



## Lynn Middlebrook

September 29, 1940 - December 1, 2018

Lynn Middlebrook of Spring Lake, Michigan (Sept. 29, 1940 – Dec. 1, 2018) was a renaissance man — beloved husband, father, uncle, friend, educator, musician, volunteer, race car driver — who excelled at everything on which he turned his attention. Lynn had the rare ability of not only mastering many pursuits, but also in mentoring, teaching, and bringing out the best in his students and colleagues...by expecting excellence, then celebrating it. Lynn touched hundreds of lives with his caring discipline and energetic optimism. Those who were fortunate to know Lynn would agree: he knew no strangers, only friends he had not yet met.

Music was the thread woven throughout the fabric of Lynn's life. Widely recognized as the finest trumpet player in West Michigan (and beyond), Lynn's musical career began in 1950, when his grandfather unearthed an old trumpet to see if Lynn would enjoy playing it. He did. Lynn studied music at the University of Michigan for two years, then earned his undergraduate degree at Central Michigan University, where he discovered an innovative approach to band directing. At CMU, he was principal trumpet in the wind and jazz ensembles and orchestra. Lynn completed graduate work at Michigan State University. He began teaching at Montague Schools, followed by a career at Spring Lake Schools as band director, chair of the music program, and director of musicals. Upon retirement, Lynn was active as a professional musician, with roles such as a conductor, soloist, and also a member of what is now West Michigan Concert Winds and the Muskegon Symphony.

In the late 1960s, an impressed Doc Severinsen heard Lynn play, offering to mentor him in New York. Fortunately, Lynn chose to remain in Michigan, where in 1972 he married Nancy, the love of his life at St. John's Episcopal Church in Grand Haven. Friends introduced them while Lynn was conducting a summer band at Muskegon's McGraft Park. Lynn invited Nancy on a date to watch him drive at Grattan Raceway. On that sunny day in 1971, Nancy joined Lynn in his post-race victory lap. Lynn was a loving — and beloved — husband, for 46 years.

A caring, involved father, Lynn was a Cub Scouts leader, running the Pinewood Derby.

With his daughter Ellen, he participated in “Indian Princesses”; his moniker was “Big Buffalo”. During many years of summer camping in the Manistee National Forest, Lynn mastered the art of grilling turkey on his Weber, hosting large groups of family and friends.

No one knows exactly the number of motorcycles and cars Lynn owned during his lifetime. His Genie (a fast CanAm race car) was most treasured; Road America in Wisconsin and Grattan were his favorite tracks. Nancy and Lynn enjoyed boating with their children and friends, especially on their 36’ Sea Ray.

A longtime member of St. John’s Episcopal Church in Grand Haven, Lynn served as choir director, vestry member, as a youth leader, and usher. He also founded St. John’s Brass Ensemble.

Destin, Florida became Lynn and Nancy’s “home away from home” in 1995. They established many cherished friendships through St. Andrew’s by The Sea Episcopal Church, and other involvements. Lynn volunteered with junior and senior high school music programs, taught private lessons, and enjoyed watching students compete in music festivals and competitions. Lynn was an integral volunteer in St. Andrew’s bicycle ministry, rebuilding and providing bikes for the homeless and individuals in need. He especially enjoyed playing the trumpet in St. Andrew’s “Boogie Beach Band”.

Lynn is survived by his loving wife, Nancy. Also by his son Jeffrey (Christy) Middlebrook, grandson Joshua; sister-in-law Sandra Warnock, sister-in-law Barbara Brink, and many cherished nieces, nephews, and cousins, especially his great, great nephews, Reid and Ryder. Lynn was predeceased in 2012 by his daughter, Ellen Middlebrook. Also by his brother-in-law William Warnock and sister-in-law Patricia Griffin.

Memorials may be directed to: Hospice of North Ottawa Community, Grand Haven; St. John’s Episcopal Food Pantry, Grand Haven; American Cancer Society. (No flowers, please.)

Visitation will take place on Friday, June 14, 2019 from 5:00 – 8:00 pm at The Spring Lake Chapel (213 E. Savidge). On Saturday, June 15, 2019 at 11:30 am, a memorial and celebration of Lynn’s life will be held at St. John’s Episcopal Church, Grand Haven. Please sign the family’s online guestbook at [www.sytsemafh.com](http://www.sytsemafh.com).

The family is being served by Sytsema Funeral & Cremation Services - The Spring Lake Chapel.

# Comments

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“ Lynn was the best trumpet player I have ever had the opportunity to play and be associated with in the music world. I had the opportunity to play music with Lynn when he and Nancy came down to Destin during the winter months. He was one of the original members of the Beach Boogie Band and we played together at various events at St Andrews Episcopal Church especially for their annual Mardi Gras bash. His favorite was "Saint Go Marching In" and he could make his trumpet "talk" to the crowd. He has been a great friend over the years and we corresponded weekly via e-mail for years. There will be a void in our lives without Lynn and we will miss the good times we had making music. Our prayers and thoughts are with you Nancy and we look forward to seeing you when you come down to Destin.

