



Donald F Mizera

March 4, 1926 - December 6, 2013

Donald Francis Mizera, 87, Bismarck left this world on December 6, 2013, at Sanford Medical Center, Bismarck ND. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Thursday at 10:30 a.m. at Church of Corpus Christi in Bismarck with Rev. Paul Becker officiating. Burial will be at St. Mary's Cemetery. Visitation will be on Wednesday from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. at Eastgate Funeral Service where a rosary/vigil service will begin at 7:00 p.m. Visitation will continue on Thursday one hour prior to the service. Donald was born March 4, 1926, to Rose Klug and John Mizera on a farm near McLaughlin, SD. He was the youngest of five children. Don, along with his three brothers and one sister, Raymond, John Jr., Robert, and Lillian, grew up on the family farm. Music was a key part of Don's life. His father began instructing him at the age of 10. After one year of study he had progressed far enough to join the McLaughlin Symphony Orchestra. The next year he was asked to be in the newly formed Public School Band. During World War II, the schools absence of a band director provided him with the opportunity to serve as director during his junior year. This proved to be the motivating force behind his future in music education. He graduated from McLaughlin High School in 1944. At the age of 12, the Donnie Mizera Orchestra was formed and continued for approximately 20 years. The dance band actually started out as a publicity stunt with his oldest brother Ray, chaperoning him at that early age. Don with his three brothers and sister were the original members of the band. It grew to become a big band orchestra as time went on. He served in the U.S. Naval Reserves from

1944 – 1946. He was stationed in Manila of the Philippine Islands. When Don returned from the war in 1946 he returned to the farm and continued playing professional dance jobs for the next two to three years. In 1949, he enrolled in MacPhail College of Music in Minneapolis and received his Bachelors of Music Degree in 1952. On June 12, 1951, Don and Maxine exchanged wedding vows in Lemmon, SD. They made their home in St. Paul/Minneapolis while Don completed his education. After graduating, Don began his first teaching job in Westhope, ND. This is where their first born child, Bonita, came into this world, just as the school term began. Don's teaching experience spanned 36 years: Westhope from 1952 – 1954, Eureka 1954 – 1957, Parshall 1957 – 1965, Grafton 1965 – 1975, and Bismarck Hughes Jr. High 1975 – 1988. During his tenure in Grafton, Don spent summers studying at UND in Grand Forks to complete his Masters Degree in Education in 1969. In 1988, Don retired from Music Education at the age of 62. In the words of Don, "As I look back, I am so happy that I became a music educator, as it has been so rewarding in so many different aspects. To see your positive influence on various students that have followed in the same field of music gives a director a feeling of pride and accomplishment." Don realized his dreams of teaching "Big Band" music through the Stage bands in Parshall, Grafton, and Bismarck. After his retirement, he was a member of the Bismarck Elks Band. He also started a big band orchestra, which gave him an opportunity to continue his love for performing. Don Mizera and the Rhythm Airs performed locally at clubs, weddings, reunions, etc. during the late 80's and 90's. On May 14, 2004, Don was honored to be inducted into the Dakota Musicians Association Hall of Fame. Don enjoyed his retirement filling it with time spent with his family, shopping, walking and gardening. He spent his latter years avidly studying the bible, spending time in devotions and frequently attending daily mass. He is leaving behind five daughters, Bonita Mizera, Fargo, ND, Cynthia John Fisher, Austin, MN, Laura Robert French, Mandan, ND, Donna Reed Stevens, Rapid City, SD, and Anne Mizera, Bismarck, ND; one son, Donald Paul, Bismarck, ND, nine grandchildren; and seven great-

grandchildren. He was preceded in death by Maxine, his loving wife of 58 years; his parents Rose and John; his brothers, John Jr., Raymond, and Robert; and his sister, Lillian.

