

## R. Michael Fling

Robert Michael Fling—he has always gone by Michael—retired from IU last year after 30 years of distinguished service to the William and Gayle Cook Music Library and the IU Libraries.

Michael was brought up in Texas and graduated with a bachelor's degree in music theory from Baylor University in 1962. Two years later he received a master's degree in musicology from the University of Iowa. His thesis was a translation of Johann Philip Kirnberger's treatise on basso continuo (1781) and a commentary thereon. After further graduate study in musicology at Iowa, he found himself in what had already become a common position for budding musicology students with master's degrees: unemployed. Thereupon, he took a position at Eble Music Company in Iowa City, ordering music scores for one of the largest music stores in the country (nowadays, one of only a few music stores in the country).

After receiving a master's degree in library science from Iowa in 1975, Michael parlayed the skills he had learned at Eble's into a job at Indiana University. His title for the first 10 years was reference librarian, but the two librarians with this title both did work in collection development and acquisitions for the Music Library, or in other words selecting and ordering materials, and otherwise building up the collection of books, scores, and recordings. In 1987, when the other reference librarian went on sabbatical, Michael took the opportunity to devote himself entirely to collection development, and did so for the next 20 years. In 1995 Michael added deputy head to his title and assisted in the administration of the Music Library. For several months in 1997 and again in 1998 he served as acting head.

The William and Gayle Cook Music Library at IU is one of the largest music libraries in this country, and indeed, the world. Its collection of over half a million items meets the needs of the faculty and students of America's largest music school, as well as those of other members of the IU community, Indiana residents, and countless visitors. That the collection meets these needs so well is largely due to Michael's tireless and savvy stewardship over the last 30 years.

Michael is known as *the* expert on music collection development and acquisitions in the United States. He literally wrote the book on it: *Library Acquisition of Music* was published by Scarecrow Press in 2004. A typically droll and thorough article on "Techniques for Acquiring Music in All Formats" appeared last year. As far back as 1981, Michael published a book called *Shelving Capacity in the Music Library*, which is still used and cited today. He put his musicology training to good use in a standard reference book, *Musical Memorials for Musicians*, published by the Music Library Association (MLA) in 2001.

Throughout his career Michael has been active in the MLA, the professional society for American music librarians. He gave distinguished service as editor of the Index and Bibliography Series and the Technical Reports, and he edited *A Basic Music Library: Essential Scores and Books*, second edition, published in 1983. Since 2001 he has been assistant editor of *Notes*, MLA's quarterly journal, where his keen proofreading eye has been much appreciated. He also served on the publications, publications awards, and preservation committees.

For the IU Libraries, Michael has also played his part in numerous committees: peer review, acquisitions and serials, collection development, grants, search and screen, promotion and tenure, preservation, budget, sabbatical and research leaves, travel, constitution and bylaws, elections, and copyright. He was a pioneer in the use of computers for library instruction and co-authored an important program for teaching students about uniform titles, still part of the Music Library's Web site.

A modest man with a disarming sense of humor, Michael is well respected by his colleagues in the Libraries. Generously, he volunteered his time to keep up the acquisitions of the Music Library until his successor was appointed, then stayed on to help in the training. We will all miss his quiet and authoritative presence behind the scenes.

*David Lasocki*