

VITO E. MASON



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SILVER SPRING, MD – Vito E. Mason, 80, of 306 Colesville Manor Drive, Silver Spring, Maryland, passed away on November 25, 2008 of natural causes. He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Rosina Mason; three daughters and their husbands, Rosina and Daniel Whitfield of Greensboro, North Carolina, Joli and Ken McCathran of Washington Grove, Maryland, and Rebecca and Ron Simmons of Aldie, Virginia; and six grandchildren,

Rose and Emily McCathran, Skyler Whitfield, and Benjamin, Kira, and Sean Simmons.

Prof. Mason lived a spectacular life. Born on January 6, 1928 in Elizabeth, New Jersey, as the son of Lithuanian immigrants, he came to be Professor Emeritus of Music at American University in Washington, DC. He was also a world traveler, and a loving husband, father, and grandfather.

He loved people and enjoyed making them smile. With his booming voice and buoyant, raucous laugh he would joke with people all the time, brightening their day. In his career as a Professor of Music he also became an internationally acclaimed choral conductor, adjudicator, and clinician. Highlights include performing with his choir at the White House, with the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center, Wolf Trap Farm Park, and countless festivals, concerts, and all-state choruses throughout the country and in many parts of the world.

Before moving to the Washington, DC area, for 14 years he served as the Director of Choral Music at Ithaca High School in Ithaca, New York. Vito was also the Choir Director of the First Presbyterian Church in Ithaca for 12 years (1954-1966), when Rev. Walter Dobbs was minister.

He has been listed in "Outstanding Educators of America," and "Who's Who of World Musicians." He is also the recipient of the prestigious Porter W. Averill Award for his distinguished work in choral conducting and music education.

A memorial service is planned for December 14, 2008, at 1:00 p.m. at the Lutheran Church of the Reformation, 212 E. Capitol Street SE. Washington, DC 20003, where he also served as the Choir Director for many years.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be sent to the Vito E. Mason Vocal Music Award, c/o the Ithaca City School District, 400 Lake Street, Ithaca, New York 14850; or the Stained Glass Restoration Fund at the Lutheran Church of the Reformation.