



## James E. McNeal

March 22, 2023

James Edward McNeal passed away at Poudre Valley Hospital on March 22, 2023. Jim was born June 12, 1941, to Olive and Wayne McNeal. He grew up on a farm south of Kersey, CO where he and his brother Steve, took advantage of country life to have fun and get into a little bit of trouble at times. He attended Valley View and Kersey schools. He received an undergraduate degree from the University of Northern Colorado and his Master's Degree from Colorado State University in music education and performance.

Jim married Priscilla Rose Stolarczyk on June 12th, 1965. They have two children, Michael James and Marcy Lynn. Priscilla and Jim lived in Longmont in the early years of their marriage and then moved to Fort Collins, CO.

Jim had many talents he shared with the world: his love of music and teaching as well as his love for vintage automobiles. As the Symphony Orchestra Director at Longmont and Rocky Mountain High Schools, he had a tremendous impact on countless students over his career. His orchestras received many awards and honors over the years and produced numerous professional musicians and music teachers. Jim also performed in various orchestras in the state and in the Fort Collins Forest Hills Woodwind Quintet.

His passion for vintage automobiles led him to restore many cars in his lifetime. Many people also knew Jim from his years working in residential and

commercial real estate.

James is survived by his loving wife, Priscilla of Fort Collins, his son Michael McNeal, PhD, of Denver, his daughter Marcy McNeal of Florida, his granddaughter Tesia Marie McNeal-Doriguzzi of Highlands Ranch, his brother Stephen McNeal of Fort Collins and numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins. He was preceded in death by his parents, Olive and Wayne McNeal.

In lieu of flowers, the family wishes for donations to be made to three organizations that were important to Jim: Rocky Mountain Raptor Center, Rocky Mountain High School instrumental music program and the St. Joseph's Catholic School music program. Please note that your gift is in memory of Jim McNeal.

Rocky Mountain Raptor Center: <https://www.rmrp.org/donate/>

Rocky Mountain High School instrumental music program: [https://crm.bloomerang.co/HostedDonation?ApiKey=pub\\_67785212-71c0-11e9-9f3d-0aa640fb8062&WidgetId=8501248](https://crm.bloomerang.co/HostedDonation?ApiKey=pub_67785212-71c0-11e9-9f3d-0aa640fb8062&WidgetId=8501248)

St. Joseph's Catholic School music program: [https://secure.lglforms.com/form\\_engine/s/l6s0lrJTh03QQGhEv-\\_GLA](https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/l6s0lrJTh03QQGhEv-_GLA)

If you wish to view Jim's service virtually, please follow the provided link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/SaintJosephCatholicChurchFC>

# Previous Events

## Rosary

MAR 31. 9:00 AM (MT)

St. Joseph Catholic Church  
300 W Mountain Ave  
Fort Collins, CO 80521  
<https://www.stjosephfc.org/>

## Mass of Christian Burial

MAR 31. 9:30 AM (MT)

St. Joseph Catholic Church  
300 W Mountain Ave  
Fort Collins, CO 80521  
<https://www.stjosephfc.org/>

# Tribute Wall

MF

“ We here at Poudre School District are saddened by this loss. Jim McNeal and his brother Steve were major contributors to the excellence of music in PSD. The PSD Music Department has made a donation in Jim's honor to the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program.

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**Melissa Flail** - May 05, 2023 at 12:26 PM

MS

“ I am so sorry to have found this today. "Mr. McNeal" was my very first oboe teacher back in 1974 and had the courage to teach me how to make my own reeds just a year later. I am grateful for all the fundamentals he taught me and send my condolences to his family.

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**Michael Schmidt** - May 04, 2023 at 07:04 PM

DL

“ Mr. McNeal was one of those teachers whose influence stays with you for a lifetime. His musical and educational gifts benefited so many of us. I will always be grateful to him.

