



CLAUDE B. SMITH, 1906 -1974

Evansville Courier

Claude B. Smith, the “Mr. Music” of Evansville for 35 years and author of instrumental music books used in schools and colleges across the country, died yesterday in an Indianapolis hospital after open heart surgery.

The retired director of music and radio in the Evansville-Vanderburgh Public School System, Mr. Smith was the founder and long-time producer of the annual All-City Band and Orchestra Concert that became the biggest school music show in the nation

He retired from the school corporation in 1970, three years after suffering his first heart attack. Wednesday he underwent open heart surgery at St. Vincent’s Hospital in Indianapolis where he died at 7:45pm yesterday. He was 68.

Mr. Smith came to Evansville in 1931 “because Bosse High School needed a band instructor,” his wife recalled. He stayed for 39 years, not only developing the massive instrumental music program that exists in the local schools today but also becoming an internationally known instructor and write of music education books. His life was dedicated to music and teaching. During summers when the local schools were closed for vacation Mr. Smith served as guest instructor, clinician, and consultant for 14 different colleges and universities over the years.

Among the schools he taught at were the University of Oklahoma, Western State College of Colorado, Michigan State University and the Universities of Idaho, Ohio, and Kansas.

His accomplishments in the local school system included developing the testing programs to encourage musical talent beginning at the fourth-grade level. It was under his direction that an orchestra and band was established in every school in the system, and a uniform program of instrumental music class instruction was instituted.

He originated the All-City Band and Orchestra Concert and its annual extravaganza, “This Is Our Story” at Roberts Municipal Stadium.

Mr. Smith resided at 1100 Eris St.

Since his retirement in 1970, Mr. Smith had been serving as a musical consultant, most notably to Tennessee Technical College in Cookeville, TN.

Mr. Smith and his wife, Marie, had also traveled extensively to Mexico, Europe and all across the U.S. and Canada. They had, in fact, given up their residence in Evansville for a while returning only in June of this year.

Surviving are his wife, Marie' his daughter Jacqueline S. Coleman of Evansville; his son, Dr. Alan H. Smith of Portland, OR, and two grandchildren.

Funeral arrangements are pending at Alexander Funeral Home East Chapel.