



# LA PIPELINE

The monthly newsletter of the Los Angeles Chapter  
American Guild of Organists

June 2023

## FROM THE DEAN

### Remembering Richard Kirtland

June 30, 1934 - May 9, 2023

#### Loss and Living: Richard Kirtland's Past, Present, and Future Influence on the LA AGO

The June issue of the *LA Pipeline* is usually our farewell issue for the summer break, typically filled with information about upcoming conventions and reminders to ensure your ONCARD information is up to date as we prepare to edit our 2023-2024 Regional Directory. This year, however, we are extending our newsletter one more month into the summer so we can devote most of our June issue to a very dear friend to us all: the late Richard Kirtland.

Richard Kirtland was a long-time member and supporter of the LA AGO, and to many of us he was considered family. Richard was so dedicated to LA AGO our chapter bestowed upon him an Honorary Lifetime Membership. Richard served in most of the available leadership roles available in our chapter at some point during his tenure as a member. After deciding to relax and simply enjoy being an everyday chapter member, Richard consistently attended every chapter event and personally congratulated or complimented all our recitalists.

Richard Kirtland was a devout member of the Church of Christ, Scientist and played for many Christian Science congregations throughout the years. The proper placement of the comma in the name of the denomination was one of the many lessons I learned from Richard about Christian Science during our friendship. Richard provided me and many of us who were not familiar with Christian Science with a new perspective of the church which aided us in better understanding his church and its mission and developing a deeper appreciation and respect for this denomination.



Kevin Cartwright

In keeping with the tenets of his church, Richard led by example. Richard was a nurturer and loved us unconditionally. Without a sole unkind word, Richard was able to offer advice and suggest alternative plans of action in an encouraging and supportive way. Richard always approached us gently and lovingly. Richard's tall, warm countenance would gracefully move toward us and open a conversation with kind and welcoming words. His demeanor was one of a man who walked the way of Christ: loving, accepting, uplifting, inspirational, and nothing short of exemplary. Richard inspired within us a desire to be more like himself: more like a follower of Christ.

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What most of our chapter did not get to see was Richard's continued involvement with our chapter leadership even after he decided to term out of his leadership roles. We regularly received emails and telephone calls from Richard regarding our recent events and other initiatives. We always answered with a smile because we knew we were about to receive Richard's loving and mindful support regardless of the topic at hand. Keeping our chapter together and running our programs is a difficult and seemingly endless task, yet Richard was one of those few cherished members who knew exactly when to step in. He would deliver messages of encouragement and appreciation, give a compliment, or offer advice when he saw someone needed guidance. Richard had "been there and done that," and he was quick to notice when someone else needed support as they walked the path he once walked as a former chapter leader. Working in LA AGO chapter leadership is never going to be the same without the consistent and inspiring support of Richard Kirtland.

There are stories and remembrances of Richard in this issue of the *LA Pipeline*, many from LA AGO chapter members who were privileged to know Richard much longer than I. As you read these memories and anecdotes, I ask you to consider how Richard's presence and friendship has changed your life. Now that Richard is no longer with us in physical form, how are you and I going to continue Richard's work as a supporter of the LA AGO, the organ, and church music? How are you and I going to support one another as Richard supported all of us? What are we going to do together to fill Richard's large shoes?

I would like to invite each of you who knew Richard Kirtland to remember him right now by carrying out a simple mindfulness exercise: at the end of this paragraph, close your eyes for a few minutes (as you are able) and remember Richard as if he were with you now. Remember his warm, friendly smile, remember his voice, remember his hand firmly taking yours as he said "Hello." Remember Richard's calm, peaceful presence in your life. Stop here, close your eyes, and remember Richard Kirtland.

