



Arthur James Smith

November 24, 1931 - January 11, 2025

Arthur James (Art) Smith, 93, of Plymouth, Minnesota, passed away on January 11, 2025, while in hospice at Wealshire Medina. Born on November 24, 1931, to William Arthur and Mary Ethel (Gifford) Smith in Lake Crystal, Minnesota, Art was a lifelong resident of Minnesota. Art graduated from Lake Crystal High School in 1949 and served in the United States Army from 1951-1954, including two years in Munich, Germany, where he rose to the rank of Sergeant.

Upon his return to Minnesota, he resumed college classes at Mankato State and married Donna Cramer on December 18, 1954. They welcomed their only child, James Arthur Smith, on September 30, 1955. Arthur earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in music education from Mankato State College in 1957 and taught and directed Bands for one year in Hector, Minnesota. From 1958 until 1965, Art taught all levels of Band in Fairmont, Minnesota, alongside Richard Scherer. In 1961, he earned a Master's Degree in music education from Mankato State College. Art assisted in the Fairmont Band's successful performances at the 1962 Seattle World's Fair and the 1965 New York World's Fair.

Art was invited to teach and to build an instrumental band program in the Rosemount Public Schools beginning in the Fall of 1965. Throughout his years there, Art collaborated closely with district administration, fellow high

school, middle school, elementary teachers, and especially, with his band and choral colleagues. He served as president and as a negotiator for the teacher's association. Over a 22-year career in Rosemount District 196, he developed the district's grade 5-12 instrumental music program, increased participation by more than 10-fold, and won numerous state music contest awards. More importantly, he was dedicated to helping each and every one of his students grow as musicians, as students, and as people.

Following his retirement in 1987, Art developed a music consultant business, helping school administrators and music educators identify issues and challenges within their music programs. Following his divorce, Art joined and performed on the euphonium with the Medalist Band of Bloomington, Minnesota, where he met and became engaged to Marcia L. Thoen. They were married in 1991, joined Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church, traveled during summers and holidays, and attended professional concerts throughout the Twin Cities area, especially the Minnesota Orchestra.

Art stayed active musically well into his 80s, performing at church and other events. At HAUMC, Art volunteered each Wednesday with the Recyclers, a group of retired church members who made repairs and improvements to the building and grounds, and who socialized with each other over coffee and treats.

Art was devoted to family and friends and was a warm and humorous presence to his son, grandchildren, and all family members. Art was predeceased by his first wife, Donna, in 2023, his brothers and their wives Chet and Neva Smith, Orville and Berneda Smith, William and Ruth Smith, and his sister and her husband, Ruth and Bud Gramenz.

Art is survived by his wife, Marcia Thoen, son James Arthur (Jim) Smith (Betsy Gardella), grandson Arthur Vance Corea-Smith (Danielle), granddaughter Aletha Dell Tarn (Ellis), former daughter-in-law Darien Smith,

sister-in-law Deb Melgaard (Dave), nieces Sue Smith, Sandy Smith, Linda Curtis (Guy), Vicki Schaible (Kent), Deb Kessler (Dennis), Cathy Smith, Leisa Harris (Gregg), nephew Steve Smith (Tracee), niece Kelsey Ronayne (Conor), nephew Jonathan Melgaard, four great grandchildren, and many great-nieces and great-nephews.

A visitation and service will be held at Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church, 511 Groveland Ave., Minneapolis, Minnesota, on Saturday, June 14, 2025. Visitation begins in Carlson Hall at 10 a.m. followed by an 11 a.m. funeral service in the sanctuary. All are invited to lunch, which will be served in Koinonia Hall from 12 noon until 2 p.m.

Memorials preferred to Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church or to the donor's choice. The 11:00am service will be live-streamed from the church and archived on the church website: <https://haumc.org/live/>.

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN 14. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church
511 Groveland Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55403

Memorial Service

JUN 14. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church
511 Groveland Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55403

Reception

JUN 14. 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church
511 Groveland Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55403

Tribute Wall

HD

“ I met Art at Lake Washington Band Camp when I was a Music Ed student at Mankato State University and had recently graduated. I was the student assistant director of the camp and a counselor and he was the French Horn teacher. While working together at the camp, he told me there was an opening for a band director in the Rosemount school district split between Rosemount High School, where he was the director, and at Valley Middle School, and he encouraged me to apply for the position. I will be forever grateful to him for the encouragement, because I did apply, was hired, and spent my entire teaching career in there. If I had know at the time how the instrumental music program there was a model throughout the state for exemplary performance, and the rigor and expectations on the part of the staff to make it so, I would probably have been too intimidated to seek what turned out to be such a high profile job. It was the best possible position that I could ever have been offered, and if I hadn't met Art at LWBC, it would have never happened.

