

David "George" Dunbar

October 30, 1934 - December 24, 2016

Obituary of David George Dunbar

A beloved choir director and music professor, Dr. D. George Dunbar, 82, of Bourbonnais, passed away Saturday, December 24, at Riverside Medical Center. Memorial visitation will be held on Wednesday, January 4, from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm at College Church of the Nazarene, Bourbonnais, followed by a memorial service at 1:00 pm at College Church. The Rev. Dr. Mark Quanstrom and Dr. John Bowling will officiate. Burial will be private at a later date.

George Dunbar served as a faculty member at Olivet Nazarene University for 30 years, and for 27 years, he directed the acclaimed Orpheus Choir of 60-70 student singers along with the Concert Singers for 17 years and the choir of the College Church of the Nazarene for 11 years.

Dunbar was born on October 30, 1934, in Calgary Alberta Canada to David and Laura (McAdam) Dunbar. He attended Canadian Nazarene College in Red Deer, Alberta, before transferring to Olivet Nazarene College in 1957. At Olivet, he met noted soprano Linda (Luttrell) Dunbar; they married on June 11, 1960.

Dunbar earned a degree from Canadian Nazarene College, a bachelor's degree in church music from Olivet in 1958, a bachelor's degree in music education from Olivet in 1959, a master's degree in voice from the University of Illinois in 1960, and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Southern California in 1970. He began his teaching career at Cascade College, Portland, Oregon, before coming to Olivet. During his 30-year tenure

at Olivet, he was awarded the faculty member of the year in 1980, the alumni "O" award in 1982, and the Sears Roebuck Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence and Campus Leadership in 1989.

At Olivet, Dunbar was chosen by then president Harold W. Reed to succeed Dr. Walter B. Larsen and Mrs. Naomi Larsen as the director of the world-famous Orpheus Choir. Dunbar expanded the reach and musical ministry of the choir by touring the Olivet region, California, Canada, Mexico, and Israel. The choir appeared twice at the National Cathedral in Washington D. C.; three times at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado; once at the Bruton Parish Chapel in Williamsburg, Virginia, 20 times at the Bill Gaither Praise Gathering for Believers; and 10 times at the International General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene. Under Dunbar's leadership, Orpheus Choir also made several appearances in Indianapolis, Indiana, singing the National Anthem before NBA games.

Dr. Ovid Young, a friend and colleague who preceded Dunbar in death, said of him: "I must be the luckiest composer alive because this man and the singers that he marshals every year have sung at least one piece of mine for every year that he has conducted Orpheus Choir. There are many composers in the world who only dream for such a blending, for such an opportunity to hear their music sung so beautifully, so artistically....As I heard that massed choir sing..."The Lord Bless You and Keep You," [I thought] there aren't many institutions that could recreate such an experience...."

Inspiring choir members and listeners alike, D. George Dunbar has left a legacy of excellence, commitment, humility, grace, and godliness to those who knew him and to those who will come after him. He has been found faithful in his commitment to his music, his Olivet, his community, his family, and his God. He will be missed.

David George Dunbar is survived by his wife of 56 years, Linda (Luttrell) Dunbar; daughter Kathleen of Seattle, Washington; son David of Bourbonnais; sister Ruth Markus of Lethbridge, Alberta; and two grandchildren, Jordyn and Joshua. He was preceded in death by his parents and one sister, Jean

Jensen.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorials be made to the Orpheus Memorial Scholarship Fund, Office of Development, Olivet Nazarene University.

Cemetery Details

Kankakee Memorial Gardens

15 South 3000 E. Rd.
Kankakee, IL 60901

Previous Events

Memorial Visitation

JAN 4. 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM (CT)

College Church of the Nazarene
200 University Ave
Bourbonnais, IL 60914
(815) 933-7749

Celebration of Life Service

JAN 4. 1:00 PM (CT)

College Church of the Nazarene
200 University Ave
Bourbonnais, IL 60914
(815) 933-7749

Tribute Wall



“ *David "George" Dunbar*

February 03, 2023 at 04:30 AM



“ *I have to say through tears that I have never met a man who embodied the real meaning of meekness (quiet strength) more than our beloved Dr. D. I barely made Orpheus Choir my Freshman year at Olivet, and from that moment I have had the most profound respect for him. Through Orpheus Choir he enriched my life and made an indelible mark on me not only as a singer, but as a disciple of Christ. Heaven has become even dearer to me knowing that he is there.*

I am praying for you, Linda, and for David and Kathleen.

