Harry Sukman was one of those rare people who decided at age 7 what his profession would be and then studied and practiced until his dream came true.

Memorabilia from Sukman’s career have been given to the University of Hartford by his daughter, Susan Sukman McCray. The collection—which features posters, photographs, albums, and scores of some of his work—will be displayed in the former lobby of Millard Auditorium at The Hartt School. Sukman McCray’s generosity has transformed the space into the newly named Harry Sukman Foyer, which will feature Sukman’s beloved ebony Steinway grand piano.

The Harry Sukman Foyer and its collection will be dedicated at a 3 p.m. ceremony on Sunday, April 17, that is open to the public. Musicians from the Hartford Symphony Orchestra will perform as the Harry Sukman Orchestra at a concert following the dedication. The guest conductor will be Vincent Falcone, musical conductor for Frank Sinatra. Sukman arranged Stephen Sondheim’s “Send in the Clowns” for Sinatra, which Falcone will perform along with several Harry Sukman compositions. Hartt students will also perform songs by the composer.

Sukman made his musical debut at age 12 in Chicago, Ill., as a pianist. While in high school, he served as piano accompanist for some of the world’s greatest musicians. He later moved to California, where he made many recordings and had his own television show. He appeared in the Hollywood Bowl and was named piano soloist for the Bowl’s annual Gershwin Memorial Concerts.

A lifelong student of the piano music and techniques of pianist-composer Franz Liszt, Sukman was selected to adapt the background score for the motion picture Song Without End, based on Liszt’s life. He received an Academy Award for this accomplishment in 1960. The following year, he received an Oscar nomination for the film Fanny and in 1966 received his third Academy Award nomination for The Singing Nun. Although Sukman’s name is not a household word, many people are familiar with the music he wrote for more than 200 episodes of such popular television series as Dr. Kildare, Bonanza, and The High Chaparral, as well as the 1972 movie Salem’s Lot, for which he received Emmy Award nominations.

“We are absolutely delighted to have this extraordinary collection of an Oscar award-winning composer and musician,” said University of Hartford President Walter Harrison. “These wonderful materials will inspire generations of student musicians, composers, actors, and singers by providing them with insights into the career and work of a man of great talent.”

Sukman McCray, a corporator of the Hartford Art School, has a great affinity for the University of Hartford. Her husband, Kent, is an alumnus of The Hartt School and currently serves as a university regent. The McCrays are Hollywood producers and principals in Ten-K Productions. They are best known for the television series Bonanza, Little House on the Prairie, and Highway to Heaven.

Sukman McCray feels that the University of Hartford is the appropriate place to house the collection because of The Hartt School and its acclaimed programs in music, dance, and theatre.

“My father would be honored and humbled by this project, and would be pleased to know that his Steinway piano will be in an area where young students are practicing and learning music,” she said.