The family would like to thank the staff of the Meadowood Skilled Nursing Facility for their exemplary care and kindness. Arrangements are by the Allen Funeral Home at www.allencares.com. A memorial service will be planned for a future date.

Tribute Wall

CB

“ Catherine Booker lit a candle in memory of Robert E. Stoll



Catherine Booker - November 21, 2020 at 09:13 PM

RL

“ Bob, will always be in my heart both as a musician and a mentor. I mourn his loss and his contributions to music, education, and teaching. God Bless the family and his closest friends.

Randy Leazenby, class of '82

Randy L. Leazenby - March 08, 2020 at 08:33 PM

RW

“ Dear Mrs. Stoll, I am so sad to hear of Mr. Stoll's passing and I wanted you to know that I am praying for you and your family! Mr. Stoll was such an amazing teacher, director, mentor and encourager for me all through college and afterwards! I applied all he taught me with my choirs And I can't tell you how grateful I am for his life and investment not only into me but all of his students! I have such amazing beautiful memories of singing hoosiers and all of our trips and performances and conducting classes and I could go on and on. We all loved Mr. Stoll and we love you too and we love how he loved you! What a beautiful example to all of us of a beautiful marriage! Thank you for all that you've done for me as well. Much love and my deepest sympathy! He will be dearly missed!
Ramona Robards Wilson

Ramona Wilson - February 12, 2020 at 11:58 PM

KG

“ I was secretary in the Music Education Dept. for some 8-9 years and loved Bob dearly for late afternoon conversations with me and students in my office. He was a joy!

Karen Gast - February 08, 2020 at 05:21 PM

RU

“ I am so Sorry for your loss. Bob Stoll was an inspiration to us all to pursue our dreams where ever they lead us. As I sang with the Singing Hoosiers starting in 1975, one of my most beloved memories of Bob was actually at my Audition with him privately. I was of course nervous. After singing what he asked me to sing and doing in my mind, a good job, he asked me to sing it again with more passion. I did and saw his eyes change as he put his fingers to his lips. I knew at that moment he had accepted me into the Hoosiers. To say I loved him through the time I spent in the Hoosiers is an understatement. He was definitely my inspiration at I.U. and I will miss him. Regards, Russ Uhls

Russell Uhls - February 06, 2020 at 09:41 PM

GC

“ I spent all four years of undergrad with Dr. Stoll's Hoosiers. It was such a great experience, the highlight of each day, that it inspired me to establish a scholarship for a young Singing Hoosier. I still remember his "tricks" for pronunciation and reading music. It was a major thrill of my college education. I thank the Stoll family for sharing him with all of us. He truly affected so many lives for the good. He always told us we would never sing among such great voices for the rest of our lives. This turns out to be so true, and it was surely his "draw" as a skilled mentor and director that attracted such talent

Ginny Fisher Cole AB69, MS73

(He always called me "Finny Gisher")

Ginny Fisher Cole - February 06, 2020 at 07:00 PM

MC

“ I am so saddened to hear of Robert Stoll's death.

My interaction with him was brief, but it made a profound impact on me. He led the "Patriot Choir" at a Fourth of July celebration, and taught a group of literally scores of amateur musicians the choral parts to that concert and pulled everything together in THREE REHEARSALS.

*I was visiting from Texas, was invited to join the choir, and I had never seen anything like it. Very few musicians I've known could pull something like that off. I was *profoundly* impressed with his direction and skill — and perhaps most of all, his humility.*

Indiana University, Bloomington and the musical world at large have lost a real treasure with the passing of Bob Stoll.

Mark Carpenter - February 05, 2020 at 07:59 PM

“ Robert E. Stoll has been a part of my life longer than my memory goes back. I attended my first Chimes of Christmas when I was two. And I fell in love. My parents brought me every year, and I watched those girls on stage and I wanted to BE them!!

As I watched girls who were babysitters and older school friends make it on that stage, I became laser focused. School? Yeah. Sure. Singing Hoosiers? YES!!!

I've never been so nervous as I was when I sang On My Own from Les Miz for the man I'd watched for 16 years on the IU Auditorium stage, but when I finished, he smiled. And the twinkle in his eye told me I'd done well.

I have an endless stream of wonderful Singing Hoosier stories... the moment I put on that coveted white chiffon dress; The people who became friends, now family; The beautiful music, especially the song my grandparents eloped to... Stardust... But one memory stands out...

That first Chimes of Christmas, when I was on stage, was surreal. My mother had given me the little dress I had worn to my first Chimes, in 1972. And I'd put it on a teddy bear. I asked Mr. Stoll if I could surprise my mom and place it on stage, under one of the trees. He loved the story and readily agreed. I was secretly pleased with myself for the surprise for my parents. But the surprise was on me! Mr. Stoll told the story to the audience, and had me grab the bear and stand at the front of that stage. It was an overwhelming moment. Nostalgia, mixed with Townie pride, mixed with nerves. I will never forget it.

