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Democracy Dies in Darkness

WASHINGTON IMPRESARIO PATRICK HAYES DIES AT 89



By Bart Barnes

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Patrick Hayes, 89, Washington's singular impresario who brought hundreds of shows, concerts, operas and ballets and the primary performing artists of the world to the nation's capital, died of sepsis yesterday at George Washington University Medical Center.

For more than 40 years, Mr. Hayes was the unofficial minister of culture of the metropolitan area. He was the former managing director of the Washington Performing Arts Society, which he founded in 1966, but he had been arranging shows and concerts in the area long before then through the Hayes Concert Bureau, which he opened in 1947.

"We are presenters. We are the middlemen. We bring the artists to the audience," Mr. Hayes said in 1982, when he stepped down as the day-to-day manager of the Performing Arts Society.

Over the years, he arranged performances in Washington by orchestras from Vienna, London and Amsterdam, the Bolshoi Ballet, and such artists as Arturo Toscanini, Vladimir Horowitz, Rudolf Serkin, Isaac Stern, Maria Callas, Sir Thomas Beacham, Van Cliburn, Jascha Heifetz and Artur Rubinstein.

For 26 years, beginning in 1949, he had a regular Sunday afternoon radio broadcast on WGMS, which he called "People and Events in the World of Music." From this airwaves pulpit, he argued for the preservation of historic theaters in Washington and the building of concert halls large enough for opera and ballet performances. After 1,248 broadcasts, Mr. Hayes went off the air in 1975. In that period, he had missed only one show, and that was because of laryngitis.

He came to Washington as manager of the National Symphony Orchestra in 1941, when Washington had a national reputation as a cultural backwater. Thirty years later, he would recall his first concert in Washington. "Igor Stravinsky was the guest conductor, and I was expecting to see police holding off a crowd at the box office. Instead, the house wasn't more than half full. Is it always like this?' I asked, and the reply was, That's why you're here, Hayes.' The fact is, the experience pinpointed exactly the challenge I had to set for myself in those years -- how to create a musical audience for the city of Washington. And I've been at it ever since."

He was born James Patrick Kearney into a New York theatrical family and later changed his last name to Hayes for the stage. His mother died when he was 4, and he was raised by an aunt in Scranton, Pa., while his father toured the country with acting troupes. As a child, he took violin lessons, and he sang baritone in a church choir as a young man. In 1929, he graduated from Harvard University, where he majored in history, government and economics.

After graduating, he was a credit investigator for a Wall Street bank, but in October the stock market crashed. With the 1930s came the Great Depression.

For the next few years, Mr. Hayes was night manager at a restaurant, an insurance salesman, actor, singer, founder of a cafe string trio and master of ceremonies in a nightclub. By 1938, he was field representative of the Civic Concert Service of New York. In the fall of 1940, he noticed an item in the newspapers that C.C. Cappel, the manager of the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, had resigned. Mr. Hayes applied for the vacancy and was hired early in 1941.

One of his first acts was to promote subscription sales for National Symphony concerts. He left the job for three years to serve as a Navy supply officer during the war, but he returned to the National Symphony in 1946. By the autumn of 1947, two years after the war ended, sales of subscription tickets had risen to 2,700, but by then, Mr. Hayes was ready to move on.

He was looking for ways to bring other artist and performers to the nation's capital and founded the Hayes Concert Bureau, which for the next two decades would be the area's primary booking and management agency for music, theater and dance events. He sponsored performances at sites including the old Uline Arena in Northeast Washington, Constitution Hall, Lisner Auditorium and the Capitol, Shubert and Belasco Theatres, and he helped arrange regular performances by leading artists at public schools

Over the years, he championed civil rights in the arts, recalling that in his early days in Washington, blacks were not permitted in many of the city's theaters and auditoriums. "The biggest challenge I had to overcome were the racial barriers that I found here in 1941," he recalled in an interview more than four decades later. "There was total black and white segregation of artists."

In his weekly radio broadcasts and innumerable speaking appearances before community organizations, Mr. Hayes became known around town as a "man of a few thousand well-chosen words." He had a ready smile, a ruddy complexion and an infectious enthusiasm for the arts. His life had been blessed, he often said, in that his vocation and avocation were the same, and his attendance at concerts and shows was both work and play. He had many connections, and he knew how to use them creatively. Once, during Lyndon B. Johnson's administration, the pianist Van Cliburn flew into Washington for a one-night concert, but his luggage, including the white tie and tails he was to wear for the performance, remained on the aircraft, which flew on to Memphis.

No rentals were immediately available, but Mr. Hayes remembered that Les Carpenter, the husband of White House aide Liz Carpenter, was about the same size as the famed pianist. He telephoned the White House, but learned that Les Carpenter's white tie and tails were unavailable but that Lyndon Johnson's were. Van Cliburn performed that night in the president's formal attire.

