

Donald O. Johnston – Biography

Johnston studied music theory under Dr. Carl Jenson at Macalester college in St. Paul, MN. Music composition studies were conducted at the Northwestern University School of Music in Evanston, Illinois under Philip Warner (NBC Symphony Orchestra resident composer) and Robert Mills Delaney (recipient of the Pulitzer Music Award).

Johnston served in Korea during the war as a member of the 45th (Thunderbird) Infantry Division. He was assigned to the Division Band. He was awarded the Bronze Star medal for meritorious service during the war.

Later, after having served as Professor of Music at the College of Idaho in Caldwell, Idaho and at Ripon College in Ripon, Wisconsin, Johnston continued Doctoral Studies at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. Music composition studies were conducted under the auspices of Pulitzer Award winners Bernard Rogers and Eastman School of Music Director Howard Hanson.

Before retiring from teaching, Johnston served as Composer-in-Residence at The University of Montana Music School.

Although Johnston maintains his main claim to fame is being the oldest living student of the world-famous American composer Howard Hanson, he has also been recognized as one of Hanson's notable students. Through his many compositions, Johnston has revealed a 20th Century "romantic" musical tradition that was pioneered by Dr. Hanson.