



Franklin T. Rice

March 12, 1926 - November 3, 2020

Frank Rice, 94, of Ackley, passed away Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at Grand JiVante in Ackley. A memorial service will be held at 11:00 AM on Wednesday June 16, 2021 at the Ackley Recreation Club. He will be laid to rest at the Oak Wood Cemetery in Ackley. Woodley Funeral Home and Cremation Services of Iowa Falls is caring for Frank and his family.

Ackley's "Music Man," Frank Rice, passed away peacefully from natural causes on November 3, 2020 at Grand JiVantè in Ackley, Iowa.

Frank taught instrumental music and directed the school bands in Ackley from 1952 to 1986. He instilled in his students a love of music and the value of teamwork, and they continue to remember him and speak of him fondly. His concert bands and solo and small groups won high ratings in regional music contests. Many of his students were selected for the prestigious state-wide All-State Bands. But Frank's first love was the marching band. He and the kids in the band worked tirelessly to prepare top-notch shows for football game half-times and marching band contests here and in Canada. For several years, Frank's high school bands boasted over 100 members – a real testament to his ability to inspire his students.

Frank was a long-time member of the Iowa Band Masters' Association (IBMA) and was elected to the American School Band Directors Association in 1984.

In 1987, the North Central IBMA branch presented him with the “Karl King Distinguished Service Award ‘Retired Member.’” Among the many plaques and certificates, he received from his students, one from 1976 perhaps best expresses their sentiments. It reads, “The Frank T. Rice Par Excellence Award: When the world seems out of tune, you keep us in tune When we feel out of step with life, you keep us in step. When we feel we might fall apart, you keep us together. When we felt alone and left out, you let us know that we count. Because you are proud of us, we are proud of you. Congratulations on your 25th year. The 1976 band members.” (He is also remembered fondly for the many pizza parties he and Ellen hosted during Jan and Leigh’s high school years.)

Frank, an only child, was born on March 12, 1926 in Littleton, Colorado, where his father was part owner of a car dealership. During the Great Recession, the family moved to southern Iowa and then to Des Moines, where Frank attended junior high and high school at North High. In junior high he met a tall, athletic, beautiful redhead named Ellen. Over the next 50+ years, neither ever looked at anyone else. Frank started playing the trumpet in grade school and never thought about being anything, but a band director when he grew up. While still in high school, he organized a popular dance band, which played for all the school dances, leaving Ellen somewhat frustrated and without a dance partner. Immediately after graduating in 1944 Frank was drafted into the army. He and Ellen were married on October 31, 1944 (that date prompted many jokes over the years), just days before Frank was shipped off to Italy.

After the War, Frank enrolled at Drake University as a music major. Ellen worked for the Des Moines Register and Tribune payroll office, and Frank supplemented their income with his dance-band gigs. Their two daughters, Leigh and Jan, were born in 1947 and 1949, respectively.

Frank’s first teaching job took the family to Zearing, Iowa, and the second, in

1952, to Ackley, which remained their beloved hometown for the rest of their lives. Frank retired in 1986 and he and Ellen spent their last few years together traveling, fishing, and playing golf. Ellen passed away in 1990, and in 1994, Frank married Esther Frisk of Ackley. Esther's sons gathered in Ackley each fall to hunt. Even after she died in 2000, Frank kept up the tradition, hosting them at Rice's house and cooking chili to warm them up after long cold days outdoors. In the early 2000s, Frank sold the house he and Ellen had built in 1960 and moved into a small apartment on 1st Avenue. Shortly after that, he married Marylou Bear, and in 2013 they relocated to the Presbyterian Village (now Grand Jivantè). Frank left assisted living to join Marylou in the nursing home before long, where they shared adjoining rooms and spent all of their remaining time together. With Frank's immediate family spread out across the country, from Florida to Utah, Marylou was a real blessing for him during his last years.

Frank is survived by his wife Marylou; his daughters, Jan Rassier and Leigh Washburn; three grandchildren, Erika Washburn, Michael Harrington, Heather Kay and six great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents; his first wife, Ellen; his second wife, Esther and his grandson, Matthew Rassier. Please visit <https://www.woodleyfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Franklin-Rice-2/> for messages of tribute and sympathy.

