



## Sidney Curtiss

March 23, 1931 - August 10, 2022

We are deeply saddened to share the news of the passing of Sidney Curtiss, our beloved Settlement faculty member of 40 years, legendary chamber music coach, and retired member of the Philadelphia Orchestra. He died Wednesday, August 10, at the age of 91. He was preceded in death by his cherished wife, Shirley, herself an esteemed and legendary chamber music coach.

For decades, Sid coached our Gabriel Braverman, Ann Newman, and Edward L. and Gail W. Snitzer Advanced Study String Quartets. Many of his former students participated in Fischoff National Chamber Music Competitions, have made wonderful careers in music, and can be found in orchestras around the country, including the Philadelphia Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the Houston Symphony, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.

Settlement violin faculty Kerri Ryan shared with us that she studied with Sid at Settlement in high school, and that he was a constant source of support and inspiration to her throughout her musical career. He was her predecessor in

the Philadelphia Orchestra as Assistant Principal Viola, and she says she smiles with gratitude every time she sees his handwriting on her music. In 2020, Kerri assumed Sid's coaching role for our Newman Quartet when he stepped down at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“When I was his student, he taught me to listen as much as possible while playing, as well as to know when to step into the spotlight, and when to musically support my colleagues. Those skills carry me every time I make music with other people,” Kerri shared with us on Wednesday night, after learning of his passing. “Now, when I teach, his example is an invaluable pedagogical education. I can still hear him pleading for me to vibrate every note, to listen to my colleagues, to prepare better, and to stop rushing. Mr. Curtiss had a contagious love for music and an incredible knowledge of the repertoire.”

Kerri added that some of her fondest memories of Sid are from the “outlandish” Halloween parties that he and Shirley held at their home throughout the years.

Sid was the recipient of our 2009 Sol Schoenbach Award for outstanding service to Settlement and a member of our Settlement 100, alongside Shirley.

Sid was an extraordinary pedagogue, colleague, and friend. He was

completely devoted to his students and their families during their time at Settlement, and those relationships lasted a lifetime. He and Shirley were part of the fabric of Settlement and were instrumental in shaping our community into who we are today. We are immensely grateful for the remarkable impact they had on our School and in our hearts.

Mark Huxsoll, Temple University Music Prep Director and former Branch Director of our Kardon-Northeast Branch, shared the following heartfelt words with us yesterday afternoon.

“Sid and Shirley were icons and had a love for both the music and the students they worked with. There are not many, or any, quite like Sid and Shirley.”

Sid studied violin and viola at New York’s High School of Music and Art before attending the Philadelphia Conservatory of Music, where he studied with Leonard Mogill. He was a member of the Philadelphia Orchestra for 42 years, including 13 years as Assistant Principal Viola. Sid was also a member of the New Orleans Symphony, the National Symphony Orchestra, the Philarte Quartet, and the New Philadelphia Quartet.

After Sid’s retirement from the Orchestra in 2002, he made Settlement

chamber music coaching his primary focus. He often spoke of the “amazing, demanding, and rewarding” nature of preparing his students for professional musical training and referred to many of their successes as the highlight of his musical career.

Sid’s musical impact will continue to echo throughout our recital halls and in our chamber music studios. His legacy will carry on in every chamber music rehearsal and concert.

We had the pleasure of connecting yesterday with Shirley’s cousin, Steve Bosan, who mentioned that knowing Sid and Shirley “lifted him up” and that while he does not know much about classical music, it was clear to him that Sid and Shirley were at the top of it. We could not agree more, and we are so grateful to have shared some of their exceptional journey with them.

Settlement will host a memorial concert for both Sid and Shirley, whose memorial concert was postponed at the beginning of the pandemic. The memorial service is not yet scheduled, but we will share details of the concert once they are finalized.

# Tribute Wall

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“ Oh Sid, I am so sad... The last days I had a feeling, but so far away. What could I do. Sid and Shirley were the most important friends in my life. I meet Sid in the lobby of a hotel in Leipzig / Germany in 2001, where I stood for a German TV Production. Only a few days I heard a concert of the POMs in Cologne. What a coincidence to meet them in Leipzig. The concierge organized for me, to visit the concert. Some hours later Sid in the hotel, Sid appears in the hotel and asked me, whether he may ask me something. He wants to know which of the 2 concerts I liked more. The one in Cologne or this in Leipzig. I don't know what to say. But Leipzig was wonderful. He invited me to have lunch with the orchestra. He never told me, where he saw me in Cologne, but it was the beginning of a wonderful friendship to Shirley and Sid. This evening he ask me to visit Philly and I said, if you will performe Beethoven 3d, I would come, if iit possible to visit the rehearsal. Some weeks later, I was in Vienna for working, I got a message from Sid, in June we will perform the 3d. Only 2 hours later I met Maestro Sawallisch in the Lobby of the Imperial-Hotel in Vienna. I knew him from working in the Munich State Opera. I told him from Sids message and the "meeting" in Leipzig. He laughed and so some weeks later I got a message from Mimi O'Malley. My entrance to visit the rehearsal. To meet Sid in my life saves my life. Without him and his help... I miss him so much and will end, like Sid ends every letter or mail.: Love Loretta

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**Loretta Wollenberg** - August 18, 2022 at 04:09 AM