

Arthur Emerson Unsworth, Jr.

November 30, 1935 ~ April 8, 2025

I loved Art. He became such a good friend when Me and my Family moved to Boone, NC. I was his home teaching partner and he ordained me a High priest. I loved to hear him Play Jazz versions of hymns before church or choir and watch Shirley ge mad at him "Art!" she'd say. May he and Shirley have a wonderful reunion. My deepest condolences to the family.

- Michael Helms

Dr, Unsworth was my academic advisor years ago at SUNY Potsdam, and taught several classes I took during my first two years. He was a wonderful professor and advisor. I extend heartfelt condolences to his family, friends and loved ones. He was a blessing to everyone who knew him. Rest in peace, Dr. Unsworth.

- Ruth C.

We had the pleasure of living next to Art and Shirley on Topview. We truly adored them as neighbors. They were always so kind and welcoming. We admired their sweet relationship and always loved seeing them do things together such as go on walks around the neighborhood and out in the yard. They always made us feel accepted and cared for simply by the way they treated us. They will be deeply missed. We were honored to have known them and send our heartfelt condolences to the family during this difficult time.

- Jake and Amy Christensen

Sad to hear of this passing and that of Shirley Unsworth in February. Like many who came to know them, my path crossed with the Unsworths when I was at Appalachian State as an undergrad from 1996 to 2001. They were like a second Mom and Dad for all of us LDS college kids away from home for the first time. I have fond memories of both, remembering them as warm, friendly, supportive, full of good advice, and always ready with a listening ear. They even came to my wedding reception after I had graduated. Rest in peace, President and Sister Unsworth. Thank you for your friendship and example. Peace and comfort to your family during this time of sorrow, and may the memory of your good and admirable lives always be a blessing to them. -Nathan Barron Appalachian State

Class of 2001 Boone, NC LDS branch, 1996-1998, 2000-2001

- Nathan Barron

I am so grateful to have known your dad. What a beautiful, talented, generous man he was. I am so sorry for your loss and will be praying for your family.

- Millie Johnson

Everyone gets to have a different experience of a person. I hope most people were able to experience my version of this man; kind, spiritual and loving. He will be missed.

- Angela Stephens Bergevin

I'm so sad for all the family. Losing both President and Sister Unsworth in such a short time is a difficult burden to bare. They were such wonderful examples to me personally. They taught me what family truly means. President Unsworth was the absolute best branch President I could have had while in college. I am thankful for his and Sister Unsworth's examples.

- Carol Blood

We send our love, prayers and condolences to the Unsworth family. They were amazing missionaries in New York! They were always willing to share their amazing talents to whatever task they were asked to do. We still laugh at his jokes trying to sell mission used cars in his special plaid jacket and her special cookies for clean apartments. Thank you family, for sharing your wonderful parents with us and the mission. They were a team and together again. Families are forever.❤■

- Richard and Wynnette Searle

Genuinely kind and compassionate, Art Unsworth chose to see the GOOD in people. He provided a LIGHT in the darkness and knew the true meaning of friendship. My world was changed for the better because I knew him and your mother. As you bless and bury your dear father may you be comforted. Love, Heather McKenzie Davidson

- Heather McKenzie Davidson

What a joy it was to have him as my professor. I am so grateful for his leadership and have always remembered him fondly. When we would ask him to play some dictation, he’d break out the opening notes of “As Time Goes By” which broke the tension and made us laugh. What a wonderful man.

- Carol Lee Carstensen

Dr. Unsworth was a wonderful man who was so important to us at Hayes SoM. God bless him and his family. Onward ever upward.

- Tim O'Toole

Art was Dean of the School of Music at Appalachian State University when I began my employment there in 1995. His kindness, gentle nature and sense of humor had a huge influence on me. My heartfelt sympathy go out to his family.

- Randy Outland

Art was our neighbor for many years in Boone. I remember Art spending time outside working on the neighborhood road, filling in the potholes. He always had a smile and a kind word. Your beautiful family is in our prayers during this heart wrenching time of loss.

