

Friends of Flutes Foundation continues its mission with endowed gift to SMTD

The School of Music, Theatre & Dance has received a gift from the Friends of Flutes Foundation (FFF) of \$50,000 and four professional-quality instruments to benefit students in the School's flute studio. The gift will establish the Friends of Flutes Endowed Flute Fund, the next phase of FFF's mission to support aspiring musicians.

Founded in 2010 by U-M alumna Judith Reinhardt Thoyer, BA (LSA) '61, FFF has helped college students and post-graduates pursue flute performance by providing more than 400 grants to musicians at conservatories and universities across the country. Grants have supported various learning and professional development opportunities such as commissioning new works for flute, covering fees and travel expenses for festivals and competitions, taking care of instrument repairs, and more. The new endowed fund will carry on this tradition at U-M, providing annual support to SMTD flute students for similar educational and programmatic needs.

"FFF gave grants to students in 50 U.S. universities and conservatories during its 10 years of operation, but it was time to wind it up," said Thoyer. "How do we continue its mission and preserve its name? The School of Music, Theatre & Dance was the perfect place to do that. By creating the Friends of Flutes Endowed Flute Fund, our mission will continue for flute majors at University of Michigan."

Thoyer is an amateur flutist herself who plays C flute, alto, and bass flute in several ensembles. After retiring as a partner at the law firm Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison, LLP, Thoyer turned her passion for flute into FFF with the support of her husband, and fellow U-M alumnus, Michael E. Thoyer, BBA '60. The foundation, based in New York City, is also supported by a board of directors including law professionals, arts advocates, academics, and musicians.

After ten years of work, FFF felt it was time to find an educational partner to carry on its mission, and selected U-M because of the caliber of its students and the dedication of faculty members like Prof. Amy Porter who leads SMTD's flute studio and will allocate funds from the gift each year.

"It is my intent to keep the giving of this generous gift in the spirit of the Friends of Flutes Foundation," said Porter. "We will use these funds for the benefit of flute students seeking opportunities in flute performance and music education. It is our goal to provide a breath of fresh air to a student who has aspirations of a job in the music industry but lacks the financial momentum."

In the past, Porter has helped many of her flute students complete grant applications to FFF, and she saw firsthand how receiving these awards significantly impacted them. "We always knew they would come through for us as a foundation," Porter said. "FFF afforded my students experiences that shaped their lives, from assisting in international study, and paying registration fees, to affording that piccolo or flute purchase.."

Porter also shares an amazing connection with FFF board member Mary Barto, a former member of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. At the age of 14, Porter performed at the

Robinwood Flute Camp in Delaware. There Porter met Barto who heard her play and encouraged her to continue pursuing flute performance. “She was so friendly to me,” said Porter. “It’s amazing that Mary has come back into my life to help me perpetuate the New York flute playing love and legacy.”

More information

[Friends of Flutes Foundation](#)

[Department of Winds and Percussion](#)

[Amy Porter, Professor of Flute](#)