

# EVANSTON ROUNDTABLE

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Wednesday, March 28, 2012

## Historic Baton to ESO Director

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An historic baton used by legendary conductor Arturo Toscanini was presented to Evanston Symphony Orchestra music director Lawrence Eckerling at the orchestra's recent concert in Pick-Staiger Concert Hall.

Shirley J. Miller, wife of the late Frank Miller, who was the former conductor and music director of the Evanston Symphony presented the baton to Mr. Eckerling. Mr. Miller, who died in 1986, would have been 100 years old on March 5. Mrs. Miller said she chose to present the baton to Maestro Eckerling in recognition of the performance quality that he has brought to the Evanston Symphony Orchestra since taking over as Music Director in 2003.

A cellist, Mr. Miller had an illustrious musical career. From 1940 to 1954, he was principal cellist for Toscanini's NBC Symphony Orchestra. When ill health forced Toscanini to retire in 1954, the NBC Orchestra ceased to exist. The famous maestro gave Miller several batons that had been created for Toscanini by his neurosurgeon. Toscanini also wrote only one letter of recommendation during his entire career; it was in support of Frank Miller's candidacy for conductor of the Florida Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Miller was conductor of ESO from 1962 to 1984.



Photo submitted by Evanston Symphony Orchestra

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