



## Dr. James T. McRaney, Sr., Ed.D.

April 13, 1940 - October 2, 2021

James T. McRaney, Sr., Ed.D. age 81, of Atlanta, Georgia, formerly of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, went home to be with his Lord and Savior on Saturday, October 2, 2021 at Emory Decatur Hospital after numerous health issues.

Dr. McRaney was born on April 13, 1940 in Hattiesburg, Mississippi to James Howard McRaney and Thyrza Maude Gardner McRaney. He started school in California during his father's service in WWII. He later graduated from Hattiesburg High School in 1957 where he was immersed in chorus, band, and theatre arts. He continued his musical education and earned two music Bachelor's degrees from Mississippi College, a Master of Arts degree from George Peabody College for Teachers (now the College of Education, Vanderbilt University), and the Doctor of Education from the University of Georgia.

For 37 years Dr. McRaney taught music education in public schools and colleges in Georgia and was named Georgia's 1983 Teacher of the Year. He also served as Director of Music in Atlanta area churches for 40 years, founded and directed Chorale II, a community chorus, for 11 years and conducted 13 international concert tours for Georgia students and church choir members.

Dr. McRaney served as President of the Georgia Music Educators Association; President of the Southern Division of the Music Educators National Conference (MENC); and served on the National Executive Board of MENC. Dr. McRaney made significant contributions to music education in Georgia and nationwide.

Dr. McRaney was a devoted son, husband, father, grandfather, teacher and friend. He is survived by his beloved wife of 61 years, Willie Ruth Blailock McRaney; daughter, Laura McRaney of Rome, GA; son and daughter-in-law, Jay McRaney and his wife, Kim, and two children, Alex and Erin, all of Canton, GA; son, Jeff McRaney of Orlando, FL and three children, Zoe, Gideon, and Connor; numerous cousins; and a host of former students and dear friends.

A Graveside Service will be held on Saturday, October 9, 2021 at 11:30 A.M. at Green's Creek Baptist Church Cemetery, 711 Old Richton Rd., Petal, MS 39465 (601-582-2450). The family will receive friends from 10:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. at the Hulett-Winstead Funeral Home, 205 Bay St., Hattiesburg, MS 39401 (601-582-1571) before the Graveside Service on Saturday. Condolence messages in MS may be sent to [hulettwinstead@hotmail.com](mailto:hulettwinstead@hotmail.com) or [hulettwinstead@yahoo.com](mailto:hulettwinstead@yahoo.com).

A Memorial Service to Honor and Celebrate the Life of Dr. McRaney will be held on Saturday, October 23, 2021 at 2:00 P.M. at the Briarlake Baptist Church, 3715 LaVista Rd., Decatur, GA 30033 (404-325-4214). Former music students and choir members of Dr. McRaney will render a Musical Celebration of his life. The family will receive friends from 12:30-1:30 P.M. before the service at the church.

Those desiring may make memorial gifts in memory of Dr. James T. McRaney to: Chorale II, Attn: Peggy Ray, Director, 5635 Nottingham Dr., NW, Lilburn, GA 30047; Georgia Music Educators Association, 245 Country Club Drive, Suite 300A, Stockbridge, GA 30281; or Briarlake Baptist Church, 3715 LaVista Rd., Decatur, GA 30033 (designated for "Music Ministry").

Condolences may be sent or viewed at <http://www.wagesfuneralhome.com>. Tom M. Wages Funeral Service, 3705 Highway 78 West, Snellville, GA 30039 has been entrusted with the arrangements in Georgia.

# Events

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**OCT** **Visitation** 12:30PM - 01:30PM

**23**

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Briarlake Baptist Church

3715 Lavista Rd, Decatur, GA, US, 30033

**OCT** **Memorial Service** 02:00PM

**23**

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Briarlake Baptist Church

3715 Lavista Rd, Decatur, GA, US, 30033

# Comments

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“ A tribute video has been added.