One thing that really impressed me is how well Art could play all the instruments, not just at a functional level for teaching kids, but at a high performance level. He frequently would spend time every weekend practicing at school. It was pretty intimidating, but also inspiring. He also was the person who established the foundation of the band program that other districts looked to as models for what they wished their programs could be - components such as all students getting individual or small group lessons, staffing ratios based on student band enrollment, and pay for co-curricular assignments. Any band teachers who have worked in District 196, regardless of if they ever worked with or even knew Art, owe him a debt of gratitude for what he established when the band program was originally designed and implemented. The band staff and students continue to be beneficiaries of Art's vision, dedication, and hard work. Respectfully submitted, Herb Dick

Herb Dick - September 10, 2025 at 12:44 PM

MT

“ Thank you to everyone who attended Art's service or who watched via livestream - your presence truly comforted us.

We are grateful to Reverend Elizabeth Macauley and the Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church staff and volunteers who offered spiritual guidance and great support in honoring Art with the Visitation, Service, and Lunch Reception. We also are grateful for the tremendous support from everyone at Washburn McReavy Glen Haven Funeral Services.

The scripture readers gifted us with the Word of God and each has a special connection to Art. Steve Olsen (Rosemount, MN) and Herbert Dick (Minneapolis, MN) both taught with Art at Rosemount High School; Rev. Steve Krogh (Sacramento, CA) is a former Rosemount Band student, who performed on trombone in Art's Bands; Barry Fox (Chaska, MN), also a retired Band director, is a Recycler at HAUMC with whom Art worked on projects at the church.

We so enjoyed Art's long life of 93 years and have many pictures, stories, and reflections in our hearts. We would love to hear more of your stories if you wish to share them and so we invite you to add them to this website.

Thank you for celebrating his life with us and for remembering him.

*Blessings,
Marcia Thoen and Family*

Marcia Thoen - July 11, 2025 at 03:14 PM

TC

“ *The Corea-Smiths purchased the Beautiful Dreams for the family of Arthur James Smith.*



The Corea-Smiths - June 06, 2025 at 04:22 PM

CR

“ *I had the privilege of being part of Rosemount Elementary, Middle and High Schools band programs. I began my percussionist journey 5th thru 8th grades under the direction of Mr Stan Shubert and then continued 9th thru 12th grades under Mr. Art Smith. Their expectations and quest for perfection not only inspired students musically but also helped us evolve in life beyond the band programs. I am grateful for my experiences while under their direction. We really were that good and also developed RHS first drum line. Class of 1982 drummers we ROCKED!*

Cheryl Ratzlaff - May 03, 2025 at 05:19 AM

MH

“ Jim...as a long time Rosemount resident I remember the day your father was hired. I believe my sister Pam was still part of the RHS band and I was still in elementary school. I don't believe Older sister Kay nor older brother Rick had your father. I stayed in band until graduation in 1975.

I also remember you and I hanging out originally at your home next to the tennis court near Rosemount Elementary. One memory was watching a football game, Bears with Gayle Sayers and playing with your dog (Irish Setter?) Your father instituted high expectations for his students and you. I was proud to have Rosemount represented by a quality band.

You may know that my father played clarinet and piano and learned brass instruments because as a teacher becoming a principal in Barnsville, MN he served as the band director.

All 4 of the Hanson children completed high school in the Band program. I wish you and your family my best. Regards, Mark A. Hanson Waukee, Iowa 515-210-7008

mark hanson - January 19, 2025 at 01:56 PM

JH

Jim as with Mark, I was in the band with both you and Mark. I have nothing but respect for your father. His professionalism and expectation of perfection were driving forces for myself and any other aspiring young musicians to ush ourselves. My greatest sympathies with your loss.

Tony Hart
11 Briese Dr
Eldon, MO
651-353-5665.

James, Tony Hart - January 19, 2025 at 09:38 PM