- Bonnie Barrett Denison

When I joined the School of Music at Appalachian State University I was blessed to have Art Unsworth as my Dean. In my first full-time university position, it is reasonable that for the first few years I was working seven days a week to prepare new lesson plans, teaching materials, exams, etc. While it was very rewarding, I was frankly exhausted during these early years. However, the encouragement, support, and praise Art gave the faculty at the end of the monthly faculty meetings left me feeling excited and reenergized. I left the meetings wanting to work even harder to do my best for the students. Just before I arrived at AppState, the music faculty had decided they wanted to make changes in the required music history curriculum. While some generalities had already been decided, I had the privilege of being able to design the details of the new curriculum. There was something new I wanted to try that had not been done at AppState before. As a new faculty member, I wanted to make sure that this new method of teaching would be OK, so I went into Art’s office to ask him if it was OK to try this idea. His response was, “You’re the boss!” Art’s support and belief in me to make the right educational decisions meant so much to me and he was a very important mentor and role model for me as an educator. Art was a fantastic musician, teacher, administrator, and most importantly, a wonderful, giving, loving human being.

- Victor Mansure

Since so many of my Appalachian State friends are fondly remembering Dr. Unsworth, I will, too, and add my own words of tribute. Dr. Unsworth came to ASU the same semester that I did. A fundamentally decent man, he was a very effective Dean from what I saw. I remember that he taught a History of Rock Music class with his son Erik, that he described as a way for him and his son to better appreciate each other. I respected that. Also, learning that I was involved with The Salvation Army, he mentioned his personal connection to Erik Leidzen, a significant figure in concert band and Salvation Army brass band music. He told me that he studied composition and arranging with him at his home. Leidzen took him on as a student on the condition, as I recall, that he wrote everything that his Jr. High band students played. He also told me of Leidzen receiving a call during a lesson from someone who sung Leidzen a tune over the phone and asked him to arrange it. That someone was Irving Berlin. Finally, he told me of receiving a call from Leidzen's wife, telling him not to come to his scheduled lesson because Leidzen had died. He also told me that he had begun research on a biography of Leidzen, but when he learned that Dr. Ron Holz had already started a similar effort, he ceased his effort and shared his research with Holz. (What a classy move.) Years later, as he stepped down from being Dean, he said he was being promoted to the Faculty. I believed him. Maybe now, Dr. Unsworth will complete his studies with Leidzen. May God bless a good man. Rest In Peace.

- David May

Our best wishes to all of our distant family on the passing of my brother Art. We watched the very warm and beautiful thoughts and recollections of Arts life live online during the funeral services and send our love to you all

through this most difficult time.

- Norman Unsworth, Kathie Clark & family

I was a student at Appalachian during Dean Unsworth’s tenure. Even though I wasn’t a music major, I was on the marching band student staff so I was in Broyhill a lot. He made it a point to learn my name and spoke to me every time he saw me, sometimes about music, or the band, or even life in general. It’s the small things that can often make the biggest impact. My prayers are with his family during this time.

- Jen Carlson

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- Norman Unsworth, Kathie Clark & family

I was very sad to hear of Art's passing. He was a wonderful person to work for - kind and caring to faculty, students, and staff alike. I will always be grateful for the opportunity to have worked and learned under his guidance. He made it very easy for me to feel a part of the School of Music family right from the start. It was a beautiful memorial service, lovingly prepared and presented, representing everything Art stood for.

- Steve Hopkins

My condolences. Doctor Unsworth was a great man. He will sorely be missed. Appstate Alum class of 2005

- Ty Quinn

Dr Unsworth was one of the best and kindest professors that I was fortunate enough to have at the Crane School of Music. May he rest in peace and may his memory be a blessing to all who knew and loved him…

- Riichard Wiederman: CSM class of 1985

I am so sorry to hear of this wonderful man's passing. Dr. Unsworth was a wonderful, kind person. After having been away from Potsdam for a few years, I ran into him at a concert and was shocked that he not only recognized me, but remembered my name! We had a wonderful conversation! I will always remember him fondly. My deepest condolences to the entire family.