**Tom M. Wages Funeral Service** - October 20 at 04:02 PM

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“ Mrs. McRaney,  
Your husband was a profound influence in my life. I learned so much from him and have been able to pass that knowledge on to my children and to church choirs I have had the opportunity to direct. Chorus was my favorite part of high school. And I remember your smiling face at all of the concerts. You were a wonderful support. I wish you and your children well. Take good care.  
Deirdre Leach Forbes

**Deirdre Leach Forbes** - October 22 at 05:42 PM

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“ 64 files added to the album LifeTributes



**Tom M. Wages Funeral Service** - October 20 at 03:38 PM

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“ 65 files added to the album LifeTributes

**Tom M. Wages Funeral Service** - October 19 at 04:21 PM

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“ 34 files added to the album LifeTributes

**Tom M. Wages Funeral Service** - October 17 at 02:09 PM

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“ I knew James through GMEA and got to know him better when we attended MENC conferences together. We both had an interest in music education history since we had both written dissertations on music education histories in Georgia. He and I went to dinner one night in Milwaukee and he introduced me to the History Special Research Interest group (HSRIG). He encouraged me to join and I did. Since then, I have attended all of the HSRIG symposia and served as president of it. I have James to thank for many wonderful memories with that group and the fond memories I have had with him. He will be terribly missed.

Patti Tolbert, Milledgeville, GA

**Patti Tolbert** - October 13 at 04:39 PM

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“ I first met James when our University of Illinois concert choir performed for the MENE National Convention in Atlanta 1972. He and his wife Willie hosted me at their home and demonstrated the best of Southern hospitality to this Northern boy. James was an excellent student when he took classes at Georgia State, We judged many GMEA LPG festivals where James was a "stickler" for the rules. He took an unusual interest in GMEA history and served as its President. His choirs were noted for their musicianship and his strong leadership. I wish the family many musical memories. John Haberlen, Professor Emeritus of Music, Georgia State University.

**John Haberlen** - October 11 at 03:25 PM

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“ I remember how kind Dr. McRaney was to all students. I was so honored to be singing with him in the very first Georgia Youth Chorale in the summer of 1974, where we toured Europe. What a wonderful experience he gave all of us. I wish peace to his family. Rest In Peace Dr. McRaney.

**Les Reagan** - October 09 at 11:03 PM

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“ Mr. Mac was a great choir director, teacher and friend. He had a huge impact in my life and instilled the love of music in my life. I sang in the chorale in the years of 1981-83 and enjoyed every minute. Thank you Mr. Mac, you will be missed but will see you on the other side.

**John kilpatrick** - October 09 at 08:39 AM

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“ Willie Ruth and all the family, my heartfelt condolences to you on the loss of such a wonderful husband and father. He was a steadfast friend and colleague who gave so generously of his time and expertise to all of us in the choral music world. His legacy lives on in the history of music education in Georgia and beyond.

**Susan Merritt** - October 08 at 11:04 PM

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“ It was an honor to sing in "Mr. Mac's" Honor Chorale at Cross Keys High School during my Junior and Senior years ('69 and '70), and in Chorale II 2010-12. I learned to site read in his classes, I learned to appreciate chorale music, and I enjoyed the performances we did around Atlanta - I especially remember one where we put on a show for Danny Thomas at one of his charities' fundraisers. Mr. Mac was a great music teacher who was highly respected by all, and he even became a mentor to some who chose to go on with music careers. He was special and was a wonderful part of my high school years and beyond. Thank you Mr. Mac. Peace and love.

**Jill Boldway** - October 08 at 09:16 PM

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“ Willie Ruth my prayers are with you and your family. I did not know Dr. McRaney but reading memories from others i can tell he was truly a great person. Love to you.  
Martha Sawyer(mills)

**martha Mills sawyer** - October 08 at 09:44 AM

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“ I attended James and Willie Ruth's wedding where he sang a love song to her. I was so impressed with that!

**Patricia Redford** - October 07 at 12:56 PM

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“ Mr McRaney was the best teacher I've ever known. He not only taught music at Cross Keys but also taught morals and values, and as a God fearing Christian Mr McRaney gave his students self confidence and courage during a time young adults are so vulnerable. He truly cared and had such love for his students. I am so grateful and blessed to have had him as my teacher mentor and friend.

