It's almost impossible to imagine MYSO without Fran Richman. Her impact on the organization--on children, families, and

the community--has been monumental, and that's the best part of the whole "Fran equals MYSO" thing. She's never made people feel like it IS an organization. Everyone I know feels a personal connection to MYSO, whether it's as a participant, parent, contributor, board member or staff member. It's the ultimate collaborative undertaking. That sort of "It Starts at the Top" management is not easy, even if her demeanor and self-depreciating style would lead you to believe otherwise. Don't be fooled, and for heaven's sake, do not underestimate her ability to multi-task every detail (right down to cooking lunch for the volunteers) while driving the cause forward, ever forward. Her tenacious grip on the goal of giving to Milwaukee-area's children an opportunity never imagined for them could only be achieved by a highly intelligent, relentless individual, huge of heart and willing to do whatever it takes to make it happen. I and many others are constantly inspired, and challenged, to DO and GIVE more by the example she has set every day these last 24 years. As a parent, then a volunteer, and now proud to call her my friend, I give a standing ovation to Fran's legacy, and wish her a happy, healthy, and productive—'cause that's the way she'd want it—retirement. Bravo!

DEB LINLEY, **MYSO volunteer and alumni parent**

The skill and discipline Fran brought to her leadership of MYSO is an example for the entire community. I have been incredibly fortunate to work with Fran having learned a life-time of lessons from her. Her superb abilities have created an institution that will sustain young peoples' learning and creativity for generations. Fran is a visionary and powerful champion for young people, for MYSO, and for Milwaukee. Her leadership has enabled MYSO to become an extraordinary arts institution and an incredibly powerful model for those who want to provide opportunities for young people. Fran cares enormously for people, and she is the fiercest mush-ball I know. Her legacy of love and devotion to Milwaukee's students will endure as MYSO continues to prosper. Everyone who is touched by MYSO has benefitted from her stewardship of resources, and her ability to bring people together for noble causes. Each of us owe a debt of honor to Fran for her work and for her passion. She has created a foundation and vision that will drive MYSO's mission for decades; Fran has truly been "Instrumental in Changing Lives." It's an honor to be her friend and colleague. Thank you for everything, Fran.

CARTER SIMMONS, **MYSO Artistic Director**

The legacy of Fran Richman and her extraordinary influence on MYSO will live on for generations to come. Fran has touched the lives of thousands of children during her impressive 25 years as executive director, collaborator and visionary. The influence Fran has had on the performing arts in Southeastern Wisconsin extends beyond her work at MYSO. Fran was instrumental in conceptualizing the Milwaukee Youth Arts Center (MYAC), which has had an

exponential impact on arts education programming. For many, MYAC is more than a building. It is a safe, innovative place where a child's potential can be realized. The United Performing Arts Fund congratulates Fran on her well-deserved "retirement." The entire UPAF staff expresses their gratitude for Fran's dedication, generosity and courage to make a difference.

DEANNA TILLISCH, **President and CEO, United Performing Arts Fund**

I wouldn't be the musician I am today without Fran Richman and MYSO.

ANDREW NEESLEY, **MYSO alum, professional jazz trumpeter based in New York**

Margery, Ron and I were on hand to welcome Fran to the then MFY staff. Little did we know what—by the initial decade of century 21—this amazing individual would have wrought. Fran led and oversaw the growing of MFY to MYSO and from 300-some to 900-some in young Milwaukee-area musicians. Between 1988 and 2008 I saw Fran lead MYSO from a mere youth orchestra program to a complete youth instrumental music program—with something for everybody. Added to the already flourishing orchestras, I saw added a wind ensemble, two flute choirs, a chamber orchestra, the Progressions program, Jazz, Calypso, and possibly student musician involvement of which I'm not even yet aware. She accompanied and or oversaw five international and several domestic tours—all of which I've been honored to be a part. Perhaps the greatest accomplishment of all—MYAC. During a period of economic downturn, Fran was one of the principal forces in raising some 12-13 million dollars it took to forge the spectacular Milwaukee Youth Arts Center into reality.

Such dedication. Such tenacity. Such vision. As a 28-year veteran of the MYSO staff, I can say, "Fran, it has been an amazing and artistically rewarding journey." Well done. WELL DONE! I look forward to your being with us—adjusted capacity granted—long into the future. Brava!

SHELBY KEITH DIXON, **Associate Conductor, MYSO Senior Symphony**

Let's go back a few years … to 1993. MYSO is still cooped up on the 4th floor of the PAC. Hallways are crammed with students, bookbags, and instrument cases. UPAF staffers complain

they are trapped in their office. Fran and her loyal staff are stuffed into a large closet, along with a collection of basses, harps, timpani, tubas, a xylophone, a gong and massive piles of music scores. Overhead, overburdened shelves that are overburdened threaten to crumble at any moment. Meanwhile the PAC is lusting after MYSO's tiny space and conjuring schemes to evict.

