



## Lathon Jernigan

July 30, 1937 - February 23, 2021

Malcolm Lathon Jernigan, age 83, of Cedar Falls, Iowa, died on February 23, 2021, at the Deery Suites, Western Home Communities. His family members living in Cedar Falls were with him offering loving comfort through his time of passage.

Lathon was born in Goldthwaite, Texas, on July 30, 1937, the son of Malcolm and Letha (Burks) Jernigan. He married Linda Louise Dorough on July 24, 1965, at Marvin Methodist Church in Tyler, Texas.

Lathon earned his Bachelor and Master of Music Degrees, both in Music Performance, in 1959 and 1961, respectively, from Southern Methodist University. In 1968 he was awarded The Most Outstanding Young Educator Award by the Classroom Teachers of Dallas and the Junior Chamber of Commerce of Dallas. He was employed by the Dallas Independent School System from 1961 to 1968. Among his duties was conducting the Bryan Adams High School Orchestra and the all-city youth orchestra. Lathon earned his Doctorate of Music degree from the University of Texas in Austin in 1971. Many summers of advanced studies with international artists were spent in Santa Barbara, California; Chicago, Illinois; New York; Hancock, Maine; and Salzburg, Austria.

Lathon came to the University of Northern Iowa in 1971 as Instructor of Music

Theory, Aural Training, and Sight Singing. In 1974 his teaching duties were considerably expanded to other musical areas. His great joy in teaching at UNI was increased when he realized he was now teaching the children of former pupils. While at UNI, Lathon also conducted the Waterloo/Cedar Falls Symphony Orchestra for two seasons and the Wartburg Community Symphony Orchestra for four seasons. He served 14 years as principal keyboardist in the W/CFSO, two years as accompanist for the Metropolitan Chorale of Waterloo, and 40 years as organist at the United Church of Christ in Cedar Falls.

Lathon was a member of the Iowa Composers Forum, American Guild of Organists, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, and Pi Kappa Lambda.

The family would like to express their thanks and appreciation to the wonderful staff at the Deery Suites for their professional and loving care of Lathon during the last two years.

Survivors include his wife Linda; two daughters Lisa Banks and Lesley Jernigan, and her partner Dave Hatcher; two grandsons, Donavon Banks and Sawyer Howe; one sister Janell Frazier; and one sister-in-law Paula Dorough Kahler. He was preceded in death by his parents.

Lathon was cremated. A memorial service will be held at the United Church of Christ, 9204 University Avenue, Cedar Falls, on Saturday, March 6, at 1:00 p.m. Social distancing and face coverings are required.

Condolences may be mailed to the Jernigan family in care of Richardson Funeral Service, 615 Main Street, Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

MAR 6. 1:00 PM (CT)

United Church of Christ  
9204 University Ave  
Cedar Falls, IA 50613

# Tribute Wall

RE

“ *The one thing that stands out in my memory so vividly about Lathon is his musical talent and hearing him play school songs on the old piano in GHS school. Always a gentleman was Lathon. Rest in peace co-Eagle. Rachel Elder, Class of '53*

Rachel Elder - December 08, 2024 at 01:55 PM

KL

“ *Dr. Jernigan was the kindest, most patient instructor and he left a lasting impression on me. His sense of humor was excellent and I so appreciated him as the conductor of Wartburg's Community symphony. My deepest condolences on the loss of such a uniquely good man.*

Kendra Leisinger - May 05, 2021 at 06:16 PM



“ *Lathon was an amazingly patient teacher, and I appreciate the evenings he introduced me to the intricacies of the church organ. My deepest condolences on his loss.*

Victoria Maloy - April 11, 2021 at 08:10 PM

DB

“ *This is such sad news, Lathon was a perfect gentleman and a generous colleague. He possessed rare insight into how music is put together and had talent for communicating it to others, I remember approaching him with a tricky orchestral passage that Mozart had corrected and asked for his take, His analysis was so deep and insightful that I cited him in the JRMA article on the piece, and provided his detailed discussion.*

David Buch - March 11, 2021 at 05:40 PM



“ Sweet Tranquility Basket was purchased for the family of Lathon Jernigan.



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March 06, 2021 at 01:41 PM



“ Lathon was a very gifted and talented musician, but he was also a true southern gentleman and a very kind and caring man. My deepest sympathy to Linda and all of the family,

*Claudia Meyer*

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**Claudia Meyer** - March 05, 2021 at 10:43 PM



“ My sincere condolences to the whole family on the loss of Lathon. He was always a bright shining star.

*Aloha Oudekerk*

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**Aloha Oudekerk** - March 04, 2021 at 05:04 PM



“ Sweet Tranquility Basket was purchased for the family of Lathon Jernigan.



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March 03, 2021 at 12:22 PM

DD

“ *My sincere condolences for Lathon's passing, and to Linda, Lisa, Lesley, and all of his family. He enjoyed a full life of amazing music making in which he touched so many. Such a kind, talented, dedicated, gentle man. He was a good friend to hundreds who was deeply respected and admired. He will long be remembered for his wonderful music and a life well spent.*

*- Dennis Downs*

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**Dennis Downs** - March 02, 2021 at 04:27 PM



“ *Basket of Memories was purchased for the family of Lathon Jernigan.*



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March 01, 2021 at 11:53 AM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Lathon Jernigan.*



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February 28, 2021 at 07:50 PM

BM

“ 1 file added to the album Bryan Adams High School (Dallas, Texas)



Bill Martin - February 28, 2021 at 12:09 PM

AC

“ I'm so sorry for your loss Lesley. I know he was a great father and loved you very much. My thoughts and prayers will be with you and your family.