A memorial service will be held in Ackley to celebrate Frank's life as soon as the SARS-Cov-2 pandemic allows his friends and family to travel safely. Time and date TBA. In lieu of flowers and for an expression of sympathy, please consider donating to the Iowa Band Masters Association Endowment Fund, which provides support and assistance for K-12 music education in Iowa. You can find a complete description at <https://www.bandmasters.org/about-us/endowment/iba-endowment-fund-information>. Donations may be sent to IBA Endowment Fund; Curt Ohrlund, Treasurer; 527 Plymouth St. NE; LeMars, IA

51031.

Cemetery Details

Oakwood Cemetery

Ackley, IA 50601

Events

Details are pending.

Tribute Wall



“ *Mary Rameyer*

Mary Frieden - January 08, 2025 at 01:48 AM



“ *I owe my continuing love of music to Frank Rice. He instilled a passion for the music, and the discipline needed to appreciate the music, with a wry candor. He always had time to talk to us, but he did love his trumpet section - I was a drummer. I'm totally kidding, but that was a running joke within the marching band. He got the best out of his bands all the time, because he made us feel like we were the best. His music choices were always a little out of the ordinary, but so much fun to play. I got to talk with him several years ago at Grand JiVante, and we had such a nice conversation, of course about music, and what I'd been doing to keep involved in music. Franklin Rice was an inspiration to so many of us. He will be missed.*

Scott DeBerg - November 26, 2020 at 09:48 PM

JR

“ Frank was my father and teacher. He taught me how to play the flute,(even the piccolo part in Stars and Stripes forever. twirl a baton(well, he tried to teach me,) and how to be a drum major.. how to ride a bike. In class, he would treat me exactly the same as everyone else, teaching me how to stand on my own two feet. He taught me how to have adventures by taking me fishing, we flew kites when we would visit his parents in Mt Ayr. He also taught me about kindness, honesty and tradition by making pizza's on Friday nights after football games for all of my friends. Thank you for all of the messages and remembrance of sympathy. We will all miss him, but never forget him. We will celebrate Ackley's Music Man when it's safe to do so.

Always Mr. Rice's daughter,
Jan

Jan Rassier - November 19, 2020 at 12:00 PM

MS

Jan, it was an honor to sit beside you in band.....to be your second chair to your first chair. I had so much respect for your dad as a music teacher. He also taught me so much and also to play piccolo for Stars & Stripes song as well. He held me to a high standard which made me want to learn & do the best that I could do. My condolences to you & your family.

Marlene Orr Schear - November 22, 2020 at 01:25 PM

“ Dear Jan, Leigh, Erika, Michael, and Heather Kay,
In celebration of your father’s and grandfather’s life, one of the first things we did was to go to the internet to google “Bugler’s Holiday”. If we closed our eyes, we could see a trio of trumpet players standing in the “old” music room delivering this piece of music. Whenever we watch “Hawaii Five-O”, those memories of twirling our flags in marching band come to mind as the music takes us back to our youth. We have long since forgotten the routines, but the songs trigger the memories. We had memories of Mr. Rice raising up the featured drummer for a long solo during half-time at basketball games, of waiting for the words “dismissed!” after marching back from our practice field, of summer music lessons, of a musician friend popping into band practice and Mr. Rice inviting him to play for us, of playing in summer concerts at the band shell, and as managers for the track team...running results up to the press box for him to announce. If we were too goofy, he would tell us to “be nice”.

Mr. Rice gave credence to the saying “work hard; “play” hard”...but the funny thing was...band never seemed like hard work. It was that time of the day, right after lunch, when you could relax by playing music with your friends and work on a “group project” in band. We do remember chair auditions and have vivid memories of being introduced to new sheet music. All the sections would start to play, the first chairs would be able to interpret the new music with more skill, leaving the rest of us in the dust...looking bewildered at each other...thinking...”where are we” (in this new piece of music)? Mr. Rice would tap his baton on his conductor’s stand, “hold his nose” because we were so bad, and smile. That was our cue to laugh gently and begin again. Sometimes, instrument section by section, and sometimes by concentrating on difficult passages in the music. In helping us to master the music, he seemed methodical in knowing exactly how to teach us to be successful by breaking the task down into smaller parts...imparting on us important lessons for our futures. True, we proudly felt part of something larger than ourselves and in having a musical part played on a single instrument...he also saw us as individuals. Perhaps, living and

contributing in a small town, Mr. Rice knew what his “part” was in building community around music. He found his purpose in life to intersect with his love of music. Mr. Rice created a culture of joy from sharing music and also of citizenship as he and his students painted music on the canvas of a small town named Ackley. We are appreciative of, and will not forget, our musical adventure with Mr. Rice, our bandmaster.