Marlene (Erickson) Oxner

Marlene Oxner - January 13, 2017 at 03:59 PM



“ *Linda, our thoughts and prayers are with you. I have a lot of good memories of George and you...both through the good and the not so good times at ONU. He was a good man who impacted me in a very positive and lasting way. His commitment to excellence as a way of serving God certainly impacted my life.*

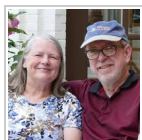
Ken Armstrong

Ken Armstrong - January 04, 2017 at 08:20 PM

NG

“ I was a Music Major at ONU and took voice lessons from Mrs. Larsen. When she took a sabbatical, Dr. Dunbar coached me. He gave me such confidence that I stayed under his teaching when Mrs. Larsen returned. I was also privileged to sing in Orpheus 3 of my 4 years. His leadership was outstanding. My husband & I were also friends with George & Linda, and enjoyed having them visit a couple of times and accompany us to Chicago for a concert at Fourth Presbyterian Church. Truly a great man!
Nina Green

Nina Green - January 02, 2017 at 09:43 PM



“ I was privileged to be in Orpheus when Dr. Dunbar became director of the choir. For my remaining 3 years at Olivet, he was a constant example of Christian fidelity and musical excellence. My turn to experience the essence of the man came on a bus trip. We were fulfilling our motto, "A Ministry in Music", singing at various churches on our educational region. Dr. D. came down the aisle of the bus, speaking briefly to students along the way. Unexpectedly, he stopped at my row and sat down in the empty seat next to me. We talked about life. From that moment, he had my heart; and a shy boy began a journey towards being a confident and spiritually mature man. Thank you, George!

John Atkinson - January 02, 2017 at 06:45 PM

DB

“ There are few in life that impact your journey and decisions - but Dr. Dunbar was that man in my life. I often remember him directing Orpheus with his palms raised as we all worshiped together in that moment at Praise Gathering. He was a special conduit of Gods great work. Dr. Dunbar will always hold a very special place in my heart. My deepest condolences to the family. May God give you strength and comfort in the coming days and months.

Dawn Bateman - January 02, 2017 at 06:07 PM

SA

“ Linda, David and Kathleen....
I am so sorry for your loss. Dr. D was a great man....thank you for sharing him with us. You all are in my prayers.

Scott Apple - January 02, 2017 at 03:37 PM

SA

“ Dr. Dunbar changed my life. He believed in me, challenged me, encouraged me, listened to me, and showed me what Godly, steadfast character is. He was a man I could count on...to really be who he claimed to be, even when no one was looking. I thank God for him. I learned more from him about music and about manly character than anyone else. He taught me how to sing, conduct, accompany. I can't imagine my life without him being part of it. Heaven is richer because he is there.

Scott Apple - January 02, 2017 at 03:35 PM

RW

“ He may be gone from this life but will never be forgotten! I've sat under countless hours of his direction and look forward once again in Heaven!! Lots of love Linda! 🙏

Ruth Wolfe. - January 02, 2017 at 10:39 AM

Kevin
Shear

“ *Linda: I never sang in Orpheus, but I loved to hear them in concert at ONU!!! Dr. Dunbar will be greatly missed by a lot of people who came across the path of Dr. Dunbar, he was an awesome man of God, who will be missed by a lot!!! I loved Dr. Dunbar and you!! You are an awesome person!! I hope that I get a chance to visit with you on Wed and share my memories here!!!!*

Kevin Shear - January 02, 2017 at 03:18 AM

RB

“ *My deepest sympathy- George was a very special friend to me and our special times we had been in Red Deer Alberta.. We shared our home with him and gave him a home away from home.Keith would extend his sympathies-however he is in a nursing home and not able to totally comprehend....we have beautiful memories of George.*

sincerely

Ruby Baker

Ruby Baker - January 01, 2017 at 03:26 PM

KD

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



Kathleen Dunbar - January 01, 2017 at 10:43 AM

KD

My Dad was an amazing music educator, father, and person. I don't remember the name of the place in Israel where I took this photo. All the other ones I tried to get of him conducting didn't turn out as well. His hand always ended up hiding his face. I am glad this one turned out. I also remember later in the trip we found a McDonald's and he said "I can't believe I flew 70,000 miles to eat a Big Mac." Growing up around his gentle yet strict nature and being of service as an educator influenced my career as an educator. Some of my students have commented that I can give them a "look" when I know they are goofing off and I said, well, that is the Dunbar Dart and I got that from my Dad. I am sure former Orpheus members and students can relate to that. And most of the time I live by the adage, you're only on time if you're early. He was also a tremendous example of taking the high road in tough situations. He was a man of integrity, action, and quiet confidence. The world is a better javascript:void(0);place because he was in it.