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**Dawn Lenz** - April 04, 2023 at 01:40 PM

CC

“ *Our sincere condolences to Jim’s entire family,*

*We are so sorry to hear of Jim’s passing. My husband and I were permanent fixtures in the seats of Rocky’s performance hall while our daughters were part of the orchestra. He was such an important part of their appreciation of the symphony and they both excelled in performance.*

*We hope you understand just how many lives were changed and how many lives were touched either by playing under his tutelage or just by being a parent...watching and listening to their children shining brighter every year.*

*Much love to you all and may Jim rest in peace.*

*John and Connie Crum, Jenny Crum Greene, and Amanda Crum*

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**Connie Crum** - March 31, 2023 at 11:28 PM

DG

“ *Dear Priscilla and family,*

*I was deeply saddened by Jim’s passing. We had breakfast nearly every morning before class at RMHS. He was a fine friend, an amazing musician, and a respected colleague.*

*We continued to exchange thoughts and opinions, laughs, a few tears and musical moments during our time together at Rocky. RIP my friend.*

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**Dr. Herb Goodrich** - March 31, 2023 at 01:53 AM

DG

“ *Dr. Goodrich sent a virtual gift in memory of James McNeal*



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**Dr. Herb Goodrich** - March 31, 2023 at 01:36 AM

JW

“ *Dear Priscilla, I'm thinking and praying for you and your family during this sad time. I wanted you to know what a kind and caring friend you were to me back in the day. Take care,*  
*Jeannette Walls*

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**Jeannette Walls** - March 30, 2023 at 06:03 PM

RH

“ *Priscilla, Michael, & Marcy, I am so sorry for your loss. As you know, I've known Jim and your family for as long as I can remember. I didn't know Jim through music (though I know several of his students who think he walked on water), but sure knew him as a close neighbor and car aficionado. He was a close friend of my Dad. I went with my Dad and met Jim for many Saturday morning breakfasts. What a great guy. He was such a good friend to my Dad. When Dad could no longer live at home, Jim visited him frequently and would give me reports about how he was doing. My family and I will dearly miss Jim. We offer our love and comfort to you in this difficult time.*  
*Love, Rem & Tina*

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**Rem Hawes** - March 30, 2023 at 05:50 PM

DR

“ Jim was a wonderful mentor and friend to so many music students. His legacy as a caring educator and bright light in the lives of young people will live on through generations of musicianship he has inspired. He will be deeply missed.

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**Dave and Amy Rosenberg** - March 30, 2023 at 03:51 PM

EJ

“ He will always be Mr. McNeal to me! What a profound impact he had on my musical development. I had the joy of being in his orchestra at both Blevins Jr High and RMHS. So many memories and such a joy it was to be under his baton all of those years. He created a spark and a love of making music with ensembles that has never faded for me. Much love and sympathy to the entire McNeal family.

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**Elizabeth Johnson** - March 29, 2023 at 02:51 PM

IB

“ Priscilla, sorry fir your loss. Praying for you and your family,

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**Irene Bond** - March 29, 2023 at 12:18 PM

PH

“ Priscilla, Michael, and Marcy,  
I'm so sorry to learn of Jim's passing. Although I never knew Jim well, Priscilla often shared stories of he and the kids. He was busy teaching and usually had several other jobs and interests that kept him occupied! My condolences to you all. Pam Harrold

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**Pam Harrold** - March 29, 2023 at 12:49 AM

DS

“ *David Kathy O. Steinmetz lit a candle in  
memory of James McNeal*



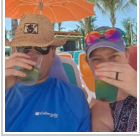
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**David & Kathy O. Steinmetz** - March 28, 2023 at 02:13 PM

“The news of Jim’s death was met with dismay and sadness, yet as I squinted back through time, back to our days together in high school, a smile crossed my face at the memories. Jim and Larry Bohlender (now deceased as well) arrived at Kersey High School in ninth grade after cruising through Valley View elementary and junior high grades—likely causing mayhem along the way. My impression of these new arrivals soon concluded that high school was going to be fun or at least more interesting than usual. This initially started out innocuously, for example, “inadvertently” calling Mrs. Dilley, our ninth-grade English teacher, Mrs. Dilly-Dally (from the T.V. Howdy Doody kid’s show) or bringing a small derringer squirt gun to spritz someone through the inkwell hole in a desk during study hall. Jim was always up for an expertly crafted practical joke or for doing something slightly risky. In this latter category, Jim was part of an “expeditionary force” of three or four seniors who painted a large, bright green, grammatically correct ’59 on the town water tower one night—facing the school building of course so everyone, especially those from the third floor of the high school, could see the achievement. Because of the enduring qualities of “John Deere” green, this large insignia lasted until the water tower was dismantled many years later and was a talisman that we, the class of ’59, had been there. Jim later recalled that the catwalk was way narrower than it had looked from the ground and in daylight, and that wielding a large brush or holding onto a gallon can of paint above the trees of the park was way sketchier than any of them had envisioned while thinking how great their plan was. But early in our high-school journey, it soon became obvious that Jim had other talents: for example, in music by performing pieces on the oboe that the rest of us in the band could not comprehend, or by his heft and force as a lineman on the football team. Beyond high school, Jim made the world a better place through his gift for music and teaching abilities. Looking back through the memories of our times together is nostalgic and now bittersweet, as he made those four years interesting, and yes, sometimes epic. My condolences are extended to Priscilla and family.

