



## Dr. Vida Chenoweth

October 18, 1928 - December 14, 2018

Dr. Vida Chenoweth was born in Enid, Oklahoma, in 1928, one of twins. She passed away December 14, 2018.

Vera and Vida were known as "the Chenoweth twins." Having graduated from Enid High School in 1947, the girls entered William Woods College for Girls, now William Woods University, in Fulton, Missouri. Vera was President of the Junior Class and the next year was voted Popularity Queen. Vida was president of two honor societies and Vice-President of the student government.

Both girls were attracted to the equestrian program, and Vera was a member of the esteemed Paddock Club. From 1952 and continuing, the Vera Chenoweth trophy has been a coveted prize at William Woods, awarded to the most outstanding rider of the year. It was first presented by Vida as a memorial to her twin in 1952 after Vera died during heart surgery in Chicago. Just a year later, Vida had the same operation at Harvard Medical School. Their two brothers, William Austin and Robert Louis Chenoweth died in 2002 and 2003, respectively. Their distinguished parents Louis A. Chenoweth (of Chenoweth & Green Music Co.) and wife Velma Warrick Chenoweth died in 1986 and 1993.

At the age of 13, Oklahoma native Vida Chenoweth turned from the piano to the marimba when her finger became infected. Her debut held in Fullerton Hall at the Chicago Art Institute was the first recital of works composed specifically for marimba. In her 1962 recital in New York, critics acclaimed her

as having lifted the marimba to concert level. World tours included every continent. She was the first marimbist invited to play in Carnegie Hall and issued the first recording of works for the marimba. IN the midst of her meteoric career, another accident to her hand caused a change of career, that of becoming a Wycliffe Bible Translator and eventually developing a theory of deciphering unwritten music systems through techniques learned from linguistics. She pioneered the effort to cultivate indigenous hymns among preliterate peoples rather than to introduce Western music. In 1977, as Professor of Ethnomusicology at Wheaton College, IL, she taught from her own ethnic music theories which led to the first Bachelor of Music degree ever offered in Ethnomusicology. She involved interns in worldwide research, and her 900+ field recordings, along with their meticulous documentation, are housed as The Chenoweth Collection in The Library of Congress.

Her scholastic achievements include an Associate in Arts degree from William Woods College, a Bachelor of Music degree with double majors from Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, a Master of Music with double majors from The American Conservatory of Music, Chicago, and a PH.D. from the University of Auckland, New Zealand, which embraced three disciplines: music, anthropology and linguistics. She is a Fulbright scholar, a member of the Oklahoma Hall of Fame (1985) and the Percussive Arts Society Hall of Fame (1994).

In 2001, Dr. Chenoweth was recognized as one of the 2000 "Outstanding Musicians of the 20th Century."

Surviving are niece LeeAnne Lawson (Chenoweth) and husband Richard, cousins Phil and Dixie McKinney and many other cousins.

Memorial service will be on February 16, 2019, at 1:00 p.m. at Symphony Hall, 301 W. Broadway, Enid, OK.

Arrangements are under the direction of Anderson-Burris.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

FEB **16**. 1:00 PM (CT)

Symphony Hall  
301 W Broadway Ave  
Enid, OK 73701