

**GERSON NORDLINGER, JR.**  
1916-2010



Gerson Nordlinger Jr., a fourth generation Washingtonian, was the son of Gerson and Camille Bensinger Nordlinger. He attended Central High School (now Cardozo High School) and graduated from George Washington University in 1935 with a degree in economics.

He was studying piano in Paris with Robert Casadesus in 1939 when World War II broke out. His parents sent him a telegram instructing him to return home via the Pacific to avoid U-Boat attacks. It took Mr. Nordlinger several months to make his way back to Washington via the Suez Canal and the Pacific Ocean. Upon his return he joined the US Navy as an Ensign and served on the USS Sebec in some of the great Pacific naval battles. After the War he was discharged as a Lieutenant Commander

By profession, Mr. Nordlinger was a certified public accountant. In his younger years, he used his training in accounting to keep the books for countless Washington area charities at no charge.

His service to the Washington community included:

- Lifetime Director and Treasurer for 58 years, National Symphony Orchestra, the longest serving Board member of the NSO
- Founding trustee of the Washington Performing Arts Society (he came up with the name)
- Founding trustee of the Washington National Opera
- Founding trustee of the Washington Ballet Company
- Founding trustee of the Cathedral Choral Society
- First Chairman of the DC Commission on the Arts (1968-71)
- Vice Chairman of the DC Board of Recreation (1960-66)
- Board member of the Phillips Collection and responsible for endowing the Sunday Concerts
- Board member of the Alliance Francaise
- Member of the Cosmos Club Music Committee
- Board Member, Young Concert Artists
- President, Society for the Prevention of Blindness

Mr. Nordlinger was also a real estate developer and investor and a founding member of the Board of Directors for *Washington Real Estate Investment Trust*.

He was chairman of the four inaugural balls in 1957 held in conjunction with President Eisenhower's second term in office. He attended White House dinners hosted by every president from President

Franklin Roosevelt to President George W. Bush. Mr. Nordlinger counted Marjorie Merriweather Post and Rose Kennedy among his many friends.

At the 2005 Young Concert Artist Gala in honor of his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, it was said:

“We all know how theatres and concert hall are generally dark on Monday night. Where would the Washington arts and culture scene be if it were not for Gerson Nordlinger? Dark. Dark. Dark. Gerson has been a pillar for building DC' s symphony, opera, dance, theatre, and museums for more than 60 years. Without Gerson's foresight, knowledge and generosity, every night in DC would be like Monday night - dark.”