

Fond Memories of the 75th Anniversary

Richard Webb, past Dean

Dear Friends,

My terms as Sub-Dean and Dean encompassed the planning and celebration of the 75th anniversary of the San Francisco Chapter and I feel especially blessed to be participating in its centennial. Ironically, my first excursion on the Bay was not in someone's sailboat, but on an evening dinner cruise sponsored by the Chapter. While I regret not being able to be with you on this celebratory cruise, I look forward to seeing you at the Region IX Convention, an event that will culminate a century of accomplishment and point to a future of possibilities as yet unknown.

As I am sure is the case for all of you, so many fond thoughts from our collective past flood my memory at this time that it is challenging to select only a few. Naming names is another issue, because the many kindnesses, both professional and personal, shown me by fellow Chapter members far exceeded anything I ever could repay in kind. When I became Chair of the Music Department at San Francisco State University in 1991, through my dear friend Alex Post I discovered that even a Chapter as large as this one had its own informal "welcome wagon" equivalent with persons calling, stopping by, offering practice time at their churches and inviting me to meetings and programs. That welcoming made the transition from East Tennessee to what always had been my mythical "dream city" of San Francisco unexpectedly easier. When I eventually became Sub-Dean, then Dean, I remembered that experience as we promoted smaller area "neighborhood" meetings in between major Chapter events and made "field trips" of board meetings by holding them in different parts of the Bay Area.

The San Francisco Chapter has distinguished itself in myriad ways and on multiple levels, but in my view one of its singular accomplishments always has been managing in creative ways to do the daunting and seemingly impossible task of having something for everyone. Professionally, the Chapter afforded me and others exciting opportunities to perform and instruct: the 1984 National Convention, the E. Power Biggs Memorial Concerts, the group dedicatory recital for the Ruffatti organ at Davies Symphony Hall, members' recitals and workshops in a variety of venues. My career-long interest in the music of Sigfrid Karg-Elert was intensified when I was invited to give my first all-Karg-Elert recital in the Bay Area. However, I personally treasure even more the lasting friendships made in the small group meetings, programs, brainstorming sessions and "coffee kibitzes" where the real energy behind the public persona of the Chapter is generated.

For all of us who have been privileged to serve this Chapter as Dean, it is humbling indeed to see our names in the company of our accomplished predecessors and successors, yet we know it is not we who have made this Chapter successful, but those hundreds of members who have been willing to work with us toward aspirations for the common good of our profession and the standards of the American Guild of Organists to which we subscribe. We can be confident that the spirits of the "great company of witnesses" from a century of service will guide the San Francisco Chapter into an ever-promising future. Soli Deo Gloria!

Fond regards,

Richard Webb

Dean, 1986–1988