

Joan Brainerd Noland

American soprano, opera, and vocal coach, in Thomaston, CT on March 10, 2024, age 99. Born in Hamden, CT on 5 August 1924, Joan took the unconventional route of writing to Lotte Lehman for advice on a vocal performing career. With this advice, she studied privately with Boris Goldovsky, Frederic Popper, Grace Christie and Else Letting.

In 1947 she was the first Connecticut winner of the National Federation of Music Clubs competition, and was awarded a touring contract with Columbia Artists, performing 150 concerts. She was a member of the first company of the New York City Opera, gave three Town Hall recitals, sang at the Yale Bowl, and with Boris Goldovsky in the Tanglewood Opera programs. Taking a hiatus to raise her young family, she began a second career of teaching, coaching, and producing local opera, becoming a tireless advocate for support of both performing and visual arts.

In 1957 she organized the Silvermine Opera Workshop. She founded "Friends of Delphi" in 1962 and the Connecticut Opera Alliance. She mounted the first production of "Amahl and the Night Visitors" outside of New York City with the blessing of Gian-Carlo Menotti. She helped a generation of young singers learn about opera.

She served as a Commissioner of the original Connecticut Commission for the Arts in the '60s, as a Trustee and Performing Arts Chair of the New Canaan Society for the Arts and as Trustee for the Stanley L. Richter Association of the Arts. In 1992 she founded the Redding Arts Council which fostered visual and performing festivals for youth.