



## MENTOR'S DESK

### My time to say thank you...

by Jane Linde Capistran

I recently discovered a book published in 2013 by Joanne Lipman and Melanie Kupchynsky entitled *Strings Attached: One Tough Teacher and the Gift of Great Expectations*. For some of you, the name of Jerry Kupchynsky may be very familiar, as he was an outstanding string educator in New Jersey and served as a national ASTA officer for many years. Tragically, his daughter Stephanie, an orchestra teacher in New York State, was abducted in 1991, her remains being found seven years later. This cold case was recently brought back into court, with an indictment. The book honors Stephanie, but devotes thanks and recognition to a string teacher that instilled life-long lessons, with what may be unconventional methods in this day and age, to his students. It will definitely be a “must read” for me on my summer reading list.

As I read excerpts from the book about “Mr. K” by Wall Street Journalist Joanne Lipman, I thought of my Minnesota mentors that led me in my musical journey. Of course it all began with my parents, *Erling and Janice Linde*, both of them musicians. They made music a way of life for me and my brothers. My father, a flutist and junior high band director, was ever so supportive when I decided that the *orchestra* was where I wanted to play, not the band like my brothers.

*Eunice Pitmon*, my elementary and junior high string teacher, gave me such a

solid start on my violin. I recognize now all the string pedagogy knowledge she had, but as a fourth grader, I just knew she made learning and playing the violin fun.

*Isabelle Thompson*, professor at Concordia College, became my private violin teacher when I got to the eighth grade. She had such a lovely way in her teaching—gentle yet demanding, as I began learning more advanced literature.

*Vincent Puliccichio*, or “Mr. P”, was my orchestra director at Moorhead High. His fiery Italian spirit and love of strolling strings gave me a huge education in a style of playing I can always use as a resource.

*Roberta Sellon* was my violin Professor at Bemidji State University. She helped me be a leader and a chamber musician, and saved the compliments so you knew when you had done well.

*Thomas Swanson*, Conductor of the BSU Orchestra, was the most musical and challenging professor one could have. His quest for knowledge always made me search for answers and strive to be a better musician.

*Mary Budd Horozaniecki* became my violin teacher at MacPhail the first year I was a string teacher in Anoka. Mary was a huge influence in my journey to being a better violinist. Her incredible playing, knowledge of repertoire and technique, and her encouraging spirit lead me into graduate school.

I am thankful, grateful and fortunate to

have all these mentors in my life—some of them continue to be my mentors. I know that you could list all the special mentors in your life too—I just happen to have an outlet to write this public acknowledgment of recognition and thanks. But just as Joanne Lipman wrote an entire book about her teacher/mentor, it’s a reminder for us to thank all of the mentors that have shaped our lives in a huge way.

For the alumni teachers out there, you are already mentoring students and new teachers every day. But remember as a MNSOTA mentor, you can also have the added mentoring experience to connect with someone who may need the exact skills you share everyday with students. And I know that in the future, they will be thanking you ... even when they are lawyers, doctors or journalists.

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