

ROBERT WILLOUGHBY TRIBUTE - NFA LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD, August, 1996
presented by Katherine Borst Jones

Bob, it is very difficult for any of us who know you to think about what we want to say about you, without including MAC. But, since we're here in your honor, we'll let MAC add her own Lifetime Achievements Award.....and we'd love to hear what she would say!

I've known Bob through the NFA, BPI, OC, CO, CA, DC, PC, XYZ, whatever that stands for! If you haven't already guessed, acronyms are Bob and Mac's PP, I mean pet peeves.

Bob Willoughby, from Grundy Center, Iowa, almost became a lawyer, then the war came along. He did become a pilot, then a teacher of pilots. A scholarship was awarded from Eastman, his Dad said, "Try it for a year." Bob said, "You mean they pay you to do this?" Clearly Bob's love affair with the flute continues to this day. How else could anyone have so much fun?

Preparing this speech, though a tremendous honor, has been most difficult. Obtaining interesting and enlightening stories about Bob, has not. Your students have fine memories, Bob. Are you worried? Do you remember how many times you accused students of pilfering your pencils? You did learn to tie them to the stand, but even that didn't work. I want you to know that some of your students have fessed up. I've finally caught the pencil, differing perpetrators, that's PPP'S! You'll get the pencils later!

Your former students and friends define you in many ways: as a pioneer of historical flutes, (though rumor has it that you were absolutely hopeless at winding tenons); some see you as a champion of contemporary music, (some cannot forget your amazing performance of *Narcissus* by Thea Musgrave, just a few years ago), some see you as a teaching guru, New England version, others remember your orchestral prominence, (how many times did you play the Beethoven Seventh?), still others remember your 40's style piano playing. Some even remember your fondness for tennis and golf. But, no matter what, everyone remembers! Because you are ALL of these things, and more.

Decaf in the morning, Earl Grey at tea time, Dry Sack sherry, Dom Perignon champagne. When it comes to wine, women and song, you have legendary good taste. You've even held on to Mac in spite of some pretty good competition from Jose Carreras!

Revered and sometimes feared, yet quick to laugh. Quick to congratulate. Positive, patient, persistent and unwilling to accept anything but the best. Humble, yet confident. Always challenging, expecting more. Colorful comments such as, "you're a dead duck", "you are giving me a bonus!", "Any technical flaws, you're dead." You have always had a talent for choosing students and choosing the proper words to teach them. If good students are the proof of a great teacher, you are among the best of the best.

There seem to be many reasons why Bob Willoughby is so popular with his students. Perhaps it is his willingness to take the blame when they do something bloody-well wrong. (Did you really tell them you're a "dirty rotten stung?") Perhaps it is those very memorable teaching techniques, chug-a-chug-a chug, puffs, tongueless attack, the siren. Or was it the invitation to "high tea" or Thanksgiving dinner when away from home? Bob, you teach us why, not just how. You demand that your students think for themselves and then have the courage to state those

opinions. You are the mentor and the inspiration for countless students who continue to follow your way of intellect, courtesy, integrity and most important humanity. Bob, it gives me great pleasure to present you with the National Flute Associations Lifetime Achievement Award.