



South Carolina Music Teachers Association

SCMTA Teacher of the Year

The Teacher of the Year Award has been presented since 2015 to a member of SCMTA in recognition of sustained excellence and achievement in teaching, professional development, and service to colleagues and to the organization and profession.

The SCMTA Teacher of the Year biographies below have been compiled from SCMTA conference booklets.

2026 - Dan McCurry



Dan McCurry is a piano and music composition teacher based in Charleston, SC. He has a B.A. in Music from the College of Charleston (Class of 2008), where he studied composition under Dr. David Maves and Dr. Edward Hart and jazz piano under the late Tommy Gill.

He currently serves the South Carolina Music Teachers Association as the Creativity in Music Chair. In this role, he has helped the organization launch a statewide composition and songwriting competition and recital, as well as companion workshops featuring composers such as Wynn-Anne Rossi and Mike Springer and songwriter Michael Flynn (of Slow Runner). Additionally, he is the Immediate Past President of his local association, Charleston Music Teachers Association, and has also served in the role of Treasurer, Achievement Day Co-Chair, Scholarship Chair, and Yearbook Editor.

McCurry regularly presents on the topic of teaching music composition, with past presentations at state conferences for Texas MTA, Florida MTA, North Carolina MTA, and South Carolina MTA, as well as for numerous local organizations. He is scheduled to present at the MTNA

2027 National Conference in St. Louis, MO. He has also contributed articles to *Piano Magazine*, *Piano Inspires Kids*, *American Music Teacher* (AMT), *Piano Guild Notes*, and *NFMC's Music Clubs Magazine*.

His students have won local, statewide, regional, and national composition competitions sponsored by MTNA, NFMC, Piano Guild, *Piano Inspires Kids* magazine, *Piano Explorer* magazine, South Carolina MTA, and the Charleston Sonatina Festival. Additionally, they have been accepted into music composition summer programs such as Brevard, Interlochen, and UNCSCA, and music composition programs at Peabody Conservatory (Johns Hopkins), Howard University, Furman University, Winthrop University, the University of South Carolina, and the College of Charleston.

McCurry has been teaching for 20 years now. He is a Royal Conservatory of Music Certified Teacher and a music faculty member at the all-girls private school Ashley Hall, where he just launched a music composition seminar for pre-college students.

Beyond teaching and music making, he is a husband and father of 3 young children. His weekends are filled with pancakes, coffee, streaming movies (sometimes with popcorn), grilling, Grandmas, more coffee, and trips to Costco to buy items in bulk.

2025 - Marina Agrest



Marina Agrest started playing piano at the age of five in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg), Russia, and had her first public performance at age six. Music was an integral part of Mrs. Agrest's life and provided a refuge during the turbulence of the Soviet Era.

At the age of seven, Mrs. Agrest was accepted into the Preparatory Music School under the tutelage of Nina Alekseevna Dmitrieva, who guided Mrs. Agrest's formative years. It was from her that Mrs. Agrest learned what makes a dedicated teacher, a teacher who gives 100% of herself to her students, and becomes like a parent to a student, by giving birth to a new musician. Mrs. Agrest went on to

receive a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance from the Rimsky-Korsakov College of Music, and then the Master's degree in piano from the Rimsky-Korsakov State Conservatory. Upon graduation, she started her career teaching piano at the St. Petersburg School of the Arts, where she also accompanied singers, violinists, dancers and performed solo.

During more than sixty years in music education, Mrs. Agrest taught hundreds of students, and her enthusiasm continues to make a difference in their lives. Her children inherited her passion for music, and both are musicians. Since immigrating to the US and specifically Charleston, SC, in 1992, Mrs. Agrest has shared her international experience with the greater Charleston community,

teaching at Creative Spark, at her own studio, and through the activities of the Russian Studies Program of the College of Charleston.

Many students of Mrs. Agrest have won awards in local and state competitions and scholarship auditions through MTNA, SCMTA and CMTA. In 2021 Mrs. Agrest received the Steinway Top Teacher Award upon being nominated by Rice Music House. Mrs. Agrest joined MTNA, SCMTA and CMTA shortly after coming to Charleston and has been a member for over thirty years. In that time, she has served on the Charleston MTA board in various capacities, such as Hospitality Chair, Scholarship Auditions Chair, VP of Membership and VP of Programs.

