



Gerald Ervin Simmons

January 24, 1936 - June 26, 2024

Gerald "Gerry" Ervin Simmons 88, of Hurricane, WV passed away on Wednesday June 26, 2024.

Gerry was born on January 24, 1936 in Wallback, WV where he spent his youth working on the family farm. While the work was demanding, Gerry had fond memories of that setting and appreciated the value of hard work which he carried forward throughout his life.

Gerry received his Bachelor's Degree from Marshall University and Master's Degree in Music Education from the College of Graduate Studies. He was employed for over 40 years by various West Virginia County Boards of Education as a teacher and band director, most recently in Putnam County where he retired in 2000. His bands received numerous awards throughout his career. Gerry was WV's Band Director of the Year in 1972 and his Wahama High School Band received the honor of performing in the Presidential Inauguration Parade in Washington D.C. in 1973. Gerry also served as Music Director for 24 years at Forrest Burdette Memorial United Methodist Church in Hurricane, WV.

It is often said of people that he or she "never met a stranger". That was absolutely an accurate description of Gerry. He loved people and he loved a good conversation. Regardless of the location, whenever Gerry was out in a

public setting, you could be confident that he would be engaged with someone in a good hearted conversation whether he knew the person or not.

He was a kind man who valued his Christian faith and his family more than anything.

Gerry is survived by his wife of 63 years, Barbara Wilson Simmons; daughters: Nancy Simmons and Alicia (James) Martin of Hurricane, WV; son, Lee (Julie) Simmons of Frankton, IN; and grandchildren: Steven (Korinna) Larson, Wesley (Paige) Larson, Adam Martin, Sarah Martin, Leah Martin, Ellie Simmons, and Levi Simmons. He is also survived by brothers: Deward "Evans" Stalnaker, Andrew Jackson Stalnaker and Charles "Chuck" Stalnaker. Gerry was preceded in death by his father, Norville Lee Simmons; mother, Pauline Moore Stalnaker; step-father, Deward Stalnaker; sister, Patricia McArthur; daughter, Tina Larson, and brothers: Steven Stalnaker, Geary Stalnaker, and David Stalnaker.

A Funeral Service honoring Gerry will be 4:00 pm Sunday June 30, 2024 at Forrest Burdette Memorial United Methodist Church Hurricane, WV.

Friends may visit with family one hour prior to the service.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorial donations in Gerry's name to: Kanawha Hospice Care 1601 Kanawha Blvd W. Charleston, WV 25387.

Anyone wishing to leave an online memory may do so by visiting Gerry's tribute page at: www.chapmanfuneralhomes.com.

Chapman Funeral Home 3941 Teays Valley Road Hurricane, WV 25526 is honored to serve the Simmons family.

Previous Events

Visitation

JUN **30**. 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

Forrest Burdette United Methodist Church
2848 Putnam Avenue
Hurricane, WV 25526

Funeral Service

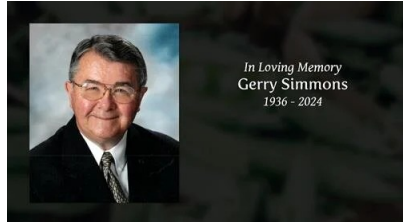
JUN **30**. 4:00 PM (ET)

Forrest Burdette United Methodist Church
2848 Putnam Avenue
Hurricane, WV 25526

Tribute Wall



“ Chapman Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Gerald Ervin Simmons



Chapman Funeral Homes - July 01, 2024 at 08:13 AM

AM

Many thanks to Chapman's Funeral. The intro showing the garden was perfect. Chapman's did a wonderful job with this video. Thank you, again.

Alicia Martin - July 03, 2024 at 03:42 PM

EL

Deepest Sympathies to those left to grieve the loss of an amazing man! He most certainly made the Widen, WV and surrounding communities and students proud of the accomplishments given under his direction. What Mr. Simmons did with & for the band students (grades 5 to 12) was amazing. I loved time served under his direction.

Erie Gibson Lane
Baritone Horn Section
WHS Class of 1961

Erie Belle Gibson Lane - July 11, 2024 at 07:15 PM

CC

“ Mr. Simmons was my band teacher at Hurricane Middle School from 1982 to 1983 both 7th and 8th grades. He was a wonderful man and when I heard of his passing it saddened my heart.

Charlie Carlson - May 01, 2025 at 01:02 PM

BD

“ *Mr. Simmons was my band director at Hurricane Middle '95-'97. He was a patient man, and I will always be grateful to him for the love of The Princess Bride.* ”

Betsie Davis - July 01, 2024 at 07:14 PM

AM

You have given him the highest compliment for a teacher. Thank you

Alicia Martin - July 02, 2024 at 05:53 PM

CG

“ *Sincere condolences to all Mr Simmons family. I was a member of his band at Wahama High School and hold nothing but respect for him.* ”

Connie Gilland - June 30, 2024 at 11:22 PM

AM

The Wahama band members were my heroes.

Alicia Martin - July 02, 2024 at 05:56 PM

KH

“ *Mr. Simmons was my band director at Hamlin High School from early 1960s until 1968. Have many good memories of band and band camp. Mr. Simmons was a wonderful person and teacher.* ”



Kathy Curry Hodge - June 30, 2024 at 09:08 PM

AM

Thank you!! To a teacher, this is the highest compliment.