Tribute Wall

DG

“ 2 files added to the album *His Trumpet*



David Gibson - June 01, 2025 at 03:54 PM

DG

“ *I didn't know him, but I bought his trumpet, which he obviously loved after having it for 66 years, and all his clippings and music notes, and I will take great care of them for him.*

David Gibson - June 01, 2025 at 03:50 PM

RD

“ *Sorry for your loss. Many fond memories of Mr. Mizera as my band instructor at Parshall High School 1957-1960. Many of the memories are of time in the band during the time of the year when we would be marching. He was always so professional. My guess is he has already organized a marching band in heaven.*

Richard Debertin - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

MB

“ So sad to hear of Don's passing. Don and Maxine were neighbors of ours on Wakeman Avenue in Grafton until they moved to Bismarck in the mid 1970s. My mother and Maxine were close friends. Bonnie, Cindy, and Donna were my babysitters at one time or another. Don was my 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade band teacher at Chase School and helped me learn the trumpet, the first musical instrument I had ever played. He shared with me his love for music. Years later, I would get a degree in organ performance from NDSU and was a church organist for many years at St. John's in Grafton and Nativity, Holy Spirit, St. Anthony's and St. Mary's Cathedral in Fargo. Thank you Don, Maxine, Bonnie, Cindy, Laurie, Donna, Anne, and Don Paul for wonderful childhood memories. We missed you after you left Grafton and never forgot how wonderful you were to us. Please stop to see us if you are ever in eastern North Dakota. Mike Byzewski, Chicago, IL Sharon Byzewski, Grand Forks, ND Tad Byzewski, Grafton, ND Jay Byzewski, Grand Forks, ND

Mike Byzewski - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

JD

“ So Sorry for your loss of Don. Mr. Mizera was my 5th grade band teacher and taught me to play the trumpet while he was teaching in Grafton. He also taught most, if not all of my siblings. Our whole family respected him very much. You have our deepest sympathy. John Dusek and all the Dusek siblings from Grafton.

John Dusek - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

BN

“ So sorry for your loss, Mizera family. Not only was he a great band instructor to me, but also a great neighbor! I always loved hearing him play his instruments too! Mr. and Mrs. Mizera were always so kind when we were over at their house playing with their grand kids, Lisa and Jennifer. So many fond memories. My thoughts and prayers are with your whole family. Brook Rosenberg Newman

Brook Newman - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

AH

“ Please accept my sympathies on Mr. Mizera's passing. He was my music teacher back at Hughes in the early 1980's. He was instrumental in helping me find my potential musically. He helped me to get excited about music again when I became bored with one instrument and I switched to another, and ended up with a college scholarship! I am sure there is a new swing band in heaven!

Amy Fockler Hammond - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

SW

“ I was so sorry to hear about Uncle Donnie, I also have such good memories of the fun we all had visiting at the farm and listening to the music that they all loved so much!

Sally Weaver - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

SM

“ Wish I would have made a visit to see Uncle Donnie before his passing. Remembering all the fun we had during the summer visits growing up on the farm. Also, how much fun he had with my Dad when he came down for the occasional overnight visit!

Susan Mizera - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

JO

“ Thank you Don for welcoming me into The Rhythm Airs many years ago. Big Band music is my favorite era and even though I wasn't with the group very long, it opened my fingers to new musical opportunities. Thank you Don for being such a wonderful musical influence to young people. May you rest in musical peace. Joan Graven Backes Piano

Joan - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

DM

“ So sorry to hear about Don's passing. But at least he not suffering anymore and especially since he had a stroke. He is now with the love of his life and they are probably dancing up a storm. Hope the memories get you though the rough times. Prayers and hugs go out to all the family. John and Cindy Hetzel and family

Don Mizera - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM

LM

“ So sad to hear that Don passed away. I know it is a very sad family time. I just pray that the good family memories you have will help you all get through the difficult days of grief. You are all in our thoughts and prayers. Linda & Richard

Linda & Richard Meidinger - March 17, 2015 at 12:00 AM