



Chicago Sinfonietta remembers long-serving Board member Phil Engel

CHICAGO, IL – Chicago Sinfonietta mourns the loss of its friend, long-time board member, generous supporter, and advocate Philip (Phil) Louis Engel. Born on August 20, 1940, in Chicago, Illinois, Phil passed away peacefully on July 2, 2025, in his hometown. He is survived by La, his devoted wife of sixty-two years, his brother Thane and an adoring family. Our thoughts are with the family at this difficult time.

Phil Engel's commitment to Chicago Sinfonietta, as an Officer of the Board of Directors from 2007 until 2019, when he stepped down and became a Lifetime Trustee, as well as being a long-time supporter of and subscriber to Chicago Sinfonietta, is part of his enduring legacy. One of his many accomplishments for the Sinfonietta is that he chaired the search committee that selected Music Director Mei-Ann Chen to succeed Maestro Paul Freeman.

A passionate supporter of the arts, and a thoughtful leader, he additionally generously gave of his time and expertise to a host of organizations, including as President of the board for the Chicago Shakespeare Theater, the Beckman Research Institute of the City of Hope and the Jane Addams Hull House Association. He was also a board member of the Stratford Festival in Ontario, Canada. "Phil was a special man and an important part of my and Mary's life for over 40 years," stated current Chicago Sinfonietta Board Chair **Jim Weidner**. "We worked together, sat on the Board of the Chicago Sinfonietta together, went to the theatre together, listened to classical music together, sang together, had many a lunch and dinner together, attended his fantastic parties, marveled at his knowledge of just about everything—and got to know his wonderful wife La. His contributions to Chicago Sinfonietta are many, and I and Mary, as well as countless others, will miss him greatly."

"My heart goes out to Phil's family," said Chicago Sinfonietta Music Director **Mei-Ann Chen**. "Phil was on the search committee that hired me, and was an incredible force of support for Chicago Sinfonietta. I still vividly remember Phil's gentle smiles and warmest welcome when he interviewed me over dinner during my very first guest week with the Sinfonietta. One of the kindest and the most thoughtful person, I am thankful for Phil and all he did for Chicago Sinfonietta. We will miss the one and only Phil Engel tremendously!"

"Phil Engel leaves an incredible legacy at Chicago Sinfonietta," said **Sidney P. Johnson, Jr.**, President and CEO of Chicago Sinfonietta. "I did not have the pleasure to meet him personally, but I understand that his commitment and service to the Sinfonietta has helped to make the organization what it is today. My thoughts and prayers go to his family, as well as my thanks for his service to Sinfonietta."

Mr. Engel's decades-long legacy of support and generosity will continue to inspire us at Chicago Sinfonietta. His remembrance in *The Chicago Tribune* may be read [here](#).

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