



2026 UPEI Distinguished Alumni Award

Dr. Betty Anne Younker (BMus 1978)

With a career in music education that has spanned more than 40 years, Dr. Betty Anne Younker has helped shape the minds and careers of countless students and has served the academy, her profession, and the communities she has called home with distinction.

After completing a Bachelor of Music at UPEI in 1978, Betty Anne went on to earn a Master of Education in Music Education at Pennsylvania State University in 1980 and then spent nine years teaching music in K-10 general, choral, and band settings in Newfoundland and Labrador and PEI.

In 1991, she returned to UPEI as a lecturer in the Department of Music, Faculty of Arts, where she taught until 1997, the same year she completed a PhD in Music Education at Northwestern University.

Between 1997 and 2000, Betty Anne was Assistant Professor of Music at the University of Western Ontario before joining the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre and Dance where she worked until 2011. During her tenure with the University of Michigan, she began working in administrative roles, first as Chair of the Music Education Department, then as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for the School of Music, Theatre and Dance.

In 2011, Betty Anne rejoined the University of Western Ontario when she was appointed as the first female Dean of the Don Wright Faculty of Music, serving in that role for two terms until 2021. During her time as Dean, she was known for her strong leadership, including raising \$2.3 million and overseeing a five-year construction project to renovate and expand the Music Building.

Her research has been reported in over 50 publications that include book chapters, peer-reviewed articles, and other professional manuscripts and reports, and in over 100 research papers and keynote addresses at national and international conferences. She is an active contributor to the music education profession and has served in various leadership roles with the College Music Society, the Michigan Music Educators Association, the Canadian Music Educators Association, the International Society for Music Education, the National Association for Schools of Music, and many more.

Betty Anne has left her mark at each of the institutions and in the communities where she has worked and lived. She has created and resurrected various academic and non-academic programs and initiatives while contributing to academic communities as an external reviewer, search committee member, task force chair, commencement organizer, and advisor.

Her impact in the community of London, Ontario, where she makes her winter home, is evident through leadership volunteer roles with the London Symphonia, the Kiwanis Music Festival of London, and the London Arts Council. She has been a long-time financial supporter of the UPEI Department of Music and served two terms as a director of the UPEI Alumni Association, including as president and past president.

It is no surprise that Betty Anne's career achievements and community impact have earned recognition from her peers, students, and others. Examples include the Distinguished Alumnus of the Year Award from Pennsylvania State University College of Arts and Architecture in 2008; the Western University Student's Council Teaching Honour Roll in 2012; the Dr. Pedro Goldman Award Faculty of Music Students Council, University of Western Ontario for 1999–2000; and the Michigan Music Educators Award of Merit in 2016. She was named to the London, Ontario Mayor's New Year's Honour List in 2021 for "providing Londoners with rich artistic fare and enhancing the reputation of the city as a centre of high-level artistic endeavours."

In recognition of her dedication to the field of Music Education and community service, the UPEI Alumni Association is proud to present Dr. Betty Anne Younker (BMus 1978) with a 2026 Distinguished Alumni Award.