



VIRTUAL HOMECOMING 2020

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

Jackie Seay McGehee, '79



COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES, FINE
ARTS & HUMANITIES

“Have a good time along the way. Keep a good sense of humor and a good sense of yourself. Feel great about yourself. It’s not others who define who you are. The journey is important. Not the end result. Or what will come our way. Our journey and who we reach is what matters.”

~ Jackie Seay McGehee

Jackie is a pillar in the music community, and blessed with her own musical gifts, she has spent her entire adult life supporting others, not for any reward or glory, but to answer a need and inspire those around her. Jackie created a fertile training ground for the musically gifted in our state in the 45 years she spent teaching piano and voice.

Along with her education at the University of Albuquerque, Jackie earned a master’s degree at age 42 from NMSU in Piano Performance and Pedagogy. Midway through her degree, a professor presented her with a certificate that said, “Jackie McGehee Knows Everything.” She cherishes the challenges, laughter and fun that her experience at NMSU gave her.

Jackie has served in Texas as President of the UTEP Opera Guild and the El Paso Professional Music Teachers Association, where she organized the El Paso Festival of Pianos, which involved assembling 100 piano students to perform simultaneously on 50 pianos. She was named Woman of the Year in Music by the El Paso Times. In New Mexico, Jackie has served as president of the New Mexico Symphony Guild (now the Music Guild of NM) and chair of the board of the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra. She is a recipient of the Albuquerque Arts Alliance Bravo Award and, most recently, was inducted into the 2020 Silver Horizon’s Senior Hall of Fame.

While chair of the board of the NM Symphony Orchestra, Jackie developed a five-year education plan in Albuquerque involving musical opportunities for all ages, and the Symphony received a Mellon grant to carry it out. Additionally, The Music Guild of New Mexico sponsored the Jackie McGehee Young Artist’s Competition for Piano and Strings. This competition has been active for 28 years and has given New Mexico musicians, age 10-21, the opportunity to showcase their talent; many of which have been accepted into the nation’s most prestigious universities of music. The winners of the Young Artist’s Competition perform with the New Mexico Philharmonic. Over the years, Jackie, the Music Guild and other generous sponsors have given a large amount in cash performance prizes and scholarships with an average of 22 contestants every year.

Jackie established the Larry McGehee Memorial Scholarship in 1978, NMSU’s most substantial annual scholarship for pianists, in memory of her son. This scholarship alone has been an exceptional tool in recruiting talented musicians and advancing the music department’s piano major over the years.

Everette, Jackie’s husband of 71 years, has been alongside her for over 15 moves in support of her outstanding music career. In addition to their late son Larry, the two share daughter Meredith, grandson Timothy and son-in-law Jeff.