*Loren Hettinger*

**Loren Hettinger** - March 28, 2023 at 11:00 AM



“ *Mr. McNeal took me from level 1 of harp to level 10 overnight, all so he could play Respighi at CMEA my first year of playing. It was awesome, and I learned quickly that being pushed to be better, easily made me better. Starting every single day of high school with him was a blessing, and I'm so glad I had that time with him. Thank you, Mr. McNeal.*

**Katie Burkhardt** - March 27, 2023 at 09:35 PM

JR

“ *Our sincere Sympathy to the McNeal Family in the loss of Jim. He truly was a Good man. I am very thankful for him in my life as one of my dear colleagues at Rocky Mountain High School, and as friend who loved his Lord, his family, his students, and his country. I first heard of this great orchestra teacher from my little cousin Signe Ahlberg as she went through Longmont High School.. She always said "Mr McNeal was the best teacher ever." Being an alumni from LHS, and a former music student I was happy for the school to have such a man. Then when we all (staff) came to Rocky Mountain High School from many different places and schools in the Fall of 1973 I met Jim.. He did great things with his music at Rocky, and how much he loved to teach. The kids loved him, and so did we the staff. I know Heaven is rejoicing as he has brought his Gift of music to that Awesome orchestra. God Bless, Jim and Sandy Robbins*

**Jim Robbins** - March 27, 2023 at 09:17 AM

WF

*Jim was an incredible friend, teacher, musician, and person of integrity. May he rest in peace from his labors. ~Wendell Frey*

**Wendell Frey** - March 27, 2023 at 11:54 PM

LU

*I was fortunate to know Jim at Rocky Mountain High School and was able to work with him there for many years. Jim was respectful, patient and kind to everyone as well as being a gifted teacher sharing love of music and life with his students.*

*I was also very lucky to have Michael as a student of mine, also kind, respectful and a joy in class. Michael, I am thinking of you and your dad and family, sending love to all. Sincerely, Liz Urban*

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**Liz Urban** - March 31, 2023 at 10:01 PM

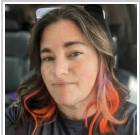
GS

“*Jim was a great friend and colleague. His musical knowledge and his proficiency as an Oboist demonstrated a true love and dedication to his profession. His hobby in restoring and showing antique cars, also trapped me. Knowing I had also a love of old cars, he said, "you need to get back into this". He called me in 1976 to tell me that he had found me a car. That restarted the involvement in the hobby with a 1942 Studebaker Commander. I'm missing him already trying to get used to not having him here to call about double reed instrument and car problems.*

*Glenn Shull*

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**Glenn H Shull** - March 26, 2023 at 02:35 PM



“*Mr. McNeal and orchestra are some of my best high school memories. My condolences to everyone that loved him*

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**Shawna Shearer** - March 26, 2023 at 01:03 PM

TB

“*Jim and I go back along time swapping selling cars and parts , we would always try to get a spot together at the car shows.I will truly miss Jim he was a fantastic person. Miss ya Buddy. Tracy Bloom*

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**Tracy Bloom** - March 26, 2023 at 09:49 AM

EC

“ Jim was such a great music educator who will be tremendously missed. He was such an inspiration to me and so many others! My prayers are with you all in Jim's family. - Ed Cannava

Ed Cannava - March 26, 2023 at 01:51 AM

DB

“ Mariel and I are very saddened by the loss of our neighbor, Jim was a very nice person, very kind to us, our older son Luis was one of his students during his Master years, we have had a continuous conversation with him and Priscilla about music, old cars and Owls. Our love goes to Priscilla and children

Dr. Luis and Mariel Barandiaran - March 26, 2023 at 12:30 AM

GM

“ Sending much love and prayers for peace. Love you, Priscilla!

