

Pioneer Hall of Fame: Dr. Theodore P. Nicholson, class of 1988



After graduation from University High School, Dr. Theodore Nicholson '88 attended Illinois Wesleyan University. He began harp lessons at Illinois Wesleyan and quickly excelled at the instrument. In 1993, he became the first student to graduate with a Bachelor of Music in Harp from Illinois Wesleyan. He then studied harp at the University of Illinois while completing a Master of Music Degree in Musicology at Illinois State in 1996. After Illinois State, Nicholson attended the University of Michigan on a full scholarship and received a Master of Music Degree in 1999. In 2003, Nicholson became the first person to earn a Doctorate of Arts Degree in Harp Performance from Ball State University.

Nicholson began piano lessons at age seven at Illinois Wesleyan University. After being accepted to Thomas Metcalf School, Nicholson was active with musicals produced by the Allied Arts Program, sang in the Metcalf chorus, and played trumpet in the Metcalf band. At University High School, Nicholson was active in the marching and concert bands. He also wrote for The Clarionette and served as its editor his senior year. He was a member of the Thespians Club and had leading roles in several U-High stage productions. Nicholson was nominated for The Pantagraph's annual Student of the Year competition and was a member of the National Honor Society. While in college, he worked part-time playing the grand piano at Von Maur.

Nicholson is a member of Pi Kappa Lambda National Honor Society and currently enjoys an active (approximately 100 performances per year) career as a freelance harpist in Los Angeles and surrounding areas. He serves as staff harpist for Hollywood Forever Funeral Home and teaches in the public schools of Beverly Hills and Glendale, California.

Today, Nicholson continues to be active as a musician and teacher in Los Angeles. He established the Nicholson Endowment in 2007 to underwrite the Fine Arts programs in the Laboratory Schools at Illinois State University so that future students will continue to receive the quality instruction he did.

Congratulations to Dr. Theodore Nicholson on his 2007 induction into the University High School Pioneer Hall of Fame!