

## IMTA TOY nomination – Sally Eppert

This submission includes 4 letters; I am submitting them together for convenience.

It is my pleasure to nominate Sally Eppert for IMTA 2023 Teacher of the Year. Sally epitomizes what it means to be a professional independent teacher, running a successful home studio in Fishers for over 35 years. And while she could now rest on her laurels, she is starting a multi-instrument music academy.

Sally has been a steadfast, dedicated presence in the piano teaching profession in the Carmel, Fishers and Indianapolis area for as long as I can remember. I first met Sally through IPTA when I began private teaching in the early '90s. Sally, along with colleagues Sue Schultz, Susie Wolfe, Bev Strathman, were a dynamic quartet that welcomed me into the profession – referring students to me, providing mentorship and friendship, and serving as role models for what an engaged professional teacher looks like. Sue, Susie and Bev have long retired, but Sally is still going strong! Read more on her webpage: <https://www.eppertpianostudio.com/fishers-piano-teacher/>.

Sally has been active in the local teacher groups for over 35 years. She was one of the pioneers of group teaching in Indianapolis in the late 1980's and 1990's, and an active member of the Indiana Group Piano Teachers. (I am fairly sure she was president of this group, but I can't verify without asking her. The group has been defunct for many years now.) Her approach to group teaching was rooted in her masters training at SMU with Louise Bianchi; Sally was influential in helping other Indiana teachers become better teachers of group piano.

Sally also served as president of GIMTA from 2006-2021 (need to verify dates). She spearheaded GIMTA's efforts to bring national pedagogues to Indy for an annual two-day workshop, including Catherine Rollin, Robert Vandall, Paul Wirth, Melody Bober, Kevin Olson, Chris Goldston and Philip Keveren. She has been a member of MTNA/IMTA since 1986.

Sally is also a long-time member of IPTA, serving as president of IPTA from 2008-2010 and 2020-2021, and IPTG (not sure if she was ever president of this group or not). Most remarkable is her commitment to lifelong learning. To this day, she continues to attend teacher meetings and conferences, always enthusiastic about what she's learning and eager to share with her students. Her students are active in recitals, festivals, competitions, and assessment programs.

Despite life-threatening health issues and challenging family obligations during the past few years (not to mention COVID), Sally remains one of the most positive teachers I've ever known. She is dedicated, committed to excellence, supportive, and truly deserving of the honor of IMTA Teacher of the Year.

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Letter from Rick Latos (adult student of Sally's):

As an adult piano student, I began learning to play this fabulous instrument less than 5 year ago. When I first contacted Sally Eppert to ask if she would be available to teach me, she laughed when I mentioned that, even though I had played clarinet 60 years ago, I didn't know where middle C was located on the piano! Fast forward to my current skill set (if you can seriously call my plinking the ivories anything akin to a skill), these years working with Sally have been among the most meaningful experiences of my

life. All joking aside, Sally's exuberant personality and constant support have instilled in me a true sense of enjoyment of music that was hidden for most of my life.

Sally has not only endured and conquered a life-threatening illness, but she has provided me and I suspect, all her other students, with an appreciation of what hard work and perseverance can do to help in one's personal growth. It is one thing to tolerate endless hours of student nonperformance, but quite another to constantly smile and encourage her students to keep on trying (kind of like Dori's attitude in *Finding Nemo*..."Keep on swimming, keep on swimming!"). Sally keeps on learning – new teaching techniques, and countless personal new styles of playing. Throughout the many years of her teaching career, she has mentored other teachers and has inspired hundreds of her students to appreciate the joy in creating their own music, not just playing what others c\have composed.

It is a true pleasure and honor for me to participate in helping Sally Eppert to receive well-deserved recognition as a music teacher and educator. At a time when all of us struggle to find importance in our lives, she continues to lead us to greater things, among the most beautiful of these is a love for the peace and satisfaction of playing music.

August 31, 2023

Derrick Latos, MD, MACP (retired)"

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Letter from Kameron Mechling:

I am honored to endorse my esteemed colleague, Sally Eppert, for the Teacher of the Year Award presented by IMTA. In an exceptional career marked by resilience, unwavering passion, and selflessness, Sally stands out as an extraordinary educator deserving of this prestigious honor.

Amidst personal trials that would daunt even the strongest of individuals—battling Leukemia, caring for her husband through the challenges of Alzheimer's, and navigating the complex landscape of Covid through it all—Sally exemplifies the very essence of dedication. Never once did these trials overshadow her commitment to her students. Her tenacity is a true inspiration, demonstrating the depth of her devotion.

Eppert's exceptional commitment to her craft is a testament to her unyielding passion for teaching. Her fearlessness in embracing risks, all in the pursuit of doing what's right for her students and community, mirrors a character marked by integrity and vision. Her actions speak to the transformative power of dedication and the ripple effects they create in the lives of those fortunate enough to be under her tutelage.

Furthermore, Sally's compassion radiates beyond herself, exemplifying her as a remarkable role model. Her benevolence in funding the expenses for both my fellow young professional and my own admission to the 2023 NCKP conference underscores her profound investment in the future of music education. This act vividly embodies the spirit of selflessness and dedication that truly distinguishes her as an exceptional educator.

In conclusion, Sally's outstanding ability to persevere, coupled with her relentless passion and empathetic nature, embodies the pinnacle of exceptional teaching. Her contributions to the field extend far beyond the ordinary, making her a true standout amongst educators. It is with the utmost respect and admiration that I wholeheartedly nominate Sally Eppert for the IMTA Teacher of the Year Award.

Sincerely,

Kameron Mechling

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Letter from Brenna Green:

It is a real pleasure to endorse Sally Eppert for this award through IMTA. My first experience meeting Sally, before coming to work for her studio, was when she came to my master's graduate piano recital at Butler University - she brought with her a couple of her adult piano students, so I was able to meet them all afterwards. Not only did her support by coming to see the culmination of my graduate work show that she was a person with a community-minded spirit with a passion to support others' music making endeavors, but I was very impressed at the close-knit bond she has with her adult piano students, and how she will take every opportunity to let them experience a rich musical life whenever possible. Once I began working in her studio, I saw that she hoped for the same musical experiences for students of all ages as well.

What amazes me about Sally is about how creative and varied her teaching ideas are, her willingness to be open to new methods, her involvement in the local music teacher scene, and perhaps most of all her tenacity of strength. She has overcome many struggles, not the least of them leukemia in recent years, and has come through with still such energy to propel her music studio forward, by developing and innovating her piano studio into a full-fledged music academy. I wholeheartedly recommend Sally Eppert as a nominee for IMTA Teacher of the Year.

Sincerely,

Brenna Green