



Robert "Bob" L. Meeks

August 16, 1938 - August 26, 2022

Robert L. "Bob" Meeks, 84, passed away at his home in Carthage, Missouri, on Friday, August 26, 2022. Bob was born on August 16, 1938, in Ferriday, Louisiana to William Edgar Meeks and Grace Mae "Loucks" Meeks.

Bob attended Arkansas State University where he earned his Master's degree in Music, and then spent the next several decades touching the lives of countless students as a music educator while also performing as a professional musician. During his career Bob received numerous honors and awards, including being named "Outstanding Jazz Educator" by the Missouri Association of Jazz Educators, selected as a "Legend of Music Education" by Palen Music Center, and selected as "Best Teacher" multiple times through the years by his students.

Bob was heavily involved with many national and state music education associations and served as the state chairman of the Collegiate Music Educators National Association, as well as being elected Band Vice President and then President of the Missouri Music Educators Association. Bob was a regular adjudicator and clinician at various music competitions and camps. Throughout his career Bob always looked for ways to promote music appreciation and participation by forming and directing multiple concert and jazz community bands. Bob was a founder and director of the "Sounds of Missouri" concert band that performed extensively in England, Austria, Germany, Ireland, and Switzerland, and was the jazz director for the "Missouri Ambassadors", which also performed in front of enthusiastic and receptive

audiences across Europe.

As a performer, Bob was a skilled trumpet player and saxophonist. Early in his career Bob worked with the Gib Brewington Combo, the Ray Coble Combo, the Joe Lee Combo, the Colie Stoltz Combo, and the Bill Black Combo. He also worked as a studio musician in Memphis and played with Jerry Lee Lewis, among other well-known musicians. In more recent years, he performed in Branson, Missouri with the Jack Decker Quintet, and was the principal trumpet player for the Missouri Southern State College Orchestra from 1986 through 1994. Born in Louisiana, Bob was always fond of Dixieland music, and he formed and played with several Dixieland bands.

Bob's career in elementary and high school music education took him from Hughes, Arkansas to Mountain Grove, Missouri and finally to Carthage, Missouri. Bob then became Director of Bands and Professor of Music at Missouri Southern State University in Joplin, Missouri where he eventually retired.

After retirement, Bob became a member of the Patriot Guard where he rode over 500 missions. Bob was eventually selected to be the Missouri state Secretary-Treasurer. He felt a strong sense of duty and camaraderie with the Patriot Guard and felt honored to be able to show his respect to our fallen veterans.

Ultimately, Bob will be remembered for his quick wit and sense of humor, and for the positive impact he had on everyone around him as a husband, father, teacher, mentor, role model, and friend.

Bob was joined in marriage to Sylvia Barker on December 28, 1958, in Helena, Arkansas; she survives.

Along with his wife Sylvia Meeks, Bob is survived by one daughter, Elizabeth Norwood (James) of Carthage, Missouri; one son, Robert F. Meeks (Lisa) of Sandy, Utah; six grandchildren, Natalie Norwood (Kelsey), Bethany Williams (Andrew), Jack Meeks, Gretchen Meeks, Jay Norwood, and Nancy Theriot (Erik); two great granddaughters, Iris Norwood and Ashten Williams; one brother, Thomas Meeks of Phoenix, Arizona; and embraced family friends

Dean and Kathy Ellensohn-Cogar of Waynesville, Missouri.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents William Edgar and Grace Mae Meeks, and one brother, Bill Meeks.

A memorial service for Bob Meeks will be held at 2:00 pm on Saturday, September 17, 2022, at Ulmer Funeral Home in Carthage, Missouri. An open visitation will be held on Friday, September 16, 2022, at Ulmer Funeral Home. Condolences may be made online at www.ulmerfh.com.

Contributions may be made to the Patriot Guard in care of Ulmer Funeral Home.

Arrangements are under the direction and care of Ulmer Funeral Home.

Previous Events

Open Visitation

SEP **16.** 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM (CT)

Ulmer Funeral Home
1208 S. Garrison
Carthage, MO 64836
(417) 358-2222
ulmerfh@gmail.com
<https://www.ulmerfh.com/>

You may come and go as you please from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm on Friday the 16th.

Memorial Service

SEP **17.** 2:00 PM (CT)

Ulmer Funeral Home
1208 S. Garrison
Carthage, MO 64836
(417) 358-2222
ulmerfh@gmail.com
<https://www.ulmerfh.com/>

Tribute Wall

TE

“ As I was wandering through the vast ocean of symphonic masterpieces, "Bugler's Holiday" started playing, and my mind said "Bob!" As I listen to the arrangement by Richard Hayman, I hear you and your wonderful impress on the brass section at Missouri Southern in the Spring of 1994.

I've thought of you often throughout the years.

Two things that I remember personally from Bob.

The first, when I joined the Marching Lions and during rehearsal, I was carrying on in the back, like percussionists do, and he stopped talking, and looked me dead in the eye, and said, "This is NOT Junior High." And I'm sure that a lot can attest to this phrase that used to remind us that we were elite, that we were professionals. But that day was mine, and he said it to me. Share your story, because he loved to say it!

The second, was after he and I bonded, he recognized me as the musician, as well as the person that I am. And once again, but during a concert band rehearsal, he was lecturing, yeah, again, I was carrying on in the back like Percussionists do, and a few in the Woodwind Section became distracted and looked back at us, and without a beat, Bob said, "Don't worry. I'm a witness and a reference... he can chew gum and keep up at the same time." and then just continued on with his lecture.

