



Executive Board

President: Kent Colangelo
 Treasurer: Bethalyn Parker
 Secretary: Larry Boudon
 Outgoing Director: Scott Keeseey
 Incoming Director: Kathryn Hartgrove
 Assistant Director: Lindsey Benne
 Accompanist: Soo Jin Kim
 Music: Barbara Giebelhaus, Betty Baccus, Julia Fabb & Karen Spooner
 Patrons: Joella Walker
 Website: Eve Wyatt

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DECATUR CIVIC CHORUS

FALL, 2025

Greetings From the Director

Friends of the Decatur Civic Chorus,

The leaves have turned a rusty red, orange and yellow and have begun to cover the ground as they descend from the trees. That can only mean that the Historic Decatur Civic Chorus is back at work busily preparing for their annual holiday concert on December 6th at Decatur First Baptist Church.

Having added even more singers to the choir, the choristers are hard at work learning their notes for another festive holiday performance. Each new season seems to welcome younger and more enthusiastic talent. This season is no exception as I believe this year's chorus is one of the most talented ensembles in my tenure.

Just as the changing leaves remind us of the beautiful transition of the seasons and the hope that lies ahead when the trees bloom once again, the chorus too will be making a transition into a new chapter this season. Currently in my tenth year with the DCC I have accepted a position in Charleston, SC beginning in mid-November. With the passing of Mary Anne Sharpe who carried most of the Choir's tenure under her baton, and my relocation to South Carolina, the Decatur Civic Chorus will rely heavily on its history, talent, tradition, enthusiasm and growth as it segues into this new chapter in the story of the DCC.

It has truly been an honor and a privilege to "take the helm" for the last 10 seasons; memories that I will cherish forever. I will miss each of our singers dearly and greatly look forward to hearing their glorious music online in seasons yet to come. Thank you, friends, family and fans of the DCC for your unyielding support of this historic chorus.

Put December 6th on your calendar everyone, as the Decatur Civic Chorus will not miss a beat! Onward and upward everyone...keep singing!

With gratitude and anticipation,
Scott D. Keeseey, Artistic Director

**Mark your calendars for our next concert: Holiday Magic!
 Saturday, December 6, 2025, at 4:00 pm
 First Baptist Church Decatur**

Please visit www.decaturocivicchorus.org for all kinds of additional information including Historical, Contact, and Sponsorship. For the latest news and updates, follow and like us on Facebook @Decatur Civic Chorus Georgia. If you'd like to receive email updates on upcoming concerts, please send a request to webmaster@decaturocivicchorus.org with the words "Add to Email List" in the Subject line.

President's Letter

Dear Patrons and Sponsors,

Hello and welcome to the Decatur Civic Chorus Fall Newsletter celebrating our 76th season! I am honored to serve as this year's president, and I hope this note finds you and your loved ones in good health and ready for some holiday cheer.

This season brings many exciting changes for your Decatur Civic Chorus. First and foremost, we continue to grow – we are delighted to welcome several new members this fall! New voices help enrich our sound and bring fresh energy to the chorus. We are truly fortunate to have them join our musical family.

Sadly, this October we lost a pivotal member of our chorus family, Mary Anne Sharpe, who passed away at the age of 94. Please see the attached bio to recount her amazing life. We owe her our deepest gratitude – our chorus stands strong today because of her vision and lifelong dedication.

Another major change this season involves our artistic leadership. After ten years of inspired direction – including navigating the challenges of the Covid-19 shutdown – Scott Keeseey will be stepping down in early November to accept a dream position with a church in the Charleston, SC area. We are saddened to see him go, but we're thrilled for Scott and Sandee as they begin this exciting new chapter.

