

# Remembering Adolph “Bud” Herseth

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April 14,



It's the end of an era.

[Adolph “Bud” Herseth](#), who served the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for fifty-six years as principal trumpet (1948–2001) and principal trumpet emeritus (2001–2004), passed away on April 13, 2013, at home in Oak Park. He was 91.

Born in 1921 in Minnesota, Herseth earned a degree at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. He originally planned to become a teacher but gravitated to performance as a career while in the armed forces. During World War II, Herseth served as a bandsman at the pre-flight school in Iowa and at the U.S. Navy School of Music. He ended his military service with the Commander of the Philippine Sea Frontier in the South Pacific.

In early 1948 while studying for his master's degree from the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Herseth was appointed by Music Director [Artur Rodzinski](#) to the post of principal trumpet of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. He never performed with Rodzinski (whose music directorship ended in April 1948) but would go on to serve under five CSO music directors: [Rafael Kubelík](#), [Fritz Reiner](#), [Jean Martinon](#), [Sir Georg Solti](#), and [Daniel Barenboim](#). Herseth made countless solo appearances and recorded extensively with the Orchestra, including seven recordings of Ravel's orchestration of Mussorgsky's *Pictures from an Exhibition* (under Kubelík, Reiner, [Seiji Ozawa](#), [Carlo Maria Giulini](#), Solti (twice), and [Neeme Järvi](#)).

Constantly devoted to the development of the next generation of symphony orchestra musicians, Herseth regularly gave seminars, coaching sessions, and master classes in Chicago and throughout Europe and worked with the European Community Youth Orchestra, the West-Eastern Divan Workshop for Young Musicians, and the [Civic Orchestra of Chicago](#).

Herseth held honorary doctor of music degrees from DePaul University, Luther College, the New England Conservatory of Music, Rosary College, and Valparaiso University. He received the Living Art of Music Symphonic Musician Award in 1994, was named Instrumentalist of the Year by *Musical America* in 1995, and was an honorary member of the Royal Danish Guild of Trumpeters. In June 2001, Herseth received the American Symphony Orchestra League's Gold Baton Award, marking the first time in the League's history that the award was bestowed on an orchestral player, and he was also awarded an honorary

membership from London's Royal Academy of Music at its commencement exercises. He was accorded a singular honor in 1988, when the principal trumpet chair of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, which he continued to occupy until 2001, was named after him.

On June 7, 1998, Herseth's friends—including [Doc Severinsen](#), Daniel Barenboim, [Arnold Jacobs](#), Frank Crisafulli, [Arturo Sandoval](#), and numerous brass players from around the world—appeared in a tribute performance at Orchestra Hall to celebrate his fiftieth anniversary with the CSO. On January 27, 2000, the CSO's Women's Association recognized Herseth for his "one season plus five decades" as the CSO's principal trumpet.

After the [Ravinia Festival](#) season in the summer of 2001, Herseth relinquished the principal trumpet chair and became principal trumpet emeritus. On February 21, 2004, he retired from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra after fifty-six years and received the Theodore Thomas Medallion for Distinguished Service. Following retirement, Herseth was a longtime member of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Alumni Association.

Herseth is survived by Avis, his wife of sixty-nine years; their two children Christine Hoefler and Stephen (Mary Jo); and six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. His son Charles (Judith) preceded him in death in 1996. Services will be private and details regarding a memorial will be announced at a later date. Letters of condolence may be sent to the Bud Herseth family (c/o Chicago Symphony Orchestra, 220 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60604). In lieu of flowers, the family has requested donations to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, [Luther College](#), or the [West-Eastern Divan Orchestra](#).



Herseth was interviewed by John von Rhein in the [Chicago Tribune](#) in April 2001, shortly after the announcement that he would cede the principal trumpet chair. He said, "for years I've been telling people I am lucky to get here, fortunate to still be here and to have had all these marvelous experiences." And when asked how he would like posterity to remember him, Herseth replied, "as a fairly decent guy who gave it his best every time he had the chance."