



Eugene Allen Rush

October 6, 1935 - March 11, 2020

Obituary for Eugene Allen Rush

Gene passed away on March 11, 2020 due to complications of Alzheimer's disease. He leaves behind his daughter Lisa, her husband Keith and cherished granddaughters, Chandler and Sheridan Weir of Minneapolis, Minnesota. He is also survived by his son Evan, his wife Carole and treasured granddaughter Addison Rush of Charlotte, North Carolina. His youngest brother Fran Rush of Washington County, Pennsylvania also survives him along with many nieces and nephews. His survivors also include many good friends and his hard-working and talented music students that he mentored over his life. He is preceded in death by his beloved wife Carol Ann Rush, who he is now joyfully reunited with. He is also preceded in death by his parents, Joseph and Estelle Rush and his sisters, Alice Ruzi, Edith Lowry, Eleanor Lange and brother, Edwin (Bud) Rush.

Gene graduated from West Allegheny High School in Oakdale, PA and went into the army's Third Armored Division, Special Services where he discovered his passion for jazz piano and met his mentor Cedar Walton. After returning from the service, Gene met Carol Switalski while playing piano at Conneaut Lake, PA. They married in 1960 and started a family. Using the GI bill, Gene went on to attend The University of Maryland while studying, performing and recording with many jazz greats in the Washington D.C. jazz scene. He

pursued his graduate work in the 1970's at the University of Denver, and was Director of Jazz Studies there while performing extensively in Denver and touring. Upon graduation with his Master's in composition he accepted a position at the University of Memphis as Director of Jazz Studies. He remained in that role for 20 years. While in Memphis he continued to perform and tour with many jazz artists from the mid-south and around the world. After retirement from U of M he continued teaching and performing. He remained in Memphis until 2011 when he moved to Minnesota. Over his career he received many honors and awards for performance, composition and arranging. His university jazz ensembles won high acclaim and received numerous invitations to perform around the world.

Gene was a world class jazz pianist, composer, arranger and band director. He traveled the world performing with well-known artists. His most gratifying professional experience however was that of jazz educator. He took great pride and satisfaction in the accomplishments of his students whether that be in performance, education or their personal lives. Gene stayed in touch with many of his students over his 50+ years, lifetime career of being a jazz teacher. His great love and affection for his students was one of the great joys of his life. His greatest joy of all was his beautiful, compassionate and intelligent granddaughters, Chandler, Sheridan and Addison.

Mass of Christian Burial will take place on Thursday, July 23, 2020 at 10:30 a.m. at St. Juan Diego Parish, 201 9th Street, Sharpsburg, PA 15215 with lunch to follow. In lieu of flowers please make a memorial donation to one of the following or to an organization of your choice.

St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, Memphis, Tennessee www.stjude.org/

Ellis Marsalis Center, Musician's Village, New Orleans, Louisiana www.ellisma

rsaliscenter.org/

Mouth & Foot Painting Artists, Peachtree, Georgia www.mfpausa.com

If you have questions or would like more information, please contact:

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Cemetery Details

Hillside Crematory

2610 19th Ave NE
Minneapolis, MN 55418

Tribute Wall

JB

“ I had the incredible opportunity in 1998 to take some lesson from Gene during the Vermont Jazz Center summer “camp” at the Putney School in Vermont. He was a great teacher, an inventive improviser and an asset to the VJC. Another jazz great, father, teacher and decent human being has passed. I am sorry for his loss to his family and all of us.

Jon Block - April 04, 2022 at 11:43 PM

RP

“ I studied under Gene at (then) Memphis State University, where I was also friends with Lisa. I learned a lot from Gene as a musician and have thought about him many times over the years. A great man, great teacher.

All the best to his family.

Robert Paul

robpaul@t-online.de

Robert Paul - March 30, 2022 at 02:44 PM