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1-24-2022

Dr. Robert William Molison



Dr. Robert William Molison, 86, passed away January 9, 2022, of natural causes at his home in Fort Collins, CO.

Robert "Bob" was born in Grinnell on July 27, 1935, the youngest child of Wilbur and Miriam Molison. He grew up on the family farm near Grinnell and enjoyed a wonderful childhood which included a love for music. After graduating Grinnell High School, he went to college at Oberlin College and Conservatory.

His first job in music was teaching at The Iolani School in Honolulu, Hawaii. While there, he also played clarinet in the Honolulu Symphony.

He received his Master of Music Degree in Performance from Yale University School of Music, then studied choral conducting in Philadelphia and was a conductor for Singing City. During his internship at Singing City in the summer of 1965, he visited his future wife's younger sister Gay in Cape Cod at the family home and met his wife Ann...and the rest is history.

He moved on to Brown University where he was the Director of Choral Activities, then completed his doctoral degree in Choral Music in 1970 at the University of Illinois, Urbana.

In 1974 he became Director of Choral Activities for Iowa State University. During that tenure, the Iowa State Singers gained national distinction for their participation with leading orchestras from around the world in performances at the Ames International Orchestra Festival.

In the 1980s, he was Director of Choral Activities at Colorado State University, before returning to Iowa State University where he retired in 2000.

In addition to his work in universities, he founded the Providence Singers, served as the Director of the Des Moines Choral Society and the Greeley Chorale, and was the Director of the Civic Chorus at the University of Wyoming in Laramie.

In retirement, he enjoyed nature photography, skiing, hiking around Colorado, and long walks in his neighborhood. He traveled extensively and was a voracious reader and life-long student. The Foothills Unitarian Church in Fort Collins was extremely important to him, and he directed and sang in the choir there.

Bob is survived by his wife of 55 years, Ann (Donham) Molison of Fort Collins, CO; his two children, Chris Molison (Lisa) of Thornton, CO, and Laura Olmedo (Jon) of Denver, CO; four grandchildren, Kayla Molison, Ally Molison, Alejandro Olmedo and Javier Olmedo. He also is survived by his sister Mary Newton (Don) of West Des Moines, and sister-in-law Carol Molison, nephew Bill Molison, niece Connie Molison, and grand-nephew Andy Molison, all of Grinnell. He was preceded in death by his parents, Wilbur and Miriam Molison and his brother, Wilbur McLain "Mac" Molison.

In lieu of flowers, the family has requested remembrances be made in the form of donations to: Robert Molison Scholarship in Music Fund #2703763 c/o Iowa State University Foundation Fund 2505 University Blvd Ames, IA 50010 <https://www.foundation.iastate.edu/s/1463/giving/start.aspx>.