



Richard T. Holmberg

May 21, 1938 - November 24, 2015

Richard T. Holmberg 77, of Estero, FL died Tuesday, November 24, 2015 at Joanne's House at Hope Hospice. Richard had been a resident of Southwest Florida since 1997 coming from Munster, IN. He was born May 21, 1938 in Faulkton, SD a son of the late Elmer T. and Maxine M. (née Ruhaak) Holmberg.

In 1956, he graduated Valedictorian from Faulkton High School. He attended Northern State University in Aberdeen, SD on a scholarship and graduated Cum Laude in 1960. He went on to Northwestern University in Evanston, IL where he received his Master's in Music degree in piano performance. Richard then attended the University of Michigan pursuing his Phd. in performance and he finished his education at Ball State University in Muncie, IN.

After college he accepted a position at Munster High School in Munster, IN where he taught Choral Music until his retirement in 1995. Upon his retirement to Southwest Florida he became active in the Naples Orchestra and Chorus where he served as the director for 4 years. He also served on the Board of Directors and eventually as President of the Naples Music Club. He was also involved with the Classic Chamber Concerts serving as secretary to the board for 10 years. In 2000, he was offered a position and taught music at The Community School of Naples. Richard was the founder of the New Chorale of

Southwest Florida. He was a member of the Greater Naples Northwestern University Alumni Association also serving on their board of directors.

He is survived by his companion of over 50 years, Gene A. Fort of Estero, FL; his two sisters, Lynn K. Dahl of Presho, SD and Kay J. Lutz of Carrington, ND; his nieces and nephews, Wendy M. (Steve) Keszler of Geneva, MN, Dawn M. Lintvedt of Presho, SD, Teddi L. (Jonathan) Dalton of Aberdeen, SD, Richard B. (Kaci) Dahl of Sioux Falls, SD, David G. Lutz of Northern, MN, Terry L. (Ruth) Lutz of Cando, ND and Kimberly K. (Michael) Nelson of Cando, ND. He is also survived by his special friends, Mary E. Auburn of Naples, FL, Nancy and James Smallman of Munster, IN, Linda and Ronald Eisenhauer of Crown Point, IN, Sandra A. Karottki of Dyer, IN, Paul and Anne Brown of Crown Point, IN and Tom & Carol Fraser of Dyer, IN.

A memorial service to celebrate his wonderful life will be held Tuesday, December 15, 2015 at 6:00 PM at the Unitarian Church of Naples 6340 Napa Woods Way Naples, FL. Additional services will be held at a later date in Munster, IN with a graveside service at Chapel Lawn Cemetery, Schererville, IN.

The family suggests that memorial contributions in his name be made to the Berggren Music Education Foundation at Northern State University, Aberdeen, SD or to the Northwestern University Bienen School of Music, Evanston, IL or to the New Chorale of Southwest Florida c/o Mr. Wiley Williams 10331 Yorkstone Dr. Bonita Springs, FL 34135.

Arrangements are being handled by Shikany's Bonita Funeral Home.

Cemetery Details

Chapel Lawn Cemetery

711 W. 77th Ave.
Schererville, IN 46375

Previous Events

Memorial Service

DEC 15. 6:00 PM (ET)

Unitarian Church of Naples
6340 Napa Woods Way
Naples, FL 34116

Tribute Wall



“ *Richard T. Holmberg*

October 09, 2023 at 03:40 AM



“ *I first met Mr. Holmberg when he came to our 4th grade class for our music class. That was in November 1962. We loved him. I knew him till graduation 1971. His love of music was contagious. I went on to be a music teacher myself.*

Joseph Zopp - August 16, 2022 at 03:46 PM



“ *I remeber Mr. Holmburg well. Every time I hear, This Land is my land I think of him. Now he will sing with the angels.*
regards Larry Pochter

Larry Pochter - March 24, 2022 at 06:34 AM



“ *I remember Mr. Holberg from my high-school choir days at Munster High. I never made it to the Met, but throughout the years in California and Hawaii, I've been on stage with church praise teams and performed on stage in choir celebrations. I'm still in choir! And I can still pack a powerful high note--Mr. Holberg's nemesis, but my four-octave strength. I'll always thank Mr. Holmberg for his encouragements. Rest in peace, Richard! Joyce (Pink) Osterman*

Joyce Osterman - September 05, 2016 at 06:18 PM

BH

“ Richard Holmberg and Gene Fort were without a doubt my two favorite teachers at Munster High! Richard will be very much missed and remembered by all of the students lucky enough to have been in his class. I have so many great memories of Richard making us laugh and inspiring us with his love of music. I have a vivid memory of him rolling his eyes when I expressed interest in doing "Grease" as our senior musical (he eventually caved). Richard gave me such a great foundation in music and I took it with me as I went on to a career in musical theater. Thank you, Richard. I will miss you. Giant hugs to you, Gene. We were lucky to have known him!

