

L O S A N G E L E S

MASTER CHORALE

GRANT GERSHON, KIKI & DAVID GINDLER ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Los Angeles Master Chorale Mourns the Passing of Marshall A. Rutter, Beloved Advocate for Choral Music and the Arts



(Los Angeles, CA) Thursday, December 5, 2024 — The **Los Angeles Master Chorale** is deeply saddened to announce the passing of **Marshall A. Rutter**, a devoted champion of choral music, who died peacefully on Wednesday December 4, 2024, at the age of 93. Surrounded by his

loving family, Rutter passed away at his home in Pasadena, leaving behind an extraordinary legacy of service to the arts and the community.

“Marshall Rutter was the quiet force behind a remarkable blossoming of choral music in America,” said Grant Gershon, Kiki & David Gindler Artistic Director. “As one of the founders of the Los Angeles Master Chorale, and through his early leadership of Chorus America, he helped to set the stage for the current renaissance in our field. His steadfast support and stewardship of the Chorale over the entire course of our 60 year history is extraordinary. During this time and under his guidance the Chorale has taken its place as the preeminent large professional choral organization in the country.”

Gershon continues, “I first met Marshall in the early 1990s when he was one of the early and most passionate supporters of the Los Angeles Philharmonic's Green Umbrella new music series. Marshall loved music deeply, and was especially committed to encouraging living composers to stretch their wings. He commissioned countless composers over the years, perhaps most notably Morten Lauridsen, whose *O Magnum Mysterium* (commissioned by Marshall in honor of his wife, Terry Knowles) has become the most beloved and iconic American choral work of the last 50 years. Marshall was brilliant, funny, endlessly self-deprecating, and a wonderful friend. We will all miss him deeply.”

“When I joined the Los Angeles Master Chorale Board in 1992 as a busy lawyer with two young children, Marshall welcomed and mentored me, encouraging me to take on leadership roles and, later, to join the Board of Chorus America, an important association that deepened my understanding of the choral community,” said Susan Erburu Reardon, Board Chair. “Over many years, I observed Marshall extend the same warm friendship and wise advice to many other new Board members, even after he became an Emeritus Director. This created a positive and engaged Board culture that will be an important part of his legacy. As the Los Angeles Master Chorale celebrates our 60th season and moves forward to a bright future, we will be guided by Marshall's deep commitment to the choral art and his legacy of service and generosity of spirit.”

Reardon continues, “On a personal note, I am especially grateful that Marshall and Terry shared with me and my husband George not only their friendship, but their knowledge and insights about commissioning and recording choral works by living composers, as their deep knowledge guided us to an interest in new music which enriches our lives to this day.”

Marshall A. Rutter was a lifelong music enthusiast and a devoted champion of choral music. At the urging of legendary conductor Roger Wagner, Marshall Rutter and the members of the Los Angeles Junior Chamber of Commerce helped found the Los Angeles Master Chorale Association in 1964 as a resident company of the newly constructed Los Angeles Music Center.

Rutter continuously served on the board of the Master Chorale for six decades, with esteemed roles including President (1978-81, 1983-86, 1989-92), Chairman (1981-83, 1986-89, 1992-96), and Director Emeritus (2007-2024). Under his guidance, the Master Chorale flourished into one of the world's foremost professional choirs.

“Marshall Rutter’s impact on the Los Angeles Master Chorale and the broader choral music community is immeasurable,” said Scott Altman, President & CEO. “His unwavering dedication and generosity helped shape the Chorale into the world-renowned institution it is today. Marshall’s passion for music and his steadfast belief in its power to inspire and unite will continue to resonate through every note we sing. We extend our deepest sympathies to his family.”

An original member of the Roger Wagner Society, Rutter was recently named Honoree of the Los Angeles Master Chorale's forthcoming 60th anniversary gala on March 22, 2025. The event will be dedicated to his remarkable legacy and life of service to the field of choral music.

Rutter’s influence extended nationally through his involvement with Chorus America, where he served on the board (1987–1996) and as Chair (1993–1995). Named Director Laureate in 2017, he played a pivotal role in guiding the organization through a period of significant growth. His visionary leadership was recognized in 2001 with the Michael Korn Founders Award for Development of the Professional Choral Art.

“Chorus America owes so much to Marshall’s leadership,” said Chorus America president and CEO Christopher Eanes. “Any period of organizational growth comes with challenges, and we are grateful for his skill in navigating those challenges and moving our organization forward. Our entire field continues to benefit from his love for choral music and the beautiful repertoire he helped bring to life.”

In addition to his contributions to the arts, Rutter was a seasoned family law attorney. After founding and practicing at a prestigious Century City law firm of thirty lawyers, he established his own small practice in Pasadena in 2010, following his retirement from the firm at the age of 75. His Pasadena practice, which he closed in December 2019, focused on marital dissolution cases involving substantial estates and difficult business or property valuations. While skilled in litigation, Rutter prioritized mediation and negotiated settlements, and enjoyed helping divorcing parties navigate stressful times with care and expertise, to provide a happier, more secure future.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Terry Knowles, who served as Executive Director (2000-2011) and President & CEO of the Los Angeles Master Chorale (2011-2015), as well as his three adult children and three wonderful grandchildren.

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