2024 - Myungsook Song Stoudenmire



Myungsook Song Stoudenmire is a piano faculty member at the Charleston Academy of Music, and devotes her teaching to piano studios in Columbia, Summerville, and Charleston. Originally from South Korea, she received the bachelor's degree and Master of Music from Sungshin Women's University in Seoul with highest honors. Later, she earned a second master's degree from Columbia College, a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of South Carolina, and completed one year of residency for doctoral studies at the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati with a full scholarship. She received the Dowling Memorial Scholarship from the Dowling Foundation in Charleston. Dr. Stoudenmire's summer and post-doctoral studies were at the International Keyboard Institute and Festival of

Mannes and Hunter College in New York, the PianoTexas International Festival of Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, master classes at the Adamant School of Music in Vermont, the Brevard Music Center in North Carolina, and Santa Cecilia Conservatory in Italy.

Dr. Stoudenmire has performed with orchestras in Korea, Germany, and the United States, and has appeared extensively throughout the Southeast and internationally in recitals and festivals, including Piccolo Spoleto Festival, Sulzbach-Rosenberg International Festival, Stafford Steinway Festival, and Hangran Music Festival, to name a few. Since 2011, she has appeared in duo piano concerts with Dr. Janet Elshazly in venues that include the Newberry Opera House, the Piccolo Spoleto Spotlight Concert Series, and the Universities and Colleges in South Carolina concert series.

Dr. Stoudenmire previously served as a piano faculty member at Charleston Southern University for twenty-three years, where she was also a founding member of the Charleston Southern Summer Piano Camp program as a director and cultivated it for ten years. From 2005–2007, Dr. Stoudenmire served as the SCMTA Charleston District Audition Chair and currently holds

the SCMTA Columbia District Audition Chair and National Piano Guild Columbia Center Audition Chair. She is a past president of the Columbia Music Teachers Association. Her students have won significant local, state, and regional competitions.

She is married to John Stoudenmire, who taught voice in the South Carolina public school system for over four decades and is an emeritus member of the National Association of Teachers of Singing. They have a daughter, Esther Song, and her husband, Jadon Hiott.

2023 - Scott Price



Dr. Scott Price currently serves as Carolina Distinguished Professor of Music, and Coordinator of Piano Pedagogy at the University of South Carolina School of Music. A graduate of the University of Oklahoma, the Cleveland Institute of Music, and Bowling Green State University (OH), his recent engagements have included repeated invitations for performances and clinics at the national conventions of the Music Teachers National Association, the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy, the Royal Conservatory of Music Professional Development Seminars, and solo recitals and presentations throughout AK, AL, AR, AZ, CA, CT, FL, GA, HI, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MD, MI, MN, MO, MS, MT, NC, ND, NE, NH, NJ, NM, NV, NY, OH, OK, OR, PA, SC, TN, TX, UT, WA, WI, WV, VA, and Washington, DC. Other engagements include

performances, masterclasses, and lectures for organizations in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Malaysia, Spain, Thailand, Singapore, and in South Korea.

Dr. Price is the creator and served for 23 years as editor-in-chief of the on-line piano pedagogy journal *Piano Pedagogy Forum*, which published more than 30 issues with participation from more than 100 writers from 84 different colleges/universities, over 28 different states and three foreign countries. The Music Teachers National Association named *Piano Pedagogy Forum* as the recipient of the 2008 Frances Clark Keyboard Pedagogy Award. Dr. Price has recorded 39 full-length recordings of educational piano music for Alfred Publishing Company and has published educational compositions with Alfred Publishing Company and the FJH Music Company. In addition, he created “The Inclusive Teaching Course” for the Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy, the first comprehensive online course for piano teachers who wish to include students with autism and other special needs in their piano studios. Dr. Price is a member of the Committee on Special Needs Students for the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy, served three terms as President of the Board of Trustees of the Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy, and currently serves as chair of Collegiate Chapters for the South Carolina Music Teachers Association.

