



## Vernon Keith Brown

October 21, 1933 - May 9, 2018

V. Keith Brown passed away Wednesday May 9, 2018 with his loving wife, Margaret Brown, by his side.

Keith Brown was a Jacobs School of Music professor emeritus of music (trombone). As a member of the Jacobs faculty from 1971 to 1997, he helped establish numerous programs, which continue to flourish and contribute to the musical life of both the university and the community.

Keith was born in Colorado Springs, Colorado, on October 21, 1933, the son of Audrey and Kenneth Brown. In 1951, he went to Los Angeles to study music at the University of Southern California (USC). He was especially anxious to study trombone with legendary master teacher Robert Marsteller, principal trombonist of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. In 1953, Keith's studies at USC were interrupted by a call to military service in the U.S. Army. In 1956, he returned to USC, and, in August 1957, he graduated cum laude and received the USC School of Music Alumni Award.

After graduation, his music career developed impressively: Aspen Music Festival faculty (soloist and orchestra principal trombonist, 1957-69); New York Brass Quintet (1958-59); Symphony of the Air (principal trombonist, 1958-59); Casals Festival Orchestra, San Juan, Puerto Rico (principal trombonist, 1958-80); Philadelphia Orchestra (associate principal trombonist, 1959-62); Metropolitan Opera Orchestra (principal trombonist, 1962-65); Temple University (director of instrumental activities and professor of music, and conductor of the University Orchestra and Wind Ensemble, 1965-71).

Keith's career continued to flourish, with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center (solo trombonist, 1969-89); Marlboro Festival chamber music series (participant and soloist, 1970-73); New York Chamber Orchestra Mostly Mozart concerts (solo trombonist, 1970-74); Indiana University (orchestra conductor and professor of trombone, 1971-97); Bloomington Symphony Orchestra (artistic director and conductor, 1975-81); Music Academy of the West (conductor and chair of the brass department, 1978-82, 1985-87); and the Camerata Orchestra, Bloomington (artistic director and conductor, 1989-96).

His discography is also impressive. It includes all recordings made by the Philadelphia Orchestra during his tenure there (1959-62). Among the dozens of commercial recordings on Columbia, RCA, and other major labels, special mention must be made of several historic recordings: those with Casals and Stravinsky conducting their own works; The New York Brass Quintet in Concert; a solo recording in the Golden Crest Recital Series; three solo recordings in the Music Minus One Laureate Series; and Music for Organ, Brass, and Percussion with E. Power Biggs, among others.

In addition to his musical duties with the Philadelphia Orchestra, he co-organized (with concertmaster Anshel Brusilow) and pitched for the orchestra's softball team. This team of musical artists (and superb athletes, as it turned out) gained considerable fame by defeating college and university intramural teams when they toured the United States. His trombone students often affectionately referred to him as "Coach," and to enter his teaching studio at Indiana University one had to step across home plate.

During his three-year tenure with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra (1962-65), he also served on the faculty of the Manhattan School of Music, teaching trombone, conducting the orchestral repertoire class, and completing, in 1964, a Master of Music degree he had begun in 1958. He also organized and pitched for the Met softball team.

Keith served as adviser to several music organizations. His international commitments included assignments as guest conductor, coach, and adviser to

orchestras in Venezuela and Spain. In December 1982, he was invited by the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China to give master classes, lectures, and recitals at the country's two major conservatories: the Central Conservatory in Beijing and the Shanghai Conservatory. He was the first American (and Western) trombonist invited in this capacity and only the second foreigner. In 1990, he was a special guest conductor of the Sapporo Symphony Orchestra at the International Tuba-Euphonium Conference in Japan, and, in 1991, he conducted a series of concerts with the Orquesta del Principado de Asturias (Spain).

Keith's concern for the training of students in solo, chamber music, and orchestral repertoire prompted him to edit and publish with the International Music Company more than 80 editions of solo materials, works for brass ensemble, etudes, and study materials, including 10 volumes of orchestral studies for trombone and tuba.

Throughout his career, gifted young trombonists and other brass players sought him out for private lessons and career counseling. Among the legion of his devoted former students are winners of international solo competitions and holders of principal positions with leading professional orchestras throughout the world.

Keith is survived by his wife, Margaret Brown, his stepdaughters Susanne Kindred of Bloomington, & Lena Jones of Stone Mountain, GA; and step granddaughter Anna Kindred, of Bloomington. His children, Bob (Tammy) Brown of California, Lise Urbaczewski of Michigan, Kris (John) Piskulic of Missouri, His Grandchildren; Maria and Jacob Brown, Ian, Alyson and Alec Piskulic, Hannah and Colin Urbaczewski, one brother Don (Lynda) Brown of Santa Fe, NM.

He was preceded in death by his first wife, Leslee Brown, and his step-daughter Anita Shade.

A Celebration of Life Service will be held at a late date. Cremation Rites have been accorded.

The family requests that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to Indiana Jacobs School Of Music Trombone Artistic Activity Fund (TAAF) or to Parkinson's Research.

You are invited to share a memory or leave an online condolence to the family at [www.allencares.com](http://www.allencares.com).

# Tribute Wall

TH

“ I was a student of Keith Brown in the 1990's. He was funny, compassionate and a stickler for detail. How I miss those years! Rest well teacher, mentor, friend.

*Ted Hale*

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**Ted Hale** - June 18, 2018 at 03:59 PM

HA

“ I was a student of Keith Brown's at the Aspen Music Festival in the late 60s and then at Indiana U. in the early and mid 1970s. I was far from the best student he ever had, but he always made me feel like I was one of his very best. I will never forget that and I owe him so much. Very fond memories. In recent years, I had not kept in touch and am deeply saddened to hear of his passing. A great trombonist and a great person.

*Harry Arling*

*Savannah, Georgia*

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**Harry Arling** - May 31, 2018 at 02:05 PM

HB

“ I knew him as Keith, and knew him best through our memberships in the Bloomington Rotary Club and First United Methodist Church. An interesting laugh made each conversation a good experience. An excellent teacher and a genuine good man has moved to another realm, to make music there.

*Harmon Baldwin*  
*Richmond, VA.*

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**Harmon Baldwin** - May 14, 2018 at 09:38 AM

RG

“ I was a Percussion student at IU in the 70's and had many encounters with this fine man.

*He was a fine conductor and worked through pieces with the Orchestra in a very detailed and professional manner - every time I knew he was going to conduct, I was confident I could follow him easily and knew it would be good workmanship.*

*I believe he also conducted the Bloomington Symphony, and I played there too.*

*I remember he had a nice little convertible car and I would see him driving around town everywhere - so he always had a nice tan starting in the Spring!*

*I hope my positive thoughts help all in mourning.*

*Best to his family and friends,*

*Roy Graham*

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**Roy Graham** - May 13, 2018 at 10:08 AM

CD

“ Keith was a special friend both on and off the tennis court, and we spent a lot of time sharing musical memories. My wife and I send condolences to his immediate and large extended family, acquaintances, and other friends.

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**Charles Davis** - May 12, 2018 at 04:27 PM

GM

“ I came to know Keith when we were both working in the IU Student Advocates office. I loved his easy laugh and sense of humor and the way he really cared for students. He was one of the genuine "good guys" and will be missed.

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**Gerald Marker** - May 12, 2018 at 09:18 AM