Gretchen Meister - March 25, 2023 at 11:37 PM



“ May peace surround you and your family during this time of loss and healing. God bless you. Our love and prayers are with you, Love Jerry and Ann Brown

Ann Mohorcich-Brown - March 25, 2023 at 05:23 PM



“ Ann Mohorcich-Brown sent a virtual gift in memory of James McNeal



Ann Mohorcich-Brown - March 25, 2023 at 05:09 PM

HC

“ *Holly Clifford lit a candle in memory of James McNeal*



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**Holly Clifford** - March 25, 2023 at 04:06 PM

MM

“ *Dear Priscilla and family, thinking of you at this difficult time. Your lives were blessed by this caring, generous man and you will miss him. Keep his memories alive. Rest in Peace, Jim.*

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**Mary McMahan** - March 25, 2023 at 01:56 PM

RM

“ *It with sadness that I write this after hearing of the passing of Jim McNeal. He had a short but HUGE influence on my life. I was a senior at Longmont High School when he first started teaching there. I played in his orchestra and he gave me flute lessons. I was having conflicting thoughts on what I wanted to do after high school. Late in the year, I decided to do music. He pointed me toward CSC (now UNC) and got me a scholarship. I went on to graduate and spent 43 years teaching music. I can't imagine what direction my life would have taken without his influence. My brother played alto sax until he got to junior high. Jim McNeal pulled him aside, handed him a bassoon and said: "I want you to play this". The rest is history in the double reed world and at CSU. Thank you, Mr. McNeal and may you rest in peace.*

*Rick Moody*

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**Rick Moody** - March 25, 2023 at 01:23 PM

VL

“ Pricilla, Michael and Marci, my deepest condolences to you all. I was very sad to hear of Jim’s passing.

*As I had told Jim (Mr. McNeal) several times over the years, I owe him my sincere gratitude for being the BEST orchestra teacher and mentor EVER. He helped me thru both junior high and high school orchestra to develop into the leader that I didn’t know I was. That blossomed into an entire career of being a professional violinist and teacher. I think so many of his orchestra students thru the years would say the same. I often would ask him, “How did you manage to get so many of your students launched into professional music careers and to have us know that that was our destiny by the end of , or even during, high school?” He would humbly say “Oh, all I did was to just not get in your way.” To that I would retort, “No, no, no you truly PAVED the way”. So many of us owe him a debt of gratitude beyond measure.*

*What a gift he had for being able to set high standards for us, and getting us to laugh and to be joyful during the process. So many great lasting memories. Thank you Mr McNeal!*

*- Victoria Azari Loran*

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**Victoria Azari Loran** - March 25, 2023 at 02:49 AM

RS

*Thank you for sharing Victoria. So many of us have similar thoughts about this amazing man.*

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**Relissa Stute** - March 26, 2023 at 12:00 PM



“ *Debie Beyer-Pacheco lit a candle in memory of James McNeal*



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**Debie Beyer-Pacheco** - March 24, 2023 at 08:04 PM

DL

“ I was so saddened to hear about my friend and colleague’s passing. It was my privilege to know him, admire his directing talent, and then work with him at Rocky for several years!. I’ll never forget my first sub job in Colorado was for Jim, teaching orchestra. At that time, nothing was done on computers (1991) and I mistakenly went to old FCHS for Steve! I wondered why all the rooms were dark, having arrived early for chamber orchestra at 6:30 a.m. By the time the office opened and they realized my mistake, I was late for the job for Jim. The next time I saw him, I apologized profusely, and he said he almost went to the school because he got so many calls about “no sub arriving”. I was so mortified, and then he said, “JUST KIDDING!”

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**Donna Lewis** - March 24, 2023 at 04:02 PM

MS

“ To Steve, and the rest of Jim's family—I am thinking of you all. I always enjoyed my interactions with Jim, especially when Steve was around!!! They tended to act like to brothers who as kids were always up to no good, and I mean that in the best way possible!!! Jim was a very fine music educator, and always a very nice man, and that car with the retractable roof was so cool!!! My condolences to you all. Mike Smith

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**Mike Smith** - March 24, 2023 at 03:08 PM