In 1966, in an effort to create a broader base of support for the arts through a continuing organization of permanent patrons, Mr. Hayes founded the Washington Performing Arts Society. The nonprofit society is governed by a board of trustees, and he became its salaried managing director, serving until 1982, when he became director emeritus and a consultant.

In 1939, he married Evelyn Swarthout, a pianist who had played solo performances with the National Symphony Orchestra before the two met. She later would give concerts around Washington at such locations as the Phillips Collection and the National Gallery of Art. She was a longtime music professor at American University.

Often when she practiced at night, Mr. Hayes, returning home from a concert or other engagement, would stop in the hallway outside the room where his wife was practicing. Not wanting to disturb her, he would just stretch out on the floor and listen.

His first marriage, to the former Gaynell Kearney, ended in divorce. In addition to his wife, of Washington, survivors include their two children, Bryant Hayes of New York, and Elizabeth Hayes of Chicago; a son from his first marriage, Edward Kearney of Washington; three grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. Irene Kulick Arlington Teacher

Irene Anne Kornacki Kulick, 76, who taught business courses at Washington-Lee High School in Arlington from 1962 until retiring in 1984, died of ovarian cancer April 13 at the home of a son in Wolfstown, Va.

Mrs. Kulick, who had lived in Arlington since coming to the Washington area in 1950, served as recording secretary with the national headquarters of the Polish-American Arts Association in Washington in 1984 and 1985.

She had been a member of St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church in Arlington since 1950. She also had belonged to the National, Virginia and Arlington Education associations and the Arlington Retired Teachers Association.

Mrs. Kulick, a native of Mount Carmel, Pa., was a 1943 graduate of Bloomsburg State Teachers College in Pennsylvania. Before coming to the Washington area, she had taught at Mount Carmel High School, from which she had graduated in 1940.

Survivors include her husband of 50 years, Joseph A. Kulick of Arlington; two sons, John F., of Wolftown, and Joseph T., of Arlington; a daughter, Therese Kulick Morse of Ashland, Va.; a sister, Mildred M. Dondero of Mount Carmel; and six grandchildren. Helen Gibel Blechman Government Lawyer

Helen Gibel Blechman, 46, a specialist in bankruptcy law who was an assistant general counsel of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, died of breast cancer May 2 at the Washington Home hospice. She lived in the District.

Mrs. Blechman had worked for the commission for the last 16 years.

She came to the Washington area in 1976 as a litigator in the Department of Housing and Urban Development's legal honors program. During her time with HUD, she was detailed to assignments in the White House and the U.S. attorney's office in Washington.

Mrs. Blechman, a native of Roslyn, N.Y., attended the Juilliard School in New York and graduated in 1972 from Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, N.Y. She was a 1976 graduate of Rutgers University law school.

She was a member of Temple Sinai in Washington. Over the years, she had been active in women's advocacy groups and professional organizations and had done work for cancer-related charities.

Survivors include her husband, Robert Glennon, and a son, Michael, both of Washington; her mother, Fela Blechman of Great Neck, N.Y., and Philadelphia; and a brother, Stephen Blechman of Sebastopol, Calif. Lucille M. Py Nurse

Lucille M. Py, 61, who retired in 1997 after 11 years as the head nurse in the critical care unit of Shady Grove Adventist Hospital, died of cancer April 29 at her home in Frederick, Md.

Mrs. Py, who was born in East Chicago, Ind., received a nursing degree from Allegheny Valley General Hospital near Pittsburgh. She had a 35-year career as a nurse, including a few years at Suburban Hospital and the Heart Institute of the National Institutes of Health.

She also had worked at an Air Force base hospital in San Antonio and at hospitals in Wisconsin.

She was an avid gardener and antiques collector.

Survivors include her husband, Raymond Py of Frederick; three children, Beth Py-Lieberman and Raymond L. "Chip" Py Jr., both of Silver Spring, and Stacey Flynn of Germantown; her mother, Marjorie Mathews of Dayton, Pa.; a sister, Karen Fredericks of Alexandria; and three grandchildren. Iris Hammer Finton Secretary

Iris Hammer Finton, 79, a former accounting firm secretary, died April 28 at the Loudoun County Hospital Center in Leesburg after a stroke.

Mrs. Finton, a former Silver Spring resident, had lived at Falcons Landing, an Air Force retirement community in Sterling, since 1996.

She worked at the Washington accounting firm of Ferguson, Dembo & Co., from 1970 to 1980 and was an active member of Woodside United Methodist Church in Silver Spring. She also was a member of D.C. Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Army Navy Country Club.

