

# Martha Cornelia Yarbrough, PhD



February 8, 1940 ~ April 5, 2022

Martha Cornelia Yarbrough, PhD, 82, of Baton Rouge, La, retired Professor Emerita of Music Education at LSU, died Tuesday, April 5, 2022 at The Pines Retirement Center, of complications from cancer.

Cornelia was born in Waycross, Ga. on February 8, 1940, to Jessie Sirmans Yarbrough and Henry Elliott Yarbrough. She went to Stetson University where she earned a BME, followed by eight years of public school music teaching at Ware County High School in Waycross, and at Glynn Academy in Brunswick, Ga. While teaching, she continued her education by earning an MME at Florida State University in 1968. She then pursued and earned a PhD in Music Education at Florida State University in 1973.

In 1973, Cornelia moved to New York state and joined the music faculty of Syracuse University, where she taught for 13 years. She was the founder and director of the Syracuse University Oratorio Society, which served as chorus-in-residence for the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra. During her tenure at Syracuse, she served as Director of the School of Music and as Assistant Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts. Also during this time, she became nationally known as an active researcher in music education. In 1986, Cornelia received Syracuse University's highest academic award, the Chancellor's Citation for Exceptional Academic Achievement.

Returning to the South in 1986, Cornelia accepted a full professorship in the Louisiana State University School of Music. She served as Division Chair of Music Education from 1986 to 2000. In 1995, she was awarded the Derryl and Helen Haymon Professorship in Music, a distinction she held until her retirement in 2009. Her passion in teaching at the university level was to mold sophomores into beginning music teachers, and to mentor and supervise graduate students seeking masters and doctorate degrees. In 1995, she received the Alumni

Association Graduate Teaching Award from LSU, and in 1996, the Music Educators National Conference bestowed upon her the prestigious Senior Researcher Award. In 2004, Cornelia was granted the LSU Distinguished Research Master of the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences Award. She remained at LSU for 23 years.

Five years after her retirement, Cornelia was awarded the Faculty Citation for Graduate Alumni for Distinguished Achievement in Music Education and Scholarly Research in Music by the Florida State University College of Music. Cornelia co-wrote Competency-Based Music Education with Clifford K. Madsen in 1980. She wrote and published An Introduction to Musical Scholarship in

2008, which was re-published as a college textbook in 2022. She authored numerous book chapters, articles in refereed journals and presentation papers. She was a guest lecturer at both the University of Alabama (1990) and the University of Arizona (1997). Nationally, she was involved in the Journal of Research in Music Education, first on the editorial committee in 1980 and as editor from 2000 to 2006. She was a member of the executive committee for the Society for Research in Music Education from 1988 to 1994. She was widely published in both the Journal of Research in Music Education and the Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education, among others.

Cornelia is survived by her life partner of 48 years, Jeana Womble of Baton Rouge; siblings Rita Aldrich (Bill) of Valdosta, Ga, H.E. "Sonny" Yarbrough, Jr. and Daniel Yarbrough (Carolyn) of Waycross, Ga; eight nieces and nephews; and fur baby, Jonah. She was predeceased by her parents, her sister Jane Grizzle, and two nephews.

A memorial service to celebrate Cornelia's life will be held on Saturday, May 14, 2022, at 10:00 a.m., at Webb Memorial Golf Course community room. Memorial contributions may be made to the charity of your choice.