MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

FOR

DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR LEONARD SORKIN

After a two year battle with cancer, Professor Leonard Sorkin, at the age of 69, finally succumbed to this deadly disease on June 7, 1985. All the way up until his death, Professor Sorkin was active and vividly alert while heading the Chamber Music Institute which he founded in 1982 at the UWM's School of Fine Arts' Music Department.

Distinguished Professor Sorkin's background was singularly special. He was born in Chicago in 1916. Immediately upon graduation from high school, he was appointed a member of the first violin section of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under its then famous music director, Frederick Stock. In 1941, Leonard Sorkin, together with George Sopkin, also a former member of our faculty, founded the world renowned Fine Arts Quartet. After Army service during World War II, Leonard Sorkin was engaged as concert master with the American Broadcasting Company Orchestra in Chicago. Together with George Sopkin, he reorganized the Fine Arts Quartet, and the quartet began giving concerts regularly for the ABC network. Concert tours, both here and abroad, quickly followed, and they began a long series of recordings which were to culminate in over 70 albums done for such labels and Decca, Concert-Disc, Vox and Gasparo.
In 1954, the Fine Arts Quartet began appearing regularly in Milwaukee at Marietta House as part of the Summer Evenings of Music series. In 1963, the year the School of Fine Arts was created under the deanship of Adolph Suppan, the Fine Arts Quartet under the leadership of Leonard Sorkin, was engaged by UWM. Its members were appointed professors of music and artists-in-residence.

Leonard Sorkin was honored by the governors of Wisconsin and Illinois for his services to the arts.

In 1978 he was awarded the title of Distinguished Professor. In 1985, he was awarded the prestigious title of Artist-Teacher of the Year by the American String Teachers Association.

Also in 1985, he received the Distinguished Citizen Award from the Civic Music Association of Milwaukee.

Leonard Sorkin maintained a constant interest in new music, particularly American new music. Many new works were dedicated to the Fine Arts Quartet. Both individually and as a group, they commissioned a number of new works by distinguished American composers which, in most instances, the quartet went on later to record. Karel Husa's 3rd String Quartet, which they commissioned in 1973, and then recorded after its premiere, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in music in 1974. Compositions by S. Shifrin, C. Wuorinen,
M. Babbitt and others were premiered and recorded. Also, UWM's composer-in-residence, John Downey, received a commission from them for the bicentennial year, his String Quartet No. 2, which the quartet played throughout Europe and later recorded.

Even after retiring from his role as 1st. violinist with the Fine Arts Quartet in 1982, Professor Sorkin remained active as violinist and conductor. Just three weeks prior to his death, he was active in both roles with the Chamber Music Institute Orchestra.

The last composition which he premiered, and which also was dedicated to Leonard Sorkin, was John Downey's Piano Trio. The unveiling occurred on November 20, 1984, at a concert sponsored by the MacDowell Club here in Milwaukee.

Leonard Sorkin, through it all, personified "The Gentle Man."

Many individuals achieve accomplishments worthy of recognition--to gain honor from one's peers; to stand out as a leader; to share one's talent and skills with others; and to bear the many vicissitudes of life. Through it all, Leonard remained: "The Gentle Man."

Leonard Sorkin's memory will remain etched in the hearts of all whom he touched: wife, family, students, colleagues, and fellow artists world-wide. His was a presence never to be forgotten...

John Downey
Paul Kramer
Leo C. Muskatevc

July 11, 1985