



Keith Norval Sturdevant

February 12, 1921 - August 14, 2014

Keith Norval Sturdevant (1921-2014)

STURDEVANT, KEITH N, age 93, passed away at home on August 14. He is preceded in death by his beloved wife and life-partner Helen (Danner) Sturdevant. He is survived by his sons Douglas Payson (Nancy) Sturdevant, Roger E. (Norma) Sturdevant; grandchildren Rebecca, Elizabeth “Beth”, Robert “Rob”, Ryan (Giselle) and Jason (Morgan) Sturdevant; and great-grandsons Tristan and Aidan D’Ottavio.

Keith was born in Lincoln, Nebraska in 1921. He graduated from the University of Nebraska with a Bachelor degree in Music Education in 1942, and after the war earned a Master in Music Education in 1947. In 1941 he was voted an “Outstanding Bandsman” in the Rose Bowl Parade, and was also president of the University’s chapter of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia. It was at the University that he met and married the love of his life, Helen. They were married in May 1942, and several weeks later Keith enlisted in the Army Air Force with the express purpose of becoming a primary flight instructor. He was assigned to Mustang Field near El Reno, Oklahoma where he also organized an all-church choir of high school age students to perform for afternoon services at the First Presbyterian Church. He was later assigned to Buckley Fields near Denver, Colorado and was discharged from the Army in October 1946. After returning to Lincoln for graduate studies, he and Helen moved to Gordon, Nebraska in 1947 where he began his first public-school position as the vocal-instrumental music teacher. While in Gordon, Keith also

directed the First Presbyterian Church Choir and organized and directed a Community Chorus. In 1949, Keith and his family moved to St. Joseph, Michigan where he taught Junior/Senior high school vocal music. He also directed the choir for what later became the First United Methodist Church of St. Joseph. In 1954, his family of four moved to Ferndale, Michigan after being appointed Supervisor of Vocal Music K-12 and Director of Choirs for Highland Park High School and Junior College. His school choirs became renowned throughout Michigan, and toured regularly throughout the State. They also performed for conventions and conferences of organizations such as the National Association of Secondary School Administrators and the National Association of School Boards. Keith organized and conducted the All-State Choir sponsored by the Michigan School Vocal Association (MSVA), was Treasurer of the Michigan Music Educators Association, and was "review editor" of new choral publications for the MSVA Journal. Keith was a member of the Rackham Choir that performed with the Detroit Symphony for performances with Music Director Paul Paray and guest conductor Robert Shaw. In 1969, Keith became Director of Music for the City of Ferndale Public Schools. Upon retirement in 1979, Keith and Helen spent winters in Sun City, Arizona where they were members of the First Presbyterian Church of Sun City. Summers were spent on Drummond Island, Michigan where they had been coming since 1963. In May of 2001, they became permanent residents of Drummond Island enjoying the visits of family, friends and many former students. The Sturdevant family expresses gratitude for the exceptional love and care he received from the hands of Joyce Meyers, Nancy Black, Mary Anderson, Dorothy Larrabee, Loren Deal and Christine Cordray FNP-C. The family also wishes to thank Sheri Walker RN, the Drummond Island Ambulance Service and EUP Home Health & Hospice.

A Memorial Service will be held Friday, August 22 at 12:00 Noon at the Drummond Island Township Hall, 29935 E. Pine Street on Drummond Island.

Memorial contributions may be sent to E.U.P. Hospice, 308 W. 12th Ave.,
Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

AUG **22**. 12:00 PM (ET)

Drummond Island Township Hall
29935 E. Pine St.
Drummond Island, MI 49726

Tribute Wall



“ *Keith Norval Sturdevant*

October 05, 2023 at 09:54 AM



“ *Keith Norval Sturdevant*

October 02, 2023 at 10:14 PM



“ *Keith Norval Sturdevant*

September 01, 2022 at 07:49 PM



“ *The most inspiring music teacher i have experienced. mr. Sturdevant taught vocal music at Highland Park High School... I graduated in 56 and majored in music at Wayne. I have taught music all my life. Mr. Sturdevant was talented, intelligent, inspiring and set a great example for gentle, kind, and fun teaching. Thanks, Mr. Sturdevant..... and God speed. Carrie Stewart Gulan*

carrie stewart gulan - August 23, 2014 at 09:05 AM



“ *I so appreciated having a choir director who cared. We worked hard and sounded great. I have always been grateful for his training. I am sorry for your loss.*