Angela Conkling - February 28, 2021 at 09:25 AM

DH

“ Linda, So sorry to hear about Lathon's passing. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.

Diane Hensley - February 28, 2021 at 09:12 AM

KA

“ Dr Jernigan was a patient instructor, a dear man and made my experience in school encouraging. May God bless his family at this time.



Kathleen - February 27, 2021 at 08:21 PM

BM

“ *Dr. Jernigan was my Orchestra Director at Bryan Adams High School and Dal-Hi Symphony (1966-67) in Dallas, Texas. He was a special and talented person who made a positive impact on my life, plus helped instill a love of music which remains today. I am very grateful he was a part of my life.*

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**Bill Martin** - February 27, 2021 at 04:19 PM

JD

“ *Janell, Brady, Amy and Denton purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Lathon Jernigan.*



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**Janell, Brady, Amy and Denton** - February 26, 2021 at 10:52 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Lathon Jernigan.*



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February 26, 2021 at 05:07 PM

CY

“ *Cousin Judy Gillan Yancey purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of Lathon Jernigan.*



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**Cousin Judy Gillan Yancey** - February 26, 2021 at 02:57 PM

JA

“ I have many memories of Dr. Jernigan, but one of my favorites was "playing one-on-one with Dr. J," or in other words, going into Dr. Jernigan's office for sight singing tests. I wasn't his best student, but he was one of my favorite professors. God's grace and peace be to his family, students and friends.

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**John Alpers** - February 26, 2021 at 02:22 PM

PH

“ This is such sad news. I got to know Lathon when I first moved to Cedar Falls to work at KUNI in 1980. He was one of the amazing people that impressed me so much about the UINI School of Music. He was also one of the reasons I decided to study for a masters in composition in the late '80's. I still remember his "Styles" classes and analytical insights, his deep talent, his great friendliness and wit. We moved away in 1990 but I saw him many times in the years since, often when he would show up at a concert to offer support and thoughtful insights. He was gentle, brilliant and kind and I'm grateful to have known him and learned so much from him.

*My condolences to the family. He'll certainly be missed!*

*Peter Hamlin (KUNI classical music host from 1980-90 and UNI composition masters student in the late '80's).*

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**Peter Hamlibn** - February 26, 2021 at 10:47 AM

SN

“ Dr. Jernigan was an amazing person, a first class musician and a true Texan. I wish I would have spent more time with him. He had three lifetimes of knowledge that for those of us that knew him were touched by. If only a glimpse. Thank you Lathon for all that you gave to me! Rest in peace my friend.

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**Sandy Nordahl** - February 26, 2021 at 10:03 AM

KF

“ Linda, so sorry for your loss. I only knew Lathon through the Deery Suites. I remember how music could still lift him in spite of his physical limitations. His memory is a blessing to many. Peace to you and your family. Karen Franczyk

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**Karen Franczyk** - February 26, 2021 at 10:00 AM

MS

“ Dr. Jernigan - or as he occasionally called himself "old radar ears" - was one of my favorite professors from my music education. I remember being so amazed that he could just sit down at a piano in the middle of class and play a musical example of a concept he was teaching, seemingly out of thin air. He would fix our counterpoint mistakes on the chalkboard without shame, but would sometimes say, "that's more better," after getting rid of parallel fifths. Sometimes when we would try to disguise our uncertainty of our solfege syllables in sight-singing he would say, "you've got to sing the words!" Like another person who posted, I also remember having a good chuckle about his outgoing voicemail message when we had to leave our sight singing homework on his voicemail. And finally, I remember one day he said that he wished he could live five more lifetimes so that he might be able to consider himself a true musician. Dr. Jernigan was a true musician if there ever was one. Rest in peace, and thank you for being part of my learning.

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**Molly Stehn** - February 26, 2021 at 09:37 AM

TJ

“ So sorry! May you sing with angels today! He would come in to class, hum a Bb, play it on the piano and say "The piano is flat today". I always remember calling in my aural exercises to his voicemail. When it announced his name it said "thum Jernigan". I always got a kick out that.

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**Tim Jones** - February 25, 2021 at 09:10 PM

LJ

*To All of You Who Have Shared Comments about Lathon*

*I would like to say "Thank you so much! I and my family truly appreciate all of the wonderful comments you have contributed. Your comments have given me an inside look at Lathon in the classroom, personality traits I was never aware of. Your wonderful comments have eased some of the pain we have been feeling. Thank all of you again."*

*~ Linda Jernigan and family*

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**Linda Jernigan** - March 05, 2021 at 05:58 PM

JF

*Dear Linda,*

*I am so sorry to hear that your dear husband Lathon has died. Altho I did not know him, I have appreciated reading the comments of those who did. These days are not easy as you and your family adjust to life without him and I hope the memories of your life together bring you comfort. May he rest in peace.*

*Thinking of you with love and sympathy,  
Judy Fogdall*

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**judy fogdall** - March 06, 2021 at 10:22 AM

RB

*Mrs. Jernigan, I have only just heard the sad news. Lathon was my piano teacher for many years. I learned a great deal from him and am still playing piano and look at his notes to me, 40 years later. He did me the honor of playing for my wedding and everyone said the music was wonderful. One year he conducted the NUHS choir when we were part of a large choir he conducted. We did come out of that with a bit of southern drawl in our Latin...Later when I was performing with the Beaverton Symphony our principal flutist had performed under Lathon when he was conducting the Waterloo Cedar Falls Symphony. He touched my life in so many wonderful ways. He will be sorely missed.*  
*Ray Bunkofske*

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**Raymond J Bunkofske** - March 21, 2021 at 08:01 PM