

**Nunc Dimittis**

**David Arthur Sansome Gell**, 70 years old, died March 2, 2014, in Santa Barbara, California. Born in Alberta, Canada, his musical journey began at age 8 as a boy chorister in an Edmonton, Alberta, church. After immigrating to Alhambra, California, he began organ lessons at age 13.



David Gell

Gell attended California State University at Los Angeles, majoring in history and music; he graduated in 1966 from Azusa Pacific University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in music, studying organ and theory with Gerald Faber. He did graduate study at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, the University of Hawaii (Manoa), and with Emma Lou Diemer at the University of California at Santa Barbara. During the Viet Nam conflict, he served on board the USS Klondike, and as organist and assistant to the Pacific Fleet Chaplain in Pearl Harbor.

David Gell served as organist and choirmaster at churches in Monrovia, California, New Orleans, Louisiana, and Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, First Congregational Church, and Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Santa Barbara. His greatest distinction was as Minister of Music, Organist and Composer-in-Residence of Trinity Episcopal Church, Santa Barbara. During his 30-year tenure, he helped create several community concert series, including an Advent Series, Old Spanish Days Fiesta with La Música Antigua de España, Young Artists Concerts, and music and organ demonstrations to school children. He served as organist-in-residence at major cathedrals in Britain during five concert tours with the Santa Barbara Boys Choir.

Active in the American Guild of Organists, he had served as dean, sub-dean, and treasurer of chapters in Hawaii and Santa Barbara. He performed in Canada, Louisiana, Hawaii, and California, including at Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles and AGO regional conventions. He established the local chapter of the Choral Conductors Guild and served as founder, first conductor, and president of the board of the Santa Barbara Master Chorale.

David Gell composed works for orchestra, vocal solo, choral anthems and cantatas, concertos for instruments, fanfares, an organ sonata, string quartet, chorale preludes, and hymn introductions and intonations for the Episcopal Church's 1982 *Hymnal*. Gell generously shared his scores, interpretation ideas, and ingenious methods of registration and of

managing multiple pages of scores. His memorial service included music by his favorite composers—Buxtehude, Stanley, Handel, and Emma Lou Diemer. Two of his own organ compositions were included: "Meditation on PICARDY" and "Toccatina on 'Only begotten, Word of God.'" In honor of his service in the Navy, *Taps* was played.

David Arthur Sansome Gell is survived by his wife of 45 years, Carolyn Gell. Memorial contributions may be made to the Azusa Pacific University School of Music, Organ Scholarship Advancement, P.O. Box 7000, Azusa, CA 91702-7000.

—Charles Talmadge

**Perry G. Parrigin**, 88, passed away December 26, 2013, in Columbia, Missouri. Born in Paintsville, Kentucky, he received his bachelor's degree in music from the University of Kentucky in 1947 and his master's degree in organ from Indiana University in 1949.



Perry G. Parrigin

Following his military service at Fort Knox, Kentucky, as a chaplain's assistant, he studied under Robert Baker at Union Theological Seminary in New York, and at the University of Colorado. Parrigin moved to Columbia in 1953 to teach music theory and organ at the University of Missouri; he retired from the university in 1989 as Professor Emeritus, and became organist and choirmaster at the Missouri United Methodist Church, serving in that role from 1953–1963 and from 1980–1997 as organist. During his tenure he oversaw the renovation and expansion of the church's Skinner organ. He was named Organist Emeritus in 2000. Parrigin was a longtime member of the Kiwanis Club and the American Guild of Organists. Perry G. Parrigin was preceded in death by his wife of 32 years, Elizabeth, and is survived by several nieces and nephews.

**Robert L. Town**, professor of organ emeritus at Wichita State University, died on December 10, 2013. He was a master teacher, recitalist, and consultant during his long and productive career. (See Lorenz Maycher, "A Conversation with Robert Town," *THE DIAPASON*, May 2008.) Born October 31, 1937, in Waterman, Wisconsin, his interest in the pipe organ began at age three, when he attended church for the first time. At age 12, he headed a successful campaign to purchase a Hammond organ for his

church, and at 15, he was appointed organist at First Baptist Church in Weedsport, New York. Town received his Bachelor of Music degree in 1960 from the Eastman School of Music, studying with Catharine Crozier. He entered Syracuse University as a master's student of Arthur Poister,



Robert L. Town

graduating in 1962 and continuing his studies there while filling a one-year vacancy in the department. Later, he continued his doctoral work with Marilyn Mason at the University of Michigan. At age 25, Town won the Boston Symphony Orchestra's Young Artist Competition, over two finalists ten years his senior; this led to his national debut as a recitalist in a career playing in the United States, Canada, and Europe, including at the Kennedy Center, St. Thomas Church for the New York World's Fair, and Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris.

Town became chairman of the Wichita State University organ department in 1965 and taught until he retired in 2006. His students were successful in prestigious competitions over a 20-year period, including two winners at Fort Wayne in addition to nine finalists at the Ruth and Clarence Mader competition (Pasadena), the Gruenstein competition (Chicago), and the national undergraduate competition in Ottumwa (Iowa). Two students won international competitions and three were selected as Fulbright Scholars. Perhaps his greatest achievement was in securing the four-manual, 63-stop, 85-rank Marcussen tracker pipe organ at Wichita State University in 1987. Marcussen and Son had never produced an instrument in the United States but were persuaded when told that Wiedemann Recital Hall (named for the organ's benefactor, Gladys Wiedemann) would be erected specifically to house the organ. In 1994, the Rie Bloomfield Recital Series was endowed on the campus.

Professor Town's estate provided a bequest to establish the Robert L. Town Distinguished Professorship in organ, a position currently held by Professor Lynne Davis, and provided for the ongoing maintenance of the Marcussen. Ten years before his death, Town made an endowed gift to keep all of the practice organs on the campus well maintained. Memorials may be sent to Harry Hynes Memorial Hospice, 313 S. Market, Wichita, KS 67202 or the Marcussen Organ Maintenance Fund, c/o WSU Foundation, 1845 N. Fairmount, Wichita, KS 67260. ■

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