Special teaching interests of Scott Price include teaching students with disabilities, very young children, and teaching keyboard improvisation to piano students ranging from beginning to advanced levels. His work with students with special needs has been featured on WISTV (SC) and WLTX (SC), and in *Clavier Companion* magazine. One of Dr. Price's students with autism was featured on *Dateline* (NBC) and CNN. His collegiate students have performed with the University of South Carolina Symphony, have presented at conferences throughout the world, and have been winners of the Article of the Year awards from the *American Music Teacher* journal, and the Music Teachers National Association eJournal. In addition, he has directed 41 doctoral dissertations and seven master's degree theses. Dr. Price is the founder of the Carolina LifeSong Initiative that is dedicated to providing piano lessons and music experiences for students with special needs, and in fostering best practices in teaching and teacher training. His book *Autism and Piano Study: A Basic Teaching Vocabulary* and two sets of *Evocations* for piano students were published in 2023 by Tom Gerou Music. He has been awarded the "Best of BGSU Outstanding Graduate" alumnus award from Bowling Green State University in Ohio in 2002 and was named a Foundation Fellow by the Music Teachers National Association in 2009. He is the 2012 recipient of the Southeastern Conference Faculty Achievement Award for the University of South Carolina. Dr. Price is a 2019 recipient of the Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy Outstanding Service Recognition Award, the 2023 Distinguished Alumnus Award from the Cleveland Institute of Music, and in 2020 he was recognized as a Carolina Distinguished Professor – the highest recognition given to a faculty member by the University of South Carolina.

2022 - Patrick Boyle



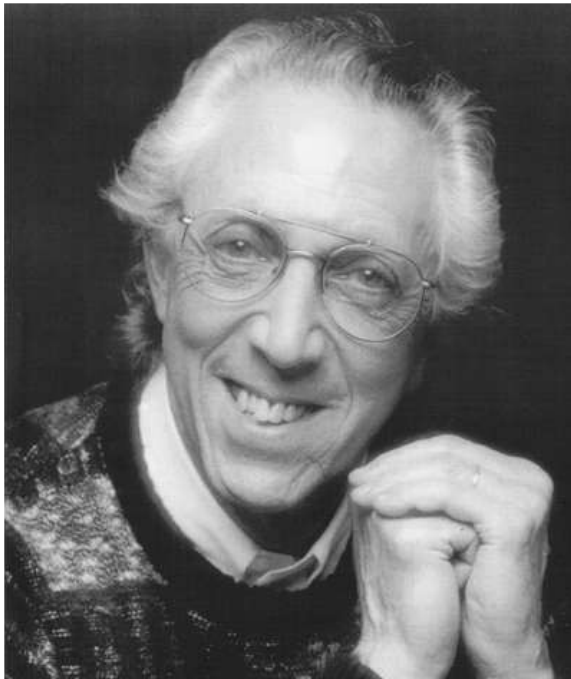
Patrick Boyle's musical journey began inauspiciously: he asked for piano lessons at the age of nine only because his older brother was taking a summer keyboard class, and Patrick spent the next two years trying to quit studies! However, Patrick was hooked by high school and couldn't stop making or talking about music. After earning a BA in History & Music (Boston College) and a MM in Piano Performance (Longy School of Music), Patrick went to work as a performing musician. In the following years Patrick has performed in concert throughout the British Isles and on both coasts of the United States. Performing locally in Charleston, Patrick has appeared as a soloist in a variety of venues, including the Piccolo Spoleto Festival. Patrick is also an enthusiastic collaborator and is dedicated in particular to sharing contemporary music. He

has premiered works as a founding member of the Charleston Eclipse Ensemble and regularly collaborates with other musicians across a variety of genres and mediums. Patrick has performed as a pianist with ballet dancers, played in jazz combos and big bands, accompanied choirs, and has even enjoyed being music director for musicals.

Patrick's passion lies in music instruction. He is a dedicated pedagogue: Patrick has served as faculty in performance and theory at Boston College, but enjoys working with students of all ages, levels, and backgrounds. Patrick is currently a member of MTNA, serves as the IMT Chair for SCMTA, has worked in a variety of roles on the Executive Board of the Charleston MTA, is a member of NFMC, and serves as an officer in the Charleston Music Club. Patrick has also strived to create additional learning opportunities for his students: he has worked through CMTA to organize and support events like Achievement Day and is a founding organizer of the Charleston Sonata Festival.

Patrick lives with his family and dog and currently teaches in Charleston, SC.

2021 - Eugene Barban



Eugene Barban is a pianist who has gained world-wide recognition for his musicianship and technical brilliance in repertory ranging from the Baroque to the avant-garde. Among his many solo performances are recitals at Alice Tully Hall, the Merkin Hall, and Weill Recital Hall in New York, the National Gallery of Art, and Phillips Collection in Washington D.C., and appearances on international concert series in Aix-en-Provence, Salzburg, Bangkok, Mumbai, and Rotterdam.

He has been guest soloist with orchestras in the United States, Asia, and South America. His recording on the Americus label, *An American Piano Odyssey*—containing works of Lees, Gottschalk, Bolcom, Dello Joio, and Barber—has won critical acclaim.