We are equally thrilled to announce that Kathryn Hartgrove has accepted the position of Artistic Director and will lead us into our next chapter – beginning with our 4 PM concert on Saturday, December 6 (mark your calendars!). Kathryn's remarkable career spans performances in Greece, Peru, France, Brazil, Turkey, and throughout the United States. She is an accomplished professional stage director and master class technician, having worked with students at universities nationally and abroad. In addition to joining us, Kathryn serves as Associate Professor of Voice and Voice Coordinator at Georgia State University, and as Director of Worship Arts at our rehearsal home, First Baptist Church of Decatur. We are so excited to have her guide us as we continue to grow in artistry and choral excellence.

Finally, I must address the topic none of us enjoys – finances. While the chorus remains in stable condition thanks to our reserve funds and the faithful dues support of our members, our goal is to strengthen our financial position so that we can regularly engage professional instrumentalists and soloists for our concerts. We are deeply grateful to you – our loyal patrons – whose generosity keeps our music alive. Your support helps cover rehearsal space, music purchases, concert hall rentals, and countless other operational expenses.

This season, we're expanding our fundraising efforts with a few fun new initiatives at our concerts and launching a donor recognition program to ensure every supporter receives the appreciation they deserve. Please review the enclosed DCC Sponsorship document for more information and QR code for direct access to our sponsorship opportunities.

On behalf of the entire Decatur Civic Chorus, I offer our heartfelt thanks for your continued support. May this holiday season bring you joy, wonder, and the gift of beautiful music.

The mission of the Decatur Civic Chorus is to offer area singers an opportunity to participate in choral singing under qualified leadership; to enhance the cultural life of the community through free, quality performances; and to support community and charitable causes.

Warm regards,

Kent Colangelo, President

Patrons Committee Greetings

In honor of our late Mary Anne Sharpe prepared by Marilyn Self:

“Music is a gift from God, and its perfection is our gift back to Him.” This is the dearly held motto belief of the DCC’s Director Emeritus, Mary Anne Sharp, which she instilled in every one of the hundreds of singers she molded into a chorus and a family over her fifty-seven years as our director. Mary Anne passed on to join the Heavenly Choir on October 2, but she has left a legacy of dedicated singers in the Decatur Civic Chorus, with a plan to carry her passion for music well into the future. Mary Anne was dedicated to her love of God and her church, and demanded perfection in the choral performance of masterworks celebrating her faith to share with the world.

She was passionately patriotic and showed her love of country by ensuring that the Chorus performed patriotic compositions whenever possible, and included salutes to veterans regularly. She ensured that we performed at national memorial sites, including the new Ground Zero memorial in New York City and while on international tours.

She knew that music was a universal language that could bring people together and took the Chorus around the world on tours to Austria, Italy, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, England, the Netherlands, Mexico, Spain and more. When we could not travel to them, she brought the world to Georgia, serving as artistic director of the DeKalb International Choral Festival, where 850 singers from almost every continent participated in a week of concerts throughout the area, culminating in a final mass concert in Stone Mountain Park under the direction of John Rutter, probably the finest living composer of classical music today. Later she took us to New York City to sing in Carnegie Hall under his direction again, and to Washington, DC to the Kennedy Center to sing with Andre Thomas. When Moses Hogan came to direct the choir at First Baptist Church, she managed to get us invited to join them. Mary Anne was always pushing the boundaries and looking for ways to be sure the DCC was exposed to the finest music and directors available.

Most of all, Mary Anne molded us into more than a group of singers – we became a family. Some of us have been with the Chorus for ten, twenty, thirty, or more years. We come and we go, and we welcome new voices, knowing they are our future. Mary Anne proved that the Chorus is more than one group, one director, one point in time. Just as she took over from the founding director, Mary Clark, she turned over the reins, to a new Director, Scott Keeseey, who introduced new rhythms, new singers, new music – and now he is turning over the reins to a new director and a new era for the DCC. WE are grateful for the legacy Mary Anne created, for her dedication and passion, and know that her spirit will live on in the DCC in its future for generations to come.

With gratitude,

Joella Walker, Patrons Committee Chair