



Charlotte M. Atkinson

Charlotte M. Atkinson, 87, was born on August 31, 1932 and passed away on May 2, 2020. Growing up in Southern California, her musical talents began to flourish in her work as a church organist and piano teacher at age 17. Passion for music drew her to San Diego State University, where she earned a bachelor's degree and met William (Bill) Atkinson in Howard Brubeck's (brother of Dave) theory class. They married in her junior year and began a musical journey that earned them national acclaim as the Atkinson Duo, playing classical music in concerts with their flute and keyboard talents. She went on to obtain an MA degree at Claremont University in 1952; she also studied organ with Clarence Mader, Catharine Crozier, and William Blanchard.

Atkinson and her husband established the Cadet Choir and Choraleers at the Army and Navy Academy in Carlsbad, Calif. She helped procure the three-manual Schlicker organ for the chapel where many concerts were held. A number of cadets and foreign exchange students remained lifelong friends of the Atkinsons after attending the academy.

Atkinson served as organist at several churches in North San Diego County. For over 40 years, she was organist at the First Presbyterian Church, Oceanside, teaming with her husband as director of music. Together they established children's and handbell choirs and obtained a new organ. She received recognition as a concert organist, making two trips to Scandinavia, England, and Germany to play concerts in such venues as the St. Jakobi Kirche in Hamburg, Germany, the Dom in Oslo, Norway, and the Rock Church in Helsinki, Finland. A composite CD was made of those trips. She was an adjunct music instructor for Mira Costa and Palomar Colleges for many years, served as president of the local Music Teachers' Association, and as an adjudicator for the National Guild of Piano Teachers.

The Atkinsons owned the Music Makers store in Carlsbad and a handbell business. She maintained an active piano and organ studio her entire life. Many of her students have become professional musicians and remained in touch with her. One of her organ students was the late Emily Holzer. Atkinson served four terms as dean of the Palomar AGO Chapter. In 1987, she was the program coordinator for the AGO Regional Convention held in Carlsbad. It was her vision that enabled this small chapter to hold a very successful convention.

Atkinson was active as a creative writer. In 2019 she completed a short book, *The New School of Practical Church Music*, a humorous look at the changing world of church music. All proceeds were donated to the Palomar Chapter Scholarship Fund. She loved pets and had a special affection for cats. She also had an extensive doll collection.

Atkinson is survived by a sister, a daughter, a son, seven grandchildren, and two great-grandsons, as well as many nieces, nephews, and cousins. A memorial service was held on March 27, 2021 at First Presbyterian Church in Oceanside, California.