

Mary Fuller

11/10/1937 - 06/03/2020

Age: 82



MARY FULLER'S LIFE AS A VIOLIST

Studied with Rosemarie Krovoza, 10 years

Oakland Community Orchestra (OCO)

- Mary played with the OCO at least from 2013 - as far back as our records go.
- Advisory Board member.
- Mary enjoyed signaling the end of rehearsal breaks by ringing a loud bell.

Rossmoor String Ensemble, 2 years

Albany Chamber Orchestra (ACO), 2011-2013

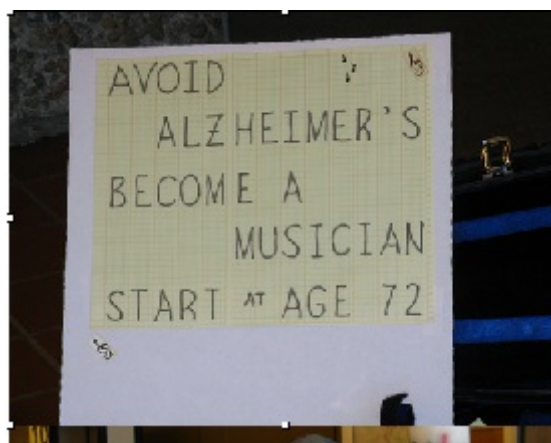
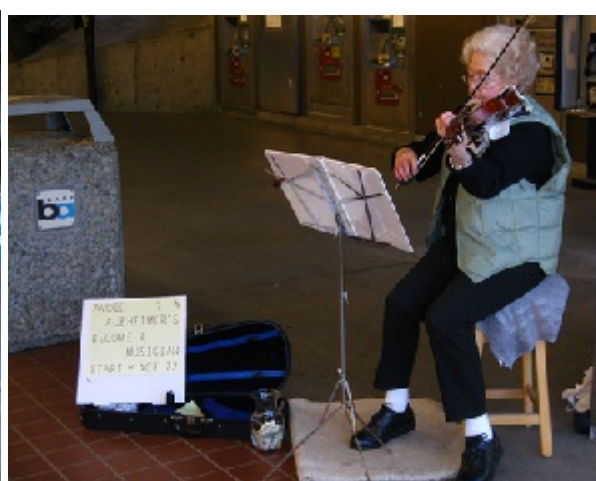
- Mary played with ACO from 2011-2013. I remember her as cheerful, funny, friendly, and always musically prepared. She enjoyed playing and interacting with the rest of the orchestra. She tried to attend as many of our "open events" as possible, especially the Beethoven celebrations. During her time with us she was playing her viola in the BART stations to entertain patrons and getting quite a following! (Teresa Colyer)
- The emails Mary wrote about her playing were always so delightful to read. So many amazing coincidences. (Elizabeth Lamson)
- Here she's seen with the ACO viola section - all wearing Stop the Violins T-Shirts (photo courtesy of Elizabeth Lamson top right)



Solo violist as background on numerous occasions, e.g., outdoor luncheon for **Franciscan Brothers at Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, 2019.**

Brother Luke said that Mary was their bookkeeper for about 10 years while they still lived in Berkeley. I know she visited them regularly when they moved to San Francisco and played viola for some events. She also told me that if she arrived early, she just practiced viola in their chapel. The day I went over for Mary's burial we went back to their house, and they had a lovely picture of Mary and a beautiful bouquet where she used to sit in the chapel. That made me happy. (Rosemarie Krovoza)

Mary shared her love of music at the Lafayette **BART Station. She** would arrive at the station early on a Friday morning and the newsstand attendant would set out a chair for her. Mary would sit and play for the morning commuters. Near her case on the floor was a sign that summed up the way she felt about music. The sign simply read "Music keeps you young". Another sign is pictured below. After busking at the BART station, Mary would pack up her viola, head over to Leona Lodge for OCO rehearsal and spread her unique brand of Joy with all of us. (Sue Crum) (Photos courtesy of Elizabeth Lamson)



OBITUARY FOR MARY FULLER BY HER NIECE, DEBRA BROCKWAY

Mary Elizabeth Fuller was born to Alfred E. Fuller and Elizabeth D. Babcock Fuller on November 10, 1937 in San Francisco, California. Mary had one sister, Patricia (Pat), and would become an aunt to Debra (1956) and Michael Gentis (1957). Mary and Pat were very close until Pat's death in 1979. When Mike and Debbie were 8 and 9 years old, the four of them took up skiing as a weekend hobby. Once or twice each month during the ski season, Mary would join Pat and her children about 4 a.m. and drive to one of the Sierra Nevada ski resorts. Then they would ski all day and drive back home, usually returning late in the evening. This activity went on for years.

