

**MILDRED
MORFORD ANDREWS
BOGGESS
1915-1987**



**FIRST
LADY
OF THE
ORGAN**

In 1939, renowned organist Marcel Dupré urged Mildred Andrews to give up teaching for a worldwide concert career. Fortunately, she chose teaching – and built an amazing music program in Norman.

Mildred Morford Andrews was born in September 1915 in Hominy. In 1933, after graduating valedictorian at Collinsville High School, she enrolled at Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas, the ‘Julliard West of the Mississippi’. The next year, she transferred to the University of Oklahoma, finishing her Bachelor’s degree in piano in 1937.

Andrews became an instructor of piano and organ at the OU School of Music in 1938. She completed her Master’s degree in piano performance at the University of Michigan in 1940 and spent the summers of 1946-1948 studying with Dupré in Chicago, to perfect her teaching technique.

Andrews became one of the first women to play a recital at the National Cathedral in Washington. In addition, she gave concerts in New York City, Kansas City, Cleveland, Chicago, Phoenix, Dallas, Edmonton, and Palm Springs.

Her standards of discipline extended to even students’ clothing. Female students had to wear dresses, even in cold weather, and males had to wear long pants. In 1948, she received the Outstanding Young Woman Faculty Member award.

In the 1950s, four students received Fulbright scholarships and five won first place in the National Organ Competition. As a result, Andrews received a \$500 award in 1952 as one of Ten Outstanding OU Faculty Members. In 1954, she became one of the first women to play at Westminster Abbey and was named the 1959 Outstanding Organ Teacher in North America.

In the 1960s and 1970s, seven students won Fulbright awards and four won grants to study abroad. In 1964, she was awarded the Distinguished Professorship, David Ross Boyd Professor of Music, the highest honor awarded by the OU Board of Regents. She was being paid \$10,092 for nine months while the other winner – a male – received \$14,400 for twelve months. It is unclear whether this matter was ever resolved.

She received the Distinguished Service Citation in 1967, OU’s equivalent of an honorary doctorate, was inducted in the Oklahoma Hall of Fame in 1971 and was named Oklahoma’s ‘Musician of the Year’ in 1972. Upon her retirement in 1976, headlines in Oklahoma proclaimed “End of an Era,” “Winningest Coach of the Console,” and “The Legend Ends.” Congratulations came from dignitaries such as President Gerald Ford, Governor David Boren, and House Speaker Carl Albert.

‘Oklahoma’s First Lady of the Organ’ died in August 1987 at age 71. For decades, she yearned for a suitable performance organ. With a \$400,000 donation from her estate and generous funding from students, the Mildred Andrews Boggess Memorial Organ at OU serves as a remembrance of her legacy.

Perhaps Andrews’s greatest success was her lasting effect on the OU music program. From 1938 to 1976, her exceptional teaching career produced some of the nation’s best organists, fourteen of whom received Fulbright Fellowships and twenty won national or regional performance competitions.