- Claire Chevalier Hungerford

Dr. Unsworth was a great teacher. I enjoyed speaking with him from time to time at the Crane School of Music. My condolences to the family

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Dr. Unsworth truly saved my music career. He saw something in me others did not and as my advisor while he was associate dean at the Crane School of Music, he truly had a huge impact on me. I was fortunate to have a phone conversation with him years back when he was dean at Appalachian State. He remembered everything about me and he truly impacted my life. Godspeed Dr. U. May the light of God forever shine upon you. Bryan H. Jenner BM in Music Education,1985 Crane School of Music, SUNY Potsdam

- Bryan Jenner

My deepest condolences to Dr. Unsworth's family… ■ I remember during one of our first advanced aural skills classes he made an offhand remark about giving a 4.0 to anyone who brought him a Mountain Dew during their one on one singing final. I stopped on the way to get him one, not for the grade, but just because I'd remembered, and he was absolutely delighted. I recall flubbing somewhere in a series of arpeggios & he stopped me asking, "Are these too hard? What if you call that note la and continue. There's a modulation that makes those accidentals much easier." Then I nailed it. Great teacher & great gentleman. (I did get that 4.0 btw - ■)

- Kathy Kelly-George (Crane Class of '87)

Eric, Adam, Andrew, and Alison, I am sorry for the loss of your dad, he was a talented and kind man. I am also sad to hear of your mom passing in February. It such a weird feeling to become the elders of the family, isn't it? You are now the repository of the passed-down family wisdom and stories and intuition. In that way, they are always there with you. I'm sending thoughts of comfort and solace. Being kids together with you is a memory I will always remember fondly, with your parents there like safe boundaries, never to be crossed.

- Laurel Wolfe Rule

Condolences to the 6 siblings of the Arthur and Shirley Unsworth Family. Your family brought a great presence to the Potsdam communuity in our schools (basketball and music), the Crane School and the local Morman congregation for more than 12 years. As a public school music teacher I surely felt your family's positive presence. Arthur and Shirley established the "A" team naming their six children with first names beginning with A. 1. Arthur, 2, Adam 3. Andrew, 4. Austin, 5. Allison, 6. Allen. When Andy returned to Potsdam several years ago to play a concert on the Hosmer Hall orgran, I met Andy and his wife in front of Northern Music by chance and Andy introduced me to his wife Alison (with 1 l rather than the 2 of his sister), I welcomed her to the A team. Well A team, you lost your leader and a few years ago your other leader Shirley. On a special note I always look forward to seeing Andy accomny and perform with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir on PBS. Soldier on A Team.

- Joseph M.. Liottq

Aside from being an excellent teacher, he was the essence of cool. Rest in peace, Doc.

- Jeffrey Halstead

Dr. Unsworth used to give a piece of advice that's stuck with me over the years. He'd smile and say, "Always show up early and sit in first chair." In the music world, first chair means you're the best. That might sound egotistical—but it's not what Doc meant at all. He was the kind of person who went out of his way to help students who were struggling. What he really meant was that if you want to grow, you have to get out of your comfort zone. Real improvement happens when you're challenged—when you're a little uncomfortable. That's where the growth is. It's also the best way to become ready for life's big and intimidating moments. Sure, we all fall short sometimes. But what really matters is how we respond—how high we bounce after we hit bottom. That's what separates people who keep growing from those who settle for less. There's opposition in all things. How we handle that is what truly makes the difference. I know the Unsworth family must be feeling this loss in such a profound way, with both parents passing in such a brief period of time. But I hope you also feel the comfort and pride of being part of such an incredible legacy. Art and Shirley lived with purpose and heart. They truly were one-of-a-kind—a remarkable couple whose warmth, kindness, and strength left a lasting impact on everyone who had the privilege of knowing them. Their legacy isn't just in the roles they played or the lives they lived—it's in the people they touched. I count myself fortunate to be one of them. The world is a better place because of Art and Shirley, and I will always be grateful for their influence on my life.

- Charles T Campbell

Dr. Unsworth was my favorite teacher at DSU in 1971. He was so kind and caring. He and his wife had our theory class over for a pancake breakfast at their house. He loved all of his students.

- Sheron Carpenter Coats