Fred and Carol Fenn

Fred and Carol Fenn - 15 hours ago

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“ Emily and I were saddened to learn of the passing of dear Lynn. Lynn was such a gracious and giving friend to all of us Snowbirds from Atlantic Canada. We will always remember the "times" we had together, sharing stories, enjoying potluck feasts at our famous Super Bowl parties but especially appreciating his talents and generous musical abilities. As the obituary indicated so well, Lynn enjoyed his life and shared it with many, many people - giving of his time and his talents to others. We were blessed in being his friends and send our love and shared remembrances to Nancy and his family. Joseph H. McGuire.

Joseph H. McGuire - December 08 at 08:58 AM

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“ Sending Love & Comfort to you, Nancy & family, as we remember an amazing man who influenced us all in so many areas of life. Through music he taught life lessons that continue to make a difference in our lives and those lives we touch. The heavenly realms are most certainly blessed with his return, after a life well lived.

Jeanne Underwood - December 06 at 02:10 PM

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“ Lynn became a good friend through music and the West Michigan Concert Winds about 20 years ago. The band organized a trip to the British Isles. The week the band was to leave, the conductor died of a heart attack. Lynn took over directing the band for the trip with a passport that would expire within a week after the trip. He had to work very hard to learn the music and direct the band in light of the tragedy. He turned out to be the best possible conductor in the situation and we became good

friends.

I wish Nancy well and am saddened by his passing. It is a real loss for me.

John Highhill

John Highhill - December 06 at 11:29 AM

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“ Nancy - we are thinking of you and your family ... and of Lynn. We are unable to attend the visitation or the funeral, as we are out of town at a racing industry event (something he would've loved!). We will all miss his smile, his infectious laugh, and his musical talent. Our thoughts and prayers are with you as you close this chapter of life.

Jack and Sue Jerovsek

Sue Jerovsek - December 06 at 09:51 AM

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“ Lots of fond memories. I especially like the boat trip with the cat.

Dennis Farmer

Dennis Farmer - December 06 at 07:11 AM

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“ Nancy and Jeff ~ My heart breaks for you both at the passing of Lynn. So many memories on the boat in Hanky Panky, Lynn playing Reville at Don and Lois' Shivarree anniversary party in the middle of the night and his laugh - so many memories. I pray you find comfort in the thoughts and prayers of your friends and family. Lynn will be dearly missed by many.  
~ Jan (Bennett) Pickford

Jan - December 05 at 09:06 PM

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“ I wished I would've met him sooner than I did. Heck up a teacher and influential when it came to music. Thankful he helped me continue a passion for music. Condolences to the family, especially Nancy.  
Will miss him,  
Mike Walukonis

mike walukonis - December 05 at 05:09 PM



“ Mr. Middlebrook certainly exerted a great positive influence at Spring Lake High School, even over those who were not in the music programs. He is missed. Phil Sielski

**Philip Sielski** - December 05 at 04:00 PM

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“ Jeff and I will always have a warm spot for you. You played the trumpet at our wedding in DC. It was lovely. You will be missed. The Kelleys

**kelleys** - December 05 at 03:29 PM

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“ So many high school memories. Marching band, band camp, SL musicals, etc. Mr. Middlebrook was a Laker, through and through. He will be missed by so many. He touched the lives of so many, and boy could he blow that horn! He lived in my family's downstairs apartment when he first came to SL. May he RIP. Condolences to his family and friends.  
David Smart  
SLHS Class of '70

**David Smart** - December 05 at 01:15 PM

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“ I played in many bands with Lynn and will miss him. I send my condolences to his family. Ginger Austin

**Ginger** - December 05 at 09:34 AM

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“ I was tremendously saddened to learn of Lynn's passing. He was my band director at SLHS, the man who persuaded me to give up dreams of the flute (in order to emulate my hero, Ian Anderson of Jethro Tull, as lead singer of my high school rock band) in favor of the tuba. I think I've been able to forgive him over the passage of time.

He was a perfectionist who demanded perfection from teenagers, which couldn't help but make us better as players and as people. I still remember how, after two years of watching football games in the stands with the marching band, I decided to forsake the band and go out for the football team. Since I had no football experience, my first game the following season I rode the bench for the entire night. After the game, Lynn made it a point to walk past me on the field and whisper, "I bet you wish you were marching now, don'tcha?"

He was a taskmaster, but I was fortunate to see his other side. He was good friends with Bobby Pellegrom, scion of the family that owned the giant house on Savidge Street where I grew up. Lynn would often come to the garage/carriage house next to the house and assist Bob in dropping engines, rebuilding transmissions, and other things weekend mechanics love, covered in grease and happy as a clam. It was so good for me to see him in that setting; I don't know if he was happier under a car or playing his trumpet, but this I know for certain: that cat could blow.

My sincerest condolences to the entire Middlebrook family. Lynn was quite a man.

Blessings,  
— Jim McFarlin

Jim McFarlin - December 05 at 12:27 AM

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Laura Stratis - December 04 at 09:08 PM

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Laura Stratis - December 04 at 09:06 PM

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Laura Stratis - December 04 at 09:04 PM



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Laura Stratis - December 04 at 09:02 PM

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Laura Stratis - December 04 at 09:00 PM

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Laura Stratis - December 04 at 08:38 PM