



Richard Charles Bellak

February 7, 1945 - January 24, 2018

Richard Bellak was born in Philadelphia and lived most of his life in Tallahassee. He was known for intellectual brilliance and creativity. He was both a brilliant attorney and a brilliant composer. His wit, breadth of knowledge, and passion animated every conversation, according to an article in the Tallahassee Democrat by Marina Brown. He passed away January 24.

He had a lifetime of musical composition. He studied music theory and composition at the University of Pennsylvania with composers Andre Vauclain, George Rochberg, George Crumb and Richard Wernick. He received a full scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania. He then went on to Princeton on a music fellowship for a master's degree, and back to Penn for his Ph.D. He wrote his dissertation on pianist and composer, Franz Liszt. He became head of the Music Department at Franconia College where he was founding Music Director of the White Mountains Festival. He conducted the first U.S. performances of Bruckner's "Nulte" symphony and Schumann's Manfred.

When Franconia closed its doors, he made a career right-angle turn. He went back to school – at Florida State University – to become an attorney. He said that "Law was really my entrée into life." He made a number of dear and lifelong friends there.

He got his first legal job in the antitrust section of the Florida Attorney General's office. He was a respected attorney at the Florida Public Service

Commission for 21 years. He was especially adept at difficult appeals. He practiced law fiercely. After retirement from the Commission, he also was a contract attorney for the Agency for Persons with Disabilities.

He accomplished a number of compositions, including a book of music called "Fugal Dreams" and Concerto for Piano and Orchestra. A highlight of his music career was when his composition, "Fantasy for Organ and Brass," was performed at the Lincoln Center May 8, 1983. As he said, he had two loves – both law and music.

The memorial service will be March 17 at 11 a.m. at the Unitarian Church on Meridian Road. Donations to the Muscular Dystrophy Association may be made in lieu of flowers. Susie Mozolic of Bevis Funeral Home is assisting his friends with the arrangements. (www.bevisfh.com 850-385-2193)