Chris Leiran Wise ‘77
Carrie Leiran ‘79

Chris Wise - November 15, 2020 at 01:16 PM

CM

“*He was a very dedicated teacher. When everyone else stopped, we would always finish with a "Work Song." He taught us to care about the needs of others, as a group first, before yourself and how to be a team! Rest in peace, Mr Rice!*

Christal Munyon - November 10, 2020 at 05:56 PM

MN

“ *The best memories of my high school years were those involving band activities. Mr. Rice was truly a dedicated professional when it came to his music and teaching. He led us to be the best we could be, demanding precision (8 steps to 5 yards!) and perfection, respecting every student under his direction. We learned a discipline and respect for each other as we spent many rehearsals and trips as a "family" - close friendships and fun developed as we shared one common goal of representing our school and community with honor. With a supportive community who would not complain with the early morning "Let's wake the neighbors" rehearsal call, we would aim to be the best we could be. It wasn't until years later after being a teacher that I learned to appreciate the endless hours that he spent outside of the school day allowing us to share in many opportunities - football games, basketball games, band festivals, numerous parades and competitions - Ellsworth homecoming, Drake Relay's, Mason City band festival, Red River Exhibition in Winnipeg and many small and large group contests. Thank you Jan and Leigh for sharing your Dad with so many. My prayers are with you as you reflect on and give thanks for a life well lived. Well done Mr. Rice, good and faithful servant!*
Marlene (Humke) Nichless

Marlene (Humke) Nichless - November 10, 2020 at 02:42 PM

CB

“ *We had 100 people in band in 1979. Every person was expected to know the music and all the routines before every football game. He made everyone know how important it was for everyone to do their very best. Mr Rice will always have my respect for a job well done.*
Carlene Bergeson

Carlene Bergeson - November 09, 2020 at 10:29 PM

HK

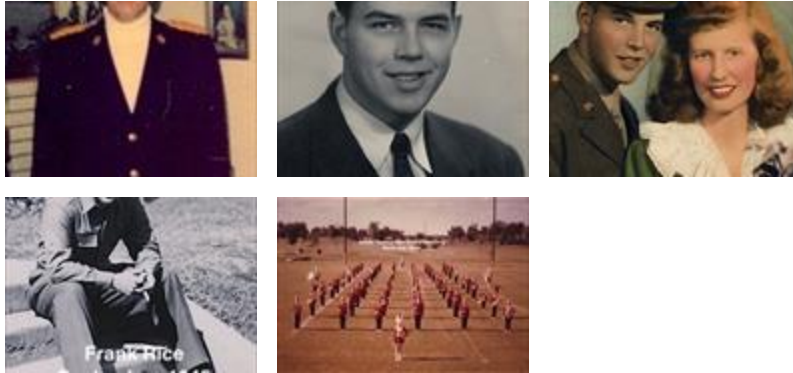
“ Frank Rice was my grandpa. He was the best example of a grandpa someone could have. I saw how many people respected him on a constant basis. From the "hello Mr. Rice" to "how are you Mr. Rice?" Everyone in town seemed to know my grandpa and he was always called Mr. Rice. I got to see the A-G high school band many times and every year his students would perform to perfection. It was a joy watching the band play the Dallas TV show theme song, marching to perfection and the girls twirling perfect. I saw how hard he prepared for the Canada band trip, and how excited he was to give the students the opportunity to play at that level. To be his student was great but to be his granddaughter was better. He taught me so much that I will never forget, it is really too much to list, from not be afraid of anything, to how to fish AND fillet them. He showed me how to have patience through example. Let's not forget when I started playing the piano. Whenever we would see each other he would say "Just play for me what you know". I would start playing, knowing full well I wasn't going to just play what I know, we were going to practice. And for grandpa that meant playing what I know, usually scales, 3 times perfect without screwing up. He helped me learn flute to perfection, and how to twirl a flag so I could make my local drill team. Who knew there was a way to twirl a flag? Grandpa did and he was so right. He also taught me how to love living in a small town for most of my life. I saw how happy he was to live in Ackley, his pride for the town that was big enough for him, and took his example and settled my family in a small town as well. Thank you grandpa for the best example of how to live a happy life. I will remember it everyday.

