



Donald LeRoy Varville

November 9, 1938 - March 14, 2018

Donald LeRoy Varville was born on 9 November 1938 in the Chicago Heights neighborhood of Chicago, IL, to Leona Rose Fetter Varville and Philip Eugene Varville. As a toddler, his family moved back to Minneapolis where Don spent his formative years developing a love of basketball, running and learning to play the French Horn. As a Boy Scout for 7 years, he earned the Eagle Scout Award, 29 Merit Badges, the Ad Altare Dei Scout Award for Religious Service, served as a Scout Master for 2 years, and was an expert in most outdoor skills, including camping, swimming, canoeing and hiking.

He was a 1956 graduate of Edison High School in Minneapolis, MN, and enlisted in the U.S. Army just a few months shy of his 18th birthday. After a 2 year assignment as First Horn with the 5th. Army Band at Fort Sheridan, IL, he was transferred to the 76th. Army Band in Orleans, France. After his enlistment and returning stateside, he went on to earn a Bachelor of Music Education in January 1965 from the MacPhail College of Music at the University of Minnesota, while also performing with the Minneapolis Park Board Band. At that time, he regularly attended meetings for a young Catholic adults social group called, "Saturday Nighters", in the Minneapolis area. As fate would have it, during one such gathering, he met a "Salvation Army"-looking girl named Helen Noé. The next few years were a time of soul searching for the ambitious and religious, young musician. He entered an abbey in Ava, Missouri for a period of discernment into the religious life. But

when asked by a priest the color of Helen's eyes and he did not know, he was told to return home and find out. Don returned home, continued his relationship with Helen and finished his studies at the University of MN. While in the pursuit of his degree, he played with the North Carolina Symphony and also went on to teach with the Pickford School District in Pickford, Michigan. Around this time, he received an offer to teach in Hawaii and asked Helen to marry him.

Donald and Helen were married on Hawaiian Statehood Day, 21 August 1965, in Minneapolis, MN. During Don and Helen's "Two Year Honeymoon" in Hawaii, he taught Music at St. Louis High School, while also playing for the Honolulu Symphony. He went on to earn a MA in Music Education from the University of Hawaii in Honolulu, Hawaii, in August of 1967. He returned to Minnesota and taught Music and Chorus for 2 years at Maynard High School in Maynard, MN. After the birth of his first daughter, Mary, the family moved to Bode, Iowa, where he taught in the Tri-City area. Don and Helen then went on to welcome a son, Christopher in 1969, followed by two daughters, Nancy and Joy, in 1971 and 1974 respectively. During this very busy and eventful period in his life, he attended the University of Iowa and worked towards a Doctorate Degree. Discouraged by a saturation at the time of others in the same field of study, coupled with losing his teaching job (although he held a permanent professional teaching certificate from the state of Iowa), Don worked the night shift at Weidenhoff, a Division of Snap-On-Tools, as a Spot Welder, to provide for his growing, young family. After the birth of his fourth child, he reenlisted in the Army and reported to Fort Leonard Wood, MO for bootcamp. Afterwards, he was assigned to the School of Music in Norfolk, VA, as a Music Instructor (a position which he held for 10 years), and the family moved into a rental home for 2 years while waiting for available government housing on the Naval Amphibious Base - Little Creek. A fifth child, Michael, was born in 1977, two months after the family moved into base housing. Don continued to stay busy with his growing family and traveled between teaching at The School of Music

in Norfolk, while on Active Duty with the Army at Fort Story in Virginia Beach.

While living on base, Don played on Softball teams and acquired many plaques and trophies from the sport. As a life-long runner, Don participated in the Army's 10,000 mile "Run For Life" Program. Even after his retirement from the Army in 1993, he continued to log the miles he ran and reached over 20,000 miles! In Virginia, he enjoyed taking his children to area parks to play while he joined pick-up games of basketball, outrunning and outplaying men sometimes half his age, while performing his signature hook shot, which included a precise combination of a slight skip and almost ballet-like pirouette. One could hear the sound of the net gently grabbing the basketball for a split second before releasing it through to the court below- nothing but net! Once, he even won a free-throw competition and received a large trophy for his accomplishment. Being from "The Land of 10,000 Lakes", Don was a very strong swimmer and would often swim a mile or two across one of Minnesota's many lakes with a friend.

Between 1976- 1978, Don was enrolled in correspondence courses with Pepperdine University in California, and in August 1978, received both a Masters in Counseling Psychology and a Masters in Human Resource Management. Trained in group dynamics and individual behaviors, as well as writing psychological profiles, Don was an asset in the years he spent counseling military inductees about academic deficiencies, as well as being in charge for 3 years of an Army company size training program of 100 people. His responsibilities in this capacity included getting training materials for 40 different military jobs, scheduling, testing, quality control, training the trainers, and overseeing a staff of five. He spent seven years in an army training development section using several different training models, while also designing training products in which he was in charge of front end analysis to the delivery of the final training products.

On 4 September 1980, Don's sixth and youngest child was born at Portsmouth Military Hospital in Portsmouth, VA. During the 10 years Don lived with his family in the Norfolk/ Virginia Beach area of Virginia, he played in the Virginia Symphony Orchestra for 6 of those years. He performed Schumann's "Konzertstück" with the Virginia Symphony as 4th Horn. He also played in The Tidewater Winds quartet, as well at the Virginia Philharmonic and Virginia POPS! He played summer concerts at Fort Monroe, which his children fondly remember, as well as his concert performances at Chrysler Hall.