You can now see that even though Richard's physical vessel has passed away, Richard is still with us. Now that Richard is once again alive in your mind and your heart, I would like to challenge you to create a plan to help Richard's legacy live on through you. Set at least two tasks for yourself to carry out at the next LA AGO gathering which will help you quite literally take up Richard's work. Perhaps this could be gently approaching a visitor or new member, shaking their hand, and welcoming them to our event. You might take a moment to congratulate someone for something they have recently accomplished. Even better still, you can simply tell a familiar face in our chapter how much you appreciate them without any specific reason or cause for your compliment. Richard did each of these things at every meeting he attended, and it is now our responsibility to carry on Richard's regular tasks of kindness and encouragement.

The loss of Richard Kirtland is going to leave a large hole in all our hearts for quite some time. While we mourn Richard's passing, we should also rise to celebrate Richard and the influence he has had upon all of us. Every AGO chapter should be so privileged as to have a member like Richard Kirtland. We were generously blessed to have him among our ranks, and I hope you can find one or two ways to be like Richard Kirtland – starting right now.

In addition to any memorial arrangements to be announced, our chapter will plan an LA AGO event in memory of Richard Kirtland so we may come together to celebrate his life as an AGO family. We will take some time to consider the best format for the event and plan the best possible music in celebration of Richard. We are interested to know what Richard's favorite organ works were, which churches and organs he had close relationships with, and any other suggestions from close friends. If you would like to volunteer to help coordinate our event, perform for our event, or otherwise participate in the event in some way, please reach out to me. I may be reached directly at [kevin.r.cartwright@gmail.com](mailto:kevin.r.cartwright@gmail.com)

## ELECTION RESULTS

As announced at the May meeting, three new Members-at-Large have been elected to the Executive Board for a 3-year term. We welcome James Calhoun, Abraham Fabella, and Philip Hoch to their new positions. The Chapter also thanks outgoing Members-at-Large for their participation: James Hurd, Haesung Park, and John West.



James Calhoun



Abraham Fabella



Philip Hoch

# REMEMBERING RICHARD KIRTLAND

June 30, 1934 - May 9, 2023

The Los Angeles Chapter was saddened to hear of the passing of our long-time member and friend. Richard was an Honorary Life Member, past dean, member of the finance committee, generous supporter, and always in attendance at our events. He was also involved in work for the national AGO organization. He was a champion of organ restorations and enhancements at First Churches of Christ, Scientist in Pasadena and San Marino. Many friends have written in to share their memories, included below.

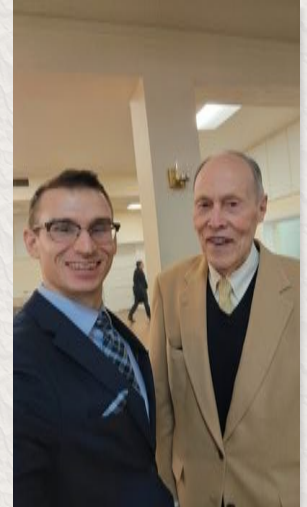


*Richard and I first met when I was 14 years old. (My mentor, Marcia Hannah Farmer, made sure that I became an LA-AGO member when I started high school.) As I began winning organ-playing competitions, Dick was always encouraging and followed my career with supportive words and actions. Over these 50 years of our friendship, he attended almost all my recitals in the Los Angeles area, and we cherished our conversations and camaraderie. A kind, intelligent, gentle man; I will miss him.*

James Walker

*I've known Richard since the early 80's - hadn't seen him in a while, and we just renewed our acquaintance last Monday at the dinner. Richard had encouraged my wife and me to be involved before our son was born. We chaired the Hospitality Committee for a few years.*

Roger Eshleman



*Richard and I were friends for over 50 years, ever since I met him in the early 70s when I was completing my MBA at UCLA in Arts Management. As an arts manager I lived in New York, San Francisco, and other cities but we always kept in touch, particularly as I was an organist in several Christian Science Churches as Richard continued to do at San Marino up to his passing. He was amazed that the church wanted him to continue even though he was 88. I spoke to him a few days before he passed, and he was his usual self – up at 5:00 AM every day to go to the gym and then to practice for two weekly services. He often said he had to practice since he wasn't as good as I was. Ha! A joke for sure. The photo is of Richard at the console of the Aeolian-Skinner organ at the Beverly Hills Christian Science Church where he played for many years. Queen Elizabeth wrote, "The sorrow we feel when we lose a loved one is the price we pay to have had them in our lives." I'm happy to have had Richard in my life. He'll be missed.*

Robert Walker



Continued next page...