Heather Kay

Heather Kay - November 09, 2020 at 08:56 PM

LW

“ 9 files added to the album Memories Album



Leigh Washburn - November 09, 2020 at 05:54 PM

DL

“ I don't think I respected any teacher as much as I did Mr. Rice. He will always hold a special place in my heart for the 4 years I spent with him as my band instructor. I don't recall him ever being anything but positive with our band groups and I think we performed with respect for him always. I remember a particular time...it was in 1975 and our band was preparing for another trip to Winnipeg, Canada for a very prestigious marching competition. Mr. Rice suffered a heart condition and was not at school with us...I honestly don't remember who was leading the band but we went out and practiced our routines on the field without him. Of course, he only lived a few blocks from the school and could hear if we were out there or not so perhaps that had something to do with it but I think we all knew we needed to do this for him. I think I can speak for the entire band that we had an enormous amount of respect for him. Thanks Mr. Rice for those wonderful years and memories.

Darla Luchtenburg - November 09, 2020 at 09:22 AM

SM

“ *My thoughts and prayers to Mr Rice's family. Mr Rice was one of a kind. He impacted his students by his discipline and high expectations, while also guiding us to meet those expectations. With his leadership, he made band fun and something to be proud of. I wonder sometimes how we did all those formations on the football field - he made it seem so easy. He challenged us by signing us up for local competitions as well as bigger competitions in Canada. And he always managed to make sure we were lined up when marching on the streets of Ackley. You'll always be remembered. Rest in peace, Mr Rice.*
Sue McGreevy

Sue McGreevy - November 09, 2020 at 01:54 AM

WF

“Mr. Rice was unequivocally one of my greatest high school mentors. He was as tough as a drill sergeant - he would straighten out absolutely anybody at any time. I myself was the target of that “straightening out” on a few occasions(!), but it taught me the invaluable life lessons of focus and discipline, among many others. He was a father figure to me - coupled with the “teaching moments” were countless hours of generosity and encouragement on his part. He provided his students with so many opportunities to grow and be successful outside of our community. For me personally it was 3 trips to All-State, a trip with several fellow students to Austria for 10 days of touring and performances, and literally countless weekends at college honor bands. I am so thankful to have had those experiences and grateful to Mr. Rice for providing those opportunities!

We had several favorite expressions of his that he was fond of using. These still make me laugh:

“PEOPLE - this is what is going to happen RIGHT NOW!”

“I want to be over THERE!” (if we missed a turn somewhere)

“Do not pass Go, do not collect \$200!”

“Ladies and gentlemen, this is not Waving Grass, Iowa!” (if we needed to be reminded about traffic in a city, or to be mindful of crime or something of that nature)

The world will not be the same without him. 🥺

Wendy Iverson Fredericks

Wendy Iverson Fredericks - November 08, 2020 at 10:42 PM

LH

“ Prayers for healing and comfort for the family at this sad time. Frank Rice was a very good friend of my dad's and I'm sure they shared many great stories about life and family. He and Mary Lou visited almost every day in dad's last days. I know it gave him comfort and for that I am grateful. Mr. Rice made such a wonderful contribution to our small community over the years and many fond memories for so many people. His dedication, hard work and compassion will be rewarded in Heaven. We will miss him.

