



## Obituary

**Born:** Saturday, November 11, 1944

**Died:** Friday, August 14, 2020

Robert Fred Kern, a renowned music educator, scholar, composer, and author, died suddenly on August 14, 2020. All who knew the force of his keen intellect and sharp wit carry the gift of his inspiration within. Fred continually challenged his students and friends to match the rigor and unstinting work ethic he brought to everything he did. We are all the better for his belief in us.

Fred was born on November 11, 1944, in Pittsfield, Illinois to Ralph and Lavern Kern. His first piano teachers, Evelyn Ransom, Edna Mae Brown, and his band teacher, Paul E. Rosene, guided his early musical interests. He went on to earn a B.S. from Illinois State University, a M.M. from Illinois Wesleyan, a M.M. from Northwestern University, and a D.M.A. from the University of Northern Colorado. In 2014, he was inducted into the Illinois State University Woonsok Kim College of Fine Arts Hall of Fame. A Professor of Music and Specialist in Piano Education at the University of North Texas in Denton from 1980-2011, Dr. Kern previously taught at William Rainey Harper College and Northwestern University.

A pedagogical pathfinder, Fred was the author, or co-author, of seven piano methods, and numerous volumes of pedagogical publications to which he contributed over 500 original compositions and arrangements. One method, the Hal Leonard Student Piano Library, has been translated into eight foreign languages.

Dr. Kern traveled the United States, Canada, and Taiwan as a sought-after clinician and frequently gave presentations for the Hal Leonard Publishing Company and at the Music Teachers' National Association, the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy, and the Texas Music Educators' Association.

Fred met every moment of his life with an eye to its humor. To be in his presence was to feel joyful, quick-to-laugh, and valued. He endured many health challenges during the last twenty years of his life, rising to meet each one and generously accepting the help of his closest companions even when that sometimes meant giving up his treasured independence.

Fred is survived by several cherished cousins, his uncle and namesake Robert Kern, many loving friends and his precious dog, Bentley Brown.

Cremation rites have been accorded and interment will be at Pittsfield West Cemetery at a later date. Online condolences

## Service Summary

### No services to be held

Location: - *Not available* -

may be left to the family at [www.nieburfh.com](http://www.nieburfh.com). Niebur Funeral Home is handling the local arrangements.