

Distinguished Achievement Citation

Judith Binkele McCulloh

Class of 1956

Dr. Judith McCulloh's multi-faceted career-- as scholar, editor, and intellectual presence in the fields of ethnomusicology and folklore-- has been devoted to discovering and recording American life. She has helped thousands of Americans to a larger sense of who we are and whence we come.

In her position as Executive Editor of the University of Illinois Press, she has generated some of the most important literature in ethnographic studies and folklore. She has published books on an extraordinary range of American music from Charles Ives to John Philip Sousa, and from Ozark folksongs to jazz to a history of the banjo in American popular culture. A specific illustration of the vast and eclectic nature of her scholarship, Music in American Life, is a distinguished series of fifty volumes edited by Dr. McCulloh, ranging from cowboy songs to Jewish tenement music; from studies of Duke Ellington to one of Paul Hindemith; from tapes of Shoshone Indian women singing to volumes of songs on railroading and labor.

Dr. McCulloh's universal recognition among scholars of American music as one of the most distinguished of their number is exemplified by her membership and leadership roles in distinguished professional societies. Inter alia, she has been longtime treasurer and member of the Board of Directors of the Society for Ethnomusicology and served as first woman president of the American folklore Society. She also serves on editorial boards of Journal of American Folklore, American Music, and Popular Music, has edited one book on folklore and co-edited two others.

In 1986, the U.S. House of Representatives recommended her as one of the six trustees of the American Folklife Center in the Library of Congress. Later, she became chairperson of the Board.

Her admirers are a legion and say of her, "(she is) one of the most experienced and insightful editors of manuscripts on American music, possessed of a rare and balanced perspective on the enduring values in our cultural heritage and on the academic trends that affect our views and our scholarship." "Judy has made a definitive mark on musical scholarship and the field of American music." "Few scholars play such a generative role in framing and producing the literature of multiple disciplines."

About herself, she says, "Through the books I could help send into the world ...I had the power to reach and influence ... hearts and minds in a lasting way ..."

It is a pleasure and a privilege to honor Dr. Judith McCulloh for significant contributions to the understanding of an important facet of our country's culture.

May 15, 1993

