

April 11, 2005

To: [REDACTED]

From: Kathi Kurtzman

Re: Piano Teaching

I have received your letter of March 31 terminating my employment as Teacher of Piano at Washington University after 15 years full-time in that position plus another two years as a part-time piano teacher.

Your letter refers to your letter to me of March 31, 2004, which you quote as saying “it remained an area of concern that, beyond teaching, your contributions to the department and the musical life of the university were significantly lacking.” You then give as one of two reasons for terminating my employment that “you have not shown marked improvement in your contribution to the department or university beyond teaching.”

Although my contract for the past ten years has never included any responsibilities beyond teaching, after I received your letter last spring, I visited you in your office and inquired what more you thought I needed to do for the department. The items you mentioned were attending faculty meetings and doing some accompanying for the department (without any offer of remuneration). In fact, in the spring of 2004 I accompanied a set of arias for Debra Hillebrand and arranged for her to perform them twice—in a concert at the Gatesworth Retirement Home and on the St. Louis Friends of Music Concerts series. In January of 2005 I accompanied faculty member James Harr in Schumann’s *Liederkreis*, Op. 24 and arranged for him to perform them twice—at another concert at the Gatesworth Retirement Home and on the St. Louis Friends of Music Concerts series. James has informed me that he wants to do more performances with me. I received no remuneration from the department or either performer for this extra work.

At the beginning of the present semester, I asked you how I was doing with respect to what you expected of me. Your response was positive. You acknowledged I had been attending faculty meetings and that I was more visible in the department. I also asked you to inform me if I needed to do anything in addition. You had nothing to suggest at that time, so I asked you to let me know if you thought of anything, but I received no further word from you or anyone else in the department until your letter of March 31.

Your letter leaves several questions I have regarding my status at Washington University unaddressed. Since I have to make plans for the future and have to know what to tell my students starting this week, I would appreciate it if you would respond yes or no to the following questions:

1. If students request me as their teacher next year, will I be allowed to teach them?
2. If enough students request me to make up a half-time load, will I receive a half-time appointment?
3. If there is an overload of students beyond what the piano faculty is currently teaching, will I be given any of these extra students?
4. If I am allowed to teach students next year, will the rate of pay be comparable to what I was earning this past academic year?
5. If I am allowed to teach students next year, can it be in the same studio I have occupied since the new annex was built?

cc: [REDACTED]