



Carol Alice Murray

April 25, 1938 - December 28, 2023

Carol Alice Murray, passed away on December 28, 2023 at the age of 85.

Carol was born in Duluth, Minnesota, to Alice and Clifford Nelson on April 25, 1938. Both of her grandparents lived just a few blocks away in West Duluth. She referred to her "grandma by the church" and her "grandma on the hill". Carol had a special attachment to her "grandma on the hill", Hilma Nelson, and she would ride her bike up the hill every day after school (weather permitting).

Carol always had a passion for music. Her piano teacher recognized her natural talent and helped her develop a group of performance pieces. Word quickly spread and her piano teacher arranged for Carol to perform at church luncheons, banquets and other venues. The pay was not great as the most common payment was a hankie.

Carol and Len first met in 1951 when Carol was asked to play for the father-son banquet at the First Presbyterian Church in Duluth, and Len played a trumpet solo for the event. Carol was 13 years old and Len was 18 and in college. Two years later her piano teacher, who was the choir director at the church, asked Carol to take the organist job at the church. Carol was then 15 years old and Len was 20 and singing in the tenor section of the choir. The choir director also invited Len to join her Carillon Choral Club, which was a civic choir originally known as "The Messiah Choir". Carol was also the

accompanist for this choir, playing the piano accompaniment for Handel's Messiah at age 13 and the organ accompaniment at age 15. The friendship between Carol and Len developed but did not blossom until Carol graduated from Denfeld High School in 1956.

In the summer of 1956 Carol was invited by the Minnesota State Board of Christian Endeavor to be the accompanist for the services and soloists at the Christian Endeavor Camp at Mission Farms on Medicine Lake. There she met Bob Mantzke who was to have an important impact on Carol's life.

Carol and Len became engaged on Christmas Eve of 1956, and were married in the First Presbyterian Church on August 24, 1957. Following their honeymoon, they moved to Minneapolis. Shortly after, Bob Mantzke (who was the Choir Director at Park Avenue Church) asked Carol to be the organist at Park Avenue Methodist Church in south Minneapolis. There, Len and Carol met many good friends who would become friends for life. In addition to the organist position, Carol started and directed several youth choirs.

Bob Mantzke also invited Carol to become the accompanist for his Minneapolis Choralaires "show" choir. Soon after, Len joined the choir and the couple had the opportunity to travel to Europe with the choir in 1961. The choir competed (and won first place) in the choral competition in Llangollen, Wales, and traveled to 14 European countries by plane, boat, and mostly bus. That was an unforgettable experience!

Carol had attended UMD for one year prior to the marriage and then continued her education at the U of M Minneapolis campus, graduating with a Master's Degree in Music Education and Piano/Organ performance. She then accepted a position as Choral Director at Sanford Junior High. She was an instant hit with the students in her choirs and by the second year (1962) she had over 300 students in her choirs. The Assistant Principal told her that next

year they were going to limit the number of students in her choirs because the other elective courses were not being utilized.

Because of her success at Sanford, the Minneapolis Board of Education promoted Carol to a position of Music Resource Teacher. This position required traveling to the Minneapolis elementary schools working with the teachers and assisting them in teaching music.

Then it was time to start a family and Carol put her teaching career on hold. Scott was born in 1964 and Kent was born in 1967. She loved these kids and made sure they were involved musically in many different venues. Carol continued her career part-time and enjoyed teaching at Bethel College (University), Northwestern College, the University of Minnesota, teaching and accompanying at the Minneapolis Central High Magnet School, and giving piano lessons at home. All this and raising two boys kept Carol very busy, while Len accepted a new position at Apache Corporation that required extensive travel, being gone all week and sometimes two weeks at a time.

In 1969, Carol was approached by Bob Berglund and asked her if she would join the music staff at Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church to direct the youth choirs. She accepted and enjoyed the challenge of working with and directing the large numbers involved in these choirs. She continued as organist at Park Avenue while directing the youth choirs at Mt. Olivet. After two years she resigned at Park Avenue to put all her energies into her choirs at Mt. Olivet.

As director of the youth choirs, Pastor Paul Youngdahl wanted the youth at Mt. Olivet to continue their music program through the summer months, so he asked Carol to live at Cathedral of the Pines to work musically with the young people there. She continued this for six years so Scott and Kent literally grew up at C.O.P. They have been loyal to the camp ever since and return

frequently to volunteer work there. Their families also have a strong connection to the camp.

In 1976 Carol became Director of Music Education for Schmitt Music Company. This involved the hiring, training, and scheduling of piano teachers at Schmitt Music. It was a full-time position, but it was difficult for Carol to be the at-home mom she wanted to be and to have the job responsibility. That same year Carol started a youth choir of her own which she named The Edina Songsters. The choir was made up of talented kids (not necessarily from Edina) in the 5th through 8th grade. They sang with some choreography and had more requests to perform than they could handle. Scott and Kent both were included in this choir.

Also, in 1976, Carol started to write choral anthems. Altogether over the years she published over 50 anthems with four different publishers.

In 1980 Carol left Schmitt Music and concentrated on more part-time ventures including the Assistant Organist at Mt. Olivet and teaching piano. In 1989 when the Mt Olivet organist left, Carol took on the Interim Organist position for a year until a permanent organist could be found.

In 1991 Carol decided to look for a position where she could express her directing talents more. She found that at Minnetonka Lutheran Church who hired her as Director of Music and Organist. This was a great opportunity for her and, in addition to the Senior Choir, she created and directed the Male Chorus, Women's' Ensemble, a teen choir, and several youth choirs. Carol continued her work there for 15 years when she retired in 2006.

In the following years her health declined and her left leg had to be amputated in 2009 due to an infection. Her strength gradually declined and she no longer was able to do the things she enjoyed the most. Following a month of

hospitalization from COVID in 2020 she was then transferred to Martin Luther Manor. After 2 months she was transferred to the Masonic Home and then in July of 2021 transferred to Mt. Olivet Careview Home where she died on December 28, 2023.

Carol was preceded in death by her parents, Clifford and Alice Nelson. She is survived by her husband of 66 years, Leonard; children, Scott (Susan) Murray and Kent (Andrea) Murray; grandchildren, Jacob Murray, Jordan Murray, Michael Murray, Caroline Murray, Edward Murray; and sister, Judy Bergman.

Memorial service will be held on Thursday, January 18th at 11 AM at Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church, 5025 Knox Ave S, Minneapolis. Visitation one hour prior. For those unable to attend in person, a livestream of the service will be available at: <https://mtolivet.org/livestream/>

Memorials preferred to Mt. Olivet Careview Home Therapeutic Recreation Dept., or Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church.

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 18. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Mount Olivet Lutheran Church (So. Mpls)
5025 Knox Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55419

Memorial Service

JAN 18. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Mount Olivet Lutheran Church (So. Mpls)
5025 Knox Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55419

Tribute Wall



“ *I enjoyed spending time with the Murrays as a youth in Edina and up at COP. In Carol, Jesus has a great new addition to his heavenly choir.* ”

Charlie Wahlquist - January 07, 2024 at 05:54 PM