Singing Hoosiers was full of wonderful moments and memories. I'm so glad I was able to see Mr. Stoll at the 65th reunion. I'm so glad I was able to hug him and tell him how special he was to me.

I know I'm not alone today, in both mourning the loss of our leader

and mentor, and rejoicing that I was one of the lucky ones. I loved every minute of it. And it was made ever more special because of the man on the podium.

Tell Hoagy and Cole hello! We will celebrate you in song!

Kristin Ingersoll - February 05, 2020 at 05:31 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album

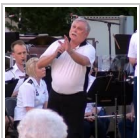


Robert Hildreth - February 05, 2020 at 05:15 PM

AH

*My 4 years with Singin' Hoosiers were the BEST time at IU!!!
Thank you Mr. Stoll. I will always cherish my years with Singin' Hoosiers.
May God bless you and your family.*

Alan Hartman - February 06, 2020 at 07:29 AM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Robert Hildreth - February 05, 2020 at 05:11 PM

EB

“ I was a Music Education/Trumpet major who had been encouraged to audition into the Singing Hoosiers during my final undergraduate year at IU Bloomington.

Bob Stoll's Music Education class prepared IU Bloomington majors for student teaching, and he had made the class an absolute breath of fresh air while reassuring many of us in our decisions to teach.

The ease with which Mr. Stoll insisted on musical excellence while having fun made Singing Hoosiers rehearsals and performances a real joy during the Fall. The following Spring semester he enabled me to sing as a Knight of the Holy Grail in the IU Opera Theater production of Parsifal—the first opportunity for this trumpet player to sing in a major opera. Mr. Stoll is an important blessing in so many of our lives.

—Earl Bruning, BME, 1966

Earl Bruning - February 05, 2020 at 04:12 PM

BH

“*Mr. Stoll inspired and motivated us to excellence throughout my four years as a member of the Singing Hoosiers in the mid to late 70's. No matter what was going on each day we always knew that we could find refuge in RM404 as we practiced and perfected for the next performance or tour. I truly felt that the best singers in the world were in that room led by the best conductor. He taught us much more than just musical expression and perfection. He taught us to really listen to each other and work as a united team. His example and expectations demanded professionalism at every level. When that hour was up we knew that we were better prepared to face whatever challenges we faced in the days or years ahead. My memories of Mr. Stoll both then and throughout the years at our reunions and spring concerts will last the rest of my life. We will always love and miss you, Mr. Stoll, our mentor and teacher. Your legacy and legend survive beyond the grave. So many of us will carry your torch in whatever we do that creates art, creativity and beauty in this world. For me your spirit will always linger in the first delicate notes of Stardust and in the last triumphant notes of The Battle Hymn - "His truth is marching on, Amen, Amen."*

Bernie Hirsch - February 05, 2020 at 04:02 PM

CC

“ There are just no words to express adequately the love and admiration I have had for Bob and Christel for most of my life. Bob was my mentor, encourager, cheerleader, teacher, comrade, as well as unsung hero to me for his practical approach to rehearsing, I learned so much from him in my choral conducting classes. He brought me the solution when I was trying to balance my hours working full-time at IU while taking graduate classes and trying to resolve how to fit in the ensemble requirement. He brought me continued wisdom which has continued through my adult life. I learned from him as a board member for the Pops, from singing in the Pops chorus, and while wearing various other hats during my tenure with the Pops. What privileges. The same picture in this obit has hung on my office wall for decades, and has served as a reminder of what his life meant to me. And Chris, a word to you: You have been there right beside him all the way. The way he related his adoration for you over the years made such an impression. I can only say "thank you" to you both. I have lost a dear, dear friend. How I will miss him. How all of us will miss him. Danke, Herr Stoll.

Carole Canfield - February 05, 2020 at 03:26 PM

CM

“ This man was instrumental in my life. He was my musical mentor while at Indiana University. He believed in me and my voice before I believed in myself. He demanded perfection but always with kindness. He helped me many times with advice and encouragement. His twinkling eyes always encouraging me during a performance. He created a family with the Singing Hoosiers that are some of my best memories ever and I'll forever be grateful for his trust in me. This was truly a wonderful man.

carri anne (jakubowski) manning - February 05, 2020 at 02:33 PM

VM

“ *My Father Jerry Mitchell was a friend to Dr. Stoll my Father was a photographer At the IU News Bureau! And took many photos of him!*