Mrs. Finton, who was born in Gibsonville, N.C., came to Washington in the 1930s and attended George Washington University.

Survivors include her husband, James R. Finton of Sterling; three sons, James R. Finton Jr. and Thomas E. Finton, both of Roanoke, and Timothy C. Finton of Silver Spring; two sisters, Maxine H. Moore of Washington and Betsy H. Finnegan of Potomac; and three grandchildren. Anna A.T. Reggio Navy Employee

Anna Agatina Theresa Reggio, 78, a retired Navy Department machine shop worker, died of a heart ailment April 20 at the J.B. Johnson nursing home in Washington.

She was a native of Pittsburgh who moved to the Washington area in 1934 to work as a clerk at a forerunner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. She was an ordnance operator and radio assembler for the Navy from World War II until she retired on disability about 1960.

She was a volunteer at D.C. Village and a member of Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Washington, the Retreat League, Catholic Daughters of America and Third Order of Franciscans.

Survivors include two sisters, Mary R. Phillips and Grace B. Reggio, both of Bethesda. Robert Rockwell Software Scientist

Robert Rockwell, 50, chief scientist for a German-based software company and a former Bethesda resident, died of a heart attack April 8 on a subway in Munich.

Dr. Rockwell was born in Oak Ridge, Tenn., and moved with his family to Bethesda at the age of 2. He graduated from Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School and Princeton University, and he received a doctorate in cultural anthropology from Rutgers University.

As a high school student, he participated in dramatic productions, and he was a founder of the Bethespians, a drama company. He attended Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church.

Since 1981, he had lived in Germany. He was chief technology adviser to a Munich software company, then in 1995 with seven German colleagues he founded Blaxxun Interactive, a firm that specializes in creating virtual communities where people and organizations meet for reunions, trade fairs and social events.

Survivors include his wife, Claudia Florian Rockwell, and a daughter, Angela Cescati, both of Munich; his parents, Theodore and Mary Rockwell of Chevy Chase; two brothers, Ted of San Francisco and Larry of Kensington; and a sister, Juanita of Baltimore. Thomas Earl Shealy Sr. CIA Officer

Thomas Earl Shealy Sr., 64, a retired Central Intelligence Agency officer, died of congestive heart failure April 29 at Inova Fair Oaks Hospital.

Mr. Shealy, who lived in Fairfax, worked for the CIA from 1957 to 1986. He then spent four years as a consultant to Usatrex International, a defense contractor in McLean.

He was born in Raleigh, N.C. He attended Colorado State University and served in the Air Force from 1953 to 1957. During the latter part of his military service, he was detailed to the CIA.

Survivors include his wife, Joyce H. Shealy of Fairfax; three sons, Thomas E. Shealy Jr., of Clifton, John P., of Sterling and Steve P., of Herndon; and two grandsons. John J. Sheridan Soldier and Salesman

John J. Sheridan, 85, a retired lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserve who had worked as a salesman and as operator of his own business, died of lymphoma May 2 at Inova Fairfax Hospital. He lived in West Springfield.

Col. Sheridan, who settled in the Washington area in 1946, was a New York native and an electrical engineering graduate of New York University. He entered the Army during World War II, serving during the war in the Southwest Pacific theater. He was a Signal Corps cryptographer before retiring from active duty in 1953. He retired from the reserves in 1965.

From 1953 to 1973, he sold industrial lubricants, chemicals and machinery for wholesale dealers. From 1973 to 1979, he and his wife operated their own home-cleaning business.

Survivors include his wife, of West Springfield; two children; two sisters; and a brother. Phyllis Beach Delaney Washington Native

Phyllis Beach Delaney, 62, a Washington native who had worked as a secretary and real estate agent before moving to Delaware in 1987, died of cancer May 2 at her home in Selbyville, Del.

Mrs. Delaney, who lived in Chevy Chase from 1962 to 1987, was a graduate of McKinley Technical High School and the University of Maryland. She received a master's degree in English from Salisbury State University.

She had been a secretary with Stuart Petroleum and Shell Oil in Washington and a real estate agent with Long & Foster in Bethesda before moving to Delaware. In Delaware, she had been a substitute teacher and real estate agent.

In Montgomery County, she had been active in PTA groups and Democratic Party organizations. She also had been a Montgomery County election judge.

Survivors include her husband, Edwin, of Selbyville; two sons, Anthony, of Harrisburg, Pa., and William, of Pittsburgh; a daughter, Beth Blechman Brown of Denver; two sisters, Barbara Frederick of Hyattsville and Donna Beach of Pompano, Fla.; and seven grandchildren. CAPTION: Patrick Hayes started arranging shows in the Washington area in 1947. (1990 photo)