



50th Jubilee Celebration - 2015
Second Union Church
Guaynabo, Puerto Rico

CHARTER MEMBER JOYCE MATHEWS IS HONORED

This is an Honor Biography you don't want to miss.

It was written by Dr. Nancy Taylor who joined Second Union in the middle 1960ties, stayed with us for sixteen years and was one our first women Council Presidents. Nancy tells about the inspiration spirit of Joyce Mathews who built a powerful tradition of music in our church.

After doing well as a high school music teacher in Mayaguez, Nancy writes that Joyce was invited by the PR Department of Education to come to San Juan where she worked for almost four decades. Joyce's talents were recognized and she rose from being the general music director for San Juan metropolitan area to becoming director of the island's music program.

During these four decades, her day time job was to teach the children of our island music and the joy of singing. What is amazing is that she had a second volunteer job at Second Union Church. For 35 years of our church's 50 year Jubilee span, Joyce's led once a week evening choir practice and Sunday morning organist support for children and senior choirs. This gift was delivered with the highest level of artistic skill with humility and love. Nancy Taylor honors her and it is well deserved.

If you wish to honor a friend with a Brief Biography, you are encouraged to do so. Check details on the wall in Fellowship Hall. Members present and past are encouraged to send a story and pictures in to Mabel Varela, our Church Manager/Secretary, secondunionchurch@gmail.com, 787-423-2340.

Thank you,

George and Joan McMurray

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Co-chairs, 50th Jubilee Celebration

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Second Union Remembers...



Joyce Creque Mathews

Attended 1965 - 2000

By: **Dr. Nancy Taylor**

In my sixteen years at Second Union, I don't remember a single Sunday that Joyce Mathews wasn't at the organ, unless it was that one time when there was no power; then Joyce was at the piano. The same goes for choir practice: she was always there, despite colds and headaches, despite our messing around, our lack of seriousness (music was always serious for Joyce). She worked with a number of choir directors in those years, some of them with so little experience as to be described as "so-called," but never once did I know her to make so much as a suggestion about their reading of a piece, though I'd guess she had plenty.

Ex. 43 --- Rhapsody, Op. 119, No. 4
Allegro risoluto



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787-720-4423 secondunion.org/50th-jubilee-celebration

For Joyce Mathews knew music. She knew classical music, church music, and the music that educators use to teach children something about the joy of singing. She began her career as a music education teacher in a Mayaguez high school and was so good at it that she was brought to San Juan, in 1961, as zone supervisor of music. By 1964 she was promoted to general music supervisor for the San Juan metropolitan area, and from 1973 until 1986, Joyce directed the island's music programs from the Department of Education in San Juan.



A native of St. Thomas, Joyce was the oldest of eight children. Her father was a noted poet, organist, and jazz musician himself and made sure Joyce and several of her siblings got the training their talent deserved. Joyce earned a B. S. in Music in 1950 at Polytechnic Institute in San German, an M. A. in Music in 1956 at Columbia University in New York City, the same year she married Tom Mathews.

Ever striving to be the best she could, Joyce also earned, in 1965, after four years of study, a Diploma in Piano from the Conservatory of Music in San Juan. In addition to serving as chapel organist and pianist at the Polytechnic Institute, she served on many island-wide committees and boards, including one that selected recipients for scholarships from the National Endowment for the Arts. Somehow, in and around all these degrees and jobs, she and Tom had a son, Dale, born in 1958.

Despite her high-powered job, her important role on committees, and the many requests to accompany both singers and other musicians, Joyce was quiet and unassuming. That was the Joyce I knew and admired. She and Tom were founding members of Second Union Church, and from the beginning Joyce served as organist and pianist. Once when we planned a duet for church—I played the piano part—I wanted to play it slowly, romantically. Joyce would have

none of it: it needs to be played faster, she said, very kindly not saying “not so romantically.”

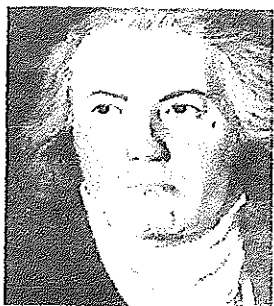
Quiet, unassuming, but sure of herself, sure in her knowledge of music.

When, in 1979, she helped plan a program of music to dedicate a piano given to Second Union in memory of my sister, Betsy Ashley, Joyce put together both singers and instrumentalists from our congregation. We insisted she, too, play for us during the evening. Pushed, she agreed—and played three unbelievably difficult pieces—Brahms’ Rhapsody #2 in G minor, Op. 79; Chopin’s Valse in C minor, Op. 64, No. 2; and Chopin’s Etude in C minor, Op 25, No. 12. Hours of practice had undoubtedly gone into her preparation of those selections. Despite her not often playing for an audience, everyone could tell that Joyce had continued to practice piano, had continued to practice for her own sense of artistry. That night we all knew who the true professional among us was.

You are invited to go to the Audio Index in the rear of our 50th Jubilee History publication and find the links to listen or download three of Joyce’s recordings:



Brahms Rhapsody in G minor



Beethoven First Movement of Moonlight Serenade



Bach We Praise Thee Oh God

