



Deborah Reeder

January 19, 1940 - January 6, 2024

Deborah Reeder, a Philadelphia area native and long-time Eagles Mere summer resident, and an accomplished musician, passed away peacefully at her home in Narberth PA, on January 6, 2024. She was 83 years old.

Debby was born in Bryn Mawr and raised in Swarthmore. She attended Philadelphia Musical Academy (now University of the Arts) majoring in cello performance, attaining bachelor's and master's degrees. She undertook further study at Tanglewood and at the Kneisel Hall Music Festival in Maine. Early on, she pursued a keen interest in chamber music, and was a founding member of the Amado String Quartet. She also engaged in freelance orchestral work in various groups including the Philadelphia Concerto Soloists and the Society of Ancient Instruments. She was invited to join the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy and continued this membership for 6 years. She became the principal cellist of Opera Company of Philadelphia and a member of the Philadelphia Ballet Company Orchestra. But chamber music was always her real passion, and accordingly she founded the Philadelphia Trio in 1971 with fellow musicians Barbara Sonies and Elizabeth Keller. The Trio evolved into a major performing group of international renown. They gave regular concert series in the Philadelphia area as well as performances in dozens of U.S. and European cities, and made several recordings on the Centaur label, garnering enthusiastic reviews. The Trio had residencies and regular concerts at Rosemont College, Yellow

Springs Institute, Mount Gretna PA, and Eagles Mere PA, to name just a few. Debby helped found the Eagles Mere Friends of the Arts in 1975. In 1976, along with Barbara Sonies, she established Music in the Mountains at Eagles Mere, an annual summer music camp which flourished for many years. Concurrently, Debby was actively engaged in music education as an adjunct faculty member at the University of the Arts, Temple University, and the Wilmington Music School, as well as through her private studio in Narberth PA. In recent years, Debby extended her artistic practice to the visual arts. She had made charming pen-and-ink sketches of fellow musicians in the orchestra pit, and later worked in pastels, one of which received a juried prize at the Wayne Arts Center this past fall. She also won prizes for her excellent photography.

Debby was beloved as a loyal friend, admired for her wide-ranging enthusiasms and deeply generous nature. She is survived by her partner Barbara Sonies and various cousins.

A Celebration of Debby's Life will take place on May 4 at 11:00am at Main Line Unitarian Church at 816 S. Valley Forge Rd. in Devon, PA 19333 and will be followed by a reception.

Memorial contributions in her name should be directed to the Eagles Mere Friends of the Arts (<https://emfoa.org/donate/>).

Previous Events

Life Celebration

MAY 4. 11:00 AM (ET)

Main Line Unitarian Church
816 South Valley Forge Road
Devon, PA

Tribute Wall

WE

“ I was one of Deborah’s cello students right after my cello teacher Francis de Pasquale died. She was caring as I worked through my grief as a young person. I still play cello and perform even though I’m now 65 thanks to her!

wendy - April 09, 2024 at 10:26 AM

CM

“ I am sorry to learn of Debbie’s passing . She was, indeed , a fine person, excellent musician and a caring friend to Karin. Wishing Barbara loving memories always.

Claire Meyer

Claire Meyer - January 30, 2024 at 03:19 PM

WZ

“ I was fortunate enough to study cello with Debbie in the 1960s. She always remembered friends, and decades later she would greet my parents when her trio performed at their retirement community. What a legacy of accomplishments and relationships she leaves.

William W. Ziegler - January 26, 2024 at 10:27 PM

SB

“ Debbie was a force of nature: she cared deeply about justice and fairness; she was an accomplished musician and teacher; her wit and insight were remarkable; and her example will continue to inspire all for years to come. RIP



Shehra Boldt - January 19, 2024 at 10:53 AM

DH

“ My heart goes to Deborah and Barbara. Deborah lived a long good life and will be loved and remembered by many for decades. She made an impact not only in the music she made but through all the students she taught.

Dennis Hancock - January 19, 2024 at 10:17 AM

HC

“ I was very sorry to learn of Debbie's passing in today's Philadelphia Inquirer. Barbara, please accept my sincere condolences on her demise.

Kit Crissey

Harrington "Kit" Crissey - January 16, 2024 at 10:21 PM

GA

“ So sorry for the loss of Deborah. She was so kind and encouraging to me over the years. I have always enjoyed the concerts of the Philadelphia Trio and Deborah was so sweet to give me a call when she had heard I was going through a difficult time and I so appreciated and admired her. She will be so missed. Much sympathy to Barbara and other family members. Love, Gael Abbasi

Gael Abbasi - January 16, 2024 at 03:28 PM