

## Cynthia B. Sajnovsky, Professor Emerita of Music



I retired from the University of Guam as Professor of Music in December 2009 and became an active member of the Society of Emeritus Professors and Retired Scholars (SEPRS) in early 2011. I earned the Bachelor of Music and the Master of Music History from the Crane School of Music, Potsdam, New York, and the Ph.D. in Performance Practices/Organ from Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri. Learning about the position opening at the University of Guam from the Chronicle of Higher Education publication, I requested that the Lutton Music Service forward my dossier to the university. I joined the UOG faculty in August 1979 as an Assistant Professor on a two-year contract.

I arrived on Guam with two suitcases and a bag of foil fencing gear and had to hitch-hike a ride from the “old” airport to the Fine Arts Building. The secretary was enclosed in a tiny office that came equipped with the building’s only phone and coffee pot. Those early days on campus

revealed discoveries: huge black toads and large snails who vied for sidewalk territory, phones that lost connections on rainy days, the two-story buildings A and B housed the primary classrooms, while Building C, a “temporary” wooden structure adjacent to the Fine Arts Building, offered the small room and some rusty equipment where I was to teach foil fencing. There would be no field house for many years.

The Music Department was vacant the year before my arrival, and I found that all pianos, chairs, and other equipment had been pushed into the one classroom. The department had no air conditioning or fans, so reorganizing the department and teaching classes was a steamy undertaking. The Piano Lab, a former closet, housed four out-of-tune spinet pianos, and four non-working first edition “electronic” keyboards. No one, not even the secretary, had a computer. Typewriters were hard to come by, and I ended up having to purchase my own in 1982. Photocopying was not available. All tests and class distributions had to be prepared well in advance so the secretary could run across campus to building B with ditto stencil masters and run off copies for the day’s needs. The students didn’t seem to mind the fragrant, freshly-inked paper, and inhaled deeply prior to taking a test.

Commencement ceremonies were given only at the end of Spring semesters and were held on base at “big” Navy. My Chamber Choir provided music for these ceremonies, and campus concerts as well. We even recorded the Guam Hymn for use in UOG’s football games held at GW field. “Big” Navy also permitted UOG professors to purchase office supplies at their supply depot, “Servmart,” a large Quonset hut facility on base. My foil fencers were invited to an informal tournament with Navy personnel. My students won.

I was a faculty member at UOG for 30 ½ years, and following retirement, I taught several courses as an adjunct professor. I have always been grateful to the university for the freedom to teach a wide variety of courses and interdisciplinary courses. It was my task, as the only music faculty person, to establish and design a core music curriculum. Syllabi did not exist, and course outlines could not be found. Starting the music program from scratch, I drew up course outlines and syllabi and offered departmental concerts. I always expended a great deal of effort in curriculum development, and each course was unique, and each varied greatly in approach, materials and topic covered. While at the University of Guam I taught 25 different course subjects and offered over 370 courses from fencing to class piano, elementary school music methods to history of music, handbells, organ, and oral interpretation. Awarded a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship to study Japanese music and granted a one-year sabbatical to Japan, I returned ready to teach traditional Japanese music. A one-semester sabbatical and a summer combined with two Korean National Ministry of Culture fellowships in 1994 and 1995 yielded another new course in traditional Korean music. I also taught on Chuuk and Majuro several times for UOG’s Micronesian Outreach Program. Through the years I presented many community lectures and presentations for the College of Arts and Sciences Research Conferences. I composed original music for several UOG theatre productions. The music program grew each year, and in 1993 the Fine Arts, Music, Art, and Theatre departments, joined forces and began a new Fine Arts major.

I engaged in research dealing with Micronesian and Asian music, and delivered papers in Osaka, Beijing, Hong Kong and UCLA. I conducted field work and offered publications in ethnomusicology in Japan, Korea, China, Guam and Micronesia. I was selected as a member of the 1988 People to People Citizen Ambassador delegation to China to research music of Chinese minority music and music education. My research efforts were supported by the NEH scholarship, and the Korean Ministry mentioned above, and also the Korean Overseas Foundation, Kyoto's Kansai Gaidai, UOG's sister university at that time, and grants from the University of Guam. Representing the university, I was awarded several National Endowment for the Arts grants for performing multiple organ concert series. I also performed in harp ensembles in Philadelphia, Eastman School of Music in New York, San Francisco, USC in Los Angeles, and on Guam as a harp soloist and with the Guam Symphony. I was the director of the Guam Recorder Consort, established in 1987 until 1997. We performed over 80 concerts in the community.

Service to the community and the university has always been an important part of a faculty member's activities. My husband, Robert, Professor Emeritus of Art, and I co-hosted the weekly production "Airing the Arts" on UOG's campus KPRG Public Radio 89.3 for 25 years. I have served as an adjudicator for many talent contests such as the Symphony Society Young Artist's Competition, the annual International Tumon Bay Music Festival, song festivals, etc. I have been an active member of the civilian U. S. Coast Guard Auxiliary since 1980. I have served the university on so many committees in my 30 ½ years at the divisional, college, and campus-wide levels.

My husband, Robert, once said, "Every semester it's new again". That kind of forward thinking makes teaching and learning both challenging and fun. I maintained memberships in professional organizations which enhanced my career and engaged in continuing education in addition to research/creative efforts to promote personal and professional growth. I prepared original and relevant materials for class use and have attempted to awaken students to the relationships of music to other fields. I have enjoyed helping beginning music students discover their abilities through initial contact with piano, guitar, and music rudiments, and I have taken pleasure stimulating more advanced students to challenge their own talents and intellectual capabilities.

I began with the daunting task of developing from scratch a viable undergraduate music program at the University of Guam. I authored new course proposals and taught courses with regional relevance. I designed the initial Fine Arts-Music Major and I have seen it come to fruition. I am so very proud of my students who are now conducting, teaching and performing in our community. They are my legacy.