So many will miss you until the day that we, too are missed.

Timothy Michael Earwood - May 07, 2025 at 06:15 PM

CS

“ I first got to meet Maestro Meeks back in 1992, he was one of the judges for our Brass Ensemble at the state band competition. He later chose me to be a participant in the Missouri Ambassadors of Music Tour to Europe. And that same month he offered me a scholarship to Missouri Southern State College to continue my music education. He was such an amazing band director and even better man. For years after I left college and joined the Army I would still get random emails from him from time to time checking in to see how me and my family was doing. It's been quite a few years since I had seen him, I did not know that he had passed away. He will definitely be missed, one of the best there ever was.

Charles Shepard - February 25, 2023 at 01:07 AM

 Leah Grover

“ My name is Leah (Sweeney) Grover. Bob was my jazz/stage band teacher around 1985 at Carthage High School. I am very grateful to have known him, as he was endlessly cheerful, smart, and encouraging. As I was a synth player, he introduced me to the very cool "Switched-on Bach" album, which I love to this day. He had a love for music and people, and always found a way to bring humor and encouragement into situations. It was a joy working under his teaching.

Leah Grover - October 01, 2022 at 11:52 PM

BC

“ *Mr. Meeks, you were my favorite teacher, one of the biggest influences on my life and a much respected musician. I have such great memories of high school marching band, our stage band road show, competitions and just being able to drop in your office during the day to talk. Thank you for all you did for me. My deepest condolences to your sweet family.*

We will miss you, Sir.

Becky (Talley) Coffee - September 15, 2022 at 10:23 AM

KS

“ *Kendra Sexton lit a candle in memory of Robert "Bob" L. Meeks*



Kendra Sexton - September 12, 2022 at 02:09 PM

“ Sylvia, Liz, & Bobby, may you find comfort and peace in keeping memories of your loved one close at heart and know that he is forever in my heart as well as SO MANY others...what an iconic man❤️🙏

*Remembering Mr. Meeks...Master of Music, & Inspirer of Life!
When Mr. Meeks, Sylvia, Liz & Bobby moved to Mtn Grove in the summer of 1969, being the Drum Majorette of the Marching Panther Band, I was privileged to be one of the first to welcome the new band director, from the “Land of Opportunity” to the “Show-Me State of MO!*

It didn't take me long to realize that behind the grin and southern drawl, there was a man and his family filled with Southern Hospitality that was going to bring new excitement to my Senior year of band, as well as to all band students, the entire school, community & Friday Night Football, with not just attention getting pregame & halftime performances, but with the expectation of discipline and respect in so doing! Mr. Meeks influence, in just one year of band under his direction, inspired me throughout my own teaching career and life in general. Whoever would have thought that the big drum majorette baton that Mr. Meeks so despised and gladly gifted me at the end of marching season 53 years age, along with my whistle and an old trombone, have continued to be a mainstay of entertainment as we continue having marching shows and parades with our grown family and grandkids through the house and around our yard.

Blessed with so many more memories from sharing a part of my life with the Meeks

Family❤️ “Pink” (as Mr. Meeks would say!)

Pinky “Douglass” Gum

Pinky “Douglass” Gum - September 06, 2022 at 01:04 AM

AJ

“Hearing the mention of Bob Meeks brings numerous memories to my mind. The ones that stand out the most to me are all of the lunch conversations I had with him at Carthage High School. Usually there were several teachers at the lunch table, and everyone shared on various topics. But Bob's words were ones I listened to more than most of the teachers gathered. Bob was funny, full of teaching wisdom, and full of wisdom for life. If it were not for Bob and a couple of other teachers at that table, I probably would not have made it through my early years as a teacher, and then stick with it for a number of years. Bob was an amazing band instructor and musician without a doubt, but he was also a wonderful man who cared about the people around him. I am so thankful for having known him, for his personable ways, and for his encouragement. My deepest sympathy goes out to all of you. Please know that you are in my thoughts and prayers.
Alice Johns

Alice J Johns - September 02, 2022 at 11:46 PM

 Tom Swarnes

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Tom Swarnes - September 01, 2022 at 10:09 AM

RH

“ 2 files added to the album Competition Band CHS 1984



Roger Hamilton - August 31, 2022 at 08:51 PM

BH

“ For many years, every Spring, it was an exciting event for our family as we anticipated Uncle Bob and Aunt Sylvia arriving with a bus full of “band kids”. They drove through the night to march in the Disney Parade and see a bit of Florida. It was a time full of laughter, and crazy stories. In a motel parking lot, I was so impressed to see this crowd of rowdy, excited kids, with Uncle Bob somewhere in the middle, become suddenly quiet when he started to speak. The control he had and the respect he was given was a sight to see. Your quiet strength, dry humor with those laughing eyes and smirk will not be forgotten. Love to you all, Betsy Hall

Betsy Hall - August 31, 2022 at 07:29 AM

JL

“ Bob was an amazing musician, an awesome educator, a great comedian, a great friend, a wonderful mentor and most of all a fine human being. Jean and I will forever have fond memories of Bob. God’s blessings for the family.

Jim & Jean Lanning

James & Jean Lanning - August 30, 2022 at 02:17 PM

LS

“ *In honor of Bob, I will never try to tune two piccolos. I will always leave the dot off of the eighth note followed by the sixteen and keep the space. I have such cherished memories with Bob. My life was made greater for knowing him.*

Laura Schwab - August 30, 2022 at 01:51 PM