Barbara Helms
Class of '88

Barbara Helms - December 11, 2015 at 11:11 AM

SB

“ Bill and I shared so many events with Dick, Gene and Audrey Bussert. What wonderful times filled with great conversation, lots of laughter and if we were lucky, beautiful piano music supplied by Dick. Munster is filled with fond memories of Dick Holmberg because of the culture he brought to our small town. My sympathy and love goes out to Gene, our thoughts and prayers are with you.
Sandy Baker

sandy baker - December 06, 2015 at 04:11 PM



“ Magnificent Life Spray was purchased for the family of Richard T. Holmberg.



December 04, 2015 at 12:45 PM

FE

“ *Shared many meals with Gene and Dick. Haven't seen them in years, but remember them like it was yesterday. Goodbye, Dick. My condolences, Gene.*

Fred Eicke

Fred Eicke - December 02, 2015 at 07:55 AM

RK

“ *He will be greatly missed! I learned so much from him and he made my high school experience fun!!! My thoughts and prayers are with Gene and Dick's family and friends. Thank You, Bob Kish or as Gene would call me Bobby*

Robert Kish - December 01, 2015 at 11:47 PM

CD

“ I am a graduate of Munster High Schools class of 1997. I had the privilege of having Mr HOLMBERG as my choir teacher til he retired in 1996. Not only was HOLMBERG my choir teacher but he was my friend as well. He was the kind of person who was there for each and every one of his students and had a special part in our lives. We had so many fun times in our class through out the years together all of us. But one of my favorite memories was the year my dad had me give him an old 80's looking plastic NIPSCO cell phone. The antenna was the straw. HOLMBERG would mess with me and pick the phone up and hold it to his ear saying "Catherine if u don't behave and be quiet I'm calling your dad." Had some good laughs with that. Also a few years later I found out that my Godfather Jimmy Bandera had him as well. Another live blessed by knowing such a great man. Then it came time for HOLMBERG to retire. That year the choir music and play was based on the theme THE MUSIC MAN. Couldn't of been a better choice since HOLMBERG was THEE MUSIC MAN OF THEM ALL. At the end of the play they had a kings chair and had Mr. HOLMBERG sit in it and honor him. He deserved every bit of it too. Thanks from the bottom of our hearts for all you did for us and what u meant to each and every one ous the MHS class of 97 choir. YOU SIMPLY ARE THE BEST N OUR ONE N ONLY MUSIC MAN. CONDOLENCES TO MR FORT. GOD BLESS YOU.

CATHERINE DEMEYER and FAMILY (JIMMY BANDERA TOO)

Catherine DeMeyer - December 01, 2015 at 10:17 PM

CD

“ Catherine DeMeyer sent a virtual gift in memory of Richard T. Holmberg



Catherine DeMeyer - December 01, 2015 at 09:59 PM

CD

“ *Catherine DeMeyer lit a candle in memory of Richard T. Holmberg*



Catherine DeMeyer - December 01, 2015 at 09:58 PM

AH

“ *I give credit to Mr. Holmberg for so much of who I am as a person. He taught me to be a team player and to be a leader. He taught us to trust ourselves and to listen to others. He was funny, he was passionate and it shined through the sometimes crusty surface. He taught us to seek excellence and the joy of doing your absolute best. He taught us music and I thank him for that as it is an important part of my life. But more importantly, he was the best teacher I ever had because he taught me how to do life well.*

Ann Helms - December 01, 2015 at 08:51 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Richard T. Holmberg.*



December 01, 2015 at 04:52 PM

JT

“ *It was our honor to have known Richard for the last few years. He was a sweet and gentle soul and will surely be missed by all of us.*

God speed, Richard.

Joe & Gina Turkel

Joe & Gina Turkel - December 01, 2015 at 03:12 PM

RN

“ *I am a 1970 graduate of MHS, and have fond memories of Mr. Holmberg and Mr. Fort. I'm old school and still call my teachers by their formal names. I was in Brigadoon, Oliver, and Camelot musicals. My goodness - what memories. I also participated in Choir - only because of Mr. Holmberg's good heart - certainly not for my singing abilities. Some of my best memories of 'Fort and Holmberg' though, were weekends on Kelsey Lake in Cassopolis, Michigan. They had a cottage up there, as my family did, as well as Jocelyn and George Glendenning. What good memories! Rest in peace, Mr. Holmberg, and my deepest condolences to Mr. Fort. Robert L. Nelson*

Robert Nelson - December 01, 2015 at 02:07 PM

DE

“ *I also went to MHS, class of '75. I had Mr. Holmberg for choir I think while in middle school. Mr. Fort was also in class. I got to know both of them through Mr. Kernaghan, who was also a teacher at MHS and a relative. They were both very nice men and their knowledge of music was amazing. My sympathies to Mr. Fort and to the Holmberg family. Rest in peace.*

