



Margaret D. Armstrong

January 1, 1916 - July 19, 2016

Margaret DeMan Armstrong was born in Baltimore on January 30, 1916. She and her younger sister, Frances, were born to the late Claudia Thomas DeMan and Henry Oliver DeMan. In her early years, Margaret attended St. Peter Claver and St. Edward's Catholic Churches. She remained a devout Catholic throughout her life as a parishioner of the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen. She was a graduate of Douglass High School and received her college education from Coppin Normal School. She later received her Master's Degree in History and Philosophy of Education from Loyola College. She began studying piano at an early age and demonstrated a unique talent, a love for playing and an overall love for music—a gift and love she passed on to her children, grandchildren, great-grandchild and all of the children of Baltimore.

She began her career as a teacher of music education in Baltimore City schools and was promoted to the position of Administrative Specialist for the Music Division for the Baltimore City Department of Education. As Administrative Specialist, she drafted a performing arts curriculum proposal that was implemented in four Model Cities public schools. Following the success of this curriculum, she was able to become a program consultant with the Federal Housing and Urban Development agency, creating a cultural arts workshop proposal that was implemented in six Model Cities districts. Her career with the Department of Education culminated with her position of

Coordinator of Cultural Enrichment. Her previous work as a consultant with the Federal government served her well when federal legislation was passed known as the Elementary-Secondary Education Act. By using federal funding and utilizing other funding sources, she created a cultural enrichment program, which grew from 33 performances the first year to an average of 750 to 800 performances during a 13-year period. The creatively designed program combined the arts and humanities through a series of experiences performed by professional musicians, actors, artists and dancers. It was a particularly successful program because Margaret was able to form collaborative relationships between private and public arts agencies, school personnel, parents, nonprofit agencies and the community.

Under the auspices of Baltimore's Sister Cities program, she created the first International Exchange Program between educators in the Baltimore City Public Schools and educators in Gbarnga, Liberia. She organized an artistic display depicting the life of an elementary school student, other aspects of the Baltimore community and Baltimore City government. This was sent to Gbarnga as the first step in the cultural exchange. In return, she received ethnic artifacts from Gbarnga, which were displayed in the Dunbar Community High School for public school students and the community.

Her love of the arts and her continued determination to encourage and support artistic talent in Baltimore City's youth, resulted in her bringing together a group of business leaders, leaders in the arts, and education representatives, which enabled her to draft the fundamental proposal for her bold idea that was dearest to her heart, which founded the Baltimore School for the Arts. It opened in 1979 and has graduated many students who are now nationally known for their talents in music, art, dance and other artistic venues. The annual "Armstrong Honors Recital" highlights her contributions to the school. The "Margaret DeMan Armstrong Prize for Excellence," established in 2001, provides an award to honor a deserving graduate who

demonstrates a commitment to community service and love of the arts.

While Margaret was the creative leader for bringing arts to Baltimore City's Public School children, she also worked as a volunteer with many boards and committees. By using her influence and expertise, she advocated for cultural institutions to be responsive to the needs of African-American children and families who would not be able to afford to attend many of the premiere cultural events in the city.

One of these achievements was brought to fruition during her early tenure on the Board of Directors for the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. As Chair of the Community Development Committee of the Board, she advocated for creating an artistic symphonic experience for Baltimore's African-American community. Bringing together members of the clergy and community, she was able to get the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra to begin the first Martin Luther King, Jr. program, a free performance open to the public that commemorated this renowned civil rights leader. Initially held at the Lyric for two years, state funding allowed it to be moved to the Meyerhof Symphony Hall, where it became one of the more popular performances of the BSO, and became a model for participation by other Symphony orchestras in the United States.

In 1992, Margaret was a member of a feasibility study undertaken to determine the possibility of creating a middle school for Baltimore City youths. In 1993, the St. Ignatius Loyola Academy opened as a tuition-free, private Jesuit school for middle school boys from low-income families.

Some of the many educational and cultural boards Margaret served on are the following: Member Emeritus, Center Stage; co-host of the television Archdiocesan program, "Real to Reel"; Trustee and Advisory Member of the Peabody Advisory Council of the Johns Hopkins University; Chair, Western

Police District Community Relations Council; Member, Baltimore City Art Commission; Member, Advisory Committee for the Preservation of Frederick Douglass High School Auditorium; and Member, Alvin Ailey Dance Theater Foundation of Maryland.

Margaret is survived by her sister, Frances Ashby (daughter Cleo), her son, Roderick (wife Gloria), Barbara Blount Armstrong (daughter-in-law), grandsons, Mario (wife Nicole) and Sean, and a cherished great-grandson, Christopher. She is predeceased by her oldest son, William Oscar and her youngest son, Carroll Robbins. Margaret is also survived by cousins Ruth and Kim McCalla, as well as other relatives and friends.

Margaret often mentioned her goal of reaching 100 years; and on January 30, 2016, she was blessed to be able to celebrate that goal with family and friends at her residence at Brookdale Assisted Living in Towson. Margaret transitioned, peacefully, with her beloved sister, Frances, at her bedside, at 2:05 on Tuesday morning, July 19, 2016.

Cemetery Details

Arbutus Memorial Park Cemetery

1101 Sulphur Spring Road
Baltimore, MD 21227

Previous Events

Public Viewing

JUL 28. 10:00 AM - 7:00 PM (ET)

March Life Tribute Center, P.A. - Randallstown
5616 Old Court Road
Windsor Mill, MD 21244
(410) 655-0110
<https://www.marchlifetributecenter.com>

Wake

JUL 29. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Cathedral Of Mary Our Queen
5200 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21210

Service

JUL 29. 11:00 AM (ET)

Cathedral Of Mary Our Queen
5200 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21210

Tribute Wall



“ *Margaret D. Armstrong*

October 13, 2022 at 08:33 AM



“ *Mrs. Armstrong was my first music teacher at school #139..I adored her..spent a lot of time away from my classroom because I was always in the music room.
She was so special to me..needless to say if my memory serves me correctly Mrs Armstrong had 2 or 3 boys I would play with in the music room.
I'll never forget the time we had a little concert and of course I was picked to be the conductor...that was the hi-lite of my life..Mrs. Armstrong was loved by all.
May her soul rest in peace'*

Barbara - July 29, 2016 at 06:32 PM



“ *We the March Family and Staff wish to extend our deepest and heartfelt sympathy in the passing of your loved one. Our prayers go out to you and your family in your time of loss. We know and understand that you have received many expressions of love and we will continue to lift you up in prayer. May the memories you cherish of brighter and happier days help to ease your sorrow and comfort you always.*

March Funeral Homes - July 20, 2016 at 03:30 PM