**Jamie Lavinder Brown** - October 07 at 08:27 AM

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“ Thank you Mr.McRaney of all the memories thank you gave to us at Cross Keys High School. You have shared your life with many of us and so much more. There are so many memories it is hard to named them all. My condolences to your family. Connie Toole Muntner



**Connie Toole Muntner** - October 06 at 01:04 PM

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“ He was my teacher and friend. He was interim minister of music at my husband's first church in Stone Mountain. He came to my 50th birthday party. I took chorus trips with him to the Bahamas, Niagra Falls, Great Britain, Italy and Austria. Mrs. McRaney and Laura are also friends. I taught the children of Chorale alumni part of a song at one of our reunions. Many wonderful memories. I am one of his legacy as I recently retired from public school music teaching, but I still am using my music at church. Thanks Mr. Mac for all I learned from you.

**Tina Meade Butler** - October 06 at 09:25 AM

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“ I taught with Dr McRaney at CK he was a gem. Great teacher and person!!

**Ron Mangrum** - October 06 at 08:06 AM

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“ My most sincere condolences and heart felt sympathy to the McRaney Family.  
"My life flows on in endless song, above earth's lamentation.  
I catch the sweet, though far-off hymn that hails a new creation.  
No storm can shake my inmost calm while to that Rock I'm clinging.  
Since Love is lord of heav'n and earth, how can I keep from singing?"  
Thank You Dr. McRaney for helping me "find my voice" and for the encouragement to help others! Shalom, Robert ><> (Robert C. Brown CK -76)

**Robert Brown** - October 05 at 07:25 PM

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“ I live in Snellville Ga. I wish I had met Dr. McRaney. My grandmother's mother was a McRaney from Port Gibson Miss. I'm sure we were related in some way.  
Condolences to the McRaney family.

**Tricia Rawlins** - October 05 at 06:58 PM

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“ Those school girl days of telling tales and biting nails are gone,  
But in my mind I know they will still live on and on,  
But how do you thank someone who has taken you from crayons to perfume.  
It isn't easy but I'll try,  
If you wanted the sky I'd write across the sky in letters  
that would soar a thousand feet high,  
To Sir, With Love.  
The time has come, for closing books and long last looks must end,  
And as I leave I know that I am Leaving my best friend,  
A friend who taught me right from wrong, and weak from strong.  
That's a lot to learn.  
What! What can I give you in return?  
If you wanted the moon I would try to make a start  
But I would rather, you let me give my heart,  
To Sir, With Love.  
Those awkward years, have hurried by why did they fly away.  
Why is it Sir children grow up to be people one day,  
What takes the place of climbing trees and dirty knees in the world outside?  
What is there for you I can buy?  
If you wanted the world I'd surround it with a wall I'd scall  
These words with letters ten feet tall,  
To Sir, With Love.  
Love  
Liz Moye

**liz Moye** - October 05 at 06:33 PM



“ Wonderful! That brought tears to my eyes as I sang along.

**Jill Boldway** - October 09 at 09:12 PM



“ Same for me, Jill. What a great lifelong friend he has been.

**Harland Ragle** - October 12 at 07:22 AM



“ Cheryl Carter lit a candle in memory of Dr. James T. McRaney, Sr., Ed.D.



**cheryl carter** - October 05 at 05:36 PM



“ I was in chorus at Cross Keys my junior year (1976-77). I was also in band. I could play OK.....but I could not sing! I knew it....everyone around me knew it....and Mr. Mac knew it. But he never disparaged me, only encouraged and taught. I've never forgotten that! He was a good and decent man. He had a way of bringing out the best in his students, and my school mates who COULD actually sing never tired of singing his praises. He had a kind way of demanding excellence, of making you want to be excellent! He made the hard work of putting it all together a pleasant, learning, enjoyable experience. He will be sorely missed. Well done Mr. Mac! Thank you!! While I mourn your departure from us here, my heart leaps with joy for your victory in Christ. You are home now.

**Joe Norman** - October 05 at 05:34 PM