Diane Eicke - December 01, 2015 at 11:28 AM

ER

“ *Mr. Holmberg and Mr. Fort were my two favorite teachers. They gave me hope as a gay student that I could live a happy and successful life.*

Elizabeth M Ramirez - December 01, 2015 at 09:41 AM

JL

“ *Dick Holmberg was the perfect blend of musical genius, a passionate teacher and good friend. I especially liked the way he tried to be a tough guy in class (gorilla choir) but was truly a softy at heart. My fondest memories include the musical practices, gorilla choir and the short lived barbershop quartet. My sincerest condolences to Gene and the Holmberg family. Dick will always hold a special place in my heart.*

Jim Lipton MHS Class of 1974

Jim Lipton - November 30, 2015 at 09:33 PM

 Kevin
Burke

“ There are teachers who educate, and teachers who shape lives. Mr Homberg was the latter, as is Mr. Fort.

It's impossible to think of one without the other. "Fort and Holmberg." So I'd like to address my thoughts to Mr. Fort... Thank you for the times the two of you patted me on the head when I needed it, and kicked me in the backside when I needed it. The two of you set me on the path to a career which has lasted 30 years because I always try to live up to your standards.

Most of all, thank you for your tolerance of my foolishness, and for life lessons which went far beyond the classroom or the stage.

*With much love and deepest respect,
Kevin Burke*

*PS...I don't think there's an MHS Choir student who will ever forget Mr. Holmberg stopping the class dead with a hand slammed on the piano, the other hand thrown into the air, a cutting remark about whatever it was we were doing, then turning back to the keyboard with a small grin which let us know he wasn't *entirely* serious. What a wonderful man.*

Kevin Burke - November 30, 2015 at 03:20 PM

SS

“ I was a Workhouse boy in "Oliver" as a seventh grader and had a number of roles in "My Fair Lady" as a senior. Mr. Holmberg played a significant role in those years. My condolences to Gene and the rest of the family. Scott Sala

Scott Sala - November 30, 2015 at 09:57 AM



“ My name is Peter Langendorff and I graduated Munster High School in 1986. Mr. Holmberg and Mr. Fort, known by most of the students as "Fort and Holmberg" positively impacted the lives of thousands of young people. As dedicated and inventive educators, they imparted an appreciation of music and history that has lived on in the hearts of many of us.

But for the young gay people at MHS, Fort and Holmberg were, in some cases literally, lifesavers. They showed us that it really does get better, that lasting love is possible, and that being gay need not hold us back from pursuing our passions. I realize that mention of this may make some people uncomfortable, but I believe it would defile his memory to not acknowledge the unique and powerful impact he made on those of us who are gay, at a time when AIDS threatened to drive us all back in to the closet.

This is a heartbreaking moment for me, and my thoughts are with Mr. Fort. I hope he will reach out to any of his students should he need a moment of comfort. We would feel privileged.

Good bye, Mr. Holmberg.

Peter Langendorff - November 30, 2015 at 03:04 AM

AC

I do not know Mr. Holmberg nor do I know where Munster High is; I just stumbled over this obit and was so touched by your tribute to Mr. Holmberg. As a mother of a 57 yr old lesbian daughter, I have been active in LGBTQ advocacy for decades. How fortunate you and your classmates were to have such a terrific teacher and mentor.

Adrienne G Cady - July 21, 2024 at 09:25 PM

EE

“ *I remember having Mr. Holmberg for music and I often thought of him and how much of a difference his classes meant to me. I offer my sympathy for the loss of such a good soul.*

Elizabeth Homan Esboldt - November 29, 2015 at 12:50 PM

LG

“ I rode the school bus with Dick and watched him pack that clarinet daily his teacher was Mr Taft a minister

lyle grau - November 29, 2015 at 10:00 AM

 Kris Banas

“ One of the few special memories of high school, is Mr. Holmberg. Choir was my favorite class, because of him. Rest in Peace sir.

Kris Banas - November 29, 2015 at 08:41 AM

JC

“ It is difficult to share just one memory of Richard Holmberg because he was a life long friend of my parents (my father's very best friend), teacher to my brother, sister, and me, and also the teacher of my husband and his siblings. He and Gene brought all of the students from every part of the high school together each year to perform a musical that would rival most college productions. He and my father worked together on the instrumental portion of those musicals and were best friends who shared the music department office for years. As a result of their collaborations, Richard and Gene were present at our dinner table for many wonderful family evenings that I will always remember. These evenings would include delicious food prepared by Gene, piano music played by Richard, my father, and Gene, and wonderful conversation. Richard was one of a kind in so many ways and will live on in our minds and hearts forever. The Brown Family will always cherish the years of memories we had with Richard.

Julie Crary - November 28, 2015 at 07:12 PM

DS

“ 1 file added to the album *New Album Name*



Dan Sweeny - November 27, 2015 at 03:40 PM