Don received orders for a new assignment with the 33rd AG USAREUR Band in the summer of 1985. The family arrived in Heidelberg, (then West) Germany on his oldest child's 18th birthday, 1 December 1985. Don consistently toured with the 33rd AG throughout Europe during the 3 years the family lived overseas. He and his family were able to obtain Visas and visit Hungary, the (then still) Communist country of his wife's birth in the summer of 1986 to visit her remaining relatives. Upon completion of his European tour of duty, he was assigned to the 214th Army Ground Forces Band at Fort McPherson in Atlanta, GA. Similarly to the 33rd AG Band in Europe, he also toured extensively with the 214th Army Ground Forces Band throughout the United States. Following his retirement from the Army in 1993, Don passed the Georgia Teacher Certification Test with a score of 363 out of 400. Passing score was a 320. Ultimately though, he taught Music at a private Catholic High School in Minneapolis, MN. After realizing the teaching profession had significantly changed since his last tenure, he returned to Georgia and held a series of odd jobs while still pursuing "gigs" and teaching opportunities in the Atlanta area. In the early 1990's, although Don was a member of St. Michael The Archangel Cantonment Chapel at Fort McPherson, he also performed occassionally during Sunday services at Rehoboth Baptist Church in Atlanta, which were televised, as well. Don was a life-long learner and constantly read books. His most favorite subject to read about was religion- whether Catholic,

general Christianity or other world religions, religious books always drew his attention. While living in Virginia, he had even studied to become a Brother of the Eastern Rite.

Don was a humble and quiet man of many talents. Don composed many pieces of music and professionally recorded in music studios. Once, he recalled playing and recording a piece of music at a studio and later recognizing it as the theme song to the popular 1980's TV Show, "Dallas". He also played at the inaugural telecast for "The 700 Club", where he later brought his children to tour the TV Studio. Over the years, through the occasional hardships of working as a struggling musician and father of six children, he also took additional courses to help improve himself and provide for his family in many ways. He was enrolled in classes for Hotel Management before reenlisting in the US Army in 1975. He also took a small engine repair course and even got his trucking license at one point after retiring from the military. While teaching in Iowa, he went to Broadcasting school and worked as an Announcer at sporting events in the area. Always with a willingness to learn and explore different ideas, Don took classes at Atlanta Baptist College through Liberty Baptist Church in Stockbridge, Georgia. In recent years, as a member of St. Philip Benizi Catholic Church in Jonesboro, GA, Don was a member of the Bell Choir. Within the past 2 years of his life, he had spoken to St. Philip's Music Director, Nick Dragone, about arranging a possible concert at church to accompany him, based on a Scott Joplin opera. Beyond his Military Band and teaching experience, during the course of Don's career as a professional musician, he also soloed in orchestras of The University of Minnesota, Fort Dodge (Iowa), Wilmar College (Minnesota), played as an extra horn with the Minneapolis Symphony, played with The Royal Winnipeg Ballet and North Carolina Symphony for 1 year each, Honolulu Symphony for 2 years and Virginia Symphony for 6 years. He also performed as part of a group for such notables as Charles DeGaulle; U.S. Presidents: Eisenhower, Johnson, Nixon and Bush; Vice President

Humphrey; Artistic Figures, which included: Carman Dragon, Leonard Pennario, Andre Kostelantetz, Mary Costa, Dorothy Kirstein, Van Cliburn, Igor Stravinsky, Nelson Riddle, Dizzy Gillespie, Arthur Fielder, Ferrante & Teicher, Henry Mancini, Mitch Miller, Peter Nero, Doc Severinsen, Tommy Neusome, Bob Hope, Richard Boone, Tony Martin, Burl Ives, Phillis Diller, Marvin Hamlisch and many more.

Even more so than his incredible talent as a Professional French Hornist, Band Leader and Left-Handed Conductor, Donald had a great sense of humor and impeccable comedic timing. He loved a great "Play-on-Words" session with his kids and grandkids during family get-togethers. His big laugh and sense of humor will be greatly missed, but his spirit and love are very much alive in the hearts of his family and those who knew him.

Mr. Donald LeRoy Varville, age 79, of Stockbridge, GA, passed away Wednesday, 14 March 2018, at 8:06pm. He was preceded in death by his father, Eugene Varville. He is survived by his loving wife, Helen Varville; mother, Leona Varville of Minneapolis, MN; children: Mary B. Varville-Rodriguez (Ramon) of Colorado Springs, CO; Christopher J. Varville (Elizabeth) of Belton, TX; Nancy R. Carroll (Philip) of Senoia; Joy C. Varville of Stockbridge; Michael Varville (Brittany) of Kennesaw; Nicholas Varville of Colorado Springs, CO; sister, Karen Miskowic of St. Paul, MN; grandchildren: Isabella, Nathan and Sebastien Rodriguez; Irais Renteria (Manolo); Brandon (Melissa) Barrera; Matthew, Noeh, Christina and Caitlyn Varville; Kylie, Philip, Baylie and Emylie Carroll; Haley, Lucas and (baby girl) "Braylee" Varville; great-grandchildren, Emilio and (baby girl) Renteria; Sophie Marie Barerra; numerous nieces, nephews and extended family. A funeral mass will be held at 10:30 AM, Wednesday, 21 March 2018, at St. Philip Benizi Catholic Church, in Jonesboro, GA. In lieu of flowers memorials can be made to any Covenant House in memory of Donald LeRoy Varville.

Matthew 23:12 Anyone who raises himself up will be humbled, and anyone who humbles himself will be raised up. ~ To Dad for not "tooting his own horn". We Will Love & Miss You Dearly

Ford-Stewart Funeral Home, Jonesboro/Stockbridge, 770-210-2700