



Sharon B. Girard (NCTM)

When she was in sixth grade, Sharon (Henderson) Girard knew she wanted to be a teacher and by the time she finished eighth grade, she knew her subject would be music. She was already taking piano lessons and, inspired by her school music teachers, she stopped taking dance lessons in order to add voice lessons while in high school. After high school, she attended Western Connecticut State University, where she earned a BS Degree in Music Education in 1976. While at WestConn, Sharon was also involved in the Theater Department, both on stage and behind the scenes as a lighting specialist. Her college journey was not straight-forward, as she had to change her major instrument from voice to piano due to health issues. As it turned out, the change was fortuitous as it led her to begin teaching private piano lessons shortly after graduation.

“At that time, the opportunities for public school teachers were few because schools were being closed due to a decline in student-age population”, according to Sharon. “I began teaching privately as a necessity and found it to be very rewarding.” In 1978 she was hired as a part-time elementary music teacher in Suffield where she worked for four years teaching K-2 music while continuing to maintain her private studio. During that time she also took courses in Kodaly and Orff philosophies in addition to courses in early childhood music. After her son was born in 1982, she chose to continue with her private teaching but did not return to the classroom. “I wanted to work on my advanced degree and felt it would be an overload to return to public school teaching along with my private studio and family responsibilities.” Sharon finished her Masters in Music Education at the University of Hartford’s Hartt School in 1984.

Sharon’s teaching philosophy is “Music from cradle to grave”. While some of her former students are now in music related professions, she believes that her primary mission is to give her students an appreciation for music in all its forms. “I teach primarily in the classical style but encourage my students to play what makes them happy, too. I personally like to hear and appreciate a great jazz pianist as much as a great classical pianist.” She is a long-time member of the Music Teachers National Association, the premier professional organization for private and college level piano teachers, where she holds the title Nationally Certified Teacher of Music (NCTM). She has served on panels at national conferences and has adjudicated piano events at the state level.

Today, Sharon continues to teach private students, children and adults, at her studio in Windsor Locks. In addition, she sings in the St. Gregory Choir at Trinity Episcopal Church in Tarriffville and is an active member of the Musical Club of Hartford. She and her husband can

be seen out and about at classical and jazz concerts and performances throughout the area and in New York City. She'll even grab a mic to sing a jazz standard at a jam session on occasion. "Music is my life's work and because I enjoy it, I will do it until the day I die."