



May 16, 2016

**Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Contacts:**

Tammy Hawk 404.733.4842, [tammy.hawk@woodruffcenter.org](mailto:tammy.hawk@woodruffcenter.org)

## **FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE ATLANTA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, BASS PLAYER JANE LITTLE PASSES AWAY**

Little Performed with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra from February 4, 1945, to May 15, 2016,  
Setting a Guinness World Record for Longest Tenure with an Orchestra

**ATLANTA** – With great sadness, the [Atlanta Symphony Orchestra](#) shares news of the passing of one of its original performers, [Jane Little](#), 87, who lost consciousness on stage during a performance on Sunday, May 15, 2016.

As witnessed by fellow musicians and the audience in attendance, Little collapsed during an encore performance of “There’s No Business Like Show Business.” Though emergency responders and a medically-trained chorus member briefly revived Little, she was transported to Crawford Long Emory Hospital where she later passed away.

Little was Assistant Principal Bass Emeritus in the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. She celebrated her 87<sup>th</sup> birthday on Feb. 2, 2016, and on Feb. 4, 2016, she performed with the Orchestra, marking 71 years to the day of her first concert held on Feb. 4, 1945, securing the Guinness World Record for longest professional tenure with a single orchestra. The Orchestra’s application for Jane Little’s record is under review pending final approval.

Little started her musical career in 1945 as a founding member of the original Atlanta Youth Symphony Orchestra, the forerunner of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. She joined after two years of studying bass in high school and has since played under all four of the Orchestra’s music directors, – Henry Sopkin, Robert Shaw, Yoel Levi and Robert Spano, as well as guest conductors including Igor Stravinsky, Aaron Copland, Pierre Monteux, Leopold Stokowski, Sir John Barbirolli and James Levine, among others.

The double bass is the orchestra’s largest instrument. Wrapping one’s hands around a bass requires a great degree of physical strength — something that at 87-years-old and 4 feet, 11 inches, Little did with ease for more than seven decades.

An Atlanta native, Little attended the University of Georgia and studied for four years with the principal bass player of the Chicago Symphony. She was principal bass with the Theater of the Stars Orchestra for 15 years, and played extensively with regional ballet and opera companies, as well as in touring performances of the American Ballet Theatre, Covent Garden Ballet, and Boris Goldovsky Opera Theatre. Twenty years ago this July, Little performed in the 1996 Atlanta Olympic opening and closing ceremonies with “Olympic Fanfare and Theme” composer/conductor John Williams.

For most of her career, Little performed using a rare Carlo Giuseppe Testore bass built in the year 1705. In 1953 she met and married fellow Atlanta Symphony Orchestra musician and principal flute, Warren Little. They were inseparable until Warren’s death in 2002. Jane and Warren had no children; Ms. Little is survived by her nephews and several great nieces and nephews.

As noted in February 2016 [national](#) and [local](#) media [reports](#) on her world record performance, Little was a fighter who overcame recent illnesses, including multiple myeloma, a form of cancer. She returned to the Orchestra in February after suffering a fall last year.

“Jane Little was an inspiration for many reasons: she was a woman who succeeded in a role traditionally reserved for men; she was a person of modest stature who played the biggest instrument in the orchestra; she was tenacious, miraculously fighting off multiple health challenges to tag her world record; and she was passionate, doing what she loved until the very end of her life,” said Jennifer Barlament, Executive Director of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra.

“Being a member of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra was deeply meaningful to her. To those of us who had the pleasure of knowing her, she was a loving, generous, modest, kind friend who was full of warmth, with a great sense of humor and style. She was an inspiration for everyone at the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and for audiences who enjoyed her performances spanning seven decades. We will miss her greatly.”

During media interviews about her world record-setting performance in February, Little was fond of stating her plans for retirement after finishing the current Atlanta Symphony Orchestra season. She aspired to take up bass guitar and form a jazz group she named “The Grannies.”

Memorial service details remain pending and will be shared when available.

#### **About the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra**

Celebrating its 71st season, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra continues to affirm its position as one of America’s leading orchestras with excellent live performances, renowned guest artist features and engaging education initiatives. The orchestra is known for the excellence of its live performances, presentations, renowned choruses and its impressive list of GRAMMY® Award-winning recordings. As a cornerstone for artistic development in the Southeast, the ASO annually performs a full schedule of more than 200 concerts, including educational and community concerts, for a combined audience of more than a half-million. A leading cultural organization in the Southeast, the ASO serves as the cornerstone for artistic development and music education in the region ... [more](#)