Vicki McGlocklin - February 04, 2020 at 09:28 PM

MC

“ *Mr. Stoll was instrumental in building strength and courage in our lives through his friendship, leadership, personal skills, and attention to details as he directed the Singing Hoosiers. We are forever grateful to him. We wish the entire Stoll family comfort and peace. He will be missed. Mr. Stoll is now conducting the Heavenly Host singing praises to God.*

Mike and Marcia Conway

Michael Conway - February 04, 2020 at 10:56 AM

KM

“ *I was a legacy when I joined Singing Hoosiers in 1970, who was blessed with a sister who was 10 years older and had been a Singing Hoosier under George Krueger.*

Under Robert Stoll not only did we continue the national touring in cooperation with the IU Alumni Association that had made the Hoosies famous...but Bob took the Hoosiers to an entirely different level as the choruses of one IU Opera after another. And in the process cemented a legacy of excellence in all phases of choral music. Indeed the my Stardust memories will forever warm my heart



Kim Manlove - February 03, 2020 at 10:59 PM

KM

“ I was a legacy in 1970, who was blessed with a sister who was 10 years older and had been a Singing Hoosier under George Krueger. Under Robert Stoll not only did we continue the national touring in cooperation with the IU Alumni Association but he took Hoosiers to an entirely different level as the choruses of one IU Opera after another. And in the process cemented a legacy of excellence in all phases of chorus music. Indeed the Stardust memories will forever warm my heart💕💕

Kim Manlove - February 03, 2020 at 10:18 PM

LP

“ Mr. Stoll was my beloved and revered friend, mentor, teacher and parent who came to my rescue on more than one occasion. He replaced those in my life who could not nurture or understand the better parts of my life. He restored all that was within my human, spiritual and artistic self. He believed in everything that was creative and embraced the artist with compassion, joy and incredible energy. He was boundless. His knowledge of music and theater were above reproach. He was a magnet and one could not resist. Thanks, Bob. Please save me a place in the tenor section where you're conducting...

Lee Parker - February 03, 2020 at 09:22 PM

JD

“ So sorry to hear this. I didn't know Mr. Stoll but knew one of his "Singing Hoosiers", Jen Goins. I also talked with his wife while I worked at IU. Such a sweet lady. Judy Galloway Drescher.

Judy Drescher - February 03, 2020 at 09:18 PM

CD

“ I was 17, my name was on the wall. He asked for volunteers to do the first show of the semester, I raised my hand. He said, "Are you sure?" i survived. What he taught still lasts a lifetime. Thank you Mr. Stoll for so many lessons, a mentor for much more than music. You are now with the stars, our stardust melody, a memory of love's refrain.

Catherine Dupuis - February 03, 2020 at 08:30 PM

SL

“ Bob conducted my first big production. It was Carousel. I was a student and he gave me the courage to take on the piece and was an excellent collaborator. Rest in Peace my friend.

Steven LaCosse - February 03, 2020 at 06:19 PM

BR

“ Dr. Stoll taught us all so much about how to sing in America. English, and how to sing the American songbook. Have you ever heard someone singing in English and you can't understand them? They never studied with Dr. Stoll. He conducted my first South Pacific (I'm on my 9th), at Indiana University. He was a taskmaster, insistent on clear diction, and meaning what you're singing. But he knew how they all went, and how to make them so great! He was a master teacher. We were so fortunate. Thank you, Dr. Stoll.

Branch - February 03, 2020 at 06:17 PM

BO

“ It was in the Hoosiers with Mr. Stoll where I learned what it meant to be "on stage." He taught me some Pennsylvania German, too; „Die Kuh hat über die Fence gejumpf, und alle der Cabbage verdamaged.“

Bill Oberholtzer - February 03, 2020 at 06:05 PM

KR

“ Thank you for the wonderful memories and the education during my time spent with the Singing Hoosiers. Very few live with your level of passion and excellence. You changed the world for the better while you were here.

Kelly Rittenhouse - February 03, 2020 at 05:18 PM

KR

“ I considered it a great honor of my life to have sung under the baton of Robert Stoll. And an even greater honor to have worked with him through the Bloomington POPS. Thank you Bob for all that you taught me. I will never forget you.

Kathleen Romy - February 03, 2020 at 05:17 PM

RL

“ I made it into Singing Hoosiers without ever having legit voice lessons. However, I wanted to get into the school of music. When my voice teacher (a grad student), never showed up for lessons and I was facing an audition for the School of Music, I went to Mr Stoll. It was the day we were leaving for a tour. He listened to my worries, held his finger up, placed a call. The next thing I knew was that I headed to a music studio and got a one hour lesson (while the whole bus had to wait.) I then got free lessons for two weeks leading up to my audition. A few weeks later, in the middle of rehearsals, Mr Stoll cut off the choir in the middle of a measure. He glared at the altos and stomped up to me. I was mortified! He leaned over and whispered in my ear, “CongratulationS, you have been accepted to the IU School of Music. But DO NOT tell anyone till the invites go out! Or Else!” He then went back to the podium and resumed the rehearsal. Everyone thought I had REALLY screwed up!

