



Sidney Andrew Blair Jr.

February 20, 1926 - August 7, 2020

Sidney Andrew Blair Jr. Age 94, passed away August 7, 2020.

Sidney was a 1942 graduate of East Detroit High School. He was a proud veteran of the United States Army/Air Force, stationed at Langley Field, VA where he was trained as a Radio Operator.

Sidney attended Michigan State University and received his Master's Degree in Music Education and Administration from Wayne State University.

He was a music teacher and administrator for East Detroit Public Schools for 35 years, where he was instrumental in developing the music program, retiring in 1981 as the System Fine Arts Chairman. He was also involved with the Jazz Studies program at Macomb County Community College. His teaching career included 10 consecutive first place awards at Michigan State Bank and Orchestra state festivals.

After retirement he was involved in Big Band Special Services Dance and Show Big Bands. He was also a side musician, backing many big name acts at Pine Knob, Meadowbrook, the Fisher Theater, Music Hall and many night clubs as well as playing for the Ice Follies and Ringling Bros. Circus. After moving to Florida his music career stayed in full swing, playing with bands such as Joe Oddo, Frank Roberts, Nick Russo, Warren Bills just to name a few. He was "on call" for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and a traveling musician for concerts in Windsor, Ontario; Carnegie Hall, NY and Kennedy Performing Arts Auditorium, Wash DC. Sidney and Helen also enjoyed many cruises where he was "booked" to play in the ships orchestra.

Beloved husband of Helen. Their children and family: Sidney James Blair with Kathy Wishart; Mario Chiarani with Alaine Blair Chiarani & Mario Blair Chiarani with Erin Nelson & Heath E. Chiarani; Christopher with Leslie (Blair) Capitan & Christopher Capitan with Becky Baker & Danielle Capitan with Dan Brown; James with Dawn Blair & Nathan Blair & Jason Blair with Hunter Voyles

Visitation at Wm. Sullivan and Son Funeral Home, 8459 Hall Rd. (3 Blks E. of Van Dyke), Utica, Thursday, August 13th 2 - 8pm, with a Prayer service at 7pm. Funeral Mass Friday 10am at St. John Vianney Catholic Church, 54045 Schoenherr Rd., Shelby Twp. Please share a memory at SullivanFuneralDirectors.com

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 13. 2:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Wm Sullivan and Son Funeral Home
8459 Hall Road
Utica, MI 48317
(586) 731-2411
utica@sullivanfh.com
<https://www.sullivanfuneraldirectors.com/>

Prayer Service

AUG 13. 7:00 PM (ET)

Wm Sullivan and Son Funeral Home
8459 Hall Road
Utica, MI 48317
(586) 731-2411
utica@sullivanfh.com
<https://www.sullivanfuneraldirectors.com/>

Funeral Mass

AUG 14. 10:00 AM (ET)

St. John Vianney Catholic Church
54045 Schoenherr Road
Shelby Township, MI 48315

Tribute Wall



“ *Wm. Sullivan & Son Funeral Directors created a Webcast in memory of Sidney Andrew Blair Jr.*



Wm. Sullivan & Son Funeral Directors - August 13, 2020 at 06:39 PM

WY

“ *Sid Blair was an amazing musician. I used to listen to him practice in the Band Room at Grant Jr High in East Detroit after school in 1963. I asked him how to learn to improvise jazz. He said you just keep playing. That is the best answer I have heard. That was he did. He just kept playing and getting better,*

William Yee - October 21, 2023 at 03:28 PM

PD

“ *Sid was a dear friend, colleague and neighbor to my father. They taught together in East Detroit and continued to be friends and neighbors throughout their retirements. Sid was extremely talented and he extended good cheer to all. He has been sincerely missed by my father since leaving Florida to return to Michigan. He leaves us with fond memories of his charming smile, his music, and his generous heart. On behalf of Vernon Glasscock, our condolences to the family.*

Patricia Drake - August 13, 2020 at 10:23 AM

JU

I wish I had known he passed away 😞💔 Mr. Blair was my band teacher from 1959 to 1962. I wanted to learn to play the Oboe, but he talked me into playing the French Horn.