LouAnn (Kurth) Kennedy Hurd - November 08, 2020 at 09:38 AM

LF

“*Mr. Rice taught us to place the needs of the group above our own needs--to make sacrifices in order to become part of something bigger and more excellent than we could achieve alone. He taught us to respect ourselves, our peers, and those in authority over us. Because of that community ethic, being a member of the Ackley-Geneva band was a source of pride. Band nerd? What's that?*

When I told Mr. Rice that I thought I might want to become a music teacher, he made sure I had the foundation to succeed. He sacrificed weekends to take me to band festivals where I could play under nationally known composers and directors. He taught me basic music theory and helped me obtain a scholarship to his Alma Mater. Along the way, I gained an even greater appreciation for him as his life story trickled out: the trumpet whiz from Des Moines' North High School who found himself in the WWII army bound for North Africa and Italy almost immediately after graduation; the young husband eating tomato soup and cheese sandwiches while studying at Drake on the GI Bill; the respected musician and friend of so many of his band director peers; and the family man, content to spend a lifetime in a small Iowa town even if they didn't yet know (in 1950) what good pizza was.

Thank you, Leigh and Jan, for sharing your dad with us. He was intensely proud of you and your families as well as the families he gained through Esther and Mary Lou. I think he remained proud, too, of each of us who passed through his band room, regardless of where we sat in our section. He built a community, not just a band. Rest in peace, Mr. Rice.

Laura Bruns Fritz - November 07, 2020 at 08:53 AM

WF

Hi Laura, it's been ages, well said. Your experience is almost verbatim what mine was. He was a legend.

Wendy Iverson Fredericks - November 08, 2020 at 08:55 PM

WF

It didn't print my full name, this is Wendy Iverson.

Wendy Iverson Fredericks - November 08, 2020 at 08:56 PM

LF

Hi, Wendy! Reading your name gave me the biggest smile! Blessings to you and your family.

Laura Bruns Fritz - November 09, 2020 at 06:44 PM

WF

Laura, me too! You were one of my favorite people, sad we lost touch. Are you on Facebook?

Wendy Fredericks - November 09, 2020 at 08:03 PM

DB

Frank Rice taught us how to be the best. There was no screwing around with him in the room. He choose music that was a challenge, he marched our behinds off in preparation for Winnipeg, and he expected our best. We gave it to him too. He showed us that what we did mattered. Excellence can be learned. I had the good fortune to learn from Mr. Rice. Rest in peace.

Deb During Brown - November 09, 2020 at 08:48 PM

LF

So true, Deb. Wendy—my husband, Tony, is the FB'er in the family. Please friend him when you have a chance so we can keep in touch. We're now in Winchester KY.

Laura Bruns Fritz - November 10, 2020 at 07:32 AM

VA

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



V Abbas - November 05, 2020 at 10:54 PM

SH

“ Mr. Rice was a very special teacher to me in my high school days.... my band director. He expected a lot and we rose to his expectations with a lot of hard work!!! Even though he scared me many times, I would do anything to please him. I even made my school bus wait for me one morning as I ran back to my house to get my horn. You see if you forgot your horn , you would automatically go to last chair!!! Anyone who was his student always dreaded the spur of the moment chair challenges. The answer to this he said was practice!!!! He was a great man and director and I totally respected him!!! He always wanted the best for the band and I know he care about each of us. I just know he probably is leading the Heavenly Band. To his family, I say my deepest sympathy. You will be in my thoughts and prayers. Lovingly, Sharleen Hofmeister Hubbard

Sharleen Hubbard - November 05, 2020 at 05:25 PM

JR

“ First off, let me just say, i so respected Mr Rice and he was loved by all his students. He pushed us to excellence and provided kids from a small farm town to travel to Canada for a band competition. He gave us the opportunity to show our talents with the Extravaganza and staging the first musical Lil Abner. He allowed us to creatively perform and for that I am eternally grateful. When I think of Mr Rice I can see him with his pipe and his wonderful laugh and of course his megaphone with the shoulder strap. Some of my favorite memories of growing up in Ackley are of my marching band days. Thank you Mr Rice. Jan Brandt Radnoti

Jan Brandt Radnoti - November 05, 2020 at 09:23 AM

VA

“ *Mr. Rice taught me about music, to love the marching band, to like clarinet playing (really never loved it) and supported me when I conducted the “AG orchestra” on graduation day in 1970. He is one of my best memories. Rest peacefully Mr. Rice. My sympathies to Marylou, his family and friends.*

V Abbas - November 04, 2020 at 07:36 PM