In the eye of this hurricane is Fran Richman. Deftly she is managing another magnificent year for MYSO, to be topped by a trip to Carnegie Hall. Creatively, she is envisioning an unbelievable future for MYSO for her board of directors. Energetically she is scouring the city for a new home for MYSO. Auditions, parent counseling, real estate searches, rehearsals, staffing situations, and the usual shenanigans by a group of Senior Symphony members who were leading the chaperones on a merry chase up and down the back stairwells of New York's Hotel Taft. Halcyon days!

Today, Fran's dreams have come to fruition. The incredible MYAC is here and paid for. Endowments and scholarships are at all-time highs, including the innovative Fran's Fund. Student and staff talent has never been better or more exciting. MYSO is strong and a national leader. What seemed like a dream in 1993 is today's reality. It has been an amazing journey.

Thank you Fran.

PAUL KRITZER, **MYSO board President, 1992-95**

Today, I am fortunate to be an orchestra teacher in the Shorewood school district, doing something I love to do in a school system where music arts are so appreciated. As President Obama said, "You didn't do it alone"….and in my case, that's true. MYSO and Fran Richman had profound impacts on my life.

The gift of five years in MYSO, learning the appreciation of wonderful music, being influenced by dedicated conductors, and surrounded by young musicians from throughout our community helped prepare me for a career in music that now allows me to give back what MYSO gave to me.

Because of my years in MYSO, and my close friendship with Wendy Richman and the entire Richman family, I was able to watch and understand why MYSO became so meaningful to me and to others. It was the leadership of Fran. It's difficult to think of MYSO without thinking of Fran….or to think of Fran without thinking of MYSO. But I know that Fran's skills made MYSO into an outstanding organization that will continue to flourish and enhance our community.

Thank you, Fran….and congratulations on your retirement!

MELISSA HONIGMAN, **MYSO alum, Elementary Orchestra Director, Shorewood School District**

Fran, Thank you for making so many of my musical dreams come true—from Carnegie Hall to Edinburgh; from the Great Wall of China to the Musikverein and Dvořák Hall. Your hard word, dedication, and vision are a constant inspiration. I don't think anyone else could have raised the money to create MYAC in such a short time. Your skills as an administrator and fundraiser are nothing short of brilliant. Fran's Fund will keep your legacy alive for generations to come. There is no doubt in my mind that MYSO would not be what it is today were it not for you. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. P.S. Life will not be the same without your curried rice salad. :)

MARGERY DEUTSCH, **Music Director, MYSO Senior Symphony**

Paul Kritzer hit the nail on the head when Fran received the 1996 Civic Music Distinguished Citizen award:

Fran Richman is a model of management, a master organizer, a moral compass, and a warm and considerate people manager. In the middle of the bustling, energetic MYSO arena, there is Fran with her clipboard plastered with dozens of stickered notes, calmly bringing order to the chaos from scores of students, staff, volunteers and members of the board of directors.

Fran's mix of energy, efficiency, generosity and compassion has typified her almost twenty-five years at MYSO as well as her interaction with community and friends. It has also been our family's great fortune to have the benefit of the blessing that is Fran at home. Now that

we have three young grandchildren (Sara Tikvah, Bentzion and Reuven), these attributes are, if possible, appreciated even more. People sometimes ask how Fran will deal with semi-retirement. I am confident that she will find plenty to do. Our family's only challenge will be to slow her down a bit so that she also multi-tasks on a few vacations.

STEVE RICHMAN, **Fran's husband of 41 years**

My mom is one of my heroes, and not just because she's my mom. As an arts administrator, I aspire to be like her: very diligent, good at working with and managing diverse individuals, a top-notch leader, skilled in many different areas, and exceptionally fiscally responsible, to name a few important qualities. Most importantly, I aspire to become the person my mom is: modest despite being very gifted at what she does, giving of herself to the utmost degree to others (especially the underserved), cheerful in the face of stress and adversity, fiercely devoted to her family, outstandingly generous, and did I mention very diligent?

Thank you, Mom, for all you've given and that you'll continue to give, even after retirement. You have been a role model for me and for so many others. We love you, respect you, and are SO proud of you. May you be the beneficiary of all the good and blessing you've brought to so many people.

JOSHUA RICHMAN, **Fran's son**

Being an itinerant musician means much of my socializing is done through Facebook. It's an efficient way to tell friends about anything and everything, from a favorite gluten-free goodie to a cross-country move. On May 15, when I could finally spill the retirement beans, I posted :

My mom is retiring after 24 chronological years as Executive Director of MYSO. I say "chronological" because she's the hardest worker I've EVER known and has probably put in more like 50 years' worth of hours, conservatively. My mom is a complete powerhouse and has, with an amazing staff and thousands of talented kids, turned MYSO into a one-of-a-kind, world-class organization. I love you, Mom, and I'm so proud of you!

I knew that many former MYSO members and Whitefish Bay classmates would "like" the post and leave comments, but I wasn't quite prepared for the response of over 150 friends. People referred to her as "an inspiration," "one of the most awesome people I've ever met," "dedicated and phenomenal," and "definitely an influence in shaping my musical career." Oh, and "a rockstar." I was bursting with pride at the public affirmation of all these people's esteem, and I know it made Mom pretty happy, too.

WENDY RICHMAN, **Fran's daughter**