*I am deeply saddened over the sudden passing of my dear friend, Dick Kirtland. We just shared a remarkable dinner, that he prepared, at his home a few weeks ago. Dick and I had known each other for over forty years, having met at and worked together with the Los Angeles Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. Dick was highly principled and very dignified, and you would always find him impeccably dressed at every AGO event. He served his church with a love and dedication that lasted until his last day. I will miss his positive attitude, his candor, and his unwavering support to our organization that he so cherished. I will miss our phone calls, Dick – may God bless your soul. Thank You for being a part of my life.*

Ron Sinanian

*Richard was a gentleman, and I'll always be grateful for his support and encouragement. Any time he heard me play he would make a point of coming up to me afterwards to say a kind word. On several occasions, he asked if I would fill in for him at the church where he played, First Church of Christ, Scientist, San Marino with its wonderful Aeolian-Skinner/Rosales organ. In December 2022, after I'd been asked to perform as organist for the annual Christmas Concert at First Church, Pasadena, I asked if I might be able to practice on the organ from time to time. Richard, a longtime member of that congregation, arranged for me to receive a key to access the church and its fine Murray Harris organ (with revisions) to practice whenever the church was available and I was able to get to Pasadena. For this, and the many contributions Richard made with his time and money to the LA AGO, he will be fondly remembered.*

Thompson Howell



*For as long as I can remember Richard Kirtland was an integral part of my LA AGO experience, a person I looked forward to greeting at all our dinners and concerts. A lovely man, Richard was kind, knowledgeable, and devoted to the organ. He always inquired about my USC work and our mutual acquaintances at USC Thornton, asked about the music program at Church of the Ascension, and what literature I was preparing or had recently presented. Then he informed me of the literature he was learning or had recently performed. He was always wonderfully cordial to Hughes, my late husband, which I deeply appreciated. We also compared his business dealings with those of my son, so we had that in common as well. Occasionally I traveled to AGO events with Mike Wilson and Patti Teele, Richard at the wheel of course. He was organized and tidy - oh so tidy! His beautiful home was immaculately maintained, and his yard was perfectly landscaped. He was a formal person - I don't ever recall seeing him without a coat and tie. Richard lived a long life, active until the end. I regret that a health issue prevented me from being with him at the last AGO event on May 8 which turned out to be his last night on earth. Rest in peace, dear Richard. I shall miss you.*

Debora Huffman



# MAY EVENTS REPORT

Ethan Haman presented an improvisation workshop and recital for the LA AGO on May 6 and 8 respectively. The Saturday interactive workshop focused on improvisation techniques, leveraging counterpoint and forms as structures for improvisation. About 20 people attended the event at Glendale First United Methodist Church with several trying out some of Ethan's exercises and techniques in a masterclass format. This was followed on Monday evening by an unusual fully improvised recital, also at Glendale First United Methodist Church. Ethan improvised complete works based on various historical styles, including a chorale prelude, a congregational hymn with introduction and interlude, a German prelude and fugue, a French Classical hymn suite, an English trumpet voluntary, a free improvisation on an ancient poem (recited by Dr. Ladd Thomas), and a symphony in five movements. Thematic material was presented to Ethan thirty minutes prior to the recital and included the Lutheran Chorale *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*, a Greek Orthodox chant, a ninth century poem by St. Kassiani (the first printed female composer), and three original themes by Los Angeles-based composer Celka Ojakangas. [Click here for the program.](#)

