REMEMBERING ELLEN RAVNAN

1954-2026

ELLEN RAVNAN WAS A MUSICIAN OF RARE DEPTH, A DEDICATED EDUCATOR, AND A CHAMPION FOR YOUNG STRING PLAYERS. WHILE HER CAREER BEGAN ON THE TRAJECTORY OF A WORLD-CLASS PERFORMER, HER LEGACY IS DEFINED BY HER UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION AND HER REVOLUTIONARY APPROACH TO STUDENT MOTIVATION.

ELLEN'S MUSICAL JOURNEY WAS ROOTED IN EXCELLENCE. SHE HONED HER CRAFT AT THE NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL OF THE ARTS BEFORE EARNING A BACHELOR OF MUSIC IN VIOLA FROM THE MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC, WHERE SHE STUDIED UNDER THE LEGENDARY LILLIAN FUCHS. SHE LATER COMPLETED HER MASTER OF MUSIC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS UNDER THE TUTELAGE OF GUILLERMO PERICH.

AS A VIOLIST, ELLEN'S TALENT TOOK HER TO PRESTIGIOUS STAGES ACROSS THE COUNTRY PERFORMING AS A SOLOIST AND ORCHESTRAL MUSICIAN. SHE HAS PERFORMED WITH THE MADISON SYMPHONY, THE WISCONSIN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA, THE DENVER SYMPHONY, THE COLORADO MUSIC FESTIVAL, AND THE CHEYENNE SYMPHONY. NOTABLY, SHE SERVED AS PRINCIPAL VIOLIST OF THE ARAPAHOE PHILHARMONIC AND MUSICA SACRA.

IN 1982, ELLEN MADE A PIVOTAL SHIFT TOWARD MUSIC EDUCATION. AFTER BUILDING A FLOURISHING STRING PROGRAM IN FORT ATKINSON, WI, SHE MOVED TO COLORADO, WHERE SHE SPENT THE HEART OF HER CAREER IN THE CHERRY CREEK SCHOOL DISTRICT.

ELLEN FOUND HER TRUE CALLING IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASSROOM. HER 8TH-GRADE ORCHESTRAS WERE TWICE SELECTED TO PERFORM AT THE COLORADO MUSIC EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION (CMEA) CONFERENCE—A HIGH HONOR IN THE STATE. HER EXCELLENCE WAS FURTHER RECOGNIZED WHEN SHE WAS NAMED THE CCSD TEACHER OF THE YEAR.

PERHAPS ELLEN'S MOST ENDURING CONTRIBUTION TO MUSIC EDUCATION IS THE STRINGATHON PROGRAM. CONCEPTUALIZED AND DEVELOPED BY ELLEN. THE PROGRAM IS BUILT ON THE PHILOSOPHY THAT UNISON PLAYING IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR DEVELOPING STRING PLAYERS DURING THEIR FIRST FOUR YEARS.

ELLEN METICULOUSLY CURATED STRINGATHON, THREE SETS OF REPERTOIRE THAT SERVE AS A COMPREHENSIVE MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM. DRIVEN BY A PURE LOVE FOR THE CRAFT, SHE PROVIDED THESE MATERIALS FREELY TO ANY TEACHER WHO WISHED TO USE THEM, REFUSING ANY PAYMENT. EVEN IN HER FINAL MONTHS, SHE FOUND IMMENSE JOY AND GRATIFICATION IN KNOWING THAT STRINGATHON CONTINUES TO INSPIRE STUDENTS TODAY.