



Richard Gerstenberger

Past Music Director & Conductor

Richard Gerstenberger became the Music Director and Conductor of the Des Moines Community Orchestra in 1989. Maestro Gerstenberger is a graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music, and Boston University. He has played horn professionally with the Boston Pops under Arthur Fiedler, as well as the Boston Symphony under Charles Munch. and the New England Opera Theater under Boris Goldovsky. He was also Director of Bands at Rutgers University.

After moving to Des Moines, Richard taught music at Drake University (Des Moines, Iowa), at Simpson College (Indianola, Iowa), and in the Des Moines Public Schools. Mr. Gerstenberger played horn with the Des Moines Symphony for 20 years, and co-founded the Des Moines Horn Club in 1970. In "retirement" he became Music Director and Conductor of the Des Moines Community Orchestra from 1989 through 2002.

In 2005, Richard and his wife, Martha Gerstenberger, long-time principal cellist of DMCO, moved to New Hampshire, where they have family roots. The photo at right was taken a few days before their departure for New Hampshire.

On March 25, 2008, Richard Gerstenberger passed away. Memorial contributions were received by the orchestra in Richard's memory, and the DMCO Board of Directors made arrangements to have Linda Robbins Coleman write new music to honor Richard. The composition was premiered at the DMCO Winter Concert on February 28, 2010. The concert program can be accessed [here](#).





The orchestra thanks the Gerstenbergers for the enormous contributions they have made to the musical arts in Iowa.

The following obituary appeared in the Des Moines Register on April 9, 2008:

RICHARD (DICK) CARL GERSTENBERGER

Dunbarton, NH

Richard (Dick) Carl Gerstenberger, 84, died March 25, 2008 in Windham, New Hampshire, after a brief illness. Beloved husband of Martha (Field) Gerstenberger for 53 years, Richard died peacefully at the home of his son and daughter-in-law. Richard was born in Lawrence, Massachusetts, on September 21, 1923 and was educated in the Lawrence Massachusetts School System.

He spent one year at the New England Conservatory before enlisting into the Army to serve in the European Theater during W W II in the 106th Infantry Division. He was also stationed in the Ardennes Forest near St. Vith, Belgium just before the commencement of the Battle of the Bulge. After an honorable discharge, Richard went back to the Conservatory for his Bachelor's Degree and proceeded to Boston University for his Master's Degree in music.

He went on to become a music Professor and Teacher as well as a professional French Horn Player. His musical career included playing in an orchestra at Wentworth-by-the-Sea in Newcastle, New Hampshire and Hampton Beach as well as stints with the Boston Symphony and Boston Pops under the late Arthur Fiedler of Boston, Massachusetts.

Richard's family relocated to Des Moines, Iowa, in 1967 where he taught music in the Des Moines Public School System, and played with the Des Moines Symphony. In his spare time, Richard was an accomplished carpenter and woodworker, producing numerous pieces of furniture, and more recently "Limber Jacks," or dancing figures. After his retirement, he spent nine years as the Conductor of the Des Moines Community Orchestra. Richard's family has enjoyed summers at the cottage on Cobbett's Pond in Windham, New Hampshire, since 1938.

Richard "PAPA" is survived by his beloved family including his wife, Martha, a son, Peter, and daughter-in-law, Susan, and grandsons, Jonathan Richard and Colin Charles of Windham, New Hampshire, a son Karl, and daughter-in-law Vicky, and granddaughter Romy Eliza of



Des Moines Community Orchestra

Norridgewock, Maine, a sister, Arlene Jones, of Princeton, New Jersey, as well as nieces, nephews and dear friends.

A Memorial Service will be held in Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting, 4211 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, IA, May 17, at 2 o'clock, to which friends are respectfully invited. There will be no calling hours.

Donations may be made in his memory to the Des Moines Community Orchestra, P.O. Box 1796, Des Moines, IA 50306, or the Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting, 4211 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50312.