As a student of Cherry Rhodes at USC, Ethan earned a Bachelor of Music degree as a double major in organ performance and composition. He subsequently earned Master of Music and Master of Musical Arts degrees at Yale University, studying organ with Jon Laukvik, Craig Cramer, Martin Jean, and improvisation with Jeffrey Brillhart. He also studied improvisation in France with Sophie-Véronique Cauchefer Choplin and Frédéric Blanc. Previous organ studies were with Angela Kraft Cross. Ethan was awarded third place and audience prizes at the 2022 American Guild of Organists National Competition in Organ Improvisation.



Cherry Rhodes, Ethan Haman, and Ladd Thomas



Dan Parks,  
Kevin Cartwright,  
and Linda Brown



Ethan Haman and  
Kevin Cartwright



Kevin Cartwright,  
Ethan Haman, and  
Scott Anderson



Hymn sing



Nicholas Galinaitis,  
Linda Brown,  
and Kevin Cartwright



Russ Litchfield tries out an  
improvisation.



Thompson Howell braves  
the bench.



Composer Celka Ojakangas and Ethan Haman



### R.I.P. LAWRENCE ROBISON

Lawrence “Larry” Robison passed away peacefully on April 19, 2023, in his home surrounded by friends after a prolonged illness.

Larry was born on December 31, 1940, in Culver City. Though his parents had no musical background themselves, they noticed his interest in the piano. Soon thereafter, they provided lessons and at the age of 12 he began studying the organ. Within a few years he was playing for his church, St. Augustine in Culver City. Over the next few years while attending Loyola High School, he immersed himself in music theory and studied with Wilber Chenoweth and other respected organists and music theorists. It was during this time that he began his professional career playing for the Catholic Church. He became involved with Father Trame at Loyola and accompanied the Loyola Men's Choir for years to come. For the next 60 years Larry played at Good Shepherd, Blessed Sacrament, St. Timothy, St. Charles Borromeo and his last venue, St. Victor's Church in West Hollywood. Larry became involved with the Robert Mitchell Boy Choir in the mid 1950's and befriended Paul Salamunovich. They would become lifelong friends and collaborate until Paul's death in 2014. Larry was crucial in collaborating with his longtime friends Alan Van Zoeren and Anthony Newman in designing the completely new organ at St. Charles Borromeo Church in 1982. Over the years Larry accompanied Paul at St. Charles Borromeo Church for the Christmas Midnight Mass. In tribute to Paul's passing, Larry played the organ for Paul's memorial service at Blessed Sacrament Church.



Larry was also deeply involved with fostering young musicians throughout the city, many of whom are professional musicians today. Aside from his amazing talent as a musician, his daytime job was teaching science at Emerson Middle School for 37 years - in the same classroom!

Larry is survived by his brothers Tom and Don Robison and his longtime friend Scott Brandin. A [Facebook page](#) has been set up in his memory.

Larry collected over 1000 organ and piano music books, sheet music, and dozens of rare, out of print books on organs and organists. Scott Brandin is looking for a music school or church that would help him distribute these amazing books to a non-profit to preserve them and ensure their usefulness to organists.

Scott can be contacted through [Larry's Facebook page](#) or via email: [brandin.360@me.com](mailto:brandin.360@me.com).

### AGO WEST REGIONAL CONVENTION JULY 10 – 13, 2023

Mark your calendars for the AGO West Region Convention to be held July 10 – 13 in Portland. Registration is now open. Visit the convention website to explore the organs and events planned.

[www.agowest2023.com](http://www.agowest2023.com)



**Get More Out of Your Handbell Choir**  
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\$50 Registration  
[www.schandbell.org](http://www.schandbell.org) for more information  
 This event is endorsed by Handbell Musicians of America, Inc.

