



## Sam Wallace Fiske

December 30, 1928 - September 30, 2025

Sam Fiske, 96, of Plymouth, MN passed on Sept. 30th, 2025. He was born Earl Wallace Avery in Great Falls, MT, the youngest of three children of Earl Weber and Gail Fiske Avery. Their marriage split, and at six months old he was sent to live with his mom's brother's family. They adopted him when he was six, and he joined four siblings, becoming the youngest by 4 years. His name was officially changed to Sam Wallace Fiske.

His early years were spent in Eustice and several other small towns where his dad was a substation operator for the Milwaukee railroad. He married young, to his high school sweetheart, Mary Gibson, and they had one daughter, Kate, but the marriage did not last.

Several years later, in March of 1954, he met Betty Lackman while he was playing at the Beacon Club in Billings, MT. They tied the knot that July. They were married for 67 years at the time of her passing in 2021.

About a week before their wedding, he received his draft notice. He followed family tradition and enlisted in the Navy, where he pursued his musical interests. He was able to serve in the band on the USS Bremerton, an ambassador ship to the South Pacific. They added 2 daughters to their family during his Navy years: Cindy (born in Maryland) and Amy (born in California).

After his service he studied engineering at Eastern College in Billings and Montana State College (presently MSU) in Bozeman, MT. During this period, a son, Mark, was added to their family (born in Billings). After graduation in 1964, Sam accepted a position with Control Data Corp. in Minneapolis, MN, in the developing computer industry. Transfers took the family to Santa Clara, CA, and then back to the Twin Cities area.

Sam accepted an early retirement from CDC in 1990 and, true to his passion for learning, went back to school and obtained his Certified Quality Engineer credentials.

He was always independent, brave, and adventurous. He was passionate about sailing and bought himself a windsurfer while in his 50's, teaching himself to sail across local lakes.

Sam was also always looking for opportunities to teach and mentor others, from children, grandchildren and great grandchildren to young musicians at the Jazz Workshop.

But music was always his heart. He learned music by listening in on his sisters' piano lessons, and then started playing his sister Bink's trumpet. He later played with his sister Alice's band in Billings, and moved up from there. He played wherever he went and as often as he could, from family reunions to regular, paying gigs. "It's all just music", was his motto.

He is survived by his sister, Win, his half-brother, CD, and his half-sisters, Beverly and Carolyn; his children Kate, Cindy (Steve), Amy (Eric), and Mark (Nicole); grandchildren, John, Christina (Anthony), Andrew, Jenny (Dan), Ryan, Emily (Brent), and John (Bailey); 12 great grandchildren and 3 great, great grandchildren; and numerous cousins, nieces and nephews.

He will be deeply missed by so many who enjoyed his enthusiasm for life.

Celebration of life will be held at First Baptist Church of Anoka, 1235 Park St., Anoka, MN, on Friday, October 10th at 11am, with visitation at 10. There will be music at the luncheon, so feel free to bring your instruments if you'd like to sit in

Memorials proffered to Save The Music Foundation or another charity of your choice.

# Cemetery Details

## Fort Snelling National Cemetery

7601 34th Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55450

# Previous Events

## Visitation

OCT **10**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

First Baptist Church of Anoka  
1235 Park Street  
Anoka, MN 55303

## Memorial Service

OCT **10**. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

First Baptist Church of Anoka  
1235 Park Street  
Anoka, MN 55303

# Tribute Wall

JD

“ Sam organized the Mpls Jazz workshop, performed with the Commodores Dance Band and was a mainstay with many other groups. Frequent comments from the audience was " Don't lose that guy... the trumpet player , who plays BASS. as Tradition goes "play it again Sam" ..one more once ..with Gabriel.

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**jim DeFeo** - October 09, 2025 at 03:57 PM

MF

“ Machesney Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Sam Wallace Fiske.

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**Machesney Family** - October 05, 2025 at 11:31 AM

MF

“ Machesney Family purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Sam Wallace Fiske.



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**Machesney Family** - October 05, 2025 at 11:31 AM