*Most sincerely, Dorothy (Detzer) Rubin
class of 1960*

dorothy rubin - August 22, 2014 at 07:31 PM

LW

“ *Laurence W. purchased a sympathy card for the family of Keith Norval Sturdevant.*



Laurence W. - August 22, 2014 at 01:55 PM

JB

“ *Sincerest condolences to the family of Mr. Sturdevant!
Mr. Sturdevant, as he was known to the students, was a gentle giant in the field of vocal music. He inspired many to pursue careers in music and was key in my introduction to musical theater!
I'm sorry to have lost contact with him after HPHS & JC!
I feel confident that he is already collaborating to join other renowned vocal directors in leading that glorious heavenly choir, and I'm sure we'll be singing together again some day!! Jim Bone
HPHS '57*

Jim Bone - August 22, 2014 at 01:10 PM

LR

“ *Mr. Sturdevant will always be remembered as one of the "patches of blessing" in my life.*

I graduated in 1962, and was part of the concert choir that gave a presentation to the Superintendents of all area schools at Cobo Hall in Detroit. The hall was very large and Mr. Sturdevant rapidly got a "shell" (I believe the first time for any such type of concert) so that our voices would be appropriately projected. There were many accolades from the audience. Mr. Sturdevant always wanted us at our best!

Nor will I forget his phrase to "sit on top of the note"! I love music, and Mr. Sturdevant is a large part of that love. What a blessing!

Lenida (Anderson) Ramsay

Lenida Anderson Ramsay - August 21, 2014 at 08:36 PM

DJ

“ *I shall sorely miss Uncle Keith. He was a wonderful person and always my favorite. I know he is at peace with the Lord. Our prayers are with you all during this time. May the Lord Bless and Keep You now and always.*

In His Love,

Dee & Janet

Dee & Janet - August 21, 2014 at 10:35 AM

SD

“ I remember vacations with Uncle Keith and Aunt Helen: at my parent's home in NE, or at Keith's house in MI. He was always positive and energetic, and fun to be around. Once we all went to Sault Ste. Marie, to see the locks and ships; and the nighttime event was to park the car by the town garbage dump, then turn on the headlights to catch the bears that came out in the dark to forage in the garbage pits. Good times with Pace & Roger too!

Skee Danner (nephew)

Skee Danner - August 21, 2014 at 10:31 AM

GM

“ Mr. Sturdevant was wonderful person and an inspirational teacher. I will miss corresponding with him. He challenged the members of the Highland Park High School Concert Choir to perform at their very best level and introduced us to great works of music. In 1967 he had us perform Poulenc's "Gloria" and I sang the soprano solos. Little did I know that in 1985 I would again sing those solos with the Detroit Symphony Civic Orchestra at historic Orchestra Hall in Detroit! Whenever I hear Poulenc's music, I will think of him.

In deepest sympathy,

Gail (White) Mitchell

Gail (White) Mitchell - August 21, 2014 at 09:21 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Keith Norval Sturdevant.*



August 21, 2014 at 08:18 AM



“ *Blessing and Peace to the family and close friends of Keith Sturdevant. He was truly an inspiration to so many of us. My experience with him in Concert Choir at Highland Park Michigan from 1965-68 sparked determination and creativity in me which lead to a life full of art, music and theatre. His memory has been with me throughout my life.*

Ellen Bush - August 20, 2014 at 05:09 PM



“ *Claire, Daniel, Tristan and Aidan D'Ottavio purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Keith Norval Sturdevant.*



Claire, Daniel, Tristan and Aidan D'Ottavio - August 20, 2014 at 12:58 PM

PG

“ *Mr. Sturdevant was the most fantastic Teacher ever. He always inspired us to strive for excellence in Vocal production and made sure that we studied to show ourselves approved. We sang wonderful music.... not only at Choral festivals (where we always received top ratings) but every Concert was filled with beautiful and glorious Music. I can still see his smiling face at HPHS and I had such a wonderful visit with him on the phone several months ago. Thank you Mr. Sturdevant for blessing all of us...especially between 1958 & 1962. Sincerely, Phyllis C. Gibson*

Phyllis C Gibson - August 20, 2014 at 07:47 AM