## HANDBELL DIRECTOR'S WORKSHOP Get More Out of Your Handbell Choir

If your church has been asking for your help with a handbell program or you have agreed to direct but have not directed handbell before (or even if you have), this hands-on workshop is for you. Barbara Walsh and Lynn Atkins are tops in their field and are willing to share their expertise. Registration and additional information can be found at:

<http://www.schandbell.org/workshop-july-29-2023.html>

## Organ Concert

Join multitalented performing artist Bruce Neswick for an organ concert featuring original improvisations and pieces from Schumann, Dupré, Texu Kim and more

**JUNE 11, 2023**  
 4:00PM

For more information & tickets (\$20),  
[www.ncpve.org/upcoming-events](http://www.ncpve.org/upcoming-events)

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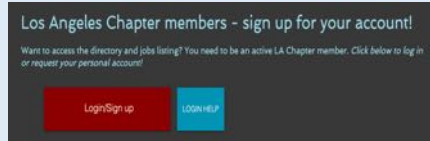
**Bruce Neswick**  
 Concert Organist



**Glatter-Götz/Rosales**  
 Pipe Organ

Los Angeles Chapter members - take advantage of your online account on our website, [www.laago.org](http://www.laago.org), to gain access to the jobs listings and online directory.

Latest jobs listing updated April 17.



## Join the AGO!

Not a member? We invite you to join the AGO with a Los Angeles Chapter affiliation to receive access to our online directory, jobs listing, a subscription to *The American Organist*, and much more. Membership in the American Guild of Organists is open to all - professional organists and choir directors, students, and organ enthusiasts alike - regardless of musical ability or denominational affiliation. See our website for more information.

<https://www.laago.org/membership>

Not ready for membership? You can join our non-member mailing list here:

<https://www.laago.org/non-member-mailing-list>



## CLASSIFIEDS

Classified ads may be included in our newsletter for a fee. Please contact the editor at [laago@laago.org](mailto:laago@laago.org) for information.

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## GET IN TOUCH

- Submit newsletter and calendar items using the online forms at <https://www.laago.org/newsletter>. The submission deadline is the 15th of each month.
- Contact the LA chapter at [laago@laago.org](mailto:laago@laago.org)
- For more information about upcoming events, who we are, photos, history, and other great resources, please visit our website at [laago.org](http://laago.org).

Peter Fennema, *LA Pipeline* Editor

## Visit our website!

[WWW.LAAGO.ORG](http://WWW.LAAGO.ORG)

- 🍷 Find a substitute...or get on the list.
- 🍷 Join the teachers list...or find a teacher
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- 🍷 Access the online calendar (always up to date!)
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- 🍷 Browse fascinating historical photos
- 🍷 ...and much more!



# CALENDAR

Calendar items may be submitted on the LA AGO website at <https://www.laago.org/calendar-submit>. Submission deadline to include in the newsletter is the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to the month of publication. Please visit the online calendar at <https://www.laago.org/calendar> for the most recent updates.

## SUN JUN 4, 2023

### 3pm - 5pm Christopher Houlihan, Organist

**Where:** Segerstrom Center for the Arts 600 Town Center Dr, Costa Mesa, CA 92626

**Description:** Pacific Symphony Orchestra is graciously offering OCAGO members a 20-30%

discount. 16 seats in Orchestra Terrace are reserved for OCAGO members and friends for the June 4th concert for Only \$30 each. Contact Susan Ruzbasan at PSO Group Sales at 714-876- 2391 to purchase your ticket with credit or debit card. Kindly let Jennifer Puhl know you will attend. Lunch before or dinner after will be an option. [puhls@aol.com](mailto:puhls@aol.com). Christopher's program - J. S. Bach: Prelude and Fugue in A minor, Florence B. Price: Air and Toccata, from Suite No. 1 for Organ, Charles-Marie Widor: Andante Sostenuto, from Symphonie Gothique, Op. 70 and Allegro, from Symphony No. 6, Op. 42, No. 2, Franz Liszt: Fantasy and Fugue on "Ad nos, ad salutarem undam"

