



## Shirley Huffman

October 4, 1936 - November 8, 2023

Shirley Jean Huffman passed away November 8, 2023, at age 87. She was born in Floyd County, Iowa near Nashua, on October 4, 1936, to Robert Horton and Neva Mae (Rottink) Bond. She joined an older sister, Dorothy June, and spent a wonderful childhood on the family farm, collecting eggs from the chickens, trying to ride the huge draft horses, and playing with her dog, Buster.

By the time she was seven years old her musical gift was evident, and she began taking piano lessons. Two years later she was playing for Sunday School at the Nashua, Iowa First Methodist Church and by the age of 11 she had become the church organist there as well as playing for weddings at the Little Brown Church near Nashua. During her high school years, she accompanied many singing groups and soloists. As a senior in high school, Shirley was chosen to receive the Edna Perry Music award, given to the senior demonstrating outstanding accomplishments in music, and the Carl J. Hansen Memorial Citizenship award, as well as the Iowa Bar Association Citizenship award.

After graduating from Nashua High School and briefly attending Drake University on a music scholarship, she began giving piano lessons. She continued to give lessons for over 60 years to hundreds of students whose ages ranged from four years old to adult. Shirley was caring and patient with

her piano students, teaching them to love the instrument and the music they could make. She urged them to make music their whole lives, no matter what professions they chose, for the joy and comfort music brings.

Shirley enjoyed exercise and being strong and physically fit. She jogged, lifted weights, and biked hundreds of miles on the Cedar Valley trails. She took long hikes in environments as diverse as Arizona, Northeast Iowa and England. Conversely, she loved to bake chocolate chip cookies and instilled a love of baking in her daughters. She also loved traveling and enjoyed a trip to England and Ireland with her daughter Julie.

Her greatest joy was her five daughters. She taught them to play piano and instilled in them her love of music. She was a master seamstress, creating beautiful gowns for her daughters and granddaughter Ashley for all their special events. All five of her daughters played in the hand bell choirs of First United Methodist Church, Cedar Falls, Iowa, and Shirley sewed all their performance clothing for concerts and tours.

Shirley was active in the Waterloo-Cedar Falls Symphony Guild and the UNI Suzuki program, supporting her youngest daughter Priscilla to excellence as a violinist. She was also a gifted artist, able to sketch and oil paint landscapes and animals. She enjoyed all crafts, whether creating enormous fiber works of art, crocheting, or making holiday decorations.

On October 4, 1955, she married Garth W. Huffman, and they moved to Cedar Falls where they made their home for over sixty years. She was preceded in death by her husband, Garth, her son-in-law Donald Shaw, her only sister, Dorothy Gates, her brothers-in-law D. Blaine Gates and Edwin Chesnut, and sister-in-law Mary (Koenigsfeld) Huffman Puettman.

She is survived by daughters Julie Huffman-klinkowitz (husband Jerry,

grandchildren Jonathan and Nina); Cynthia Sweet (husband Stanton, grandchildren Ashley [Joshua Mattson], Devin, and Tyler); Katrina Huffman; Valerie Shaw (grandchildren Kienan [Cheyenne], Caleb [Cassie], Karina [Jordan Holthaus] and step-grandchildren Brenna Shaw and Justin [Margo] Shaw); Priscilla Blanchard (husband Michael, grandchildren Zachariah [Finch Madlock-Blanchard], Abraham, and Gabriel); as well as eight great-grandchildren; six step great-grandchildren; many nieces and nephews, and cousins; her sister-in-law Maralyn (Huffman) Chesnut and brother-in-law Will Puettman.

Burial will be in Oak Hill Cemetery, Nashua, Iowa. Private family services. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be directed to First United Methodist Church, Cedar Falls to support the hand bell program and the care and upkeep of the organ.

# Cemetery Details

**Oak Hill Cemetery**

Nashua, IA

# Tribute Wall

DB

“ Sorry for your loss. Shirley was a talented, brilliant and kind woman. I enjoyed several years working for her and Garth.

Denise Barr - November 27, 2023 at 09:22 AM

CM

“ Shirley was the best piano teacher and especially patient with me as a young learner. I took lessons with Shirley for over ten years and she taught me a lot about music and life. I'm very confident she lives on in every note and song 🎵💕

Photo from 2004 recital (Shirley, front left).



Christine McKenna - November 25, 2023 at 03:12 PM

ME

“ I am so sorry for your loss. Shirley was a gift to so many and I still remember going to her home every Monday (or Wednesday) for lessons all through my senior year of college. I cried so hard at my last recital, not because of missing the lessons themselves but I was going to miss Shirley. She shared her gift with so many people and I'm honored to have been one of them. May you all find comfort in knowing how terrific your mom and grandma was. She was truly wonderful!

megan - November 12, 2023 at 12:20 PM

JH

“ Dear Cyndi and Julie,

*My deep sympathy to you and all your families. What an extraordinary woman your mother was to so many others.*

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**Judith Harrington** - November 12, 2023 at 09:26 AM

MD

“ Cyndi, Condolences to your family at the loss of your mother.

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**Mindy Doyle** - November 12, 2023 at 08:56 AM

LB

“ I'm so sad to see of Shirley's passing. We thought so highly of her. She taught our four sons piano. She was always encouraging and had a smile. ❤️ My condolences to the family.

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**Laura Bowden** - November 10, 2023 at 06:01 PM

AD

“ I’m so grateful for the time I spent taking piano lessons with Shirley. I started taking piano lessons with Shirley when I was 5 and over the years she taught me so many valuable lessons. I credit her for my love of performing, as well as not being afraid of having an audience; she always welcomed mistakes as a learning opportunity. Her passion and love for music was evident in everything she did; I have never met anyone as dedicated as her. She truly loved the piano and instilling a love for music in others. I am so grateful for the time I spent with her, as she was always patient, passionate, and excited to share new things about music.

This past year, I’ve enjoyed visiting with her and learning about different aspects of her life. She was an awesome story teller and I enjoyed her company.

Shirley watched me grow up, learn, fail, and perform, all with patience and grace. Her love and liveliness is something I feel honored to know and will never forget.

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**Abby Dvorak** - November 08, 2023 at 11:46 PM