Kathleen Dunbar - January 01, 2017 at 10:51 AM

KC

Thank you for posting Kathleen. I remember that look!

Karen Culver - January 02, 2017 at 09:05 AM

SR

Liza and I talked, and laughed a lot over Christmas break remembering you and Dr. George. All the silly shenanigans, Orpheus trips, variety shows, and the fact that all of those Orpheus songs that we sang, still stick with us. What great memories. Please keep in touch. Especially with Liza. We are on FB.

suzi richardson - January 02, 2017 at 01:59 PM

VH

“ I am saddened to learn of the death of George Dunbar, whom I have known since being a student at Canadian Nazarene College in Red Deer in the early 1950's. George was a fine human being and a very talented musician in his service to Christ and the church. I remember him as the driver of the CNC college choir tour bus on occasion. Sincere condolences to Linda and family.

Vern Hannah, Calgary, Alberta

Vern Hannah - December 31, 2016 at 09:26 PM

SH

“ My Sympathy to George's family. What a great legacy George left. I knew him at the beginning of his career and education at Canadian Nazarene College 1955-57. Shirley Harter (Rudyk)

Shirley Harter - December 31, 2016 at 06:25 PM

JL

“ Dear Linda and family - We were saddened to learn of George's passing. We know you will miss him. He was a precious Christian gentleman with a gift for creating glorious music. Heaven's celestial choir has another director, one of the best. Our love and prayers for God's comfort. Jim and Leora Legacy

Jim and Leora Legacy - December 31, 2016 at 07:27 AM

LP

Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family as you mourn George's passing. But as you celebrate his life of service to God and his church, we are blessed to have known George. Blessings, Larry and Denny Patterson

Larry Patterson - December 31, 2016 at 02:12 PM

BT

“ Dear Mrs. Dunbar, David, Kathleen, and the rest of the family: You are in my thoughts and prayers during this very difficult time. Dr. Dunbar has meant so much to me -- you all have -- since I first met the Dunbars in 1985. I never wanted to miss an Orpheus rehearsal because of how special he made each and every one of them. He taught me something about music I'll never forget: "All music must dance." His kindness and graciousness reflected the beauty of Jesus to me over and over again. My heart is saddened at his passing; and yet I am full of joy that I have been so blessed to know such a great man as Dr. Dunbar. Jesus is the bread of life. And I know without a doubt, Jesus will raise up Dr. Dunbar on the Last Day! Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! With all my love, Bill Techau, Champaign, Illinois.

Bill Techau - December 30, 2016 at 05:42 PM

LH

“ Dear Linda and Family: So sorry to hear of Dr. Dunbar's passing. You are in thoughts and prayers... Lori Morrival Hoekstra

Lori Morrival Hoekstra - December 30, 2016 at 01:18 PM

SC

“ George was a spiritual and musical example and mentor to me. He, along with Naomi Larsen, Ovid Young, and Harlow Hopkins were the stalwarts and hearts and souls at ONU. He will be greatly missed! Praying for Linda, David and Kathleen! Shirley Close '70.

Shirley Close - December 29, 2016 at 10:31 AM

KC

“ *Dr Dunbar has been a mentor and friend since 1969. A wonderful Christian gentleman who was always consistent in his leadership, faith in God, and excellence in music. It was a privilege to be a member of Orpheus choir and the choir of College Church of the Nazarene. My prayers are with Linda, David, Kathleen and grandchildren.*

Karen Culver - December 28, 2016 at 07:29 PM



“ *George Dunbar was a wonderful part of my college experience. He was a musical treasure to all of us who had the privilege of working with him and being taught by him. I am sad to hear of his passing and all of my sincere sympathy goes to his family.*

*Linda Moore Johnson
1965-1970, Olivet Nazarene College*

Linda Johnson - December 28, 2016 at 06:14 PM

JH

“ *We hold all of you in our prayers tonight, and I will forever remember George as a guiding mentor and spiritual leader in my life, along with Linda. Love and peace....Jane Holstein*

Jane Holstein - December 26, 2016 at 08:32 PM

WS

We hold all of you in our prayers today. We will forever remember George as a kind friend. Warren and Ann Smith

Warren and Ann Smith - December 27, 2016 at 07:40 AM