Alicia Martin - July 02, 2024 at 05:58 PM

CS

“ Prayers for the family and friends
Thank you for everything Mr Simmons, from a
Wahama band member 🙏



Crystal Richardson Stamper - June 30, 2024 at 12:16 AM

AM

The Wahama band members have been wonderful. I love all of you
who were students of my father.

Alicia Martin - July 02, 2024 at 05:59 PM

DJ

“ My sincere condolences to his family. He was the best band director
Wahama had and a wonderful man.
Diana Johnson, member of the White Falcon band 1972-1975

Diana Johnson - June 29, 2024 at 07:59 PM

AM

Go White Falcons, you were the best.

Alicia Martin - July 02, 2024 at 06:00 PM

AM

“ I was a proud student of Mr Simmons at Wahama High School
Class of 1972. He was the best. I enjoyed being a part the band and
he was a big part of that enjoyment.
Anitra Wriston Morgan

Anitra Morgan - June 29, 2024 at 10:33 AM

AM

Thank you, Wahama White Falcons were my heroes.

Alicia Martin - July 02, 2024 at 06:02 PM

PP

“ *Mr. Simmons was a wonderful man. He certainly touched my life in the 1960's as he did countless other students. Sending this family comforting thoughts as you step through this difficult time.*



Philip Petrie - June 29, 2024 at 06:30 AM

AM

Thank you, this is the greatest compliment for a teacher.

Alicia Martin - July 02, 2024 at 06:03 PM

RS

“ Jerry and I were colleagues who worked together for over 32 years before his retirement. He was a trusted and true friend. He knew no strangers and was an excellent musician.

He worked with my daughter as a student until he could no longer coach her in her instrumental music lessons and made it his professional business to contact Dr. Ann Bingham at Marshall to further her career in her music aspirations. He left an indelible impression upon her through her collegiate career in music. What an inspiration he had upon all his students!

I had many conversations with Jerry as a friend and colleague and he was a wealth of wisdom.

I was privileged to have his daughters -Nancy and Alicia as students who were very intelligent.

I can honestly say, “The heavenly host has a great conductor in their presence”.

A crown of glory will be bestowed upon this great man whose has touched so many lives.

He will be missed, but will one day be seen in Glory!

My deepest sympathy is expressed to all his family, may God's presence be felt in this heart- breaking moment.

Respectfully,

Bob Slone and Family

Robert Slone - June 28, 2024 at 07:24 PM

RM

Where does one begin in reaching out to a Christ filled family whose husband, father, and grandfather completed his earthly mission to now join his eternal journey with God, his Father, Jesus his Lord and personal Savior, and led by the Holy Spirit.

I, Becky Mazzella, had the privilege of working on the same team with Gerry, Related Arts. Gerry often spoke of you Barbara to me. His eyes twinkled and his love and respect of you were topics I needed to hear of a females growth and service of Jesus. Your children he spoke of the love you shared and how each one similar but so different kept you both on your toes. How Lee was spoiled with all the females in the family, but glad there was one more male to take his side.

The advice he gave to me, not asked for, but knew I needed to hear was, "Becky, (a young teacher at that time) you need to take life, teaching more lighter, not so serious. Take deep breaths, laugh, and know this too shall pass. You take care of you. Just be you, the good teacher and person you are." Words I needed to hear. Encouragement he gave to so many. Staff and students. With tough love to enable us to grow to be our best. This is a time that breaks hearts to heal into a different heart that is the same, but memories which you are blessed to have so many. When Gerry heard his name called I'm sure he said, "Lord, here I am." And the angels escorted him to Jesus and then Jesus embraced him and said, "Abba! He is here, your son, Gerald." And God stood and also embraced Gerry saying, "Well done my good and faithful servant." Find that peace of God in each other. All of you are the greatest gift given to you as husband and father. Blessings upon you, one day at a time. In Christ Jesus Always.

Rebecca Mazzella - June 30, 2024 at 12:02 PM

TG

If Widen High School was not the first assignment Mr. Simmons had as a band director, it was among the first. An enrollment of about 125 students (7-12), he eventually had almost half of the student body in the band and after that he recruited 7th & 8th graders from Dille Elementary for the band. He was a perfectionist when it came to the band but he had a way of bringing out the best talent of his musicians as evidenced by the number of "Superior" ratings the little school earned. We loved him and respected him. The only miscalculation Mr. Simmons made was the year he ordered white buck shoes to go with the new band uniforms. Not the best idea in a coal mining town with coal dust streets where the tipple, the mines, and the railroad all came together in the middle of the town.

TG Griffith

TG Griffith - June 30, 2024 at 04:14 PM

AM

Thank you for honoring my father.

Alicia Martin - July 02, 2024 at 06:05 PM

JB

I was a member of Mr Simmons' Widen High School Band. He was my first and best band director, and he set a high bar for the others after him who never came close to inspiring me to do the best I could to not disappoint him. He allowed kids in fourth and fifth grade to join the high school band.

His leaving Widen was a profound loss to me personally as well as all the others he led and inspired.

He put me on a path in music that has lasted all my life .

Sincere condolences to his family.

J.B. Butcher

JB Butcher - August 01, 2024 at 02:28 PM