

# *In Loving Memory*

## **Jerry Weseley Harris**

October 21, 1933 - January 19, 2021

Jerry Weseley Harris passed peacefully in his Beaverton home on January 19, 2021. His life was filled with music! As a musician, teacher, composer, arranger, and choir director, Jerry's musical gifts were shared with countless students, colleagues, and choir members whose lives he touched. Born on October 21, 1933 in The Dalles, Oregon to Merrion ("Bud") Harris and Eunice (Knight) Harris, Jerry began his study of violin at age six. Jerry graduated from The Dalles High School in 1951 and then began his undergraduate studies at Lewis and Clark College, where he continued his studies in Violin and Viola with Boris Sirpo and began his choral music education program under L. Stanley Glarum. During his busy college years, he played in the Portland Youth Philharmonic Orchestra and played one year in the Portland Symphony. Jerry completed his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Music Education in 1956. He married Adrienne Hill (also a Lewis and Clark graduate) and they were married for 25 years and had three children; Clark, Elaine, and Jeffrey.

Jerry began his teaching career at Franklin High School in Portland, where he was Director of the Women's Choirs. In 1958 he was hired by the Beaverton School District to develop the choral and orchestral programs at the new Sunset High School. Within two years, the Sunset choirs were recognized for excellence in local and regional music festivals. Jerry's hard work and success at Sunset prepared him for a variety of opportunities to expand his career. He was selected by the Oregon Department of Education as the first Music Education Consultant for Oregon. Jerry traveled throughout the state for four years, providing assistance and support to music programs and staff from elementary through high school.

In 1966 Jerry completed his EdD degree at the University of Oregon and then moved with his family to Moscow, Idaho where he was a professor of Music Education at the University of Idaho and was engaged in revising their Music Education program.

Jerry returned to Oregon in 1971 when he accepted the position of Choir Director at Beaverton High School. Fondly called "Doc Harris," Jerry's countless students were both challenged and encouraged by a college-level music curriculum. "Doc's" high expectations for his students were met with enthusiasm and success. His choirs had many opportunities to perform and compete in local, state, and regional choir festivals. Twice Jerry took members of the Concert Choir to Austria to participate in the Vienna International Music Festival. Choir members anticipated the annual Spring Break trips to San Francisco or Vancouver, British Columbia, where they enjoyed homestay visits and performed in local high schools. Every year current and former choir members looked forward to performing "The Hallelujah Chorus" a beloved tradition at the Beaverton High School Holiday Concert.

In addition to teaching and directing his high school choirs, Jerry enjoyed many years as Director of Adult Choirs at St. Matthew Lutheran Church and Murray Hills Christian Church. As with his high school students, Jerry established many lasting

friendships within his church choirs.

Jerry was an adjunct professor in music education at Portland State University and active as a certified choral music clinician, adjudicator, and festival director. He was a Life member in the Oregon Music Educators Association, the American Choral Directors Association, and the Music Educators National Conference-- Northwest Division. Jerry was presented with the MENC-NW Distinguished Music Educator award in 1993. In 1988 Jerry founded the Northwest Chorale, a 40-voice professional choir. A prolific composer, arranger, and editor of choral music, Jerry has over 950 compositions published by various music publishers. He began his own publishing company, Northwest Music Publishers, in 1998.

Jerry married Judy Wayland in 1982. In their 39 years together, they continued their busy careers and then began an "active retirement" that included lots of travel! Annual road-trips throughout Oregon and the Pacific Northwest and Canada were always fun and interesting, and tours in Europe provided memorable music experiences. Always drawn to the sun, Jerry looked forward to Maui vacations and winter golfing in Palm Springs. He also enjoyed the Oregon Coast and his condominium in Lincoln City, where he served on the Homeowners Board for 26 years. A voracious reader, Jerry was seldom without a book in his pocket, car, or bedside table. For many years, Jerry and Judy hosted two Christmas parties in their home, one for church choir members, and one for longtime schoolmates, friends, and golf buddies.

Jerry's faith in God was steadfast. He loved God, his family, and sharing his gift of music with others. A private family service has been held at Skyline Memorial Gardens. The family is grateful for the excellent care provided by Dr. Kevin Sellars (Providence Newberg Medical Center), Dr. Akshita Narra (Oregon Kidney & Hypertension Clinic), and the wonderful Hospice team from Providence, Portland.

Jerry is survived by his wife Judy; daughter Elaine Rocheford (Gregg); sons Clark and Jeffrey; step-daughter Cynthia Varadi (Michael); five grandchildren-- Nathan Ott (Grace), Callison Ott, Andrea Varadi Jones (Mason), Mikayla McLeod (Stuart), Mike Varadi; great-grandson Euan McLeod and three more on the way!

Donations in memory of Jerry may be made to Providence Hospice Program at Providence Newberg Medical Foundation: 1001 Providence Drive, Newberg, Oregon, 97132 or online: <https://give.providencefoundations.org/newberg>