## SUN JUN 11, 2023

### 4pm - 5pm Bruce Neswick, Organist

**Where:** The Neighborhood Church 415 Paseo del Mar, Palos Verdes Estates, CA 90274 **Description:** Ticket \$20 (Student \$10)

## FRI JUN 16, 2023

### 7pm - 9pm Eddie Zheng, Organist

**Where:** Geneva Presbyterian Church 24301 El Toro Rd, Laguna Woods, CA 92637

**Description:** Part of the Geneva Organ festival, Eddie Zheng is a MMus graduate of Julliard. Come and enjoy some outstanding playing at Geneva Presbyterian Church, Geneva Presbyterian Church, 24301 El Toro Road, Laguna Woods, CA 92637. More info at <https://www.genevap-res.org/organfestival>.

## TUE JUN 20, 2023

### 8pm - 10pm Pacific Symphony & Pacific Chorale in Concert with Paul Jacobs

**Where:** Christ Cathedral 13280 W Chapman Ave, Garden Grove, CA 92840

**Description:** As the Grand Finale to the 2022 – 2023 year of Hazel, Paul Jacobs joins the Pacific Symphony & Chorale on a special evening program including the world premiere of Sir James MacMillan's Fiat Lux

"Let There Be Light." Leading Scottish composer Sir James MacMillan has been hailed by The New York Times as "ceaselessly inventive, evocative and penetrating." This major commission, entitled Fiat Lux ("Let There Be Light"), utilizes a text by Dana Gioia, the internationally acclaimed poet, California poet laureate and former chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. Carl St. Clair directs the performance, which opens with thrilling works for organ and orchestra featuring soloist Paul Jacobs, the only Grammy award winning organist, playing the Hazel Wright Organ.

## FRI JUN 23, 2023

### 7pm - 9pm Bobby Nguyen, Organist

**Where:** Geneva Presbyterian Church 24301 El Toro Rd, Laguna Woods, CA 92637

**Description:** Part of the Geneva Organ festival, Bobby Nguyen is a MMus graduate of Julliard. Come and enjoy some outstanding playing at Geneva Presbyterian Church, Geneva Presbyterian Church, 24301 El Toro Road, Laguna Woods, CA 92637. More info at <https://www.genevap-res.org/organfestival>.

## SUN JUN 25, 2023

### 4pm - 5pm Brahms, A German Requiem

**Where:** St. Bede's Episcopal Church 3590 Grand View Blvd Los Angeles CA 90066

**Description:** The Laudamus Te Singers, St. Bede's Choir, Orchestra, soprano Mariana Ramirez, bass Chung Uk Lee; organist Frank Basile; conductor James Vail. Donation at the door.

## SUN JUL 2, 2023

### 4pm - 6pm Karissa Raebel and Charles Raasch, Organists

**Where:** St. John's Lutheran Church 154 S Shaffer St, Orange, CA 92866

**Description:** Recital featuring well known standards as well as pieces celebrating Independence Day with a variety of exciting musical guests. St. John's Lutheran Church, Orange. Details at <https://www.stjohnsorange.org/event/3466439-2023-07-02-organ-concert/>.

**SAT JUL 29, 2023**

**9am - 5pm Handbell Director's Workshop**

**Where:** Lutheran Church of the Cross 24231 El Toro Rd  
Laguna Woods CA 92637

**Description:** Get More Out of Your Handbell Choir. South County Community Handbell Choir, Barbara Walsh and Lynn Atkins invite you to a workshop specifically designed for you to get more out of your handbell choir. See [schandbell.org/workshop-july-29-2023](http://schandbell.org/workshop-july-29-2023) for more information and registration. This event is sponsored by the South County Community Handbell Choir and is endorsed by the Handbell Musicians of America, Inc.