Janice (Gugel) Uglis - October 21, 2023 at 06:55 PM



“ *Sweet Solace Spray was purchased for the family of Sidney Andrew Blair Jr..*



August 11, 2020 at 09:40 AM

AK

“ *I had Mr. Blair as my band teacher and flute instructor. He left me with wonderful memories and my thoughts are with his family. Rest in Peace.*



Anne Kowalczyk - August 10, 2020 at 07:55 PM

SB

“ *3 files added to the tribute wall*



Shirley Blair-Medlin - August 10, 2020 at 07:39 PM

PG

“ *He was my band teacher at Grant Jr. High and I learned how to play the clarinet. He was a great teacher. RIP*

Peggy Mahe Genova - August 09, 2020 at 05:10 PM

JB

“ I think most of us have about two teachers we look back on as standouts; for me Mr. Blair was one of mine. Had him as a music teacher at Grant Junior High School (not as band leader...that was Mr. Magnuson) and at the time I was a clarinet player of little talent and even less personal interest -- this would remain the case until I mercifully gave it up early in high school. So, this is not that type of memory...

What he did for me was fill in the non-playing blanks, theory and appreciation. Mr. Blair had this pattern of teaching where he would be up on the podium in front of the class, stamping his feet in time to bring us all in, talking a bit as stomped and then realizing something of interest he would suddenly stop, leave the podium and take us on a side tour, talking about Debussy, augmented 7ths, light, impressionism, Souza, etc.; and then he would jump back up, count us in with his stomping and we'd begin to play probably sounding like the kids in "The Music Man".

What stayed with me as an adult were his journeys beyond the black and white notes on the sheet music. It turned out I could take what he was talking about and end up doing a decent job of understanding music, taking that understanding and use it to pursue a serviceable ability to play guitar and piano (interest in music overcoming the still missing native talent).

Mr. Blair also took a personal interest in us kids as humans, part of humanity. I recall he was also the music director for the district and so his influence certainly was felt across the bands and choral groups.

I tried to find him online a number of times to relay the above to him, but was never successful. In a way, good for him not having a large footprint on the internet.

Finally, I believe he was the composer of the Grant Junior High School fight song. Which I can still sing.

Joel Butler - August 09, 2020 at 04:20 PM

JL

“ *I remember Mr. Blair fondly from my time in the band at Grant Junior High. My condolences to his family on his passing.*

Jane Law - August 09, 2020 at 04:15 PM

JM

“ *Mr. Blair was my band teacher at Grant Jr. High for 7th, 8th and 9th grades from 1962-65. He was a great, fair teacher... always composed. He was extremely talented, and always sought to provide the best music education possible. He made band fun for his students.*

John Maggetti - August 09, 2020 at 03:51 PM

KL

Mr. Blair was a wonderful band director and music teacher. He was a genuinely kind soul. One of my favorite teachers. Rest in Peace.

Kathy Lewis - August 09, 2020 at 05:00 PM

 Randy Rowe

“ *2 files added to the album Memories Album*



Randy Rowe - August 09, 2020 at 09:41 AM

JM

The GJHS yearbook photo reminds me that I was in Mr. Blair's 7th hour, 8th grade band class when it was announced that President Kennedy had been shot... also that Mr. Blair had me stand out in the hall and play "Taps" after teasing another trumpet player. I deserved it, for sure.

John Maggetti - August 09, 2020 at 04:13 PM

LG

He was one of my teachers than my department chairman for a short time. He will be fondly remembered. Thanks Sid.

LG - August 10, 2020 at 06:56 PM

TJ

Sid Blair's encouragement helped me to become a professional musician .I'll be forever great full and I will miss him . Best to the entire Blair family. TIm jensen

Tim Jensen - October 13, 2020 at 07:37 PM