

MICHAEL KOVINS NAMED DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS

The Frost School of Music is honored to award its Distinguished Alumnus Award for 2006 to Michael Kovins, former president of Korg USA. He was one of the first graduates from the University of Miami with a Bachelor of Music degree (1970) with an emphasis in music business. After graduating, Mike began his career in the music industry at Sam Ash, first in the educational department and then in their Hempstead, Long Island store. In 1973, he joined Tolchin Instruments where he was involved in setting up the first nationally distributed catalog for music educators. Upon leaving Tolchin in 1976, Mike went to work at M. Hohner, Inc., hired by then vice president of sales, Joe Bredau (Korg USA's current vice president of market and sales) to run their Orff-Schulwerk Division. When Hohner decided to move to Richmond, Virginia, Mike went to work at Unicord in 1980. When Korg USA was founded in 1985, Mike then assumed responsibilities as executive vice president. In 1994, he was promoted to president. Kovins earned his MBA in Marketing from Long Island University/C.W. Post. He was a generous supporter of the Frost School of Music, having donated electronic instruments to many members of the faculty and for one of the keyboard labs in the Music Technology Center.



Kovins served as president of the International Association of Electronic Keyboard Manufacturers, a board member of the American Music Conference, founder and executive committee member of the Technology Institute for Music Educators, member of the board of Five Towns College, one of the first commercial board members of the International Music Products Association, and member of the Music Educators National Conference Advisory Council. He received the Gold Clef award from Berklee College of Music for lifetime commitment to music education and the Julia E. Crane International Medallion for lifetime achievement in the Music Products Industry from SUNY Potsdam. In the twenty-five years that Kovins was at Korg USA, the company grew more than 500% in sales and became one of the country's largest suppliers of electronic musical instruments to retailers and major artists.

We regret to report that Michael L. Kovins passed away on May 2, 2006 at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Hospital in Manhattan, New York after a long battle with leukemia. He is survived by his wife of 29 years, Katherine, who taught music education for over thirty years in the Syosset School District.