

David B. Weber
1947-2020

David Benjamin Weber, professional oboist, repair person and oboe reed maker extraordinaire, of Queen Creek, AZ, died unexpectedly in Mesa, AZ, on August 4, 2020 at the age of 72.

David is survived by his wife, Vendla Koljonen Weber; his brother, James K. Weber, Jr. of Granville, MA; his nephew James K. Weber III of Nolansville, TN; and his nephew George Harrison Weber of Stamford, CT. He is preceded in death by his parents, James King Weber and Margaret Caudell Weber.

David was born on October 19, 1947 in Statesville, NC to James and Margaret Weber. He grew up in Charlotte, NC where he attended Myers Park High School until, in his senior year, he became one of the first oboe students of Stephen Adelstein at the newly-founded North Carolina School of the Arts in Winston-Salem, NC, from which he graduated in 1965. Other early teachers were David Serrins, Joseph Robinson, John Mack, Don Hefner and James Caldwell.

David was always drawn to the artistry of Marcel Tabuteau of the Philadelphia Orchestra and especially to that of Tabuteau's successor, John de Lancie. So in 1966, he was understandably excited to be accepted as a full scholarship student of John de Lancie at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, PA. He graduated in 1970 with a Bachelor of Music Degree.

It was in Philadelphia where he met Vendla Koljonen, who was a flute student at the Curtis Institute of Music. David and Vendla married in Philadelphia on September 6, 1970 and immediately moved to Atlanta, GA to become members of the Atlanta Symphony (under the direction of Robert Shaw) as assistant principal oboe and assistant principal flute, respectively. The following year, they moved to Birmingham, AL, where David accepted the position of principal oboe in the Birmingham Symphony (which became the Alabama Symphony), and where Vendla later became the principal flutist. While living in Birmingham, David taught at Auburn University, the University of Alabama, Birmingham-Southern College, and the University of Montevallo.

David's reed making skills were obvious at an early age, and he was always willing to share his knowledge with his students and colleagues. While still a student at the Curtis Institute, he began supplying oboe reeds to the famous woodwind repairman, W. Hans Moennig, for him to resell. When Mr. Moennig retired, he referred his oboe reed customers directly to David, who then gained a faithful following. While still in Alabama, David collaborated with the Minnesota Orchestra's English hornist Ferald B. (Fred) Capps, in writing *The Reed Maker's Manual, Step-by-step instructions for making oboe and English horn reeds*. Published in 1990, it de-mystified the art of oboe and English horn reed making, and it remains to this day the standard reed making textbook in many places.

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Following the demise of the Alabama Symphony in 1993, it was only natural for David to begin using his reed making skills to earn a living. So he and Vendla started the business they named “Weber Reeds” in order to market David’s reeds, which were probably the first professional-quality oboe reeds available in any significant way. Of course, they continued selling *The Reed Maker’s Manual*, as well as adding the supplies and equipment that David used to make his reeds. Soon David and Fred Capps began giving “Reed Maker’s Workshops” around the country, and as the business grew, some very specialized services, such as oboe bore adjustments and oboe cane gouger set-ups were added. Colleagues and clients learned they could count on David for not only great service and honesty, but also engaging conversation and friendly encouragement.

David and Vendla moved their business to Chandler, AZ in 2000. When David could no longer keep up with all his reed orders, he limited his customers to subscription orders only, and Weber Reeds added other reed makers to its catalog. To balance his work load, David began accepting more oboe and English horn repairs, as well as selling new and used oboes. He also began making and selling oboe bells. In 2016, Weber Reeds moved to a new location in Mesa, AZ, where they stayed until David and Vendla retired at the end of 2018.

David felt very strongly about carrying on and preserving the legacy of his teacher John de Lancie and by extension, Marcel Tabuteau. In 1998, he and Fred Capps, along with Dr. Carrie Vecchione, arranged for Mr. de Lancie to give master classes based on the Barret Oboe Method. The classes were videotaped and released in 2013 as a 10 DVD set called “John de Lancie: The Art of Creating the Musical Line.” After retiring, David became a member of the editorial board of the website “Marcel Tabuteau First Hand.”

Because of the current pandemic, there will be no services planned until it is safe. Condolences may be sent to Vendla Weber at 20137 E. Avenida del Valle, Queen Creek, AZ 85142 or vendla@webreeds.com. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Student Assistance Fund at the Curtis Institute of Music, 1726 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 or Curtis.edu/giving or to your favorite charity.