Mary grew up in the Lake Merced area of San Francisco and attended public schools there. In junior high school she met her life-long friend, Betty Bowden, and the two of them developed a passion for playing the viola, which they pursued through high school. After high school, the lust for playing the viola would wane and be put on the back burner for a while, but it would reemerge later in life. And while she maintained continual contact with Betty, their lives would each follow a different path for many years. Mary attended San Francisco City College for a brief period of time before venturing into the work force fulltime. She became a pioneer in the sense that she was one of very few women who entered the computer programming field in her day. She lived in Sunnyvale for a few years before buying her first home in San Mateo, California.

During the recession of 1972, as companies began laying off employees, Mary took the bold step of starting her own business as a computer programming contractor. As such she provided computer programming services to the Palo Alto Unified School District for more than a decade. She also provided programming services to various other businesses on a short-term basis. During this time in her life, she developed an interest in Great Pyrenees dogs and traveled to the eastern United States to purchase Troy, her first Great Pyrenees from a breeder. As she learned more about the dog breed, she became interested in pursuing the breeding business. She obtained Erin (and also took in a rescue Pyrenees, Pelee), and successfully bred Troy and Erin. The outcome was Tristan, but she soon realized that dog breeding was not a suitable business for her. After selling Tristan, Mary was notified that the dog had escaped from his yard and the owner refused to do anything to try and find him. Upon learning of this, Mary posted signs on every street corner in the area and went to extreme efforts to find Tristan. She was, fortunately, reunited with Tristan, at which point she refused to give him back to the purchaser. This heartbreaking experience left her unwilling to take that chance with another dog.

Mary married her husband, Richard, in 1975. Shortly thereafter, she sold her home in San Mateo, and the two of them purchased a home on a ½ acre lot in Alamo, California. After marrying Richard and moving to Alamo (with all four dogs), Mary became interested in gardening and spent most of her time planting fruit trees, vegetables, and berries on her new property. She grew most of her own fruits and vegetables during her time in Alamo. This became her new passion for many years to come.

As Richard approached retirement in the mid 1980's, they decided that the Alamo home was a bit too much work to maintain, so they sold their home and bought a smaller tract home in a newly developed neighborhood in Benicia, California. As a newly developed tract, the yards were nothing but dirt, so Mary developed and then implemented her own landscaping design for the lot. This effort spawned a new passion, that of starting her own landscaping business. She initially sent out flyers offering her services to the neighborhood, but soon expanded her reach to areas beyond the neighborhood. She did this for a number of years. She designed my landscape when my husband and I built a home on a 1-acre lot. I received many compliments on the yard in the years following the implementation of her design.

In the early 1990's Mary's interest took a swing toward the stock trading business. The rapid growth of the economy, and hence, the stock market, during that decade fueled her appetite for active participation in the stock market. She maintained detailed spreadsheets of the day-to-day, as well as historical, performance for numerous stocks. She joined a stock trader's group and met with them regularly in San Francisco over several years. This remained a strong passion of hers throughout the rest of her life.

As the late 1990's approached, Mary and Richard decided to sell their home in Benicia and rent a two-bedroom fourplex in Moraga. They lived a quiet life there until February 2006 when Richard passed away. Following his death, Mary became a very active member of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Her interest in playing the viola was also reignited and she began reintroducing herself to the viola by taking lessons from Rosemarie Krovoza. I believe it was through Rosemarie that her expansion into the orchestra arena evolved. Mary also became involved with the Benedictine Order of monks who were located in San Francisco, and subsequently, the Franciscan Friars who assumed the residence after the Benedictines relocated to Santa Barbara.

Mary would make one final move to Oakland in 2014, where she was beloved by the residents in the apartment complex. They told me that she had provided wonderful viola performances for the complex community when requested. Throughout the remaining years of her life, Mary's interest in the stock market and her passion for her faith and her music would continue to play a crucial role in her life.

7/8/2020