



Anita Gayle Laughlin 1944 - 2024

Gayle Laughlin passed away peacefully Sunday morning September 22, 2024, at her home. She was born in New Orleans, LA on December 27, 1944, following her father's discharge from the US Navy (served in WWII Pacific Theater). Growing up in Paoli, Indiana, Gayle began her early education at the Lowe's one-room country schoolhouse near Young's Creek. When she was in the 6th grade, she moved to the town school and began clarinet lessons in the band program, under the direction of Harold Iverson. By the time Gayle was in the 7th grade, she was the 1st chair clarinet player in the high school band, a post she held the next 5 years until graduation. In 1962, she placed in the Indiana Bandmasters All-State Band (held in Goshen, IN that year), and earned scholarships to both the Indiana University Summer Program, and the Stephen Foster Music Camp.

After High School, Gayle attended Eastern Kentucky University for 1 year, and then transferred to Indiana University in Bloomington. While at IU, she played in the Wind Ensemble for 3 years. Gayle graduated from IU with a BME degree in 1966, along with the distinction of "Bands Woman of the Year". In 1972, Gayle completed her graduate degree (MA) from IU.

Gayle Laughlin began her teaching career in the "West End" of Louisville for one year. From there, she moved to the New Albany – Floyd County School system, where she taught for 7 years with her 1st husband Larry Kinzer. While at New Albany, Gayle and Larry established the "Highlander Band Tradition" of the new Floyd Central High School. After Floyd, Gayle spent 2 years assisting the band programs of South Spencer and Springs Valley before returning to Paoli, where she became the assistant band director for the next 22 years. Directors whom Gayle taught with include Larry Kinzer, Arthur Ayde, John Aylsworth, Mark Middleton and Bill Laughlin. Notable achievements of the Paoli Band Program during Gayle's tenure include consistent "Superior" ratings for her Elementary bands at the ISSMA concert band festival, 13 State High School Marching Band Championships, and many of her private students earning positions in All-State Bands, University Bands and the Military Bands.

Gayle Laughlin (Thompson at that time) was involved in the decision to hire Bill Laughlin as the new Director of Bands for the Paoli Community Schools in 1988. In 1992, they were married and had the wonderful opportunity to “team teach” the fantastic students of Paoli in the band program. This lasted until Gayle’s retirement from full time teaching in 2007, but continued on a part-time basis until 2012 (full retirement). Gayle (and her family) were part of the charter group of members at the Paoli Christian Church. During the years of marriage to Bill, she served on the musical Worship Team as a piano player.

Gayle’s Awards and Recognitions:

1962 All State Band

1966 “Bands Woman” of the Year (Indiana University)

2004 induction to the Phi Beta Mu International Bandmasters Fraternity

2015 induction to the Phi Beta Mu / Indiana Bandmasters “Hall of Fame”.

2018 “Grand Marshall” (with Bill) of the Paoli Fall Festival Parade

Gayle Laughlin was blessed with a Son, Craig Kinzer, Daughter In-Law, Angie Kinzer; and her grandchildren: Madison & Zachary. One of Gayle’s most treasured accomplishments is having a 22 year teaching career in the same music program with her husband and partner – Bill Laughlin. Gayle and Bill still resided in Paoli, had several Old English Sheepdogs together and were members of the music ministry at Paoli Christian Church.

Although Gayle had “retired,” she never stopped teaching - continuing private lessons and woodwind sectionals with the Paoli Band program. As “Band” had been a part of her life since the 6th Grade, Gayle would like to say “Thank You” to all of the friends and family who had shared in this mission of education to our community, and – to all of the fantastic students and families over the years that had made her career of music education the most “wonderful profession imaginable”.

Memorial Service to be held 6:00 PM, Friday, September 27 ,2024 at the Paoli Christian Church, 1700 W. Hospital Rd. Paoli, Indiana 47454.

Visitation will be held 3-6 PM Friday, September 27, 2024, at Paoli Christian Church.

In lieu of flowers donations can be made to the Orange County Humane Society