Professor Emeritus of piano at Winthrop University, Eugene Barban has been on the faculties of the Interlochen Music Camp and the Adamant Music School in Vermont. Students from his private studio as well as from Winthrop University have captured top prizes in competitions. Several have become professors of piano themselves. As a chamber musician, Barban performed with the Aeolian Trio, the Rowe Quartet, and the Arden Quartet. He has performed as collaborative artist with vocalists and instrumentalists throughout America and has served on international piano competition juries both here and abroad.

A native of Ohio, Barban received his undergraduate degree from Capital University, his Master's degree from Ohio University, and the Doctor of Musical Arts from the College-Conservatory of Music of the University of Cincinnati. He was recipient of a Fulbright Fellowship for

a year's study in Freiburg, Germany. His teachers have included Olga Conus, George Katz, and Loy Kohler. He has coached with Richard Goode, Walter Hautzig, Jeffrey Swann, Josef Raieff, and Adele Marcus.

He is a past president of the South Carolina Music Teachers Association.

2020 Deborah T. Freeman



Deborah T. Freeman has been an active member of SCMTA since 1979, and she has maintained a private piano studio in the Greenville area for over fifty years. Many of her students have pursued careers in various areas of music education and as church musicians.

She is a founder and past president of Greenville Woman's Music Club, past president of Crescent Music Club, and member of the Music Club of Greenville. Deborah served as GMTA President 1995–1999, SCMTA President in 2004–2006, and in October, 2011, was chosen as one of TALK Greenville's 25 Most Beautiful Women in the Upstate for her volunteer service with young musicians in the Greenville area. Having served SCFMC in many positions, she is currently the Junior Clubs Coordinator for three junior music clubs with over 225 student members, Festival Director for NW District I, Festival Finance Chair, Media chair, American Music chair, and Parliamentarian.

She has written numerous articles on American Music for *NFMC Music Clubs Magazine* and *Junior Keynotes* magazine. Deborah is a Life Member of the National Federation of Music Clubs, American College of Musicians, a Rose Fay Thomas Fellow, a Carolina Jessamine Fellow, and is currently serving as the NFMC First Vice President.

Following collegiate studies as an organ performance major at Anderson University, she continued her studies of piano and pedagogy with private teachers. She is a member of the NGPT Board of Adjudicators and enjoys participating when time allows. Deborah's greatest joy is spending time with her three children and six grandchildren, and she spends her leisure time growing roses.

2018 - Matthew Manwarren



Originally from El Paso, Texas, pianist **Matthew Manwarren** has established a notable career as performer and artist teacher over his career. Since 2006, he has served as Professor of Piano at Winthrop University in Rock Hill, SC. In 2018, he was appointed Visiting Artist Professor of Piano at the University of South Carolina. He has also served on the piano faculty at Belmont University in Nashville, TN, and at Erskine College, where he held the Harriet Pressly Smith Caldwell Professorship in Music. Since 1998, Manwarren has served on the faculty at the Adamant Music School during the summers, a prestigious program for advanced-level pianists from all over the world.

Past performances include recitals at the Steinway Piano Gallery of Charlotte, Weill Recital Hall of Carnegie Hall, the Sundays at the Loft series in New York (Behre Piano Associates), the Ivories on the Border series in El Paso, Belmont Camerata series in Nashville, three recitals on the Cathedral Arts Series

in Burlington, VT, and numerous concerts throughout the US.

Manwarren began his piano studies in El Paso with Mary Lou Hindman Wade and later continued his study with Claude Herdon (a pupil of Tobias Matthay). He earned his undergraduate degree (summa cum laude) from Texas Tech University as a student of William Westney. While there he received the prestigious Eva Browning Piano Scholarship and was winner of the university concerto competition, performing Chopin's Concerto in E minor with the Texas Tech University Symphony. He earned his master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, studying piano with Frank Weinstock and Elisabeth Pridonoff and organ with David Mulbury. In 1996, Dr. Manwarren was awarded a Teacher Enrichment Grant from the Music Teachers National Association for the purpose of studying at the French Piano Institute in Paris, where he had the opportunity to coach with Dominique Merlet, Pascal Devoyon, and Noel Lee.

Dr. Manwarren has served two terms as president of the South Carolina Music Teachers Association. He is nationally certified as a teacher of music through Music Teachers National Association.

