

KENT S. DENNIS MEMORIAL ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

Saginaw Valley Chapter

American Guild of Organists

GENERAL INFORMATION

The purpose of the Kent S. Dennis Memorial Endowed Scholarship is to encourage and enrich the musical education of present and future church or synagogue organists and will be awarded for either beginning study or further study of the organ.

The scholarship competition is open to keyboard students (piano or organ) enrolled in high school or college, and also adult students who reside in the Great Lakes Bay Region and served by the Saginaw Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists (including but not limited to Arenac, Bay, Clare, Gladwin, Gratiot, Huron, Isabella, Midland, Saginaw, and Tuscola counties) or who study with a teacher who is a member of the Saginaw Valley Chapter. Scholarships will be based entirely upon merit and will be paid directly to the college or university or to an approved instructor on behalf of the student and in accordance with the Midland Area Community Foundation's award distribution policy.

Three scholarships of \$500.00 each are available and will be awarded at the discretion of the judges. Additional scholarships may be awarded. The number of applicants, the amount of funds available, and the final opinion of the judges appointed by the Scholarship Committee will affect these decisions.

All application requirements of the Saginaw Valley Chapter and the Midland Area Community Foundation must be completed by the posted deadline, February 15th of the year, in order to qualify for the scholarship.

If, in the opinion of the judges, no suitable candidate is eligible, the scholarship may not be awarded. The amount of each award will be determined at the discretion of the judges. The Midland Area Community Foundation reserves the right to accept or reject the recommendations of the Saginaw Valley Chapter A.G.O.

Dr. Kent S. Dennis [1928-2007]

Kent S. Dennis was born June 25, 1928, to William and Mabel Dennis in Donora, Pennsylvania. A scientist, Dr. Dennis earned a BS degree in chemistry from Grove City College, where he graduated summa cum laude. He received MS and PhD degrees from Cleveland's Western Reserve University (now Case Western Reserve). In 1954 he began a position at the Dow Chemical Co. in Midland before being drafted into the U.S. Army for two years. He retired from Dow in 1986 after 32 years as a senior research associate. Dr. Dennis was organist at The Bertha E. R. Strosacker Memorial Presbyterian Church in Midland for 47 years, and was named organist emeritus in 2003. He played for more than 700 weddings and performed annual organ recitals for 46 years; he also taught many organ students. His community involvement included leadership terms for the Saginaw Valley Chapter AGO, which he served three times as dean. He also served on the board of managers of the Midland Center for the Arts and as president of the Midland Symphony Orchestra. In 1987 the Music Society and Midland Symphony Orchestra honored him with the Musician of the Year award. In 1997 he received the Grove City College Alumni Achievement Award. In 2002, Dr. Steven Egler commissioned an organ piece, "Fantasia on Dennis," by David

Gillingham in honor of Dr. Dennis. Having both extraordinary technical and musical talents, Dr. Dennis built a pipe organ in his Alden Dow-designed home. When his health declined, he donated the organ to St. Joseph the Worker Church in Beal City, Michigan. Kent Dennis died on January 1, 2007.

Application Process and Audition Requirements

All the requirements of Midland Area Community Foundation, found at the link below, must be followed to qualify for the Kent S. Dennis Memorial Endowed Scholarship. Follow all instructions closely. **All materials must be received by the Midland Area Community Foundation no later than February 15th of the year.**

<https://www.midlandfoundation.org/fund/kent-s-dennis-memorial-scholarship-fund-602/>

<https://www.midlandfoundation.org/scholarships>

Each scholarship applicant is required to participate in a performance audition, which will take place on the last Friday of March each year, in the sanctuary of The Memorial Presbyterian Church, 1310 Ashman Street, Midland, MI 48640. Upon receipt of the scholarship applications, the Scholarship Committee will schedule the date and times of auditions and rehearsals.

Organists will perform on the 2012 Letourneau, 4-manual, pipe organ, and pianists will perform on the Steinway grand piano.

Both pianists and organists will perform two pieces of contrasting styles and periods, with one being from the Baroque or Classical era. Memorization is not required. Performance time will be limited to a maximum of ten (10) minutes.

Update for 2021 competition:

In light of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Executive Committee of the Saginaw Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists has decided not to hold a live competition on March 26, 2021. Instead, applicants will submit an unedited video recording of the required music on their own instruments. This video shall then be sent to Dr. Adrienne Wiley (wiley1ae@cmich.edu), Dennis Scholarship Competition Coordinator, no later than **March 19, 2021, Friday at 5:00 p.m.**

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c/o The Midland Area Community Foundation

www.midlandfoundation.org

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