Again, after my father died and I dropped out of school to help at home. I received a call from a band leader in Indianapolis, who was looking for a singer. He got my name from Mr. Stoll, who told him that I, “was the one.” So I went back to singing. Thanks to Mr. Stoll who never forgot me. And I will never forget him.

He was a very kind man. He expected a lot. But I know he lived many and deeply. My deepest sympathy to his family and for the music community - we lost a gem!

Robbin Thomas Lyons - February 03, 2020 at 05:11 PM

TR

“ I am so grateful to have worked with and for Robert Stoll and The Singing Hoosiers.

I spent many hours of my college career in rehearsals, performances and touring with The Hoosiers, my Major was actually "The Singing Hoosiers". I am particularly grateful that Mr. Stoll also hired me through work-study to assist him to help pay for school. He was a talented, funny, kind man that helped me so much to get my degree in music. I loved my time singing with him and learning from him. He could be tough when you were chewing your diphthongs, but you always knew how much he cared about being great. I will always remember him with admiration. I wish his family all the best.

Timothy Riches

Member Singing Hoosiers 1976-1981

Tim Riches - February 03, 2020 at 04:41 PM

DM

“ There are way too many memories to share, but it all started with an audition in 1967 followed by a trip to the Rose Bowl, 2 USO tours and more shows than I can even count... bus trip, plane trips and more fun and laughter than one should be gifted with in one lifetime. I learned so much from Mr. Stoll that permeates my life every day. I know that he will live on through the music that we shared. My condolences to his family.

Debbie Goodrich Mayes - February 03, 2020 at 04:26 PM



“ It seems Mr. Stoll has always been in my life. First as the director of the choir in the church I grew up in, then as my incredible mentor in Singing Hoosiers and as I grew older, lucky enough to follow him to the Bloomington Pops. His professionalism and the wonderful music that surrounded me as a lucky recipient and then student under Mr. Stoll will always be appreciated. He has helped shape the person that I have become. My heart to his wonderful family. Thank you for sharing him with us all those years.

Kathy Floyd - February 03, 2020 at 04:24 PM

SS

“ Mr. Stoll will always be remembered by me for his boundless energy, his consummate professionalism and the many lessons he taught about life as well as music that he passed on to all of us who were privileged to be in the IU Singing Hoosiers. I got a second chance to work with this wonderful man with the Bloomington POPS Orchestra and Chorus. Bob Stoll was one of a kind, will be greatly missed. My condolences to his delightful wife, Christel and his proud daughters. Love from Susan Sandberg.

Susan Sandberg - February 03, 2020 at 03:43 PM

BA

“ Mr. Stoll was my director in Singing Hoosiers from 1974 to 1978. But, he's always been sitting by my shoulder whenever I sang with a chorus. The lessons he taught will be with me for a lifetime. And that effect of awe never went away, not even 41 years later, when I was older than he'd been when I was in SH, and I said hello before last year's spring concert. He was smiling and gracious ... and I was as tongue-tied as I was the first day in room 404, when he asked me something at my audition. He was simply the most influential person in my life at IU. Rest in peace, Mr. Stoll ... there's a chorus of angels who have been waiting for you to lead them.

Bruce Andis - February 03, 2020 at 03:17 PM

&H

I owe all my choral skills to Mr. Stoll. He knew before I did that choral direction was what I should pursue. I have told my choirs so many stories of the good times and what he taught me. He may be gone, but he won't be forgotten.

"Lizbeth" Hines - February 03, 2020 at 11:01 PM

JD

Mr Stoll has mentored us - and those we have mentored on every level of excellence possible - I felt him all my career as a part of my teaching "ministry." A catholic school teacher o remember on tour with him and the Hoosiers he had all of us - our dressed best in our long tail tux's and the ladies in their beautiful dresses - in the basement of a senior home - not much of a place and very meager - a public facility. Before the concert he said to us "this is probably the MOST important concert on this tour - keep that in mind.. ". So moved and grateful the listeners I repeated this all my teaching career - and the payoff was (is) artist and not folks with a dangling arrogance of virtuosity. I have had conductors on Broadway, singers, leads, opera singers. Jazz singers.. and more . He taught us all - and yet Indiana never awarded him a Doctorate (?). A master of masters my heart aches tonight -he never forgot any of us !

james Deiotte - February 04, 2020 at 12:01 AM