2017 - Ann Barnes Wilson



Ann Barnes Wilson is an independent teacher of piano performance, piano pedagogy and music theory. She holds a Doctor of Musical Arts in piano pedagogy, a Master of Music in piano pedagogy and a Bachelor of Arts in piano from the University of South Carolina where her principal teachers were Bong Hi Kim, Max Camp and Charles Fugo. Dr. Wilson taught piano and piano pedagogy at the University of South Carolina and was an instructor in the USC School of Music Summer Workshops.

Dr. Wilson has served as an adjudicator for piano competitions throughout the Southeast and a curriculum author and faculty member for collegiate seminars, workshops and music camps. She is the author of several research documents, including “A Review of Applied-theory and Ear-training Concepts in Piano Method Series for Young Beginners”, and “Supplementary Literature for Elementary Age Students of

Beginning Piano Methods based on The Six Stages of Complexity as Presented by Max W. Camp.”

Students of Dr. Wilson have been selected to perform in numerous master classes and chosen for participation in leading competitions and summer programs of study, including the Southeastern Piano Festival and the Lyceum International Piano Series.

Professional service has included presidency of the South Carolina Piano Festival Association and the Columbia MTA. Dr. Wilson is currently State Festival Chairman of the South Carolina Piano Festival Association, a member of Columbia MTA, MTNA and Pi Kappa Lambda. She is associate director of music ministries at Christ Church of the Carolinas in Columbia and accompanist for the professional chamber choir, Colla Voce, under the direction of Dr. Larry Wyatt.

A resident of Lexington, SC, Dr. Wilson is married to Harry Wilson, whose collegiate studies were in vocal performance. Their two daughters, Victoria Wilson Boyce and Ann Forrest Wilson Bowers, also hold degrees in music.

2016 - Donna Sanders



Donna Sanders has been teaching piano lessons to students in North Carolina and South Carolina for 41 years. Many of her students have chosen music careers in areas of church music, music education, professional accompanying and private piano studio teaching.

After moving to Myrtle Beach in 2003 she worked with State President Deborah Freeman to establish a Myrtle Beach district for pre-college auditions. In 2005, she and Kathleen Nungesser organized a local association of MTNA/SCMTA in Myrtle Beach - the Long Bay Music Teachers Association.

On the state level, she has served SCMTA as MTNA Junior Auditions Chair, District VIII Pre-College Auditions Chair, and on the local level as President of LBMTA and currently as Treasurer and Vice-President for Membership. During her 29 years in North Carolina, she also served NCMTA

in many capacities.

She is North Carolina Whiteville District Gold Cup Chairman for National Federation of Music Clubs and a National Guild of Piano Teachers judge. Other professional involvements include UNCG Summer Music Camp piano faculty for 22 years and master class clinician for piano teachers groups in North Carolina and South Carolina. Her articles have been included in Marvin Blickenstaff's "Repertoire and Rhythm" editorial sections of *Keyboard Companion*. Nationally certified by MTNA as a teacher of music (NCTM), she holds the Permanent Professional Certificate.

Mrs. Sanders received a Bachelor of Music degree from Greensboro College where she studied with David Pinnix and also attended UNC-Chapel Hill, where she pursued additional studies in musicology with William S. Newman and piano with Marvin Blickenstaff.

She and her husband, Rod, live in Myrtle Beach. They have two adult sons, one living in New York City, who is VP of a costume design company, and the other is a veterinarian in Los Angeles.

2015 - Helena Meetze



Helena Meetze has taught piano students in the Columbia, SC, area for more than fifty years. Her legacy of students includes many who continue to be very active in the profession.

She has served as President and Secretary of the Columbia Music Teachers Association, and as President of the Morning and Afternoon Music Clubs. At the state level, she has served as Secretary, Vice-President for Membership, and on the State Auditions Committee of the South Carolina Music Teachers Association. She has also served as President, Vice President, Secretary and Co-Chairman of Region II for the South Carolina Piano Festival Association. With the National Federation of Music Clubs, she has served as National and State Chairman for National Music Week and for the Essay Contest. She has served as the South Carolina representative to the National Board, served as South Carolina State President,

State Chairman of the Council of Presidents, and State Junior Festival Chairman.

Helena Meetze attended Lexington County Public Schools and the University of South Carolina, studying piano with Charles Fugo. She continued additional studies with Jenő Takács at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, and with Robyn Gibson at Columbia College.

She and her husband, Ralph, are the proud parents of four children, one of whom graduated from the Indiana University School of Music and now teaches in the Boston, MA, area. They are also proud grandparents of five grandchildren.