

Roger O. Doyle (1939–2012)

By Susan Wladaver-Morgan

Roger O. Doyle contributed both to higher education and the musical culture of Oregon for nearly forty years. A member of the music faculty at the University of Portland, he was musical director of the Choral Arts Ensemble of Portland, conductor of the Multnomah Athletic Club's Balladeers, founder of Mock's Crest Productions, and president of the board of KBPS public radio station.

Doyle was born to Daniel and Minnie Doyle on Christmas Eve 1939 in Wichita, Kansas. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in music education at the University of Wichita, where he was known for his mellifluous baritone voice and prowess on the tuba. During those years, he also served in the Kansas Air National Guard. After earning a doctorate in choral music and conducting from the University of Colorado, he taught in the Kansas public schools and at St. Mary of the Plains College in Dodge City. He and his wife, Kay Reboul Doyle, moved to Portland in 1973 when Roger Doyle joined the faculty at the University of Portland.

He poured his life into Portland's musical scene. He taught music history and theory at the University of Portland and reveled in conducting the orchestra and the University Singers, a group he nurtured into an accomplished choir with an international reputation. He convinced composer Aaron Copland, who had received an honorary degree from UP in 1975, to donate a set of his complete scores to the university. In 1990, in collaboration with the theater department there, he founded Mocks Crest Productions, which performed light opera, especially Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, every June, until the program was disbanded in 2019. For Doyle, learning was a two-way street. For one of his most popular classes, *The Joy of Music*, he required students to compile a CD of music they thought he should know.

Doyle reached out for new ways and venues to share music. He began conducting the Multnomah Athletic Club's all-male Balladeers in 1975 and served as the musical director and conductor for the Choral Arts Ensemble (formerly the Civic Choraliers). The CAE became a mainstay of Portland's choral scene, performing pop standards, Christmas concerts focused on specific countries, operas and operettas, and spirituals under the guest direction of Moses Hogan. The capstone of Doyle's conducting career came in 2008, when he merged the forces of the Choral Arts Ensemble and the University Singers in a performance of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*. As a board member of KBPS (now 89.9 All-Classical), he helped persuade the public classical music station to purchase its broadcast license from Portland Public Schools, allowing the station to become independent. He served on the board of the Metropolitan Youth Symphony, as president of the Oregon Choral Directors Association, and founder of the Best of the Northwest Choir Festival. He also lectured and conducted abroad and twice conducted the National Chamber Choir of Ireland.

While leading students on a tour of Eastern Europe in 2009, Doyle experienced the first symptoms of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease). He retired from both the University of Portland and CAE the next year. With his wife of forty-five years beside him, Roger Doyle died in Portland on April 30, 2012. All Classical Portland named one of its studios the Roger O. Doyle Performance Space in his honor.

Sources

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